

**A VERY PRETTY OBJECT:
THE SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED LANDSCAPE OF BURLINGTON HEIGHTS
1780-1815**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

LIST OF MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

INTRODUCTION..... 1

CHAPTER I: MISSISSAUGA HEIGHTS..... 6

CHAPTER II: BEASLEY’S HEIGHTS..... 32

CHAPTER III: MILITARY HEIGHTS..... 76

CONCLUSION..... 127

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 132

ABSTRACT

Landscape is a way of seeing. It is a social construction. Land is viewed, used and transformed by the humans who inhabit it. The different worldviews of people provided the basis for what Burlington Heights could and should be used for. Following the cycle of scarcity and abundance, the Mississauga people using Burlington Heights were egalitarian, stewards of the land, finding in the natural features around them -- a spiritual potency which defined their place on the landscape. Following the pattern of his merchant patrons, Richard Beasley built material prosperity as well as social and political influence, which he demonstrated by developing his property in picturesque style. Faced with the prospect of losing complete control of the Niagara Peninsula during the War of 1812, the British army occupied the Heights and exerted a tyrannical influence across a landscape that it considered as indefensible, devious and unhealthy.

LIST OF MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Menominee Night Fishing.....	30
Ojibwa Wigwams.....	30
Spiritual Potency.....	31
Log House.....	74
Beasley's Brick House.....	74
General Store, c 1820.....	75
Water Powered Grist Mill.....	75
War of 1812 Blockhouses.....	123
Pioneer Fences.....	123
Burlington Heights, 1793.....	124
Burlington Heights, 1813.....	125
Burlington Heights, 1823.....	126

INTRODUCTION

Each day we wake up and casually look outside and see a landscape. We all have perceptions of the landscape, but if considered closely, even for a moment, it is one of those concepts that is very elusive, because landscape is not the same for any two people. Physical geographers have attempted to define landscape in terms of a suite of earth processes which shape it. This only provides an incomplete answer, because it does not take into account the human element in shaping landscape. Realistically, one can say with authority that landscape is a way of seeing, and more broadly, people within a society tend to share similar ideas about landscape. It must be understood that human views on landscape are based on socialization and how diverse societies are organized. Landscape symbolically reflects society. How did the diverse peoples using Burlington Heights over thousands of years perceive the landscape, and what was this difference based upon? To date, the historiography on Hamilton has not concentrated specifically on this question. Most have concentrated solely on the prominent figures involved in early Euro-Canadian settlement, and neglected the symbolic place of landscape.

C.M. Johnston in the *Head of the Lake*, focused on people and the economic, political and social context within which the province developed. Johnston concerned himself with identifying the major players at the Head of the Lake Ontario, such as Richard Beasley, and how he and others established themselves as merchant princes. His main goal was to present a salutary view of the developing community at the Head of the Lake, to instill a pride of place in Hamiltonians. What was not emphasized was how merchants like Beasley perceived the landscape and how landscape development played a role in demonstrating Beasley's emerging material prosperity and

social and political influence.¹

Marjory Campbell's *A Mountain and a City*, proceeded along lines similar to Johnston's. However, she focused on the human interest stories and the hardship faced by individual settlers in the early years of provincial development. For instance, we learn about the system of measure used by provincial surveyor Augustus Jones, and the romantic tale of how Beasley met his wife, but there is no discussion on how perceptions of land affected social and political standing in the emerging community at the Head of the Lake. Campbell provided the researcher with interesting stories full of local colour, emphasizing that Hamilton's past should be studied and celebrated.²

While Bruce Wilson's *Enterprises of Robert Hamilton* also does not concentrate on perceptions of landscape, it is a detailed account of merchant activities in the province from its beginnings until the death of Hamilton in 1809. Wilson argues that Robert Hamilton was interested in maintaining a powerful merchant presence in the fledgling province. Hamilton was one of Beasley's patrons and acted as a good example of what a successful merchant was capable of. He had huge land holdings, a large client base, and a strategic location for his store. Beasley followed Hamilton's example although he was not as successful. Like Hamilton, Beasley also developed his own immediate property, through the construction of a store, enclosed fields and a stylish house. Wilson's treatment provided valuable insight into the society in which Beasley

¹C.M. Johnston, *The Head of the Lake: A History of Wentworth County* (Hamilton: Wentworth County Council, 1958).

²M.F. Campbell, *A Mountain and a City* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1966).

emerged as a socially and politically influential country gentleman.³

Dennis Cosgrove, Colin Coates and Rhys Issacs, examine how perceptions of landscape are reflected in social organization.⁴ Cosgrove argued broadly that symbolic perceptions of the landscape are closely related to social formation. This view is derived from the Marxist idea that the mode of production and reproduction the social and political structure and the ideological superstructure determine the social formation of human groups. Coates was concerned with landscape appropriation and the way in which picturesque landscape proponents such as Elizabeth Hale devised a coded language about the landscape that reflected their aristocratic background. Rhys Issacs argued that architecture, as well as the spatial and social organization of plantations were a product of patriarchal Virginian planter society. In all cases social formation had a formative influence on the way landscape was viewed.

It will be shown that the social formation of human groups using Burlington Heights determined how they saw themselves in relation to the landscape. The Mississauga people viewed it as sublimely beautiful, worthy of reverence for its own sake. Richard Beasley saw that it was

³Bruce G. Wilson, *The Enterprises of Robert Hamilton: A Study of Wealth and Influence in Early Upper Canada, 1776-1812* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1983); S.J.R Noel, *Patrons, Clients, Brokers: Ontario Society and Politics, 1791-1896* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Noel treated the same issues as Wilson, but it was carried out in broader scope. Noel's most interesting contribution was the characterization of the Laurentian trade network and the patron/client relationship. His general descriptions of the reciprocal obligation generated between clients and patrons was useful in explaining how Beasley fit into the trade network, and in turn how he was able to increase his wealth and influence.

⁴Dennis Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Madison Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998); Colin Coates *The Metamorphoses of Landscape and Community in Early Quebec* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000); Colin Coates "Like 'The Thames towards Putney': The Appropriation of Landscape in Lower Canada" *Canadian Historical Review* vol. LXXIV (1993); Rhys Issacs *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

necessary to improve nature, symbolizing his desire for material prosperity as well as social and political influence. In contrast, the British military were concerned about exploiting the landscape for their own survival.

Chapter I deals with the Historic Ojibwa, referred to specifically as the Mississauga, living on Burlington Heights in the late 18th century. Contained within the Mississauga's own way of seeing the landscape is the idea that this was not a new way of seeing but one that extended back through time, possibly thousands of years. Humans, animals, and plants were all connected spiritually and materially. Humankind held the privileged position of harvester of nature's abundance, but as an egalitarian hunting and gathering people the Mississauga did not have a sense of land ownership nor see the necessity of constructing monuments to material prosperity, or social and political influence, as some earlier native groups and Europeans did. Following the cycle of scarcity and abundance, the Mississauga people using Burlington Heights were egalitarian stewards of the land finding in the natural features around them a spiritual potency that defined their place on the landscape.

The Mississauga still visited the Heights seasonally when Richard Beasley began squatting on Burlington Heights in the 1780's.⁵ For Beasley, they represented an early opportunity to develop a local client base that might supplement his business ventures as part of the Laurentian trade and transshipment system. As a Loyalist, Beasley belonged to a hierarchical society that put

⁵Nicholas Leblovic "The Life and History of Richard Beasley Esquire" in: Wentworth Bygones vol. # 7 (Hamilton: The Head of the Lake Historical Society 1967) p 1; Trevor Carter *Beasley Wharf Complex* (unpublished M.A. Thesis); By the mid 1780's Beasley held no title to the land. Leblovic reports that Beasley was granted land in what is now Wentworth County in 1791. Archaeological evidence indicates that European trade goods were stored and distributed from the site of Richard Beasley's store house on the bay-shore of Burlington Heights in the 1780's. The implication is that Beasley was squatting on the land prior to the official land grant of 1791.

emphasis on material demonstrations of prosperity. By the time he sold his property in 1832, Beasley had amassed several thousand of acres of land; he had a commodious picturesque estate on Burlington Heights; he was a magistrate and he had held a variety of government posts.

Following the pattern of his merchant patrons, Richard Beasley aspired to material prosperity as well as social and political influence, by symbolically developing his property in picturesque style.

Beasley was well on the way to achieving his goal of becoming a country gentleman when the British army commandeered his property during the War of 1812. The British army, while part of wider English society, had a different way of seeing the landscape based on its own distinctive social formation and particular interests in the province. In general, a Napoleonic period army viewed the landscape in terms of its own survival. The most important concerns related to defense and supplies, as part of conducting operations on a shifting strategic frontier. For the British army, the Heights symbolized a point of imperial defense, a place of rest and resupply, and an unhealthy location which they were forced to inhabit. Faced with the prospect of losing complete control of the Niagara Peninsula, the British army occupied the Heights, during which time it exerted a tyrannical influence across a landscape that it considered as exploitable, indefensible, devious, and unhealthy.

The British army, a merchant such as Richard Beasley, and the Mississauga all saw the landscape in markedly different fashions, and all used the landscape in different ways. Burlington Heights was viewed, used and transformed by the humans who inhabited it. The different world-views of the egalitarian Mississauga, elite merchant Richard Beasley and the British military provided the basis for what Burlington Heights could and should be used for.

Chapter 1

MISSISSAUGA HEIGHTS

Smoke curled lazily upwards from the wigwam's smoke hole barely distinguishable against the dense fog hugging the ground. Grandfather sat inside with his grandchildren around him. He told them stories of Nanabozho, the great Ojibwa culture hero who with the cooperation and sacrifice of the animals saved the people and recreated the earth. The storied landscape was full of incredible beauty and terrible danger largely beyond human control. The children learned that they must seek the aid of plants and animals or face a much harder existence. Nanabozho had a close spiritual partnership with the animals and plants of the land, and this was the only way to preserve the privileged position of humankind as harvester's of nature's abundance.¹

The lessons of the ancestors handed down from the long past to the Mississauga formed the basis of their hunting and gathering economy, their egalitarian social organization, and their close spiritual connection to the land. Faced with the awesome forces of nature they did not see themselves (as European settlers did), as owners of the land. Instead, they used the landscape of Burlington Heights for several months of the year, managing plant and animal species for their own benefit, as one part of a highly mobile seasonal round. To the Mississauga the natural features of the landscape brimmed over with a spiritual potency. They related to the awesome trees, rock formations, and water bodies by imbuing them with a spirit which had to be listened to

¹This narrative is a reconstruction of a scene that may have taken place on Burlington Heights. It is based on similar accounts of Mississauga behaviour taken from Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), Ruth Landes, *Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), Dorothy Reid, *Tales of Nanabozho* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1963).

and interacted with appropriately.² Naturally occurring landscape features such as Coote's Paradise and the Heights itself symbolized who they were as family, band and clan members. Relative to what is known about the Mississauga groups on the Heights, comparatively little is known about the other cultural groups who lived here for the last several thousand years. The archaeological record of Burlington Heights has been much studied over the last several decades in order to reveal hidden clues as to who these people were. The Heights have been occupied for the last 9,500 years including occupations during the Archaic Period, (c. 9,500 - 2,600 B.P.)³, the Middle Woodland Period (c. 2,200 - 1,800 B.P.)⁴, as well as the Historic Period (beginning c. 500

²For a discussion of manitous and the Native perceptions of the landscape generally, See Calvin Martin, *Keepers of the Game: Indian- Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Shkilnyk, *A Poison Stronger Than Love*; Thomas Vennum, jr., *Wild Rice and the Ojibway People* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988); Dorothy M. Reid, *Tales of Nanabozho* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1963); Ruth Landes, *Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968); Peter S. Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); Matthew Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace: Iroquois European Encounters in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); George Copway, *The Traditional History of the Ojibway Nation* (London: George Gilpin, 1850); Peter Jones, *History of the Ojibway Indians; with especial reference to their conversion to Christianity* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, reprinted 1970, originally printed in 1861); Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987); Bruce Trigger, *The Huron: Farmers of the North* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969); Bruce Trigger, "The French Presence in Huronia: The Structure of Franco- Huron Relations in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century", in: *Canadian Historical Review*, XLIX (1968), p 107-141.

³C.J. Ellis, I.T. Kenyon, M. Spence, "The Archaic", in: C.J. Ellis & N. Ferris, *The Archaeology of Southern Ontario to A.D. 1650* (London: Occasional Publications of the London Chapter, Ontario Archaeological Society Inc., 1990), p 65

⁴M.W. Spence, R.H. Pihl and C. Murphy, "Cultural Complexes of the Early and Middle Woodland Periods", in: C.J. Ellis & N.Ferris, ed. *The Archaeology of Southern Ontario To A.D. 1650* (London: Occasional Publications of the London Chapter, Ontario Archaeological Society Inc., 1990); Don W. Dragoo, "The Development of Adena Culture and its Role in the Formation of Ohio Hopewell", in: J. R. Caldwell and R.L. Hall, ed. *HopeWellian Studies, Illinois State Museum Scientific Papers, vol. 12* (Springfield: Illinois State Museum, 1977); Stuart Streuver,

B.P.).⁵ As important as the archaeological record is, it unfortunately does not shed much light on how pre-contact native groups viewed the landscape. While it might be generally hypothesized based on material cultural evidence that Archaic, or Middle Woodland groups were hunter gatherers with an egalitarian family/band/clan organization, it is an almost impossible stretch to assert any verifiable statements about their perceptions of landscape. As a result, this chapter will focus on the Historic Period Mississauga, for which there is a comparatively larger written record.⁶ Nevertheless, some of the discussion that follows must necessarily be speculative, and reconstructs the Mississauga's patterns of behaviour based on limited archaeological and documentary evidence, and anthropological studies of more recent Ojibwa communities. It is not clear exactly when the Mississauga first arrived on Burlington Heights, although there is some evidence that they gradually moved into the area after a successful series of wars with the Five Nations Iroquois in the late 17th century. By the early 18th century the Mississauga had an

"The Hopewell Interaction Sphere in Riverine-Western Great Lakes Culture History" in: *Hopewellian Studies, Illinois State Museum Scientific Papers*, vol. 12 (Springfield: Illinois State Museum, 1977); J.R. Caldwell, "Interaction Spheres in Prehistory", in: *Hopewellian Studies, Illinois State Museum Scientific Papers*, vol. 12 (Springfield: Illinois State Museum, 1977)

⁵Matthew Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace: Iroquois European Encounters in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Bruce Trigger, *The Huron: Farmers of the North* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969)

⁶The most important sources concern the Reverend Peter Jones (Kakwequonaby) or Sacred Feathers, who was born on Burlington Heights in 1802. Both his historical work, *Peter Jones, History of the Ojebway Indians; with especial reference to their conversion to Christianity* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, reprinted 1970, originally printed in 1861), and Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), deal specifically with the Mississauga on Burlington Heights during the late 18th and early 19th century.

established presence on Burlington Heights.⁷

The Mississauga had a close physical and spiritual connection to the land. Following the path of egalitarianism, they sat in circles without coercive power and gained support for action through consensus.⁸ In favouring consensus and harmony, an egalitarian social formation is an indicator of how they viewed the landscape. As part of a great circle of which the Mississauga were but one point on the curve, they did not seek to dominate the landscape but saw themselves as part of it. Following the cycle of scarcity and abundance, the Mississauga using Burlington Heights acted as stewards of the land, finding in the natural features around them, a spiritual potency which defined their place on the landscape.⁹

CYCLE OF SCARCITY AND ABUNDANCE

The Mississauga year was divided into four seasons, as it had been for native peoples using Burlington Heights for thousands of years. Winter or peboon was the season from November to

⁷Peter S. Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991)

⁸See Calvin Martin, *Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Shkilnyk, *A Poison Stronger Than Love: The Destruction of an Ojibwa Community*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Thomas Vennum, jr., *Wild Rice and the Ojibwa People* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988); Dorothy M. Reid, *Tales of Nanabozho* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1963); Ruth Landes, *Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968); Peter S. Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); George Copway, *The Traditional History of the Ojibwa Nation* (London: George Gilpin, 1850); Peter Jones, *History of the Ojibwa Indians; with especial reference to their conversion to Christianity* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, reprinted 1970, originally printed in 1861); Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987); R.W. Dunning, *Social and Economic Change Among the Northern Ojibwa*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959)

⁹The term stewardship for the Mississauga is applied here based on the ideal that they saw themselves as privileged harvester's of nature's abundance.

March when the bands dispersed into smaller immediate family groups to hunt and trap. Peter Jones and his family spent at least part of the winter on Burlington Heights. His grandfather's hunting territory was located around the Head of the Lake which explains why the family was encamped on the Heights when Peter Jones was born in January 1802. Family groups reformed into larger bands again in early spring to tap maple trees during seegwun, meaning literally "sap season". Once the sugar was processed, it was time for some of the family groups (including Peter Jones' family) to visit Richard Beasley on the Heights, where they traded their furs and sugar for pots, guns, knives, beads, cloth and silver ornaments. By May they broke camp and moved again to what is the Mississauga area today, on the banks of the Credit river to take advantage of the spring salmon run. The Credit river was a location that provided important dietary protein, and a venue for religious festivals, dances, marriages and games. After the salmon run, Jones' family separated from the main band gathering, to camp on and around Burlington Heights where they planted corn. In early summer (neebin or the abundant season), the Mississauga collected seasonal berries, tended their crops and fished in the bay. By late summer they harvested corn and wild rice on and around the Heights, and in Cootes' Paradise. In the fall, tuhgwuhgin or the fading season, signaled the time for families to once again collect in the hundreds at the Credit river for the fall salmon run. By late fall the seasonal round came full circle as the band dispersed into small family groups and Jones' and his relations returned to Burlington Heights in preparation for the winter hunting and trapping season.¹⁰

In total the Mississauga may have lived on Burlington Heights for as much eight months out of

¹⁰Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, p 3, 7-8; See also William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), p 39 -48, for a similar discussion of the seasonal round of the Algonkian hunter/gatherers of New England.

the year, and as a result it was the centre of their seasonal round. They did not necessarily camp in the same place on the Heights every time. The placement of their camp was based on prevailing weather conditions and the purpose of their use. For instance, the archaeological remains of a Mississauga campsite discovered out in front of Richard Beasley's brick cottage contained silver tinkling cones and glass beads, two types of ornamental goods that they would have received from Beasley in return for their sugar and furs. This suggests that it was set up in the late spring, when the Mississauga were laden with goods for trade with Beasley. The area out in front of Beasley's house was clear of trees and as a result was very open to the cold wind. It was an appropriate camp site for warm weather, or if trading with Beasley was desired; but a more sheltered location on the Heights would have been preferred in winter.

In order to successfully navigate through the seasonal round, close kinship connections and a marked division of labour were important in sustaining the cooperative effort necessary for survival. Close kinship ties between families provided insurance against hard times. Ideally if one group was suffering hunger due to a failure in the hunt or low plant yields then there was every opportunity to cross over into the traditional hunting or gathering range of related kin members.¹¹

Families routinized cooperation through a marked division of labour which was another key to dealing with the problem of scarcity. This is revealed in the large store of teaching stories which

¹¹The Ojibwa were not "Noble Savages" who always cooperated with one another in pursuit of their livelihood which always resulted in an optimal food supply in equilibrium with nature. See Richard White, "Native Americans and the Environment", in: W.R. Swagerty (ed.), *Scholars and the Indian Experience: Critical Reviews of Recent Writing in the Social Sciences* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p 179-204, for a discussion of scholarship inspired by the Environmental Movement which places Native North Americans on a conservationist pedestal. The main thrust of many of these studies from the 1960's and 70's was that Native groups were consciously conservationist – intentionally leaving no trace of their passage on the landscape.

were passed down from generation to generation. The stories represent an oral record of collected wisdom that reinforced the kind of behaviour that was necessary for survival. The maintenance of proper and respectful relationships along gender and kinship lines was emphasized as well as the importance of cooperation between humans, plants and animals.

In the tale, *Nanabozho Saves Nokomis*,¹² Nanabozho, the Ojibwa culture hero is warned by a flying squirrel that his grandmother (Nokomis) is in danger. She packs up her camp and then carries it all by herself while following Nanabozho to safety. In this case Nokomis is in danger from evil Windigo spirits.¹³ Nanabozho takes her to a grove of maple trees beside a waterfall. When the Windigoes approached Nokomis' hiding place they saw what looked like a raging fire (maple trees in the fall seen through the mist of the waterfall), in which they believed that Nokomis would surely perish. They left without investigating further. When Nanabozho learned the part played by the maple trees in protecting his grandmother, he rewarded them by making the maple sap extra sweet thus making the trees extra useful to men. Without the cooperation of the squirrel, maple trees and the mist of the waterfall, Nanabozho's grandmother would have been devoured by the Windigoes. On a strictly practical level the association of maple trees with sweet sap and the process of sugaring was an important one, which is demonstrated by the fact that the

¹²Reid, *Tales of Nanabozho*, p 65-69

¹³The Windigo is a giant as tall as a pine tree that stalks, kills and eats humans. In some tales Windigoes are humans transformed by hunger and isolation. Ojibwa bands of a few hundred split up into nuclear family groups to move to solitary hunting and trapping grounds in the winter. The men spent many days away in the woods hunting and trapping, while the women stayed home to take care of affairs around the wigwam. The Windigo tales served to reinforce the importance of cooperation, and proper behaviour between humans, plants and animals. Failure to maintain the proper relationship could lead to a failure on the hunting trail or disease. In either case rituals become necessary to ask forgiveness of an angered plant or animal so that the people would again be successful on the hunt.

spring season was named after that very process by the late 18th century. As part of a much repeated story, the Mississauga would never forget to respect the important role that animals and plants took on in helping them to survive.

There are also a number of important aspects of behaviour that are reinforced in this story. First the status of the grandmother is emphasized, in that her safety is at the centre of the story. Elders are venerated because they have a great deal to offer the family/band/clan such as expertise in cooking and the healing arts. Second, the traditional division of labour centred around an egalitarian organization is reinforced. Though Nokomis is the grandmother of the greatest Ojibwa culture hero, the camp is packed up and carried in its entirety by Nokomis, while the young and powerful Nanabozho walks unencumbered. Although grandmother is old and highly respected she still fulfills the traditional role of women in packing up and moving the campsite. Historic commentators commonly criticized native males for forcing their women to work while they sat around and took their ease. From these historic accounts concerning Algonkian peoples, it is clear that the commentators did not understand that the men, at certain points in the seasonal round, were out working very hard hunting, trapping and fishing putting up with tremendous hardship while the women lived in comparative ease at the home base.¹⁴

The Reverend Peter Jones (Kakwaquaonaby) comments on this division of labour amongst the Mississauga on Burlington Heights, which he also finds inappropriate.¹⁵ As was the case with

¹⁴William Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, p 52; In the words of New England colonist Roger Williams, "It is almost incredible...what burthens the poore women carry of Corne, of Fish, of Beans, of Mats, and a childe besides. Another colonist, Christopher Levitt commented that, "Their wives are their slaves...and do all the work; the men will do nothing but kill beasts, fish, etc."

¹⁵Jones, *History of the Ojebway Indians*

New England colonists Roger Williams and Christopher Levitt the native men are portrayed as lazy and the women as overworked. All accounts fail to consider that these practices had long precedent. For instance, during the early 18th century when the potential for contact with Five Nations war parties was still a reality, it made sense that when leaving Burlington Heights in the spring to head into the sugar bush it was expected that men were to be unencumbered to allow them to hunt or provide protection from enemies -- a point that Jones himself, while aware of, was not impressed by. There was a strongly defined division of labour along gender lines. All traditional stories as well as comparatively recent anthropological studies confirm that this was an acceptable, positive and necessary relationship, which ensured a distinct realm of influence for both men and women. The distinctness ensured that everyone was fully employed assuming responsibilities that guaranteed the well being of the family/band/clan organization, as well as contributing to a sense of pride of place in terms of the relationship of individuals to each other and the landscape. As Ruth Landes states, the woods belonged to men and the wigwam and its surrounds belonged to women.¹⁶ Following the traditional pattern of the division of labour, the Mississauga men and women using Burlington Heights would have cooperated to harvest the wild rice. The women tended the corn and collected wild species, while the men hunted, trapped and traded the skins and maple sugar processed by the women to Richard Beasley. The goods received in trade from Beasley such as glass beads, were incorporated into clothing by the women. This implies a certain authority and preferential status inherent in separate specialized knowledge bases for men and women. By its very nature it promoted an equality that was a necessary part of Mississauga egalitarianism.

¹⁶Ruth Landes, *Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968)

STEWARDS OF THE LAND

Clearly the Mississauga were well prepared to deal with the cycle of scarcity and abundance through a detailed knowledge of the landscape, and through cooperation and a strict division of labour. However, they did not passively react to the fluctuating uncertainty that they faced in the pursuance of the seasonal round. Instead, they responded to this challenge by managing animal and plant species in order to reduce scarcity and increase abundance. This management was not haphazard. Specific families managed particular areas. For instance, Peter Jones' family reserved the right to use Burlington Heights as the central focus of their seasonal round, and as part of the hunting territory claimed by his grandfather, Wahbanosay.¹⁷ The claim amounted to the privilege of having precedence over all others in terms of use, but did not restrict others from using the land. There are two important implications to this fluid sense of land use. First, when Richard Beasley began squatting on the bayshore of the Heights in the 1780's, the Mississauga were probably happy to have a trader with access to desirable European goods nearby. Second, Beasley's presence was allowed to continue without reference to a binding system of ownership. Without a sense of exclusive land use, but with a definite desire to manage plant and animal species, the Mississauga acted as stewards on and around Burlington Heights. An anthropological study amongst the Mistassini Cree sheds light on the kind of stewardship maintained by the Mississauga.¹⁸

¹⁷Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, p 1

¹⁸Martin, *Keepers of the Game*; Like the Mississauga, the Misstasini Cree located north of Lac St-Jean in Central Quebec, were highly mobile hunter/gatherers. They were egalitarian and viewed the landscape as full of spiritual potency. Though the Misstasini Cree are separate from the Historic Mississauga in time and space, both groups share a similar settlement / subsistence pattern and a common belief system.

In Adrian Tanner's study, which is cited by Calvin Martin, the people are characterized as highly proficient in managing game. They knew where animals would be at any given time in the seasonal round, when rutting season was, when animals were the fattest and best for hunting. They maintained an approximate tally of animal populations based on the numbers sighted in an area, which was used to determine relative animal abundance based on a comparison with memories of prior seasons. Based on this impression of relative abundance they made decisions on which game species should be hunted and which should not. Calvin Martin in citing Tanner, maintains that the Mistassini Cree and the Rainy Lake Ojibwa were so confident and proficient in their hunting regimes that they at times deliberately chastised the manitou of the Northwest in order to bring on colder harsher weather. This was done to change the snow conditions in order to make it easier to chase down and kill game animals.¹⁹ According to both Tanner and Martin the Mistassini were capable of fostering or decimating animal populations if they chose to.²⁰

Much like the Mistassini, Mississauga groups that hunted and fished in the area around Burlington Heights, may also have managed game populations, in this instance, through controlled burning. The use of fire by Algonkian hunter gatherers in Southern Ontario for this purpose is well documented.²¹ They used fire to thin out forest cover, leaving behind a more open

¹⁹Ibid, p 123,124

²⁰ This served Martin well because part of his major (and strongly disputed) argument in *Keepers of the Game* was to show that pre-contact Native groups were capable of hunting any animal species to extinction if they chose to. They did not according to Martin because of the spiritual contract between humans and animals. This only changed when the animals themselves declared war on humanity through epidemics, thus explaining why Native groups went against the tenets of their traditional worldview and hunted fur-bearing animals into extinction.

²¹Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p 490; Stephen G. Monckton, "Huron Paleoethnobotany" in: *Ontario Archaeological Reports I* (Toronto: Ontario

park-like environment which encouraged the growth of berries, as well as the kind of plants eaten by browsing animals, such as deer. Similarly, controlled burns were used to clear land for crop production. As Richard White recounts, in the late 18th C. Algonkian hunter-gatherers were extremely concerned about increasing pressure from white settlers to stop their annual forest burning activities -- a practice that threatened the settler farms.

By the early 1790's Richard Beasley's holdings on Burlington Heights were also largely clear of vegetation, which raises the question, was Burlington Heights already cleared when Beasley began squatting on the property in the 1780's? It is certainly possible that the Ojibwa groups who arrived in Southern Ontario in the late 17th and early 18th C managed the land by controlled burning. After Beasley's arrival on the Heights in the 1780's and before the birth of Peter Jones in 1802, burning would no longer have been possible given the reaction of the settler farmers to burning as recounted by White.²² Given that the Mississauga were managers of plants and animals, does that imply that they were more than just stewards? Does management imply commoditization and ownership?

Heritage Foundation, 1992), p 93; Conrad Heidenreich, *Huronian: A History and Geography of the Huron Indians 1600-1650* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), p 174, 182, 183; Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace*, p 33-36; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, p 30, 48, 50-51

²²In describing Richard Beasley's property on Burlington Heights in her diary Elizabeth Simcoe is notes that it is park-like - featuring stands of hardwoods, with little to no underwood. Elizabeth Simcoe, *The Diary of Elizabeth Simcoe* (Toronto: Prospero Books, 2000), p 323-4. This is exactly the kind of environment that results from controlled burns. Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, p 30, 49-50; describes the process of burning carried out by the Algonkian groups living in what is now New England. As a result of this controlled burning, the landscape became a patchwork of forest and meadow. The kind of browse attractive to deer thrived in these conditions. White in his book *The Middle Ground*, p 490, in discussing chronic food shortages in the late 18th C outlines the conflict between white settlers and the desire of Algonkians to continue their traditional practice of burning the landscape in a controlled fashion in order to make it more attractive for game animals.

A commodity is anything that "is used or valued especially when regarded as an article of commerce"²³, which is directly linked to European ideas of business. No doubt the Mississauga would understand this definition well because of their long participation in trade with Europeans. The Mississauga engaged in production for the market place, but only a small portion of the activity carried out as part of their seasonal round went towards such production, and they shared their goods received through trade with the whole group. Rather than as symbols of material prosperity that were to be hoarded, trade goods were viewed as gifts that could be redistributed. Clearly they had an understanding of commoditization, when it came to trade goods, but it was overshadowed by their egalitarian openhandedness. In terms of the concept of ownership, their egalitarian openhandedness made the idea of ownership inappropriate; however, the Mississauga had their own understanding of ownership. This becomes particularly clear when the land agreements between the British crown and the Mississauga from the 1790's are examined.

The texts and maps that make up these agreements have details of land sales that point to differences between Mississauga and English perspectives of the landscape.²⁴ One text, which concerned lands in what is the London area today, purported to record the declarations of Mississauga representatives on behalf of their people. It is virtually identical to other land surrender documents, which suggests that it was written by an officer of the Indian Department and agreed to by the Mississauga representatives. Significantly, the Mississauga had little to do with the actual wording of the documents. They may have reacted differently had they been in it.

²³*Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Volume I* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1966), p 458

²⁴"Purchase of Indian Lands At Channail Ecarte, Sept. 29th, 1795." in E.A. Cruikshank, ed., *The Correspondence of Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe, vol. # IV, 1795-1796*, (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1926), p 96

Their understanding of the wording was different from the Crown's. The document begins with a statement to the effect that the Mississauga,

agree with Alexander McKee Esquire Deputy Superintendant General and Deputy Inspector General of Indian Affairs on behalf of His Majesty King George the Third, for the consideration of Eight hundred pounds Quebec currency Value in Indian Goods, we will execute a regular Deed for the Conveyance of the Lands hereon marked...to his said Majesty...in the year 1790 when the said goods of the aforesaid Value shall be delivered to us.²⁵

From the Mississauga perspective this may not have been a transfer of title but an agreement to allow the British to use the land. More importantly, the agreement ensured the continued flow of British gifts. The Mississauga were largely concerned with these gifts given in return for the use of land by the crown. As useful and prestige items, gifts could be redistributed to enhance one's position in the band, by encouraging reciprocal obligation. In order for this document to have the same meaning for the Mississauga as for McKee on behalf of the Crown, prior to transfer the Mississauga would have had to have considered themselves as possessing the rights of ownership of the land in question, and in turn renounce that ownership.

The Mississauga did not consider themselves as owners, but only as users of the land by right of conquest and long presence on the landscape. They were willing to share the land with the white settlers, but never considered that they would not continue to have equal use of the same spaces. While this implied privilege of use by the Mississauga is not directly mentioned in the text of the previous document accompanying the agreement, this kind of provision was often included in accompanying letters. Just such a letter referring to a separate land sale was received by

²⁵"Purchase of Indian Lands At Channail Ecarte, Sept. 29th, 1795." in E.A. Cruikshank, ed., *The Correspondence of Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe*, vol. # IV, 1795-1796, (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1926), p 96

Deputy Superintendent of the Indian Department, Colonel John Butler from Governor Simcoe on October 20th, 1795.²⁶ The letter states that the land to the east of Burlington Heights on the north shore of the lake as far as the beach strip, was to be purchased from the Mississauga with the usual consideration paid in Indian goods. This information was also clearly and legally set down in an officially recognized surveyor's document. Unfortunately, only in the letter (which was not part of the official extinguishment of title), does Simcoe instruct Butler that the Mississauga "...should retain their customary use of the beach &c..."²⁷ The word "should" is important because it does not imply a definite retention of the customary use but only a suggestion that it should be so. Further, the provisions mentioned in the letter were subject to the voluntary acts of the correspondents and not recorded officially on the actual Conveyance. Very often unofficial provisions to land conveyances were only viable while the people who made them still had influence. Simcoe left Canada and ceased being Lieutenant Governor in 1796. Butler died in May of 1796²⁸, and Joseph Brant died in 1807.

A second letter from J.G. Simcoe to Lord Dorchester, the Governor of British North America in April 1796 elaborates on the unofficial provisions to be made on behalf of the Mississauga. Simcoe stated that,

These lands should be purchased so as to leave the Missassaguas in full possession of their rivers and fishing grounds, nor should I think it by any means advisable to

²⁶"From J.G. Simcoe to John Butler, Oct. 20th, 1795." in: *Simcoe Correspondence*, Vol. IV, 1795-1796, p 106

²⁷Ibid, p 106

²⁸Elizabeth Simcoe, *The Diary of Mrs. John Graves Simcoe, Wife of the First Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Upper Canada, 1792-6, With Notes and a Biography by J. Ross Robertson*, (Toronto: Prospero Books, 2001, republished from the original William Briggs edition, 1911), p 71, 72, 311

grant them universally, but only in such detached lots as might tend to facilitate the communication between this place [York] and Burlington Bay.²⁹

The content of this letter demonstrates that the most important point in the negotiation from Simcoe's perspective is that the Crown extinguish native title to land, and that the Mississauga use be limited to "detached lots". Again the word "should" is used when referring to the way the land was to be purchased. There is no definite statement made that provided the Mississauga with the actual rights to their fishing grounds. Fishing grounds and rivers were probably singled out by Simcoe because the Mississauga gathered in large numbers at these sites at certain times of the year. Other sites which fell outside of Simcoe's proposed "detached lots" were used far less intensively, with far fewer numbers of people involved. The Mississauga left no permanent markers of their land use, which as a result, did not correspond with Simcoe's ideas on improvement. They did not build permanent houses or erect enclosures for animals or crops. There was no permanent indication of their claim to the land -- nothing which would have symbolically marked the landscape as Europeans thought appropriate.³⁰

The most important point from the Mississauga perspective, that the land was to be used by both whites and natives, was not set down in official documents, but only recommended by the governor; and that only in a limited fashion. This is further emphasized by Simcoe's final sentence in the letter to Butler. He clearly states, "...that a public road will be cut through it [the

²⁹"From J.G. Simcoe to Lord Dorchester. York, April 9th, 1796." in *Simcoe Correspondence*, vol. IV, 1795-1796, p 239

³⁰Colin Coates, *The Metamorphoses of Landscape and Community in Early Quebec*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000); Colin Coates, "Like 'The Thames towards Putney': The Appropriation of Landscape in Lower Canada", *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. LXXIV, # 3, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, September, 1993)

land in question] and it is probable a Bridge will be shortly built to connect the two beaches," which separated Burlington bay from Lake Ontario. This implies and is well supported by general statements made by Simcoe concerning the development of the province, that the land was being prepared for the expected influx of white settlers. The arrival of a large population of white settlers and the subsequent bounding of the land eventually separated the Mississauga from the lands they believed they had the use of. White settlers developed the land, changing the patchwork of meadows and forest created by the Mississauga, into what they perceived as an improved series of farmsteads and mill seats, which demonstrated in their minds the important notion of material prosperity. The last thing many of the new settlers wanted, was the presence of Mississauga groups camping on what they considered as their legally held, improved property.

Donald Smith in *Sacred Feathers* effectively characterizes this ungrateful attitude of the white settlers towards the Mississauga, and the Mississauga response. According to Smith, the Mississauga around the Head of the Lake warmly greeted the first white settlers. These groups were willing to share the land and provided the settlers with easy access to local goods, that ensured their survival such as venison, wild ducks, maple sugar and wild rice. After all of this help offered by the Mississauga in the spirit of cooperation and openhandedness, they realized that, "...having fenced off all the land they [the English settlers] needed for growing their crops and enough pasture land for their cattle, they demanded more. [T]heir English allies wanted the whole north shore of Lake Ontario."³¹ Eventually the Mississauga realized what the surrender agreements meant.

Our fathers held out to them [the English] the hand of friendship. The strangers then asked for a small piece of land on which they might pitch their tents; the

³¹Donald Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, p 2

request was cheerfully granted. By and by they begged for more, and more was given them. In this way they had continued to ask, or have obtained by force or fraud, the fairest portions of our territory.³²

The loss of so much territory was due to different understandings of the concept of ownership. Clearly the English notion of private ownership was far more narrow than the Mississauga notion of a fluid system of preferential land use. Accordingly it was a surprise when permanent buildings enclosed by fence lines separated them from their traditional use of the landscape. What is interesting is that this was not the case on Burlington Heights.

Once the Mississauga title to the Heights had been extinguished and Beasley himself had acquired it in 1798, he seems to have been agreeable to the continued use of his property by Mississauga families. Whether in the spirit of good will, or self-interest, Beasley saw the importance of good contacts with the local native population. He may have viewed them rather as he would later view the local white settler population -- as part of his clientele who would eventually allow him to build material prosperity, social and political influence. His business opportunities during the first several years squatting on the Heights were characterized by trade with the natives. He may even have benefitted by the same kind of help that other new settlers received, and in turn they continued to use the Heights as they had been doing for generations. While Beasley did not discourage the Mississauga presence on Burlington Heights, he did not share their particular perspective of the landscape. Infused with the English ideal of improvement of natural wasteland, his views on the relationship between people and the landscape differed sharply from the Mississauga.

³²Peter Jones, *History of the Ojebway Indians; with especial reference to their conversion to Christianity* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, reprinted 1970, originally printed in 1861), p 27

For the egalitarian Mississauga stewards, Burlington Heights, as the centre of their seasonal round, was to be used and managed for their own benefit. However as they worked through the cycle of scarcity and abundance they were also inspired and terrified by the sublime character of the Heights. They viewed the natural features as a linkage between the material and spiritual world, brimming with a spiritual potency, which symbolized their place in the world.

A SPIRITUALLY POTENT LANDSCAPE

The Mississauga believed that the Burlington Heights landscape was alive. Every rock, tree and animal had a spirit or manitou.³³ One merely had to look in order to see the resemblance of the long sinuous peninsular Heights to a huge serpent; or hear the voice of the nature spirits in the hum of an insect, the cry of migrating birds, or the burbling of frogs in Coote's Paradise. The spirits of the land when seen were described as taking the form of larger, or brilliantly white versions of the animals they represented. At times, these spirits took on miniature or even normal sized human form. In other words, it was not always possible to distinguish between the spiritual and physical world, because they were intimately linked. Young men and women strived to see into the invisible world, during a period of fasting in which in a solitary state they would attempt to communicate with a manitou, which ultimately would become their guardian spirit. It was their direct spiritual link with the land. Once the spirit connection was made, the guardian if treated respectfully would watch over them -- help them in difficult tests of will (warfare, childbirth), in hunting, gathering and healing. Respectful propitiation of the hunted animal's spirit before and after a successful hunt convinced the animal to give its body to the hunter. Many hours were

³³ See note # 5 for a list of secondary sources that discuss manitous

spent prior to the hunt beating a drum, praying to the manitou, to achieve this end. After the hunt parts of the animals were eaten while other parts were treated with veneration. For instance the paws and head of a bear would be set on display in decorated fashion in the wigwam of the successful hunter, while the rest by tradition was devoured in one sitting by the family and invited guests. Similarly women also paid attention to the manitous of plants while gathering. They were careful not to collect plants during menstruation for fear of offending the manitous. During menstruation women isolated themselves from the rest of the group -- a practice that recognized the awesome power of women in reproducing life.³⁴

The awareness attained during the vision quest was a necessary addition to an already in-depth understanding of the physical landscape and its animal and plant inhabitants learned from their elders.³⁵ The recognition of spiritual potency in plants and animals like game management, was necessary for the Mississauga to be able to tip the balance in their favour in terms of subsistence. By identifying landscape with spiritual potency, it came to symbolize who they were and what their place was in the world.

Spiritually potent features on the landscape which reminded the Mississauga of human or

³⁴Ruth Landes, *Ojibwa Religion*, in quoting an Ojibwa sorcerer recounts how an evil spirit which had lodged in the body of the sorcerer in the form of a disease. It was removed by having a woman walk over top of him while he lay in the prone position; Shkilnyk, Anastasia, *A Poison Stronger Than Love: The Destruction of an Ojibwa Community*, (New Haven; Yale University Press, 1985); She relates that the women took it upon themselves at times of menstruation to isolate themselves in a separate tent. Food was brought to them but they were not allowed to collect rice or berries themselves for fear of offending the manitous of these plants.

³⁵Children spent a great deal of time with their grandparents in early life. They learned from stories their eventual role as men and women, and by example the importance of respect for nature, their place in the family/band/clan and the role and position of others. Later they began helping their parents with simple tasks leading up to the important skills that will allow them to prosper in a living breathing environment.

animal forms were seen as having a place in both the spiritual and material world. For instance, Thunder Point on Lake Superior resembles a reclining human form because it is the resting place of the great Ojibwa culture hero Nanabozho.³⁶ Nanabozho was sent to earth by the Great Spirit to be an intermediary between manitou and human. Nanabozho was a proud figure, large in size, quick of wit, physically powerful, an excellent hunter, and a compassionate saviour of human kind.³⁷ Similarly, Burlington Heights, was associated in the minds of the Mississauga with abundance, as the place of ripening corn, wild rice, berries, game animals and trade goods. Such notable features on the landscape provided a vital sense of humanity's belonging to a place.

Reverence and curiosity for manitous near Burlington Heights is shown in a tale recounted by Peter Jones. Jones' tale - which he considers as a fairy story³⁸ -- nevertheless indicates the significance of Burlington Heights to the Mississauga. Small human sized manitou spirits were occasionally seen paddling a stone canoe across Coote's Paradise. When pursued, these creatures immediately made for shore. When they reached shore they disappeared, canoe and all into the side of a high bank, which was thereafter considered to be their home. They were seldom seen but their presence was certainly felt. Loud detonations reverberating off of the escarpment, were

³⁶Reid, *Tales of Nanabozho*, p 122

³⁷Ibid, p 59-64. According to one account he warned the Ojibwa people of an oncoming flood. His warning and the moon's power to hold back water gave the people time to build a raft upon which they could float safely. He then recreated the world out of mud captured by a muskrat spreading and expanding it on top of the raft.

³⁸Jones maintained that he was never able to have a vision in which his personal manitou was made known to him - a notable failure in terms of how he would have been perceived by other Mississauga. His descriptions of Mississauga spirituality while sympathetic were also influenced by his eventual rejection of it. He describes the end of a traditional way of viewing the spirit world and ideas about the landscape that were part of it. He would later be instrumental in the conversion of the Credit River Ojibwa to Christianity and European farming methods.

attributed to these same manitous firing off guns, which they had stolen from other natives. Peter Jones also recounts a story told to him by a man who had a special attachment to a huge old growth pine tree near Brantford on the Grand river.³⁹ The man became spiritually linked to the tree, so much so that he came to venerate it as a potent natural symbol of his place in the world. He took it for his personal guardian spirit - a peaceful uplifting symbol linking him with a vital spirit of the landscape. Within the context of the story, the cutting down of the tree by white settlers pointed to a severing of a direct link to the traditional Mississauga relationship between people and the land -- one in which the spiritual potency of natural features symbolized the place of humankind in the world.

Smoke curled lazily upwards from the wigwam's smoke hole barely distinguishable against the dense fog hugging the ground. As the fog cleared, a larger permanent brick cottage with adjoining wings and a garden stood out against the backdrop of the Heights. The permanence of Beasley's house overshadowed the small cluster of Mississauga family dwellings -- a grand demonstration of his material prosperity and social and political influence.

If one visited Burlington Heights just after the turn of the 19th century, one would have been struck by the difference between how the Mississauga used the landscape in comparison to Richard Beasley. The temporary nature of the Mississauga encampment with its cluster of wigwams and small fields of corn would have contrasted sharply with Beasley's Georgian brick cottage, large enclosed fields, orchards and barns.⁴⁰ Over two hundred years later Beasley's substantial brick house is preserved as part of the central block of MacNab's Dundurn Castle,

³⁹The Mississauga referred to it as the Horn River because of the antler like upper reaches of the stream.

⁴⁰Richard Beasley's war losses. Copy of document from National Archives of Canada -- War Losses 1812-1814, Dundurn Castle Library.

whereas the remaining physical evidence that the Mississauga used the site is only recoverable in small traces through archaeological excavation. The Mississauga presence was like a fleeting shadow leaving nothing behind to permanently mark their use of Burlington Heights.

The reason for this lack of evidence left behind of the Mississauga presence has to do with the way their society was organized which in turn influenced their view of the landscape.

Egalitarianism and the pursuance of a hunting and gathering economy strongly influenced their spiritual beliefs. A hunting and gathering economy requires cooperation and a strong division of labour. Assuming a stewardship role, the Mississauga managed plants and animals to reduce scarcity and increase abundance. Any surpluses were redistributed in the spirit of openhandedness which in turn enhanced cooperation by building a sense of obligation between people. Decisions within a band were reached through consensus, for no one individual or group could afford to exert a dominating influence over the others without losing band cooperation which was vital for survival. In aid of consensus building and practical economic approaches, they sought the help of plant and animal spirits through vision quests and rites of propitiation in order to link themselves to the spiritual world. Failure to do so meant a much harder existence. Success meant that they preserved their privileged position as harvester's of nature's abundance.

The product of living in an egalitarian hunting and gathering society with a strong spiritual connection to the land was that the people viewed themselves as part of the landscape and not as a dominating influence over it, because it was full of incredible beauty and terrible danger, largely beyond human control. There was no place for superficial monuments to material prosperity since natural features such as Burlington Heights and Coote's Paradise were imbued with a spiritual power which dwarfed their meagre human presence. The fires have long gone out in the little collection of wigwams on Burlington Heights; but, if one is looking for the Mississauga presence

on the landscape, one need look no farther than the natural edifice of the Heights itself. It still resonates with the same spiritual potency which defined the Mississauga place in the world.

Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, p 93; Paul Kane's painting from 1846, of Menominee Indians shows a night fishing technique similar to that used by the Mississauga.



Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, p 93; Paul Kane's mid-1840's painting of an Ojibwa village near Sault Ste. Marie is similar to what would have been seen on Burlington Heights when the Mississauga encamped for several months of the war.



Spiritual Potency. "Cover Illustration." Wilson, Hap, *Missinaibi: Journey to the Northern Sky from Lake Superior to James Bay by Canoe*, (Hyde Park: Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association, 1994). A northern Ojibwa man communes with nature spirits. The Mississauga held great reverence for the landscape which they imbued with a spiritual potency. Every rock and tree was alive with spirits or manitou.

Chapter 2

BEASLEY'S HEIGHTS

An approving smile spread across Richard Beasley's face as he opened the front door of his commodious brick cottage and ventured out. He passed the Mississauga wigwams situated a short distance away, thinking of the potential profit he would make from selling the recently acquired furs in Montreal. He turned and began walking across the cleared parkland of his picturesque property towards the northwest. His smile altered slightly as he left the wigwams of his native clients behind and his prized stands of ash and walnut caught his attention. He continued under the spreading canopy of the hardwoods towards his orchards of 200 fruit trees -- the apple trees laden with white blossoms foreshadowing the rich harvest to come. Stopping briefly he breathed in the sweet fragrance as his eye was drawn westward towards his barn and fenced fields. The wheat, hay and rye, swayed gently in the morning breeze off of Burlington Bay. As he walked towards the eastern edge of Burlington Heights, he could just glimpse the shadowy outlines of his storehouses and wharf, downslope on the bay shore. This, Beasley thought, was where it had all started. It was hard to believe after close to twenty years toil that he had finally begun to realize his goal of becoming a leading citizen in the province. He had all of the trappings of a country gentleman. He had a 950 acre picturesque estate with enclosed fields surrounding his Georgian brick house; a well established store with an increasing client base; appointments as a magistrate, a captaincy in the militia and an elected seat in the Legislative assembly. The future looked bright for Richard Beasley, a man who now played a dominant role in the affairs around the Head of the Lake.¹

Beasley's use of Burlington Heights reflected his desire to become an English country

¹This narrative is based upon Richard Beasley's war losses. Copy of Public Archives of Canada - War Losses 1812-1814, Dundurn Castle Library; Beasley's advertisement for the sale of his property in Canadian Constellation / S&G Tiffany at Niagara June 21st, 1800; and the "Western Mercury", March 28, 1833, as quoted in: Leblovic, *Life and History of Richard Beasley*, p 16

gentleman surrounded by his country seat. The Heights were used by Beasley both as a strategic economic location and a strategic social location in order to achieve this goal. In the late 18th C Burlington Heights was no longer a landscape dominated by native conceptions of spiritually potent natural features. It also became the base of activity for Richard Beasley, a man that would transform the landscape of Burlington Heights dramatically.

Generally, Europeans viewed the landscape as a naturally occurring series of forests and meadows, a view that gave little to no credit to native groups for their role in altering the landscape as a result of their settlement, subsistence and ritual activities. Europeans looked at the landscape as a potential series of resources that had to be brought under improvement by clearance and enclosure, the institution of British agricultural methods, or the establishment of British industrial complexes such as mills. A forest or a river may have been considered beautiful in and of itself by these commentators, but usually natural features were also seen as potentially useful as sources of firewood, building timber, or water power, or as transportation routes. In this context, pre-contact native land use was characterized as involving a chaotic approach, maintaining a landscape consisting of undeveloped potential or “waste”. This common conception, held by many late 18th and early 19th century commentators, fit well with Beasley’s approach to landscape both on Burlington Heights and in his dealings in the surrounding area.

The first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, John Graves Simcoe, agreed with these ideas, and sought to recreate an English landscape and an English social hierarchy.² Simcoe was

²E. A. Cruikshank, (ed), *Simcoe Correspondence, Vol. # I, 1789-1793*, p 264. Simcoe wrote in commenting on the necessity of establishing an English style hierarchical system in Upper Canada, it “has been justly considered that the principal cause of the American revolt was the want of an aristocratical power which might afford a legal provision for the fair claims and just ascendancy of honourable ambition, and not suffer it to waste its energy in dissatisfaction and

interested in attracting English speaking settlers to Upper Canada who were to clear and develop the land through the establishment of farms and mills, as well as the development of other resource based industries such as salt and iron production. Unfortunately for Simcoe, aristocratic personages were not easily attracted to Upper Canada. The social hierarchical system was successfully transplanted, but instead of landed aristocrats, the hierarchy was initially dominated by military officers. Subsequently, merchants such as Richard Beasley exerted a significant influence on Upper Canadian society.³

At the head of the lake, Richard Beasley took advantage of his connections with well established merchants and the Lieutenant Governor, to carve a place for himself within the economic and social hierarchy. Upon his arrival in the 1780's, Beasley viewed Burlington Heights as a strategic location for achieving material prosperity through trade with the local native population and more broadly, through the transshipment of fur. As the settler population increased his business interests diversified into store goods, milling, and land speculation. Although his business clients became more numerous, material prosperity eluded him. Various problems in conducting business kept him from achieving anything more than a successful business on paper. Nevertheless, Beasley invested his irregular profits in his Burlington Heights property in order to sustain the illusion of material prosperity. As the scope of his business broadened, so did his influence in judicial and political affairs. The increase of influence indicated

discontent.”; Edith Firth, *The Town of York, 1793-1815*, (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1962[?], p lxxxiii

³Bruce G. Wilson, *The Enterprises of Robert Hamilton: A Study of Wealth and Influence in Early Upper Canada, 1776-1812*, (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1983), p 35-48, 141-164; Edith Firth, *The Town of York*, p lxxxiii

he was successful socially, if not actually achieving the desired goal of material prosperity.

When Beasley first arrived to squat on the Heights, he immediately set out to construct his first log house and store complex. It was small -- set close to the lakeshore -- with a wharf projecting out into the bay, reflecting his humble beginnings as a trader. Eventually, as his influence grew he built a more attractive brick cottage on the top of the Heights overlooking Burlington Bay, complete with garden, enclosed fields, an orchard, and outbuildings. Beasley's success, or the projected image of success, was inherent in his transformation of Burlington Heights, an already cleared park-like environment, following the canon of the Picturesque - a style that by the late 18th century was long associated with the English aristocracy. Land for Beasley served a combination of purposes.⁴ It was a strategic point of transshipment and local trade, a commodity for speculation, and symbolic, of his projected position in society as an influential public official. Beasley used the land to demonstrate that he had arrived at his goal of becoming a country gentleman.

TRADE AND TRANSHIPMENT

Beasley belonged to a merchant network that was based on kin relations, trade concerns and geography, and was part of a wider Laurentian commercial network. This network has been characterized by S.J.R. Noel as one based in "clientelism". Clientelism implies a series of relationships between patrons and clients that spanned both the economic and political spectrum.

⁴See accompanying maps for c. 1793, 1813, 1823; See also a reconstruction drawing of Beasley's brick house.

The goal of the patron was to establish a clientele based on his ability to provide a broad series of products that were in demand by clients. As Noel explains, the products varied,

includ[ing] his own land, Crown land [or land belonging to a large grantee] whose allocation he could influence, credit in the form of goods or mortgages, information, intervention with officials, and other discretionary favours and services that were within his power to bestow or withhold.⁵

There was a notable hierarchy with grand patrons bestowing credit and other products upon lesser clients, who in turn, were direct suppliers of the same to a regional and lesser clientele. Clientele were required to deal directly with and support their local patron through payments of debt through a share of surplus agricultural products, skills, half-pay vouchers, or land. They were also expected to accept their clients social leadership commercially and politically. This was a reciprocal relationship of dependence but not one of equality, since while the patron may have depended upon having many clients, each individual client was actually much more dependant upon him. This network became the basis for what has been called the “shopkeeper aristocracy”.

The social interrelationships between the members of the Laurentian network allowed each to prosper to a greater or lesser extent.⁶ Ties of kinship, friendship and long association in business bound the merchants of the Laurentian network together. A good example of this notion is demonstrated by the situation of John Askin. Askin was related to Robert Hamilton by marriage. He had helped Hamilton to set up his business, and had dealings with some of Hamilton’s cousins. This led to a strong family based linkage between the trading centres of Detroit and Queenston. The network extended to Montreal where the firm of Todd and McGill acted as their suppliers of

⁵Noel, *Patrons, Clients, Brokers*, p76

⁶Wilson, *Enterprises*, p 135

British goods, and as providers of the all important British military contracts. Askin's business ties to Todd and McGill extended back to 1761, and the business relationship between Hamilton, Cartwright and Askin was later established in 1781. The network provided important government contracts and protection in times of financial difficulty. All three merchants, for instance, had benefitted financially from the military supply contracts attained for them by the Montreal firm in 1793. Protection from financial difficulties was maintained through the close relationship based in kinship, friendship and long association. When Askin experienced a downturn in his commercial prospects, his associates took a personal interest in helping him. His relations directly influenced the decisions of the chief justice and the Lieutenant Governor in securing for Askin clear title to 8,000 acres of land -- an action that helped Askin to pursue his land speculation schemes and aided him in his financial difficulties.⁷

Like Askin, Beasley benefitted from his close ties to this network through his cousin Richard Cartwright of Kingston, and to a lesser extent, through Robert Hamilton. In most cases, goods from Europe were attained by Beasley through his connections with his cousin Richard Cartwright in Kingston and occasionally through Robert Hamilton in Queenston -- arguably the most successful Upper Canadian merchant up until the time of his death in 1809. The close connection with Cartwright became vital to Beasley, which is clear from the huge line of credit that he carried with Cartwright. Cartwright ordered the goods from his store at Kingston through the firm of Todd and McGill in Montreal. The goods were then transferred to Beasley's store at Burlington Heights, for sale and redistribution to local residents as well as to his fur suppliers in the Detroit area. As one of Cartwright's clients, the goods were forwarded to Beasley without

⁷Wilson, *Enterprises*, p 136, 137

immediate payment.⁸ Beasley in turn, provided goods as local patron, to his own clientele.

Initially as a trader, he was interested in Burlington Heights as a point of transshipment and local trade. There were many perceived benefits to setting up shop on Burlington Heights. Given the absence of a developed road system, water transport was the most effective means of bringing goods to market. Since Burlington Heights is situated at the western end of navigation on Lake Ontario, it made sense that Beasley could take advantage of the sites' potential as a natural funnel for trade goods to the west. Goods transported to Burlington Bay by water from the east arrived by lake schooner or batteaux. Because of the shallow draught at the mouth of the Burlington Bay inlet, small schooners would have to be off-loaded to batteaux, which ferried the goods to Beasley's wharf. Beasley's goods made the journey west over long established trails that linked Burlington Heights to Detroit and the fur bearing regions to the north and west. This potential as a strategic point for transshipment was also recognized by the first Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe, who considered placing a government depot on the Heights. Simcoe also planned and later executed the construction of the Governor's road, which provided an improved road linkage between Burlington Heights and the west.⁹

The trade took place over very long distances. Goods were easily damaged and were never in large supply. Prices, especially on fur and alcohol, fluctuated from season to season, in part due

⁸In most cases, payment was expected by year end.

⁹S.J.R. Noel, *Patrons, Clients, Brokers: Ontario Society and Politics, 1791-1896*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Bruce G. Wilson, *The Enterprises of Robert Hamilton: A Study of Wealth and Influence in Early Upper Canada, 1776-1812*, (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1983); Malcolm Macleod, "Fortress Ontario or Forlorn Hope? Simcoe and the Defence of Upper Canada", in: R. Craig Brown (ed.), *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. LIII, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972)

to European demand, and political unrest south of the border. Except on paper, a money economy in Upper Canada was virtually non-existent. Hard currency was scarce. Payment often took the form of land transfers, or the transfer of half pay vouchers, issued to retired military officers. Merchants like Beasley depended heavily on a system of credit and patronage which hinged upon close connections with more senior merchants and government officials. Business transactions were often complicated by a client's inability to pay. Non-payment could be dealt with through legal action, but required money (or extended credit from lawyers), for legal fees and a hardness of heart -- both of which were in short supply, in Richard Beasley's case. To further complicate things he set up his store on Burlington Heights, without realizing that in order to replicate the success of senior merchants such as Cartwright and Hamilton, he had to be skillful at selling and buying (including collection from destitute clients). He also had to have a consistent means for supplementing his business. Cartwright and Hamilton were successful because they were able to circumvent business downturns and the inevitable non-payment by destitute clients, because they held strategic positions on the landscape and maintained connections within the Laurentian network.

Hamilton had a virtual monopoly on the Queenston portage -- the only effective means that goods could be transported along the Niagara river past the falls, for which he collected a fee. Essentially, Hamilton profited from every good transhipped along the portage. Cartwright was situated at Kingston, which is the gateway from the western end of Lake Ontario to the St. Lawrence. Most goods freighted up and down the St. Lawrence passed through Kingston which gave Cartwright, Hamilton's partner, a considerable advantage in terms of transshipment also. Of more importance in Cartwright's case though was the close connection with the government

through Captain John Butler, a relation in the British Indian department -- a situation which helped to ensure that vital government contracts would be steered in his direction.

In contrast, as Cartwright's client Beasley only benefitted indirectly from government contracts. He also could not rely on his perceived strategic position on Burlington Heights as a supplement to his income, as Hamilton did at Queenston. Given the traditional route of transshipment of goods between Detroit and Europe, in the late 18th century¹⁰, Burlington Heights was not a strategically significant position. Nevertheless, Beasley persisted in his attempts to be successful in business, working out of Burlington Heights. This is not surprising given his interest and early successes in business which began long before his arrival on Burlington Heights in the 1780's.

Beasley was born in Albany, New York in 1761.¹¹ His early exploits are known only sparsely through scant records of his actions. During the American Revolution, he may have served as a member of a Provincial Corps of light infantry called Roger's Rangers. For instance, there is a reference to a "Basly" being captured by Rebel forces during the American Revolution. It is not clear whether this Basly was released or whether he escaped his captors. If it is the same Beasley born in 1761, it may be that his young age saved him from a potentially horrible fate at the hands

¹⁰The traditional route of transshipment from the deep water port of Montreal was along the St. Lawrence to Kingston by batteaux (a small boat of shallow draft which could be fitted with a sail), and along to the Queenston portage via schooner; thence to Lake Erie and Detroit. There was no advantage to having a store at Burlington Heights given Beasley's original goal of attaining furs from Detroit. It is not until the settler population increases around the Head of the Lake that it is justifiable to have a store at Burlington Heights.

¹¹T.M. Bailey, (ed), *Dictionary of Hamilton Biography, Vol. I*, (Canada: W.L.Griffin Ltd.,1981), p 15; Nicholas Leblovic, "The Life and History of Richard Beasley, Esquire", in: *Wentworth Bygones*, vol. # 7, (Hamilton: The Head of the Lake Historical Society, 1967), p 1

of the Rebels after his capture.¹² Roger's Rangers was known for its ruthless treatment of the enemy during and after raids. It was not unusual for such ranger units to engage in property destruction through burning, (barns, houses, crops, livestock). Victims of these raids were sometimes scalped. Whatever the situation, he eventually claimed that his arrival in the province was in 1777. The evidence behind his claim as to when he arrived in the province comes from a petition for more land, which was made to the Provincial government in January 1795. In it, he makes no mention of service in a Provincial Corps, but mentions two years service as "acting Commisary".¹³

In 1781, he is noted as a witness to a partnership agreement between Robert Hamilton of Queenston, Richard Cartwright of Kingston, and John Askin of Detroit. Beasley was an assistant commissary at Fort Niagara at the time giving him the opportunity to learn the process of business (ordering, stocking, inventorying, transshipment).¹⁴ He may not have had the same kind of problems with non-payment that he would later experience, since the ultimate responsibility for the store lay with the government. Nevertheless, this was a valuable education for him, where he learned the rudiments of trade and transshipment, and where he gained his first connections that would see him clear to set up shop at Burlington Heights.

Beasley's first attempts to establish himself in business after the Revolutionary War concerned the "Indian trade." As early as 1786, he traded with the local natives while also

¹²Bailey (ed), *Dictionary of Hamilton Biography*, p 15

¹³C.M. Johnston, *The Head of the Lake: A History of Wentworth County*, (Hamilton: Wentworth County Council, 1958), p 333

¹⁴Bailey (ed.), *Dictionary of Hamilton Biography*, p 15

engaged in the fur trade. A letter signed "H. & C."¹⁵ (Hamilton and Cartwright) reveals through the types of goods that he traded with the local natives, including the Mississauga¹⁶, who visited Burlington Heights seasonally, and possibly the Six Nations Iroquois on the nearby Grand River Reserve (established in 1784). The advantage in supplying goods to a large sedentary population like the Six Nations, would have been very great. Beasley's later close association in 1800 with Joseph Brant and other Six Nations chiefs -- which is borne out by their good opinion of him during the government enquiries into the legality of the sale of Block # 2 lands on the Six Nations reserve to Beasley in 1804 -- were likely established during early trade relationships in the 1780's.¹⁷

Goods typically used in trade with native groups dominate Beasley's inventory at his store on Burlington Heights.¹⁸ For instance Hamilton and Cartwright supplied him with rum, shrouds, blankets, powder and shot.¹⁹ Additionally, other items common to the native trade that Beasley ordered were in short supply, (silver ornaments, cloth), and could not be sent. Hamilton and Cartwright maintained that "...as for Silver Works we have not any but have wrote to Niagara for some." "There is but one pc (piece?) White Molton also, and this we got from the Indian

¹⁵H & C to Messrs Beasley and Smith, 10 April 1786; For clarity it can be assumed by the reader that any cited letters are from the correspondence of Richard Beasley found in Trevor Carter and Julia Holland, (eds), *The Richard Beasley Documents: Part I, Beasley Correspondence*, (Hamilton: unpublished compilation in Dundurn Castle Library)

¹⁶Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, p 8

¹⁷Lieutenant Governor's Office to Executive Council, 15th May 1804; Johnston, *Head of the Lake*, p 42

¹⁸Trevor Carter, *Beasley Wharf Complex*, p 57

¹⁹H & C to Messrs Beasley and Smith, 10 April 1786,

Store.”²⁰ “Silver Works” refers to trade silver, which came in several forms from bracelets, to brooches, ear rings and tinkling cones. These items are commonly seen in hand drawn and photographic images of Natives.²¹ Of particular note is that “White Molton” was only sent because Hamilton and Cartwright took it out of stores kept by the British Indian Department. This is significant because the Indian Department took part in annual gift giving ceremonies to ensure the maintenance of the military alliance between the British and Mississauga and Six Nations groups. Clearly this cloth was one of the many items that if not preferred by native groups was certainly an item they frequently used, which indicates that Beasley was largely involved in trading with native groups in the beginning years of his occupation on Burlington Heights.

In her diary Elizabeth Simcoe describes Beasley as an Indian trader during on June 11th, 1796. As she and her husband Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe, entered into Burlington Bay from the main lake, she was moved to declare that, “the river and bay were full of canoes; the Indians, were fishing; we bought some fine salmon of them. When we had near crossed the bay, Beasley’s house became a very pretty object.”²² Mrs. Simcoe also refers to Beasley as an “Indian

²⁰Ibid, 10 April 1786,

²¹Carl Benn, *The Iroquois in the War of 1812*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), pp 85-92

²²Elizabeth Simcoe, *The Diary of Elizabeth Simcoe*, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1911), reprinted (Toronto: Prospero Books, 2000), p 323; The fishing natives may have been either Mississauga or Six Nations. Both groups regularly visited the Heights. Joseph Brant had a house in what is today Burlington. Mrs. Simcoe also mentions seeing Six Nations peoples camped on the north shore of Burlington Bay near the Beach strip which divides Burlington Bay from the main lake.

trader” “...trading being his only occupation.”²³ Although she does not say how she knows this, she may have seen trade goods while she had dinner in his home. Additionally, she clearly engaged in considerable conversation with Beasley during their walks on his Burlington Heights property.²⁴ Elizabeth Simcoe’s sketch of Beasley’s house/wharf complex on the shoreline below Burlington Heights seems to show only one building which probably served the dual function of living quarters and storehouse.

Archaeological evidence from Burlington Heights confirms these findings.²⁵ Musket shot, silver brooches, earrings, modified thimbles, tinkling cones, and copper alloy musket furniture²⁶, have all been recovered from the area around Beasley’s first residence/storehouse. These things show that Beasley was trading with native peoples.²⁷ Fish, maple sugar, and some furs were part of what the local natives traded to Beasley. He was also very interested in profiting from the reciprocal transshipment of furs and goods between Detroit and Europe.

In several letters, Richard Cartwright mentions Beasley’s fur trade activities. In June 1786, he states that he is everyday expecting “...Beasley and Smith (Beasley’s partner) with peltries of

²³Simcoe, *Diary of Elizabeth Simcoe*, p 324

²⁴Ibid, p 324

²⁵Carter, *Beasley Wharf Complex*, p 57, 58

²⁶The evidence for firearms as a item of trade with the Natives is in the form of brass side plates from specially produced Indian trade guns. Side plates are reinforcement devices affixed to a musket on the side away from the actual lock or firing mechanism. The plate is perforated at both ends so that screws which pass through the gun stock can tightly fasten the lock to the musket without damaging the wood. These plates are quite distinctive because they are actually moulded in the shape of a sinuous serpent.

²⁷Carter, *Beasley Wharf Complex*, p 57, 58

which they have sent.”²⁸ In July 1786 he notes that “He [Smith] still persists in having Peltries shipped on their own Accounts.”²⁹ In August 1793 Cartwright states that he is “sorry to inform you (Beasley), that there will be a very considerable loss on your Parcel of Furs.”³⁰ By November of the same year he also promised losses on Beasley’s fur parcels.³¹ By May of 1794, Cartwright sends more unfortunate news concerning Beasley’s furs. “It is much to be feared that we shall have a war with the United States, and the Prospect for Furs at Home seems to be worse than ever.”³² Cartwright reports further losses in October of the same year.³³ Regardless, Beasley persisted and he used his credits reported by Cartwright towards the increasing debt incurred, based on the goods Cartwright forwarded. Clearly, Beasley believed he could succeed in the fur trade -- a faith that was never borne out by actual success.³⁴

Beasley did not rely entirely on the local native trade or the longer distance fur trade. By 1791 he was in the process of constructing, “A grist and sawmill (on a creek entering into the Head of

²⁸Richard Cartwright to Robert Hamilton, 8th June 1786

²⁹Richard Cartwright to Robert Hamilton, 18th July 1786

³⁰Richard Cartwright to Richard Beasley, 23rd August 1793

³¹Richard Cartwright to Richard Beasley, 22nd November 1793

³²Richard Cartwright to Richard Beasley, 9th May 1794

³³Richard Cartwright to Richard Beasley, 4th October 1794

³⁴Carter, *Beasley Wharf Complex*, p 71-82; This section entitled “Beasley and the Fur Trade”, is the most significant contribution to the understanding of Beasley’s early attempts to succeed in the declining fur trade. Carter cleverly cross references “# Estimated Trade Goods” {based on site specific archaeological information} with “# Furs Exported” {taken from Harold Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), p 13}, to show that Beasley continued to maintain a large and increasing store of trade goods while actual numbers of furs exported from the Canadas declined. Of course the large store of trade goods may also reflect the increasing importance of local trade with the Six Nations and Mississauga.

Burlington Bay.) on the Road leading to the Mohawk village” with his partner James Wilson.³⁵ In his correspondence the mill was only indirectly mentioned by its produce, flour; or, in terms of his desire to establish a distillery. Historian John Weaver suggests that the establishment of a mill in Ancaster by Richard and Samuel Hatt provided direct competition for Beasley and Wilson, eliminating Beasley’s virtual monopoly of milling in the area, and reducing his profits, profits that may have been used as the basis to finance land speculations, his wharf/storehouse complex and eventually, his new brick house. The loss of the monopoly, however, was not the only problem Beasley experienced in trying to turn a profit on his milling enterprise.

In August 1793, Cartwright advised Beasley that he could “be of no use to you [Beasley] in providing a Sale for your Flour,”³⁶ encouraging him to sell his flour by other channels. Cartwright declared that flour could be just as easily obtained through his (Cartwright’s) connection with Todd and McGill in Montreal, and that therefore it was a disservice to Beasley for Cartwright to have a share in Beasley’s profits. The increasing number of mills springing up across the province must have made it more difficult for Beasley to profit from the sale of his flour via his usual connection with Cartwright. Cartwright was concerned that Beasley maximize his profits in his enterprises including the sale of his flour, because in the same letter of 1793, he also refers to Beasley’s rising debt, which he states will jeopardize their further business dealings. Nevertheless, Cartwright continued to do business with Beasley well into the 19th century, perhaps in the hope of recovering some of the money he was owed.

³⁵Statement of the Mills in the District of Nassau Stating by whom Erected, and by what Authority, and in what year

³⁶Richard Cartwright to Richard Beasley, 23rd August 1793

Beasley was also interested in distilling, an enterprise linked to the business of grist milling. As Cartwright noted, "I observe what you say on the Subject of Stills and I do not doubt but they may answer very well."³⁷ Distilling was a natural and profitable addition to a grist mill in that part of the grist could be used as a raw material in the distilling process. Beasley obviously hoped to eliminate the middle man in terms of acquiring spirits -- the price of which fluctuated drastically -- given his request for a still which appears in August 1793.³⁸ While adding a distillery to his property in Ancaster was a desirable goal, Beasley never acquired the necessary equipment and knowledge to set up a distilling business. It may not have been possible for two reasons as Cartwright notes, "...having no direct Correspondence with any Person in the States, it will not be very easy to procure them even if the Governor's Permission can be obtained for their passing..."³⁹ Cartwright was unable or unwilling to help Beasley find the right equipment, perhaps owing to his frustration with Beasley's other business ventures. He suggests that Beasley find his own contacts in the United States instead. By October 1795⁴⁰, Beasley is still buying spirits from Cartwright, and this practice seems to carry over into the 19th century. His account book shows a large increase in alcohol sales related to the vast number of military personnel living on his property during the War of 1812.⁴¹

³⁷Richard Cartwright to Richard Beasley, 23rd August 1793

³⁸Ibid

³⁹Ibid

⁴⁰Richard Cartwright to Richard Beasley, 14th October 1795

⁴¹An Estimate of Losses Sustained by Richard Beasley...on or about 6th September 1814; Goods lost by Beasley included casks of nails, snuff and window glass, but by far the most expensive commodity apart from tea was alcohol (Port wine, Shrub, Peppermint Cordial)

In addition to his idea of a distillery, Beasley sought other ways to take advantage of the increasing white settlement in the area. He attempted to order a bellows -- probably to outfit a blacksmith -- as well as other items from Cartwright such as glass tumblers, salt, tea and candles.⁴² Rising debt -- which likely owed to falling fur prices and his inability to extract payment out of his clientele - forced Beasley to look elsewhere for ways in which to get ahead. Eventually he turned to land speculation in order to take advantage of the expanding demand for land. Material prosperity had eluded him up to this point. Part of the reason for this was Beasley's questionable business practices.

In the process of conducting business, Beasley did not endear himself to his major creditor and cousin Richard Cartwright. Beasley's business ineptitude took on different forms, from persistence in pursuing the fur trade and incorrect administrative practices, to inappropriate extension of credit and the inability to extract payment from difficult clients. In a letter dating to 22nd August 1800⁴³, Cartwright begins addressing his cousin as "Dear Sir" instead of as "Dear Richard", which is how he had consistently addressed Beasley up to this point, and which he seldom did again, in the course of their correspondence. In most of Cartwright's letters to Beasley dating from the early 1790's up until 1800, he offered advice on how Beasley could more profitably run his business. For instance, on several occasions he made it clear that the fur trade was no longer a dependable source of revenues. He cautioned him in 1794 that fur prices were unstable due to the potential for war with the United States - a product of the friction between his

⁴²Richard Beasley to Richard Cartwright, 24th September 1793; 22nd November 1793; 9th May 1794; 4th October 1794

⁴³Richard Cartwright to Richard Beasley, 22nd August 1800

Majesty's Native allies in the old northwest of the United States and American back country settlers.⁴⁴

Cartwright also wished Richard Beasley luck in his attempts at land speculation as early as 1797.⁴⁵ By that time however, Beasley was seriously indebted to Cartwright -- a sum that was never less than £1,000.00 between 1793 and 1800.⁴⁶ His debt never reached a manageable level.⁴⁷ In September of 1793 it was £1,650.00, Halifax Currency. By April 1794 it had ballooned to £1,702.00. By May 1795 it had been reduced to £1,118.00. By April 1798 his debt was still high at £1,200.00. By August 1800, Beasley still owed Cartwright over £1,075.00. This is a huge amount as demonstrated by Cartwright's journal entry for March 31st 1800. The journal reveals that Beasley is only one of 26 people that owed Cartwright money; however, of the £1,744.00 owed to Cartwright, Beasley's debt amounted to approximately 62% of the total.

⁴⁴War was abated for two reasons. First, Jays Treaty (1794), which was meant to establish amity between the two nations (the natives were not invited to the treaty table) guaranteed the ceding of the old British fur trading forts south of the Great Lakes to the Americans which the British had originally agreed to give up as part of the Treaty of Paris (1783). Second, during the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, the British decided against supporting its native allies which was a major factor in the native defeat. The result was the Treaty of Greenville (1795) which was largely dictated to the natives concerned by the United States. The treaty temporarily put a cap on the expansion of American settlement beyond the Ohio river watershed.

⁴⁵Richard Cartwright to Richard Beasley, 1st November 1797

⁴⁶Richard Cartwright to Richard Beasley, 24th September 1793; Debts due me [Richard Cartwright] on the 31st March 1800

⁴⁷The contract between Askin, Hamilton and Cartwright witnessed by Beasley in 1781 stipulated that all extended credit accounts were to be paid by year end. This may have been fine for Hamilton, Cartwright and Askin, but may have been impossible for Beasley, and his clients. For Beasley's clients, paying at years end may not have been possible without handing over the deed to their properties. The c. 130,000 acres of land acquired by Robert Hamilton between 1781 and 1809 was largely due to the practice of accepting deeds as a form of debt repayment.

In 1793, Cartwright explained to Beasley that he could no longer help him with the sale of his flour.⁴⁸ This appears to be the beginning of the end of the partnership between Beasley and Cartwright, which is officially dissolved by Cartwright in 1797.⁴⁹ As early as 1796, Cartwright explained in no uncertain terms, that he had been forced to curtail his own business. Since Beasley could not be relied upon to extract payment from his clients, Cartwright in turn could not pay his "Correspondants in Montreal" (Messrs. Todd and McGill).⁵⁰ The implication here is that Beasley's inability to pay was ruining Cartwright's business, straining the bounds of his relationship with a key firm within the Laurentian network. It is interesting to note that Beasley had made payments on his largest land speculation venture (Block # 2 on the Six Nations Reserve), totaling £823.00 by 1802, a sum that would have gone a long way towards cancelling his debt with Cartwright.⁵¹ Not wishing to sue his cousin, Cartwright wishes him luck on the Block # 2 speculation in hopes that it would bring Beasley a profit that could be applied to his large debt. Beasley seemed to believe that his kindly cousin was an overflowing fountain of capital and patience. It is no wonder then that Cartwright dropped the friendly title of address in his letters to Beasley, stating on at least one occasion that he would be glad to see Beasley if he had some form of payment for him.⁵²

⁴⁸Richard Cartwright to Richard Beasley, 23rd August 1793

⁴⁹Bailey, (ed), *Dictionary of Hamilton Biography*, p 16

⁵⁰Richard Cartwright to Richard Beasley, 27th June 1796; It had been over two years since any payment had been made on this account.

⁵¹Lieutenant Governor's Office to Executive Council, 15th May 1804

⁵²Richard Cartwright to Richard Beasley, 22nd August 1796

Beasley's administrative incompetence must have been equally frustrating for Cartwright, because errors delayed payments or reflected a lack of awareness of the availability of goods in general. On at least two occasions, Beasley passed on his clients land vouchers to Cartwright as a form of payment.⁵³ Cartwright was forced to return the vouchers because Beasley had signed them in the wrong place. In November 1793, Cartwright informed Beasley that he had made an error in addition, on his invoice, and had ordered items that were not available. "The small memorandum you sent for Articles in the Spring is composed of such as do not frequently remain in hand at that Season."⁵⁴ The unavailability of goods does not appear to have been caused by a supply problem. Instead, it seems likely that a trader of Beasley's experience (c. 1777 to 1793), should have known better than to order items that were not usually available.

Perhaps the point of greatest concern for Cartwright was that Beasley was not particularly good at getting payment from his clients. On June 27th 1796, Cartwright expressed his concern over Beasley's incompetence in business. Cartwright noted that, "...If Nothing better is to be done with Messrs. Street & Phelps it may be prudent to take their Note & Security for the money they Owe, but it will not suit me to take their Note in Payment."⁵⁵ In this instance, Cartwright forced Beasley to take responsibility for his own business. He was tired of doing Beasley's work for him. It was Beasley's responsibility to convert the "Note and Security" of Street and Phelps into cash and then pay off Cartwright. Cartwright continued, "I hope you will be more successful

⁵³Transfers of land titles through vouchers often served as a method of payment. The frequency of this kind of transaction is reflected in the huge land holdings of merchants such as Robert Hamilton.

⁵⁴Richard Cartwright to Richard Beasley, 22nd November 1793

⁵⁵Richard Cartwright to Richard Beasley, 27th June 1796

with your other Debtors than you have been with Messrs. Street and Phelps & will still be able to remit me something handsome in the Course of the Season.” Clearly a lack of payment on the part of Beasley’s debtors is an unacceptable excuse for not remitting “something handsome” to Cartwright, who was then forced to curtail his own business. Cartwright scolded Beasley in August 1796⁵⁶, “...however well a Man’s Business may look upon Paper, if he can not come at his money when he wants it, it certainly cannot be a good Business...” Eventually Richard Cartwright stepped in on his own behalf in order to bypass Beasley’s ineptitude. He took legal action against Street and Phelps and eventually collected a partial payment of \$500.00.

In a final gentle criticism of Beasley’s business practice, Cartwright deemed Beasley’s land speculations to be a forlorn hope. He demonstrated his concern for Beasley’s speculations by telling him on January 7th 1798, that, “Far independant of the Comfort of having no considerable debts hanging over one, I cannot but think that the Price of Lands in your Neighbourhood has been Pushed to as great a Height as it is likely to attain for many Years to come.”⁵⁷ It must have been very frustrating for Cartwright to have to put his own business on hold while Beasley speculated on the Six Nations block - amongst other properties - with money that could have been paid directly to Cartwright. Contrary to Beasley’s belief, Cartwright’s perspective from his seat in Kingston was that land speculation around the head of the lake would have little consequence for Beasley except further debts incurred. From Beasley’s point of view, land speculation was an avenue of investment that he had a good chance of profiting from. In the end, Cartwright was mistaken and Beasley made a handsome profit in the venture. Beasley’s long association with Six

⁵⁶Richard Cartwright to Richard Beasley, 22nd August 1796

⁵⁷Richard Cartwright to Richard Beasley, 7th January 1798

Nations chief Joseph Brant was what made the Block # 2 speculation possible and successful.

Both Beasley and Brant actively increased their influence as patrons. For Brant, the sale of Reserve lands was a means to secure revenue for the Six Nations. Brant also hoped to establish his right to sell native lands outright without going through the very slow process provided for in the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which prevented direct sales of native lands to white settlers for the purpose of speculation.⁵⁸ For Beasley and his partners, the speculation on Six Nations lands was a method for circumventing the problems related to the slow growth of their businesses by allowing them a chance to earn a relatively large profit over a very short time. For both Brant and Beasley, the speculation was also a means to actively assert themselves economically and socially by allowing them direct access to land as a commodity. Brant was essentially raising revenues to maintain the Six Nations people, thus enhancing his status as a local patron; while Beasley if successful would be able to achieve greater material prosperity. He could continue the development of his Burlington Heights property to reflect his status as a country gentleman. Given that hard currency was virtually non-existent, land grant vouchers commonly served in place of cash, passing between client and patron to settle year end accounts. The negotiations on such a large block of land was a great opportunity to profit for both sides.

In the arrangement with Joseph Brant for Block # 2, Richard Beasley, Jean Baptiste Rousseaux and James Wilson (Beasley's milling partner) attained a mortgage of £8,887.00 on the property, which consisted of approximately 94,012 acres.⁵⁹ Beasley proceeded to sell the

⁵⁸Six Nations land was held under a title, though collective lands west of the 1763 line were not.

⁵⁹Lieutenant Governor's Office to Executive Council, 15th May 1804

property to a Mennonite group in the spring of 1800. It took until 1803 to discover that the titles to the property issued to them by Beasley were worthless because of the largely unpaid mortgage.⁶⁰ In the ensuing investigation that took place the following year, it was made clear that Beasley had made payments in excess of £2,142.00, Halifax currency - an action that would eventually put him in good stead with the Six Nations Council and the provincial government.⁶¹ The Mennonites eventually bought 60,000 acres of Block # 2 outright for £10,000.00. Beasley then proceeded to extinguish the rest of the mortgage with a payment of £5,000.00, which provided Beasley with a healthy profit.⁶²

The profit Beasley made as a result of this speculation was a significant sum of money. It also carried with it the prestige that went along with dealing in land transactions. He had enhanced his prestige by taking on so large a parcel, which he maintained (barely) in good faith. The proceeds from the sale were likely used to build his new wharf and storehouse at the water's edge as well as his Georgian style brick house on top of Burlington Heights, which he had completed by 1800, ten years before the first brick house was completed in the provincial capital.⁶³

Beasley had achieved the appearance of material prosperity by 1800. Appearance is the operative word here because it is clear from the correspondence that between c. 1786 and 1800 Beasley had questionable business practices. From Richard Cartwright's perspective, Beasley was hopelessly inept as a merchant, selfishly clinging to his cousin's enterprises and causing

⁶⁰Johnston, *Head of the Lake*, p 42

⁶¹Proceedings of a Council held at the Grand River the 29th day of June 1804

⁶²Lieutenant Governor's Office to Executive Council, 15th May 1804

⁶³Firth, *Town of York, 1793-1815*, p lxxvi

Cartwright's own business to suffer considerably. Beasley entered into business on Burlington Heights as a fur trader long after it was prudent to do so. When he did diversify his store to take advantage of the expanding settler population, he showed a lack of understanding of what goods were available through his usual supplier (Todd and McGill via Cartwright) or how to acquire these goods by other means (distilling equipment, bellows for a blacksmith forge). Although he attempted to enter into subsidiary business endeavours, such as milling and distilling, he had trouble competing with more aggressive merchants such as the Hatt brothers, lacking the necessary skills, knowledge and connections to succeed in these ventures. His judgement of people was also questionable, given the fact that he was unable to collect appropriate payments from many of them. Even when he did extract payment, he made administrative errors which caused expensive and frustrating delays for his creditors/suppliers.

He was unwilling or unable to take legal action against his debtors, effectively forcing the task on to shrewder merchants, such as Cartwright and Hamilton, who were more determined to collect money owed. All in all, the image of Richard Beasley is not particularly favourable. Of course the correspondence is dominated by the letters of Richard Cartwright and so there is a distinct bias in place here which reflects Cartwright's very close dealings with Beasley and does not appear to reflect how Beasley was viewed by wider Upper Canadian society. When Cartwright's thoughts about Beasley are considered alone he appears to be more inept in his business dealings than he actually was, because ineptitude is what Cartwright emphasized. Cartwright's letters do not take into account that Beasley was exerting his own influence over his clients as a patron, by providing terms of repayment which were by Cartwright's standards exceedingly lenient. Contrary to Cartwright's impressions, Beasley was actually quite effective in

building social and political influence.

BUILDING SOCIAL AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE

While not particularly successful in business (at least according to Cartwright), Beasley was a highly visible merchant at the Head of the Lake, and no doubt was appreciated by his clients.

This visibility at the least would form the basis for what was a natural next step: to build upon his notoriety as a local storekeeper, and establish himself as a social and political presence at the Head of the Lake. What was more important than actual material prosperity was the reciprocal relationship between Beasley as a local patron and his clients. While Beasley held no monopoly on the supply of goods to his clients, he successfully competed with the other local patrons for political and military appointments. As well, Beasley's kinship and business linkages to the Laurentian network were vital to his bid for political and military offices. For instance, it was largely due to the advice of Robert Hamilton, an executive councillor himself at this point, that Lieutenant Governor Simcoe appointed Beasley as a Justice of the Peace in 1795. This kind of patronage served to increase Beasley's social influence, as well as that of the other members of the Laurentian network more generally.⁶⁴

To enhance his image and reflect the appearance of material prosperity and social influence, he attempted to make an impression through conspicuous consumption. He sought to effect the appearance of the great country gentleman or well established local patron, who was a natural

⁶⁴Noel, *Patrons, Clients, Brokers*, p. 77,78

choice for leadership over his local clientele.⁶⁵ His social influence is reflected in his attainment of land grants, and political appointments starting in the 1790's, which was facilitated by his strong presence as a merchant. His beginnings on the Heights were humble. He started with a small log house and a wharf on the bayshore, in the mid 1780's, which was nonetheless a step above the typical pioneer cabin. This was followed by the dramatic transformation of his Burlington Heights property at the turn of the 19th century.

When Beasley began his tenure on Burlington Heights, he likely followed the pattern of most frontier settlers and built himself a log cabin. The log cabin was the easiest substantial building to construct because it required few tools and simple relatively unrefined building materials. A few axes for felling and shaping trees into walls, beams and floor planks, plus hand drills for preparing the floor planks and beams for pegging was all that was required for building a log cabin. Beasley was probably quite familiar with the construction of log cabins, having grown up in New York State before the Revolutionary War. Unfortunately there are no documents that relate to the building of Beasley's first house, and few details concerning the look of the house itself, other than one vague reference to the fact that his son Henry Beasley (1793-1859) was born in a log cabin on Burlington Heights.⁶⁶ A second reference mentions that Beasley built a "crude log house" on a 200 acre lot granted to him near modern day Paradise road and Main street west in Hamilton.⁶⁷ These two references tie in well with a map of the area dating to 1793, wherein

⁶⁵Ibid, p. 77,78; Edith Firth, *The Town of York, 1793-1815*, (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1962)

⁶⁶Bailey, (ed), *Dictionary of Hamilton Biography*, p 15

⁶⁷Nicholas Leblavic, "The Life and History of Richard Beasley, Esquire: An Address to the Society on October 22, 1965," p 3; The map dating to c. 1793 also shows a house at the

Beasley's fields extend eastward along the ridge line bordering the south shore of Coote's Paradise towards the eastern edge of the Heights and down slope to the bayshore, where a small structure (log cabin) is shown.⁶⁸ The map also shows what is probably a rustic fence running across the Heights. This fence appears to divide Beasley's granted 200 acres from the northern 400 acres of the Heights, which had been granted to Captain Lottridge for Revolutionary War service. By 1798, Beasley had successfully negotiated with the heirs of Lottridge and officially petitioned for and claimed the 400 acres.⁶⁹

When Elizabeth Simcoe visited in the summer of 1796, she briefly described Beasley's holdings on Burlington Heights, including a small wooden wharf which extended out into the bay.⁷⁰ Beasley's first wharf, along with the house, made up his initial trading/dwelling complex. Apart from Elizabeth Simcoe's reference, little is known about the first wharf, except that it was probably torn down or incorporated into the new enlarged wharf that Beasley intended to begin constructing in the spring of 1798. Simcoe also mentioned that looking from the opening of Burlington Bay towards the shore, Beasley's house formed, "a very pretty object".⁷¹ She included

eastern extent of Coote's Paradise which may have belonged to Beasley, and referred to as Beasley Hollow.

⁶⁸ 1793 map of Burlington Heights

⁶⁹In two letters written by Richard Beasley to David W. Smith (Deputy Surveyor General), 26th March 1798 and 12th March 1798, Beasley confirms the successful negotiations with the Lottridge family and urges the Deputy Surveyor to "...bring the business to a conclusion as soon as possible...", because he wants to begin building his new wharf and storehouse as soon as the bay is clear of ice.

⁷⁰Elizabeth Simcoe, *Diary of Elizabeth Simcoe*, p 323; Carter, *Beasley Wharf Complex*, Figure 1

⁷¹Elizabeth Simcoe, *Diary of Elizabeth Simcoe*, p 323

a sketch of the structure on the bay shore, but the sketch is from some distance, perhaps five miles away. She did not mention what the house looked like from close up nor did she describe its interior. Beasley's first small cabin must have been crowded, housing both his growing family and his trade goods.

Historian J.H. Smith described one of Beasley's properties which he locates on the north side of King Street, west of Ferguson Ave., as a combined house and store, built of "hewn timbers" and "covered with clapboards".⁷² This description, while relating to a location east of Beasley's first residence, is consistent with the other documentary and archaeological portrayal of Beasley's Burlington bay shore house in the late 18th century. While observers like Elizabeth Simcoe may have seen Beasley's cabin as rustic and cramped, the cabin nevertheless, was quite substantial and would have been considered as a house by many settlers.

Donald A. Hutslar, in his book *Log Construction in the Ohio Country, 1750-1850*, provides an exhaustive study of the different types of log cabins and houses erected by settlers in the Ohio region. Typically, cabins did not have finished brick chimneys and fire boxes, nor did they have glass windows; oiled paper often served to seal out drafts and let in light.⁷³ Hutslar, quotes Thaddeus M. Harris - a traveller passing through the Ohio Country in 1803:

The temporary buildings of the first settlers in the wilds are called *Cabins*.

⁷²"Proceedings, Royal Society of Canada, Second Series, Vol. IX 1903", in: *Beasley Correspondences & Related Documents*, p 259, 260

⁷³Elizabeth Vincent, *Substance and Practice: Building Technology and the Royal Engineers in Canada*, (Ottawa: Ministry of the Environment, 1993), p 171, 172, 179, 181; Window glass for domestic use in Canada was not taxed as it was in England; however due to breakage during transit, it was more expensive in Canada. The implication is that the use of window glass in a log structure as opposed to oiled paper was uncommon and therefore a status symbol.

They are built with unhewn logs, the interstices between which are stopped with rails, caulked with moss or straw, and daubed with mud. The roof is covered with a sort of thin staves split out of oak or ash, about four feet long and five inches wide.⁷⁴

Harris continues, "If the logs be hewed; if the interstices be stopped with stone, and neatly plastered; and the roof composed of shingles nicely laid on, it is called a log-house."⁷⁵ Another observer, William Cooper Howells, agreed that, "the houses and improvements depended upon the length of time they had been on the place." He also stated that "...for a good house, this 'chinking' (wood stuffed into the interstices between the wall logs) was plastered over with a good mortar (sand and lime) on the inside and outside."⁷⁶ Further, Howells notes, "doors and windows [were] cut through the logs and cased up." Howells' also describes a good house as having, "a brick chimney and well laid floor."⁷⁷

By these standards, Beasley's first structure was a log house rather than a cabin, at least by the end of its use. This is clear when the archaeological record is examined. Beasley's first house had a cobble foundation, sleeper trenches -- upon which a floor could be pegged or nailed down, and a brick fireplace. The destruction layers from Beasley's first house contained mortar fragments, which may have been originally applied as a sealant over chinking. From Mrs

⁷⁴Cited in Donald A. Hutsler, *Log Construction in the Ohio Country, 1750-1850*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992) p 77

⁷⁵Ibid, p 79

⁷⁶Ibid, p 79

⁷⁷Ibid, p 79

Simcoe's sketch, a door and windows are clearly in view; however it is not clear that the windows contained glass. It is known that Beasley ordered window glass, nails and earthenware (dishes) from Cartwright in the fall of 1793.⁷⁸ It may be that some of these articles were ordered by another settler through Beasley, but the archaeological record shows that all of these items were employed in the construction or improvement of Beasley's house and housewares.⁷⁹

Some of the nails found in the archaeological record were undoubtedly used for applying clapboarding. Once whitewashed, clapboarding (which helped to weather proof the house), altered the rustic appearance of a log house - - giving it a regularity and brightness which would make it stand out, thus more properly fitting Elizabeth's Simcoe's description of it. Window glass was expensive and as a rarity became a status symbol. Certainly there is good evidence for a mortared brick fireplace (however crudely made), as well as trenches dug into the contemporary ground level which contained hewn log sleepers. If Beasley followed the typical practices of the day his floor was probably made up of puncheons split from hewn logs, laid and pegged to sleepers.⁸⁰

In Hutslar's study of log architecture in the Ohio Country he indicated the rarity of a building with a mortared stone foundation. More typically, log cabins had log footings; however,

⁷⁸Richard Cartwright to Richard Beasley, 22nd November 1793

⁷⁹Carter, *Beasley Wharf Complex*, p 57, 341; Ceramic sherds recovered from the cellar pit in Beasley's first house include salt glaze stoneware plates (1740-1765) and tin glazed earthenwares (1690-1780). The presence of these sherds in the cellar pit indicates that the pit may have been used for storage as well as for waste deposition. Nails and window glass are also found in contexts ranging from the Early Historic Phase IV, through Construction (Phase V), Occupation (Phase VI) and Destruction of [the] First Residence (Phase VII). Nails are most numerous in the Destruction Phase (52), followed by the Occupation Phase (18).

⁸⁰Hutslar, *Log Construction*, p 211-212

Hutslar's description of a log jail dating to 1805, has a builder's trench filled up to the ground surface with good stone, upon which a mortared stone foundation was constructed. While there is no evidence for mortared stone in the construction of Beasley's log house, the archaeological evidence indicates that the two initial steps were followed. This suggests Beasley's house was more substantial and more expensive than what was typically constructed as a first residence by the average settler, if the Ohio Country accounts are any indication of what was typical.

As early as the 1790's, Beasley was well on the way to achieving his goal of becoming a country gentleman, as demonstrated by the evidence for the construction and improvements made to his first house, including his development of the surrounding landscape on top of the Heights. By 1813, Beasley was growing rye, hay and wheat on top of the Heights, in neatly fenced enclosures. These fences may be the same ones that appear in the 1793 map, which suggests that he had been improving his property by growing cereal grain on top of the Heights, while still living in his log house on the bayshore.

Outside of his immediate relationship with Cartwright, Beasley was not looked upon as an incompetent and dependant businessman, but, instead was viewed quite favourably by wider society. The Six Nations had a very good opinion of him since he made good on his mortgage payments (1797-1804) during the Block # 2 speculation.⁸¹ He was the only one in the group of three speculators who they judged to be acting in good faith towards them. He also had a client base that was large enough to secure his seat in the Legislative Assembly from 1791-1804. He was appointed Justice of the Peace in 1795, and became a magistrate in 1796. He had also

⁸¹The Answer of the Indians to the Speech delivered to them by Col. Claus, 17th August 1803

advanced from Captain to Colonel in the 2nd York Militia by 1809.⁸²

Beasley's petition for land made to the Provincial government in 1795 demonstrates the reality of his connections to, and the strong influence of, the Laurentian network. The petition mentions that he only received 200 acres of land for his loyal service to the King during the Revolution, and that he "prays for such further additional grant as yr. Excellency may be pleased to give". The bottom of the petition contains an endorsement with the approval of "1,000 acres additional." A second appeal for more land made by Robert Land demonstrates Beasley's influence. Robert Land based his June 1794 claim for land on a tragic tale of woe including his (Land's) valiant military service wherein he experienced "sufferings, and dangers [that] were neccesarly great", as well as his loss of an impressive list of property holdings and a position as a magistrate, in Pennsylvania, as a result of his loyalty to the King during the Revolution.⁸³ Land received 300 acres at Burlington Bay and his sons were granted 200 acres each.⁸⁴ Compared to Beasley, Land had the stronger claim, yet Beasley was treated more generously. What seems to matter is that Beasley had worked closely with his cousin Richard Cartwright and Robert Hamilton during his term as commissary at Fort Niagara. Because of these connections, by 1795 Beasley was a well established merchant and had become a Justice of the Peace. It is not surprising therefore, that Beasley was given preferential treatment over Land. Clearly Beasley's success at making the right connections helped him toward his goal of becoming a country gentleman.

⁸²Bailey,(ed), *Dictionary of Hamilton Biography*

⁸³Cited in Johnston, *The Head of the Lake*, p 333

⁸⁴Ibid, p 333

PICTURESQUE LANDSCAPE ON BURLINGTON HEIGHTS

Beasley demonstrated his desire for enhancing his position in wider society through the development of his property on top of the Heights. He made the transition from Indian trader in the 1780's viewing the landscape around Burlington Heights as a strategic means to an end, to the owner of a property which reflected his arrival as a well connected, while still junior, member of the Upper Class.⁸⁵ By the end of the 18th century, he began his ultimate property improvements, which saw the attainment of this lofty goal with the completion of his Georgian brick cottage and the associated changes to the landscape following the canon of the picturesque.

According to Northrop Frye, "in general the picturesque eye was an idealizing one, assimilating past experience in Europe to a future when the new world would look more like the old one."⁸⁶ The "canon of the picturesque" contained concepts which led to the specific intention of changing the landscape into one that fit old world ideals, expressed in a language of improvement and Europeanization. Elizabeth Simcoe, Elizabeth Hale, and George Heriot all produced paintings in Canada during the late 18th or early 19th century when the picturesque

⁸⁵Firth, *Town of York, 1793-1815*, p lxxxiii; Firth argues that the merchants of York in the late 18th and early 19th century "formed a link between their lesser brethren and the gentry. Their was as yet no clearly defined middle class." She also states that the merchants of York with their junior government posts did not have the influence of the merchants in the Niagara towns or Kingston. She does agree that many merchants including those in York had considerable influence in local affairs through institutions such as the Court of General Quarter Sessions of the Peace. The posts Beasley held were beyond this local status which justifies the contention that he was a junior member of the Upper Class.

⁸⁶Northrop Frye, "The Canadian Scene: Explorers and Observers", in R.H. Hubbard, *Canadian Landscape Painting, 1670-1930* (Madison, Wisconsin: 1973), p 3, as quoted in: Colin Coates, "Like 'The Thames towards Putney': The Appropriation of Landscape in Lower Canada", *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. LXXIV, # 3, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, September, 1993), p 343

movement was in full swing.⁸⁷ These English elite figures had the leisure time to travel, paint and provide commentary on the landscape. These proponents of the picturesque belonged to an affluent social class, whose aristocratic values Beasley wanted to project through defining himself as a country gentleman. The association between an aristocratic lifestyle – or the appearance of it – with picturesque landscape development is key to understanding Beasley's transformation of Burlington Heights. He sought to show himself to be a materially prosperous merchant and a socially and politically influential, propertied country gentleman. The Picturesque ideal required that landscape be altered to satisfy well established views of how the land should look, as though in a picture. It classified landscape types emphasizing the blending of its natural and man made features. Picturesque paintings provided a template for landscape development. Life was made to imitate art.⁸⁸

A prime example of the kind of codifying that defined the picturesque imagination is revealed in the term "neatifying", which refers to clearing away underbrush, making walking across the landscape easier. In using the term, Elizabeth Hale expressed her desire to see the landscape reshaped.⁸⁹ The term implies her need to mould the landscape into a humanized, more proper series of spaces that expressed her dominant social position -- a desire to unify natural elements

⁸⁷Elizabeth Simcoe, *Diary of Elizabeth Simcoe*; Elizabeth Hale, "Hale Sketch Book" (Ottawa: National Archives of Canada, Documentary Art Division), as quoted in Colin Coates, *Metamorphoses of Landscape and Community in Early Quebec*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000); Gerald E. Finley, *George Heriot, 1759-1839*, (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1979)

⁸⁸Jane Flatt, "An 18th Century Jewel in a 19th Century Wilderness: An Essay on Dundurn and its Tradition", in: *Wentworth Bygones: From the Papers and Records of the Head of the Lake Historical Society*, vol. # 7, (Hamilton: Walsh Printing Service, 1967), pp 17-21

⁸⁹Cited in Coates, *The Metamorphoses of Landscape*, p 152

with human improvements.

A survey of paintings by Hale, Simcoe, and Heriot reveals that the natural features of the landscape were used symbolically, forming a code of aristocratic values for the viewer. Picturesque proponents portrayed landscapes dominated by a patchwork of forests and cleared meadows, with sinuous or powerful streams running through them. Forest cover was important, but without bothersome undergrowth which got in the way of the progress of people strolling through it. For example, the picturesque approach favoured hardwoods such as oak, ash, and walnut over soft woods such as pine, because pines grew in untidy thickets which were unpassable. Historian Colin Coates argues that the presence of too dense a stand of wood represented the unknown, unexplored, danger of the uninhabitable primeval forest.⁹⁰ Such uncleared densely forested spaces were generally referred to as waste. The favoured picturesque landscape configuration combined improvements such as enclosed fields and industrious mills, surrounded by a manicured wildness, based on the tastes of the observer. Elizabeth Simcoe and Elizabeth Hale both collected knowledge of and in some cases samples of plant species which could be used on their estates, carefully nurtured, but never allowed to spread into an uncontrolled wildness. Elizabeth Hale also imported seeds from England in order to make her Canadian estate resemble England to some extent.

Picturesque paintings, including those by Hale, Simcoe and Heriot, featured craggy peaks, rushing rivers, or forested edges, and cleared foregrounds. The central focus was almost always some sort of human activity, such as people fishing on a placid river, or a house on a cleared tract. Wildness was always present but came under the control of human agency. For instance, in one

⁹⁰Coates, *Metamorphoses of the Landscape*, p 144-161

of George Heriot's paintings, a powerful waterfall cascades down a gorge surrounded by forest; in the background is a town and a bridge spanning the river. In the foreground in the midst of this natural chaos stood a mill which by drawing on the power of the flow shows that the area had been appropriately brought under useful improvement, while maintaining a portion of its desirable wildness.⁹¹

The manor house was the centre piece of an estate, providing the comfortable place wherein a country gentleman and his family could rest amidst, "an idyllic, stable world with obedient servants."⁹² The landscape without was in part shaped to form appropriate views from within the house. As Elizabeth Hale notes, "I used to think a Beech tree would have a very good effect where the single Poplar stood, opposite the Bow room window, & would not shut out any view." In her opinion, the view from the Bow room window was displeasing prior to the planting of a Beech tree because as she continues, "The line of hills in that part is rather too strait & wants something to cut it."⁹³ The landscape also helped to vary the straight lines of the house. Strategically planted trees splayed foliage which broke up its facade. This is also particularly notable in a piece of folk art displayed in Rhys Issacs' *The Transformation of Virginia*, where he notes a surrounding fringe of hardwood trees and vines softened the straight lines of the estate's buildings.⁹⁴

⁹¹"View of Jeune Lorette, the Village of the Huron's, Nine Miles North of Quebec," in: Gerald E. Finley, *George Heriot*, p26

⁹²Cited in Coates, *The Metamorphoses of Landscape*, p 152

⁹³Ibid, p 152

⁹⁴Issacs, *The Transformation of Virginia*, p 40

Issacs places the manor house within the context of the landscape unifying the natural and the man made. According to Issacs, shapes on the landscape reveal social relationships, relations to production as well as relations to the environment. Issacs argues that the “invaders” (English plantation owners in Virginia) imposed “lines of exclusive property rights”, imposing on the landscape, through survey and the placement of markers, an order that did not exist before their arrival. These lines represented a major difference between how Englishmen and natives viewed the land.⁹⁵ The patriarchs controlled large plots of land primarily under tobacco cultivation and supported large numbers of dependants.

According to Issacs, by the turn of the 19th century manor houses took on a formalized style, acting “as declarations of the owners’ status, not only by sheer scale but also by means of elaborately contrived formal relationships.”⁹⁶ Georgian architecture featured a three part design, with an elevated central structure which was balanced by the addition of adjoining, subordinated lateral wings.⁹⁷ In establishing his model upon which wealthy Virginian planters would base their house designs, Issacs concentrates on the Governor’s mansion in Williamsburg. In the case of the Governor’s Residence, the central structure was the living space of the Governor and his family, while offices occupied the subordinated lateral structures. All around the central structure lay outbuildings and quarters used in tobacco production and living space for his dependants. This prompted an English traveler in Virginia to remark that the estates he saw reminded him of small towns. This pattern reflected the patriarchal position of the Governor as well as other great

⁹⁵Ibid, p 19,20

⁹⁶Ibid, p 35

⁹⁷Issacs, p 37

planters in Virginia as political and social leaders.⁹⁸ The organization of Beasley's holdings mirrors this pattern.

Beasley put into practice this way of viewing the landscape in the continued development of his property. By 1800, he had razed his first house, built a new wharf and storehouse, had moved up on top of Burlington Heights and constructed what would later be described as a commodious brick cottage with cellarge. While the expenditures for these projects do not appear in his correspondence or account book, clearly they must have cost him quite a bit of money. The cost of building a modest frame house or "cottage," such as Deputy Surveyor General D.W. Smith's "Maryville", was expensive, in the area of £1,000.00 Halifax Currency.⁹⁹ The stature of Maryville matches well with the reconstruction drawings of Beasley's house on Burlington Heights; however, Beasley's must have been much more expensive because it was built out of brick. The advertisement that Beasley ran in the *Canadian Constellation* on June 21st, 1800 describes his property on Burlington Heights as substantially developed.

'For Sale' - To be sold: a valuable and pleasant property at Burlington Bay, containing 976 acres of land, 150 of which are under good improvement. There are on the premises a comfortable dwelling house and stables; also a wharf, 100' long and 52 wide; a storehouse 30 x 20 and an excellent seat for a sawmill, with a quantity of valuable pine, walnut and timber...it is an excellent stand for business.¹⁰⁰

Clearly Beasley was referring to his holdings around Burlington Bay as well as his mill in Ancaster. The new wharf and storehouse were completed by the time the advertisement appeared

⁹⁸Ibid, p 38-39

⁹⁹Firth, *Town of York, 1793-1815*, p lxxvi

¹⁰⁰*Canadian Constellation* / S&G Tiffany at Niagara June 21st, 1800

in the *Canadian Constellation*. His mentioning of 150 acres of land under good improvement, including out buildings and stands of hardwoods, shows that he had created an environment bounded by the ideals of the picturesque.

A second advertisement placed in the *Western Mercury* in 1833 by the new property owner Allan MacNab provides evidence that Beasley continued to develop important positions of social influence as well as his property in picturesque style after 1800. MacNab intended to rent out the property until he was ready to begin construction on what would later be known as Dundurn Castle.

The handsome and commodious brick cottage on Burlington Heights, lately occupied by Colonel Beasley, will be let for two years to a respectable tenant. It is beautifully situated on the edge of Burlington Bay, commanding an extensive view on all sides and is very roomy. Being fifty feet long and forty feet wide with two wings, each twenty feet square and a large frame kitchen eighteen feet by thirty feet with cellarage under the main body of the building. On the premises are a good ice house, wash house, smoke house, an excellent garden stocked with fruit trees, and an extensive peach orchard, said to be the best in the province.¹⁰¹

In 1798, Beasley made the official arrangements to secure title to the rest of Burlington Heights, setting up his lines of exclusive property rights. He had a large estate (c. 950 acres by 1815), of which a sizeable amount lay under cultivation. Much like the Virginian planters, Beasley had a manor house and a surrounding complex of outbuildings, a garden, barns, fields, wharf and storehouse. His fields, garden and orchard provided him with food at the very least on a subsistence basis. During the visit of the Lieutenant Governor and his wife in 1796, Mrs. Simcoe had nothing but good things to say about Beasley's industry and ambition. She admired his park-

¹⁰¹"Western Mercury", March 28, 1833, as quoted in: Leblovic, *Life and History of Richard Beasley*, p 16

like property with its splendid hardwoods and absence of underwood.

Beasley's brick house consisted of a main block with two subordinate framed wings.¹⁰² Its scale of construction, although undoubtedly smaller than the plantations described by Issacs, had the same plan. In Beasley's case, it is not clear how the subordinate wings attached to the elevated central block were used, although he did have need of space for at least one servant. Beasley followed the same plan in terms of the overall look of the house without the same degree of patriarchy displayed.¹⁰³ The distinction between Beasley and his subordinate staff was not nearly so marked as it would have been between the Governor of Virginia, or even the wealthier planters and their staff. Nevertheless, Beasley, so interested as he was in being a successful, influential member of colonial society, applied these traditional Georgian architectural features when building his house and estate. As the master of a considerable estate with several dependants, his manor house, with its elevated centre and subordinate wings, emphasized Beasley as the head of the household. The Georgian manor house also symbolized Beasley's participation, and in some cases leadership, in a stable political and economic system. His estate must have been rather impressive early on in the 19th century, as the advertisements for its sale and later rent in 1800 and 1833 demonstrate.

As one strolled around Beasley's estate, one would have been struck by the view of the lake to the east, the craggy Niagara escarpment to the west, his three tiered brick and frame house with

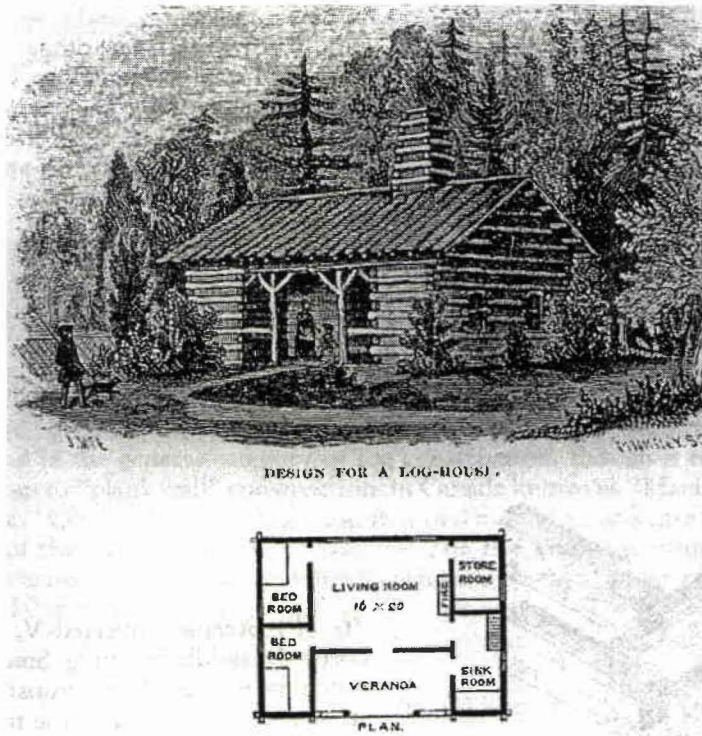
¹⁰²Carter, *Beasley Wharf Complex*, Figure 6

¹⁰³Edith Firth, *Town of York, 1793-1815*; This model is also generally followed by Upper Canadian worthies such as Deputy Surveyor General D.W. Smith at his home "Maryville" in York. While "Maryville" does not have the attached wings the front section of the house is divided into three parts, consisting of a central hall with adjoining drawing room and office on either side.

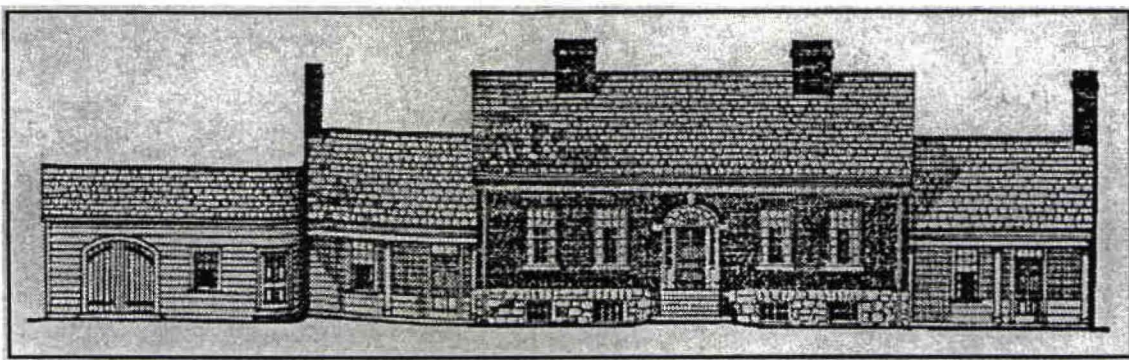
its attached garden, set apart from the enclosed fields and orchard, all softened by stately oak and walnut trees. Although Elizabeth Simcoe clearly saw its potential during her visit in 1796, it is not clear how much influence she and her husband the Lieutenant Governor, two highly visible and vocal purveyors of aristocratic values, had on Richard Beasley's choice in developing his lands as he did. Beasley was certainly interested in maintaining as close a connection to the Simcoes and their subsequent replacements as he could, in order to attain land grants, as well as government-appointed positions. It makes sense that he believed in the hierarchical system and therefore sought to demonstrate that belief through the development of the landscape in the hierarchical symbolic way presented here.

On the Heights, Beasley's holdings eventually became valuable as a picturesque demonstration of his rising position in Upper Canadian society. Initially he developed the space on the lower slopes of the Heights to facilitate his business as a merchant. Right from the start, he was interested in building a house that was more than just a basic log cabin. He made improvements by adding clapboarding and windows which already featured a cobble foundation and a brick fire place. By 1798, he had decided to improve his storehouse and wharf by building new structures. Between 1791 and 1798, he had already begun the process of improvement by planting and enclosing fields on top of the Heights. By 1800, he completed construction on his substantial brick house, brought 150 acres under good improvement and built stables. By 1813, he had constructed a barn, and by 1823 he added two more barns, a summer kitchen and an enclosed garden. He considered selling his property in 1800, and given that he was constantly in deep debt to his cousin Richard Cartwright, one might ask how he could have afforded the improvements to his estate? One might answer also in the form of a question, how could he

afford not to make improvements? Part of success in business in Upper Canada at this time (as it is to some extent today), is the *appearance* of success. By introducing improvements to his estate he may have put himself in greater debt, but his appearing as successful allowed him to maintain his position as a local patron at the Head of the Lake with considerable social, political and economic influence.



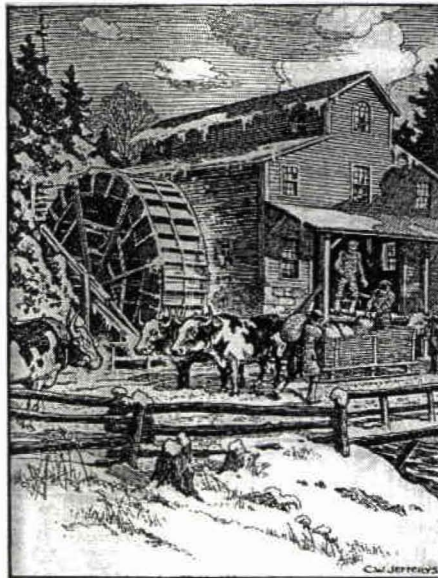
Hutslar, *Log Construction*; A typical log house. Beasley's was probably quite similar to this except that he probably added clapboarding and white wash to provide a more finished look



Dundurn Castle Library; Reconstruction drawing of Richard Beasley's commodious brick cottage



C.W. Jeffereys, 1911, "A General Store, about 1820", in Knight, James, (ed), "Canada 1812-1871: The Formative Years, illustrations by C.W. Jeffereys", in: *Imperial Oil Review*, (Toronto: Imperial Oil Ltd., 1967); Beasley started out as an Indian trader, but he soon diversified and provided goods for the increasing white settler population.



C.W. Jeffereys, 1911, "A Water Powered Grist Mill", in: Knight, James, (ed), "Canada 1812-1871: The Formative Years, illustrations by C.W. Jeffereys", in: *Imperial Oil Review*, (Toronto: Imperial Oil Ltd., 1967); Beasley and James Wilson set up such a mill in the early 1790's.

Chapter 3

MILITARY HEIGHTS

Barton 16 September 1815.

To the President and Gentlemen composing the Board of Claims at Fort George:

Gentlemen:

I have thought it necessary to accompany my claims with a letter containing a statement of a few facts which can be substantiated by most of the Magistrates of the District of Niagara. I was in the year 1813 situated on a farm in the Township of Barton in the district of Niagara consisting of nine hundred and fifty acres, one hundred and sixty of which was cleared and under good fence. Their [sic] was on the premises a brick house, a barn, stone house and outhouses, an orchard containing two hundred bearing apple trees and a nursery of young apple trees, a garden with a number of fruit trees. I depended on the product of the farm for the support of myself and family consisting of myself, wife and eight children beside [a] domestic. My premises on the first of June, 1813 was taken forcible possession of by his Majesty's troops under the command of General Vincent. The provisions that I was then provided with was totally destroyed by the troops. Myself and family had to leave the premises and seek for shelter where we could find it. Shortly after the Battle of Stoney Creek which was on the 6th of June 1813 the army commenced fortifying on my premises and have kept possession till the 24th August of the present year and have left my farm and buildings in a most desolate situation - the Indians that where attached to the army, a part of them encamped on my grounds with the troops and the Indians, the whole of my grounds were occupied. The Indians have destroyed the greatest part of my valuable timber cutting down the walnut trees and a quantity of valuable ash that the most convenient to my cleared land of timber has been destroyed by the Orders of the Commanding Officers at Burlington. That the deprivation and waste of my property at Burlington has been great will I presume be admitted by persons who have had personal knowledge of the premises before the war and the present time.

I am Gentlemen

Your very

Humble Servant

R.B.¹

¹Richard Beasley's war losses. Copy of document from National Archives of Canada -- War Losses 1812-1814, Dundurn Castle Library.

During the War of 1812 the fortunes of the British army had taken a turn for the worse in the spring of 1813, with American victories at York (April 27th), and Fort George (May 27th). With American forces controlling the Niagara Peninsula, the British army found its position there untenable. Rather than abandon the peninsula entirely, it retreated to the Head of the Lake where it could continue to exert a military presence in the Peninsula, supported by a strong defensive position on Burlington Heights. By June 1, the British army made arrangements with Richard Beasley to make use of his property for the duration of the war. Beasley's picturesque estate thus became a military depot.

Soon after arriving, the British began hastily constructing defenses, barracks buildings and storehouses, meant to serve their forces operating in the Peninsula and as far west as Fort Malden, across from Detroit.² The British army chose to fortify the Heights because it is a naturally defensible, narrow, steep-sided peninsula, an expedient position for a regional fortress to which troops could retire for the purpose of defense, resupply, rest and medical attention. The Heights played an important role in maintaining the British presence on the fluctuating strategic frontier of the Niagara Peninsula, the most hotly contested area of British North America during the war.

Much like Beasley, the military sought to create a materially-prosperous site which is reflected in its reshaping of the property, and in its creation of a supply centre for troops in the region. Unfortunately, in carrying out this task, the wants, needs and liberties of the local population seemed to be of little importance in comparison to keeping the army well stocked with provisions. The British army commandeered, forcibly exacted, and dragooned material from the local

²It was centrally located to allow for the use of the surrounding hinterland as a source of provisions as well as a storage depot for provisions brought in by road and water.

population to achieve this end. It treated the landscape as a commodity using materials which were to be consumed for immediate benefits hastily.³ As the war continued, the military also sought to increase its social and political influence in Upper Canada. With the failure of the system of requisition, and with the increased incidence of sedition and treason, it became necessary for the military controlled government established boards of inquiry and courts of Assize, to make an example of disloyal elements within the population. While civilians administered these boards and courts, the military exerted considerable pressure on court officials to pursue disloyal elements in the population thereby exerting a coercive political influence across the landscape of Upper Canada. Treason trials were held at what is today the centre of Ancaster, and the executions of the guilty were carried out in sight of the garrison on Burlington Heights. The choice of the Heights as a place of execution associated the garrison with a frightening executive function of the military government – a chilling warning for citizens with traitorous intentions.

This tyrannical presence is at odds with the benevolent influence of Richard Beasley as demonstrated by his tolerant attitude towards the extension of credit to his clients, and through the development of his property as a local patron in the aristocratic style of the picturesque. The actions of the army indicate that it perceived the landscape as a foreign and hostile environment. British military commentators also perceived the landscape as having an inherently devious nature, one which caused widespread sickness experienced by the soldiers on Burlington Heights and in

³In the Niagara Peninsula in 1813 for instance, stores were to be acquired locally by any means because it was too expensive to bring in stores from outside of the province. The utmost care was to be taken in protecting all stores. Bases such as Burlington Heights and temporary encampments were to be inhabited/defended only so long as the risk of loss to the British military was minimal.

Upper Canada in general. Medically, it was perceived as a hostile unhealthy environment due to the presence of natural or undeveloped features of the landscape that exuded immoral qualities.⁴ Clearly, Beasley's attempts to transform Burlington Heights into the seat of an English country gentleman went unrecognized by some military recorders. For the British army, the Heights had a meaning that was distinct from that of Beasley and those of the local civilian population.

THE MILITARY MEANING OF THE HEIGHTS

Burlington Heights, occupied on an expedient basis by the army in order to make the most of a tenuous defensive situation, was limited in terms of its location as far as the British army was concerned. As a military site, little attention was paid to it before the War of 1812. According to historian C.M. Johnston, however, as early as the 1790s, John Graves Simcoe had great plans in store for Burlington Heights. As Johnston writes, during the 1790s Simcoe drew up plans for a town and military station at Coote's Paradise, complete with blue prints of drill grounds and storage sheds, and had surveyed the approaches to Burlington Bay for outposts that would protect this bunker.⁵

⁴John Douglas, *Medical Topography of Upper Canada*, (London: Burgess and Hill, 1819),

⁵Johnston, *The Head of the Lake*, p 49; While some authority is provided for part of the above statements, no evidence is provided for the existence of plans for Cootes Paradise or Burlington Heights. Within the correspondence of J. G. Simcoe there are references to several town plans including Barton at the Head of the Lake. The Governor's road completed in 1794 extended from the Head of the Lake to the head waters of the La Tranche (Thames) river. When considered in this light the Head of the Lake takes on strategic importance as a communication/transshipment depot (by water and land) linking York and Kingston to Detroit.

Johnston's discusses Simcoe's negotiations with Beasley for his land around the Head of the Lake, accepting at face value a story first presented by Mary Holden.⁶ The evidence for this assertion is dubious because there is no cited authority. Holden relates that Simcoe was interested in Beasley's property as the site of the new capital. She also contends that the Governor and his wife visited Beasley in 1796 – short months after Beasley received his 1,000 acre grant in 1795 – not strictly for pleasure, but to negotiate a land sale. Holden maintained that the overconfident Beasley asked for a huge land grant in return, which caused Simcoe to withdraw his offer and place the capital at York. There are a number of problems with this story. The most notable is that the capital was not installed officially at York until 1797, which means that Simcoe was not forced to maintain the capital at York because it was at the time situated at Newark (modern day Niagara On The Lake). Second, title to at least 400 acres of the Heights was held by the Lottridge family. She does not consider that clear title was not held by Beasley for the entirety of Burlington Heights until 1798. Both of these facts undermine her story.

Simcoe's correspondence clearly shows that he favoured what would become London at the head waters of the La Tranche (Thames) River primarily, for the capital, giving serious secondary consideration to York (Toronto). Simcoe's correspondence makes virtually no mention of the Heights at all. In a letter dating to 1793 Simcoe mentions his interest in setting up a "post" around Cootes' Paradise at the Head of the Lake.⁷ He makes no specific reference to the Heights;

⁶It is based on a story by Mary E. Holden printed in the Wentworth Historical Society's *Papers and Records*, vol. 2, p 27.

⁷"J.G. Simcoe to Francis Le Maistre, April 14th, 1793", in: *Simcoe Correspondence*, 1789-1793, p 313; "I had also desired Mr. Beasley who has a mill at the head of the lake to reserve a

however, his letter appears to be concerned with the area only in relation to Richard Beasley, his mercantile connections, and his knowledge of available flour to feed garrisoned troops elsewhere. There are other more broad-reaching reasons for not considering the landscape on or around Burlington Heights as the capital, or as a fortress site.

One consideration a commander of forces, such as Simcoe, must make is about determining the direction of the threat to the landscape he is defending; another, is about the line of supply. The location of Burlington Heights was not directly connected to the long established line of supply from Great Britain through the Laurentian trade network. Burlington Heights was at the western extent of navigation on Lake Ontario where it joined up to the Governor's road which extended to the west. Burlington Bay, while a protected harbour, had a very shallow and narrow natural inlet, which required that goods be offloaded onto the beach strip only to be reloaded onto batteaux for the 5 mile journey to Beasley's wharf.⁸ While goods could be shipped along this route, it could be difficult going. Road travel was inconvenient at best, and freight could only be moved in smaller quantities and at a slower rate than along the established water route.⁹

In determining the direction of the threat to the landscape of Upper Canada Simcoe gave some consideration to the route from New York State across the Niagara river and into the peninsula --

quantity of flour, as it may be possible I shall establish a Post in its neighbourhood."

⁸The inlet was so shallow and narrow it was bridged over by 1796.

⁹E.A. Cruikshank, 'Public Life and Services of Robert Nichol', "Ontario Historical Society, vol. xix", (1922), p 34, as quoted in: Johnston, *The Head of the Lake*, p 47; the general Condition of Upper Canadian roads is a staple topic of complaint by settler commentators. One frustrated militia officer was convinced of the, "impossibility of transporting...guns and baggage...in the then state of the roads."; E. Simcoe, *Diary of Elizabeth Simcoe*, p 319; As she put it, road travel around the Head of the Lake was, "the most terrible...full of swamps, fallen trees, etc."

a route that was extensively used by American invaders during the War of 1812. Situated on the border at Newark, Simcoe decided to move it to a safer location. Burlington Heights, situated as it is at the western edge of the Niagara Peninsula, is removed from the border, and therefore a reasonable choice provided that the Niagara Peninsula would be the major route of invasion from the United States.

However, Simcoe's ideas on provincial defense show that the major threat to Upper Canada came from the American northwest (Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky).¹⁰ Tensions there had never ceased after the Revolution between American back country settlers and native groups over land entitlement. Aggressive American settlers squatting on "Indian land" commonly met equally aggressive native groups who sought to protect their ancestral hunting grounds.¹¹ The tensions reached their highest levels between 1791 and 1794, with the first of the American punitive military expeditions, followed by the final defeat of the Western Tribes in 1794 at the Battle of Fallen Timbers. The British actively traded in arms with the native groups carrying out raids on the American settlers, and as a result, a cry arose from back country settlers, that the British were

¹⁰Malcolm Macleod, "Fortress Ontario or Forlorn Hope? Simcoe and the Defence of Upper Canada", in: R. Craig Brown (ed.), *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. LIII, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p 149-178; Macleod focused on defence in terms of "1) ...the colony itself; 2) on the relation between the defence of Upper Canada and the largest questions of continental strategy; and 3) on Upper Canada's importance in the overall scheme of British North American security." Relevant discussions can also be found in Richard White, *The Middle Ground*, p 461-487, G.F.G. Stanley, *The War of 1812: Land Operations*, (Canada: Macmillan, 1983), p 11-83.

¹¹Richard White, *The Middle Ground*, p 461-487, G.F.G. Stanley, *The War of 1812: Land Operations*, (Canada: Macmillan, 1983), p 11-83.

supporting, if not inciting, the natives to go to war.¹²

The definite threat to Upper Canada was from the new western American territories. The British were inclined to cultivate good relations with the Western Tribes for two reasons -- to reduce the threat of a native invasion of Upper Canada, and promote a strong alliance, placing a tribal buffer zone between American expansionism and Upper Canada. Western defense was largely achieved through the British/native alliance. If it failed either due to American victories or native discontent with the British, Burlington Heights would not have been a good choice for a fortress, because it was much too exposed from the west. This idea is confirmed by the concern felt by the British over two military operations carried out by American forces a few years later during the War of 1812. The first instance occurred after the Battle of the Thames (Moravian Town), in the fall of 1813.¹³ In the aftermath of the battle, the defeated British and native forces straggled into Burlington Heights while the victorious Americans retired due to the lateness of the season. Another invasion attempt from the west never fully materialized in 1814. In this second

¹²See George Stanley, *The War of 1812: Land Operations*; R.S. Allen, *His Majesty's Indian Allies*; J.G. Simcoe, *Correspondence*, for a discussion of the political situation and the military campaigns concerning the Old Northwest of the United States in the 1790's. Interestingly, British/native trade in firearms and the accompanying charge of British incitement of the natives to attack American back country settlers was the most often-cited American evidence for the British inhibition of American western expansion. This provided a valuable justification during congressional debates, for the American raids on the native tribes of the old northwest. The availability of British firearms may have been significant; however there were obviously other more important factors involved. This becomes clear when American images of natives in battle from contemporary sources are examined. The painting of the Battle of the Thames (Moravian Town) shows Natives with bows and arrows, hatchets, and scalping knives - the traditional tools of native "savage" warfare." This portrayal emphasizes one of the major reasons for the American punitive raids on the natives of the northwest, which was the fear of native savagery and not the trade in - or use of firearms in combat.

¹³George Stanley, *The War of 1812: Land Operations*, pp 209-213

instance a force of American riflemen and cavalry progressed most of the way to Burlington Heights only to be turned aside by a British force near Burford.¹⁴ On both occasions it was the opinion of the British commanders that Burlington Heights could not withstand an attack from the west and in the event that the threat became too great the Heights were to be evacuated. They had little confidence in the fortifications on the Heights to long withstand a committed siege, due to the exposed nature of the British position there. While it is largely surrounded by water, an attacking army could envelope the Heights from the north, east and south cutting off lines of supply.

Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Bruyeres, Commander of the Royal Engineers in Canada, advised the Governor General and Commander of Forces, Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost, in October of 1813, that,

there are...various roads that communicate to the Rear and flanks of this position that should he advance in Force or meditate a combined movement, this might be completely surrounded and the retreat to York cut off without difficulty by his occupying the commanding ground round the whole extent of the position.¹⁵

These three examples from a slightly later period nevertheless characterize the fears felt by Simcoe that Burlington Heights was not a good choice for a fortress or the capital because it was too open to attack from the west.

Simcoe also argued for a strong naval presence on the lakes, which virtually ruled out

¹⁴*Ibid*, pp 282-283

¹⁵Lieutenant Colonel Bruyeres to Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost. Bt., 11th October 1813.

Burlington Heights as a reasonable choice as a fortress site.¹⁶ The small number of professional troops in the province (occasioned by the wars with France), would be concentrated at two major establishments – York on Lake Ontario and Long Point on Lake Erie.¹⁷ From these two bases, troops could be quickly ferried to any trouble spots between Detroit and Kingston.¹⁸ Burlington Heights did not have a suitable harbour for the purpose. A shifting sand bar protected it from the main lake and a narrow shallow opening made it impossible for large ships of war to enter the harbour. There was little utility in establishing an important military or naval post at the exposed site at the Head of the Lake prior to the War of 1812, given Simcoe's emphasis on naval defence and the maintenance of an Indian buffer zone in the west. During the war, the Heights were occupied only out of practical necessity.

The British army established itself on Burlington Heights in the way that armies of the time typically did in the late 18th early 19th century; developing it as one of the regional fortifications which served as both a base of operations and a supply depot. The depot at Burlington Heights and the land upon which it was built was viewed not as valuable in and of itself, but in a very limited fashion as a means to an end, due to the shifting nature of the strategic frontier in southern Upper Canada. For instance, its strategic value fluctuated over the span of a few short weeks between September and October 1813. Initially Lieutenant Colonel Bruyeres R.E. considered it

¹⁶This idea is also echoed by none other than the Duke of Wellington in 1814, as quoted by, Stanley, *The War of 1812: Land Operations*, p 391; "Till that superiority [control of the Lakes by a navy] is acquired, it is impossible,...to maintain an army in such a situation as to keep the enemy out of the whole frontier..."

¹⁷Both these sites have excellent natural harbours for defense, as well as appropriate ground for ship building.

¹⁸Macleod, *Forlorn Hope*

as a point of natural strength in good communication with the other posts on Lake Ontario by water and by road. Eventually, senior British officers considered it a liability because it could be surrounded. It was to be maintained as a fortified supply depot only so long as it was not threatened by attack. This is borne out by the statements of Lieutenant Colonel Bruyeres and the opinion of Major General Vincent.¹⁹ At the time that Bruyeres' second letter was written (October 11th 1813), the Western Division operating out of Fort Malden at Amherstburg across from Detroit had retreated as far as the Thames river where they were forced to fight a pursuing American army.²⁰ There they were defeated soundly and forced to retire towards Burlington Heights. Bruyeres' and Vincent's major concern at this time was that the victorious Americans would continue their pursuit and besiege Burlington Heights. The recent destruction of the British squadron on Lake Erie in September, which left the north shore of Lake Erie indefensible against American ship-borne raiders made this threat seem more immediate. Prevost had asked Bruyeres to evaluate the practicality of maintaining troops and stores at Burlington Heights. He wrote, "I must candidly acknowledge to you that I consider the situation of this part of the Army [the Central Division with Burlington Heights as its base fortification], as very precarious that I think a retreat from hence will soon become indispensable."²¹ Bruyeres noted that Major General Vincent told him that it will soon be necessary, "to remove the Heavy Ordnance [guns] with part

¹⁹Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Bruyeres to Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost. Bt., 11th October 1813; the opinion of Major General Vincent is found within Bruyeres communication to Prevost.

²⁰Stanley, *The War of 1812: Land Operations*, pp 209-213

²¹Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Bruyeres to Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost. Bt., 11th October 1813

of the stores to York, and I am directed to proceed there myself as soon as I am able to make the arrangements that may be necessary to secure, and protect that place.”²² Clearly senior officers at Burlington Heights believed that the position would soon become untenable. The movement to York never occurred because they could not possibly fortify the capital to such an extent that it could, in Bruyeres’ words, be made “secure.” Additionally the expected pursuit and attack by the American army did not occur due to the lateness of the season.²³

Bruyeres’ and Vincent’s statements and opinions represent a fundamental change in the perception of Burlington Heights as a worthwhile position. Just a little more than a month earlier Bruyeres was convinced of the utility of Burlington Heights given that the, “Water communications with the Lake being well retired, and perfectly secure in the event of the Enemy’s Vessels having any temporary advantage so that the stores deposited here could not be destroyed.”²⁴ He goes on to relate that Burlington Heights was worth keeping as a storage depot because the main roads from Amherstburg and York pass through it. This assessment changed with the military situation, and also because the British failed to follow through on planned improvements to the fortifications and accommodations there. More generally, this assessment reflects the lack of British military confidence that Upper Canada could be successfully defended.

²²*Ibid.*

²³American forces under William Henry Harrison declined to pursue the straggling British and returned to Detroit to go into winter quarters, secure in the knowledge that they had control of south western Upper Canada - a situation that would remain the same until the end of the war a year and a few months later when the Treaty of Ghent was signed in December of 1814.

²⁴Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Bruyeres to Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost. Bt., 4th September 1813

This is borne out in the basic strategy followed by Sir George Prevost. From Prevost's perspective the key to British North American defense was to protect the deep water ports of Montreal, Quebec and Halifax. If these ports and the associated forts could be retained, then any losses in Upper Canada could eventually be reversed. In other words, Prevost considered it to be a forlorn hope, not worthy of primary consideration because it would require British forces to be spread too thinly to cover Maritime, Lower Canadian, and Upper Canadian posts. Strategically Prevost's reasoning was sound, given that the British expected that the American forces would focus on campaigns designed to capture the important posts on the St. Lawrence and the Atlantic ocean. Such a strategy would have, if successful, effectively cut off the long line of supply from England to Upper Canada, allowing American forces to achieve the conquest of Upper Canada with minimal cost in terms of manpower and stores. This idea is supported through comments made by 89th Regiment Surgeon, William "Tiger" Dunlop in 1813,

every kind of Military and Naval Stores...had to be brought...up the still portions of the river [St. Lawrence] exposed to the shot of the enemy without protection...we must have been utterly undone, had not the ignorance and inertness of the enemy saved us.²⁵

Similarly, the Duke of Wellington observed at the end of the war:

I have been astonished that the [British] officers of the army and navy employed in that country [British North America] were able to defend those provinces last war; and I can attribute their having been able to defend them as they did only to the inexperience of the officers of the United States in the operations of war.²⁶

²⁵Dr. William Dunlop, *Recollections of the War of 1812*, (Toronto: Historical Publishing Co., 1908), p 35-36

²⁶Stanley, *War of 1812: Land Operations*, p 419

The might and skill of British arms was only partially responsible for the successful defense of Upper Canada. The continued British military presence in the province was largely made possible because of American strategic errors and a poor showing by American armies who essentially lost the war.

The defense of Upper Canada as a forlorn hope defined the conditions under which the British regular troops, militia troops and native allies had to operate – conditions under which they were constantly faced with serious manpower and supply shortages. It is not surprising that they viewed the landscape as a means to an end, and not as territory that had to be defended because it was valued by the people who lived there. Instead, the British military adopted a hasty, calculated, approach to landscape, which can be seen specifically in the creation of the military Heights on Richard Beasley's Burlington Heights property. Also included in the creation of the Heights is the notion of social and political influence, which had serious implications for the lengths to which the military went to exert control over the landscape around it.

CREATING THE MILITARY HEIGHTS

The British army aimed primarily to establish a fortified supply depot as inexpensively and in as short a span of time as possible. This determined the reshaping of the Heights landscape. Rather than engaging in a major restructuring of it, they sought to facilitate a hasty defense. As well, the British held the idea that the Heights and the surrounding landscape were commodities to be consumed for the army's immediate benefit, which was initially facilitated by a system of requisitions, and later by forced exactions under martial law. The latter especially demonstrated

that from the perception of the local inhabitants, the British military appeared to view the landscape as a foreign and hostile environment to be conquered at least temporarily, in order to exert social and political control over the landscape.

The strategic necessity of the British military occupation of Burlington Heights only occurred after the fall of Fort George (Niagara on the Lake). The British retreat from Fort George along the southern shore of Lake Ontario occurred as as fast as possible because of their concern that their troops would be overtaken by both the victorious American army as well as the American naval squadron operating on the lake.²⁷ The retreating British forces needed to establish a hasty defensive position, and Burlington Heights offered the strongest point that they could occupy. They eventually developed the Heights into a fortified supply depot, although in a somewhat dubious fashion.

Upon their arrival at Burlington Heights, the British forces made it the headquarters for the Central division of the British army in Upper Canada, but, although a military contingent constantly occupied it, central division headquarters did not remain there permanently. During the advance by the British towards Fort George in the summer and fall of 1813, they shifted their headquarters several times to the creeks (40 mile [Grimsby], 20 mile [Jordan], and 12 mile [St. Catharines]) flowing into Lake Ontario on the southern shore. By mid November of 1813, it had shifted again back to the Heights, in order to concentrate the troops and prepare for the expected

²⁷The British had a scant five days after arriving on Burlington Heights before they were forced to deal with a pursuing American army. Subsequently this American force was soundly defeated and forced to retreat after the British raided their position during the Battle of Stoney Creek, on June 6th, 1813. The naval threat never materialized due to a British attack on the American naval base at Sackett's harbour on May 28, 1813. The American naval commander Issac Chauncey chose to race back to Sackett's harbour rather than provide naval support to the American troops that pursued the retreating British.

attack by the American army pursuing Major General Henry Proctor after the Battle of the Thames. Their change of the placement of military headquarters shows the extent to which British officials were concerned with the shifting strategic frontier that existed in Upper Canada during the war.

Shortly after commandeering Burlington Heights, officers began directing the troops to dig entrenchments and set up *cheval de frise*.²⁸ Fortifications built across the Heights had to be hastily constructed in expectation of a major assault. In establishing a hasty defense, the British used already existing features on the landscape to best advantage. This raises the question, what aspects of the already existing landscape did the British use to begin the construction of defenses on the Heights, which would have provided them with the quickest route to a hasty defense?

The British used an existing linear mound as the basis for the first earthen defensive wall spanning the Heights.²⁹ The mound which was probably constructed as part of the Middle

²⁸This is fairly typical for early 19th century fortifications in Upper Canada. Usually linear trenches were dug and the dirt from the trenches was piled behind to make an earthen mound. E.B. Biggar, "The Story of the Battle of Stony Creek", in: *Hamilton Spectator*, June 5th 1889, relates that "...trees were felled [on the Heights] for some distance around, with their branches pointing outward, as a sort of *cheval de frise*, traces of which may yet be seen in the present cemetery." *Cheval de frise* are sharp wooden obstacles that are affixed to the front of the earthen mound to slow down or break up the formation of an attacking enemy, making them more vulnerable to defensive fire.

²⁹"Canadian Home Journal, October 12, 1898. 'Old Days in Hamilton – Some Memories of Events Long Past,' Miss M.J. Nisbet, Cited in: John R. Triggs, *Archaeology at Dundurn Castle, 1991*, (Hamilton: The Corporation of the City of Hamilton, 1993), p 3; "A long Indian mound extended from the marsh [Coote's Paradise], across Burlington Heights to the Bay. When the British army was encamped on the Heights in 1812-1813, they used this mound for a fortification, building a barricade on top of it." Miss Nisbet's recollection is of the long past and probably passed on to her by a relative who had first hand knowledge of the mound. Nevertheless, the only mound on the Heights that corresponds to Miss Nisbet's reminiscence is the 1st Line of Defense, as described by Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Bruyeres R.E. on September 4th 1813.

Woodland occupation dating to c. 2,000 B.P., was augmented to fit with the typical approach taken in the formation of field works by armies in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.³⁰ A ditch was dug out in front of the mound and then cheval de frise erected (pointed sticks dug into the front face of the mound which act as an obstacle to attacking troops). Eventually a vertical or horizontal palisade was added. The reminiscence that recorded the re-use of the “Indian mound” by the British army does not record its location on the Heights; however, there is other indirect evidence that provides insight into where this mound actually was sited.

The c. 1793 map of the Heights shows a rustic fence that was probably built by Beasley to separate his property from the 400 acres belonging to the Lottridge family, which he gained full title to in 1798.³¹ The line of the fence extends from the eastern edge of the Heights above Beasley’s house on the bay shore, to the edge of the precipitous drop off to the west. When the British military maps drawn in 1813 and 1823 are compared to the c. 1793 map, it appears that the British earthwork labeled as the First Line of Defense was built across the same space that Beasley used for his fence and very likely across the same mound built by the Middle Woodland occupants of the site, almost 2000 years before.

The British used Richard Beasley’s rustic fence line, built on the Middle Woodland mound and stretching across the southern portion of the Heights, as the starting point for their hasty defensive wall, which would be further developed into the ditched, palisaded earthwork that can be seen in

³⁰Spence, M.W., R.H. Pihl and C. Murphy, “Cultural Complexes of the Early and Middle Woodland Periods”, in: C.J. Ellis & N.Ferris, ed. *The Archaeology of Southern Ontario To A.D. 1650* (London: Occasional Publications of the London Chapter, Ontario Archaeological Society Inc., 1990)

³¹Nicholas Leblovic, “The Life and History of Richard Beasley, Esquire”, in: *Wentworth Bygones*, vol. # 7, (Hamilton: The Head of the Lake Historical Society, 1967), p 5

the 1813 and 1823 maps. The development of Beasley's fence into a fortification certainly explains why there is no fence shown in either the 1813 or 1823 maps, while many other prominent features such as the wharf complex, house, barn and garden are included. Perhaps the most telling piece of indirect evidence in confirming the use of Beasley's fence line as a fortification comes from a letter written by an officer of the Royal Engineers, Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Bruyeres to Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost³² on the 4th of September 1813.³³

By then the First Line of Defense was already complete and a Second Line was being constructed at the narrowing of the Heights a few hundred metres to the north of the first. Bruyeres' traveled to Burlington Heights in the fall of 1813 to make the arrangements necessary to build barracks for the troops.³⁴ He provides a commentary on the state of the defenses. He carries out this duty, "in order not to lose time owing to the impracticability of carrying on immediate operations against the position of Fort George."³⁵ He was in his own words "disappointed in the strength of the First Line of Defense,"³⁶ because of the presence of broken

³²Prevost was the overall commander of forces in British North America during the War of 1812

³³Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Bruyeres to Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost Bt., 4th September 1813

³⁴E.B. Biggar, "The Story of the Battle of Stony Creek", in *Hamilton Spectator*, June 5th 1889, p 5; In reference to the troops' accomodation prior to the battle, Biggar relates that "An order to move forward startled the sleeping officers and men from the grass where on they were reposing,..."

³⁵Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Bruyeres to Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost Bt., 4th September 1813

³⁶Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Bruyeres to Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost Bt., 4th September 1813

ground which would allow an army to approach under cover within musket shot and command portions of the First Line of Defense.³⁷ He explains the weakness of the chosen position of the First Line, it, “had been thrown up in great haste, and conducted by Officers who have not been thoroughly acquainted with the system of Field Works.” In Bruyeres’ professional opinion, the First Line of Defense could not be improved easily. Its lack of potential for improvement stemmed from the fact that it was so poorly sited. Bruyeres maintained that the incorrect siting was due to the inexperience of the officers who oversaw its construction. He did not consider that the officers would have taken advantage of the already existing mounded fence line which, without further augmentation would have provided some cover to the defending troops. By the time that Bruyeres arrived at Burlington Heights, very few of the officers, including Major General John Vincent and Lieutenant Colonel John Harvey, were present to provide background on the original siting of the First Line of Defense.³⁸ Bruyeres himself was only on the Heights for a brief period before he returned to the mobile British headquarters located on Four Mile Creek, near to Fort George. This certainly explains why there is no direct reference to the mounded fence line that provided the basis for the First Line of Defense. But more importantly, it testifies to the major changes in perspective on the landscape of Burlington Heights over time. The

³⁷Broken or dead ground refers to the presence of depressions in the landscape which would shelter an advancing army from defensive fire from the earthwork. Command refers to an army's ability to gain the advantage in attack or defense by virtue of forming up in a position on the landscape which overlooks or dominates the position of an opposing force. In this case the First Line of Defense was so set up that an advancing American army could dominate portions of this position.

³⁸Wood, William, (ed.), *Select British Documents of the War of 1812*, Vol. II, (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1923), p 152, 155, 320, 321; These documents clearly show that by September 4th 1813 both Major General John Vincent and Adjutant General Lieutenant Colonel John Harvey were no longer situated on Burlington Heights.

mound itself began as a funerary/ritual monument by native groups as part of a spiritual wilderness. It was then used as a natural division in the landscape to mark off and enclose improved private property from unimproved waste by Richard Beasley. Finally, it formed the basis of a defensive wall used by the British army which marked the space as part of the military complex.

The reuse of features of the landscape did not stop with the building of the First Line of Defense. During the initial phase of fortifying the Heights (before the Battle of Stoney Creek, June 6, 1813), the British also made use of Beasley's barn. An 1873 *Hamilton Spectator* article, refers to a "blockhouse" built by the British army, around which they camped prior to leaving for the assault on the American position at Stoney Creek.³⁹ According to the reporter, traces still remained of the foundation timbers as well as ditches dug by the army around the blockhouse just to the south of what by 1873 was the Hamilton Cemetery. Apart from the fact that it would be logistically impossible for the troops to construct a blockhouse in four or five days, it is not unusual for confusion to occur in distinguishing between a log barn and a log blockhouse. Hutslar in his book on log construction in the Ohio country makes an interesting point which would explain the reporter's misunderstanding. He concluded that it was virtually impossible in most cases to distinguish blockhouses from barns, especially if the buildings were either barns converted to blockhouses or blockhouses converted to barns. A blockhouse that has the same shape and alignment as the one mentioned in the 1873 article, appears on the military map drawn by Bruyeres in the fall of 1813. Hachure lines, which are used in mapping to show changes in elevation, (around the building) suggest that a ditch was dug to strengthen its defense. The

³⁹*Hamilton Spectator*, August 21st 1873

Spectator reporter was quite correct in assuming that the building under consideration was a military blockhouse in one sense, in that there was a log structure on the spot mentioned that was used as a blockhouse; however, the British army did not construct it.

Rather, there is good evidence that the structure was Richard Beasley's barn. Perhaps the most significant piece of evidence to support the idea that the blockhouse was actually Beasley's barn stems from the maps. When the 1813 map is compared to the 1823 map, it becomes clear that the so-called blockhouse is in the same position as Beasley's barns.⁴⁰ Secondly, the 1793 map which shows the extent of Beasley's fields has no barn; however, when the position of the so-called blockhouse on the 1813 map is compared with the position of Beasley's fields on the c. 1793 map it is clear that it would have been closely situated to those fields. Clearly Beasley must have raised a barn sometime after 1793 and before 1813.

From Beasley's war loss claim in which he describes the damage to his property during the army's stay, he mentions back rent owed by the army on his barn for a period of two years beginning June 1st 1813 until June 24th 1815.⁴¹ The loss claim also stipulates that 82 bushels of wheat, 51 bushels of rye and 1 ½ tons of hay were destroyed in the barn. The wording is significant here in that the cereal grass was "destroyed" and not "consumed" by the troops. The most likely explanation for the destruction of the grass was that it was destroyed because the troops used it for bedding. Beasley does not say what caused the destruction of his cereal grass in the barn, but he would not have directly observed its destruction, having been forcefully evicted

⁴⁰The 1813 map shows a large square building which has been interpreted as a blockhouse. The 1823 map shows a cluster of three barns in the same location.

⁴¹Richard Beasley's war losses. Copy of document from National Archives of Canada -- War Losses 1812-1814, Dundurn Castle Library.

from his property on June 1st 1813. Beasley also claimed 5 tons of hay, which he said was used by the soldiers and teamsters for bedding in 1814.

Beasley also mentions a shed and a sheep stable burned by the troops during their stay on the Heights.⁴² While this activity may relate to the troops taking apart these structures in order to provide fire wood in their struggle to keep warm⁴³, it is more likely that the shortage of proper barrack facilities forced them to inhabit any structure to keep some sort of roof over their heads. Bruyeres himself in a letter to Governor General Sir George Prevost on 11th October 1813 admitted, that the progress of erecting the public buildings was very slow, owing to a shortage of manpower which was due to large scale militia desertions.⁴⁴ The troops made use of whatever was available for shelter, using the barn and possibly the shed and stable as makeshift barracks. The grain served as stuffing for their bedding. Eventually the army did build a few barracks buildings and set up store houses, but not in time to adequately house the thousands of soldiers, warriors and their families retreating to the Heights from the west.

The army continued to rely on Beasley's resources as well as those procured from the surrounding hinterland until the end of their stay in 1815. The prolonged stay of the army on the Heights and the mass influx of retreating troops to the garrison, coupled with poor harvests and the perceived self-interested attitudes of the local population, were problems that had to be dealt

⁴²Richard Beasley's war losses. Copy of document from National Archives of Canada -- War Losses 1812-1814, Dundurn Castle Library.

⁴³Included in the war loss claim is a report on things used by the troops and the native allies for firewood, which included: 3,000 fence rails, as well as a quantity of black walnut burned while making bread.

⁴⁴Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Bruyeres to Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost Bt., 11th October 1813, Dundurn Castle Library.

with. The civilian population had to be compelled to contribute vital stores regardless of whether they had stores to spare. The availability of stores to the army was not just determined by the surplus held by civilians but also by the desire on the part of civilians to contribute. This situation fluctuated during the war and helps to explain why the army forcefully exerted a negative social influence across the landscape often at the expense of the civilian population through the process of forced exactions.

In September of 1812, a representative of the commissariat at Niagara reported that, "In present Circumstances People are happy to get rid of their Flour on any terms."⁴⁵ Requisitioning food from the population to fill the storehouses of regional fortresses was not a problem; however, that situation was soon to change. As early as March of 1813, British officials were concerned about the poor harvest of 1812. As one commissariat officer at Prescott commented, "I am fully satisfied that the grain sown last Autumn in this District will prove utterly inadequate for the consumption of the Troops stationed in it."⁴⁶ Supplies of flour and beef were eagerly sought out and acquired from any available source, including smuggled goods from the United States.⁴⁷

Early on in the war, the army used a requisition system to acquire stores from the local

⁴⁵Cited in Douglas McCalla, *Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784-1870*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p 33;

⁴⁶Cited in McCalla, *Planting the Province*, p 33; Desmond Morton, *A Military History of Canada* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1985), p 61

⁴⁷McCalla, *Planting the Province*, p 33; Dunlop, *Recollections*, p 33-35; Dunlop relates a tale wherein 100 head of cattle were purchased by the British Commissariat at Cornwall from an American officer who was a self-declared smuggler. Apparently 300 more, which belonged to a Senator from Vermont, had been smuggled over the border and were also available for sale .

populace. Magistrates who administered the system, issued receipts or army bills, to the farmers whose supplies were then taken. The failure of the harvest of 1812 was one reason the system broke down. Another was that the farmers began withholding their grain in order to raise the prices. Commissariat officials noted in early 1814 that there was, "a disposition on the part of most of the Inhabitants to withhold their Grain until the necessities of the Troops should oblige the Commissariat to offer an extravagant premium in Specie."⁴⁸ This perception led to great frustration on the part of military commanders and soldiers alike. Soon this self-interested approach of the civilian population was well matched by that of the military through martial law and forced exactions.

The land was viewed by the army as a commodity that was valued for its resources – the vital flour and pork found on local farms – most notably in the Niagara Peninsula and around the Head of the Lake where the majority of military operations were carried out. According to historian George Sheppard, most of the war loss claims submitted to the government after the war support this statement and reveal that approximately 50% of claims were made against British soldiers and the native allies.⁴⁹ At certain times Upper Canadians, may have wondered just who was the enemy.

When the military operations after the fall of Fort George (May 27th 1813) up to and including the retreat of the General Proctor (October 5th 1813) are examined, it is clear that the standard military operating procedures of the British army did little to endear them to the Upper

⁴⁸Cited in McCalla, p 33

⁴⁹George Sheppard, *Plunder, Profit, and Paroles: A Social History of the War of 1812 in Upper Canada*, (Montreal: Queen's University Press, 1994), p 126-7; British forces were responsible for 49.6 % of all Single-perpetrator War Claims.

Canadian population. Wherever large concentrations of military personnel congregated, incidences of violence and maltreatment of civilians could be found.⁵⁰ To the inhabitants of Upper Canada, it must have seemed as if the British army was behaving as if it were operating in foreign or conquered territory rather than in the homeland of loyal British subjects. However, the practices carried out by the British army were part of the normal operations of an army established in concentrated form on the landscape.⁵¹ British commanders make little mention of the local population except as to whether they were loyal or disloyal and as to whether they had stores usable by the army.⁵²

This interpretation fits well with the typical actions of armies in the late 18th and early 19th

⁵⁰William Wood, (ed.), *Select British Documents of the War of 1812*, Vol. II, (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1923), p 138-339

⁵¹Rory Muir, *Tactics and the Experience of Battle in the Age of Napoleon*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); John Keegan, *The Face of Battle: A study of Agincourt, Waterloo, and the Somme*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1976); It was common for an area around a large military concentration to be completely exploited for its resources leaving the local population destitute. In contemporary Napoleonic contexts French and British armies shared resources at the expense of the local population. Also of importance is the evidence from the American Revolutionary war which indicates that soldiers short of supplies often preyed upon the civilian population - a population they were supposed to be defending. As Charles Royster in his book *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783*, (Williamsburg Va.: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), p 72-75, argues, soldiers looted because they were acting on their own sense of independence which was at the root of the American state of mind. While official forced exactions were considered legitimate, disciplinary actions were ineffective in dealing with this problem. They became part of the negative yet necessary process of maintaining a standing army. Fred Anderson in his book *A Peoples Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years War*, (Williamsburg: Va.: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), p 83-88, argues that unofficial forced actions in the area around concentrated troops were rare only because armies were often encamped away from civilian farms.

⁵²William Wood, (ed.), *Select British Documents of the War of 1812*, Vol. II, (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1923), p 138-339

century. As military historian's Martin Van Creveld and John Shy have pointed out, only a small portion of supplies required by an army can be supplied by fortified supply depots such as Burlington Heights; most must come from the area directly around the site where an army is encamped. As Clausewitz points out, armies needed to have the cooperation of the local inhabitants in the quest to secure sufficient stores, otherwise forced exactions were necessary.⁵³ Ideally, they aimed to preserve the resources of one's own country by going on campaign in, and extracting resources from, enemy territory. Problems arose when armies either spent too much time in one area or returned to an area without allowing enough time for the exhausted resource base to be replenished.⁵⁴

Five days after the battle of Stoney Creek, Colonel John Harvey reported to Colonel Edward Baynes, that the army in the Niagara Peninsula continued to advance eastwards from 40 Mile Creek (Grimsby) towards Fort George in order to put pressure on the enemy to continue the general retreat, as well as capture as many prisoners as possible,

withholding all Supplies from them...for the purpose of sparing the resources of the Country in our rear [around the Head of the Lake] and drawing the Supplies of the Army as long as possible from the Country immediately in the Enemy's

⁵³Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, (Kent: Wordsworth Classics, 1997), pp 267-271

⁵⁴Martin Van Creveld, *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p 37; Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, (Kent: Wordsworth Classics, 1997); See also John Shy, "Logistical Crisis and the American Revolution", in: John A. Lynn (ed.), *Feeding Mars: Logistics in Western Warfare from the Middle Ages to the Present*, (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1993), p 161-79 for a discussion of the factors faced by the fledgling United States in provisioning the Continental army during the Revolution. The problems in provisioning the Continental army are virtually identical to the British in Upper Canada during the War of 1812 - in particular the actions of the local populations in holding out for higher prices...or seeking exemption from providing badly needed stores to the military which resulted in forced exactions by the troops.

Vicinity.⁵⁵

The Commander of Forces in Upper Canada Major General Francis De Rottenburg gave General Vincent at Burlington Heights similar advice. He encouraged Vincent to mount, expeditions... in concert with the Indians towards the Niagara Frontier if only for the purpose of sharing with the Enemy the Supplies of that abundant District.⁵⁶ Supplies were to be spared strictly for the army and in the latter case shared with the enemy, and only with the civilian population once the army had been provided for. When these assertions are combined with the general idea of carrying out these operations with as little risk to the British troops as possible, it strongly suggests that the army's actions were largely concerned with its own preservation, and not that of the local population, whose safety seems to have been of secondary importance.⁵⁷ A reference to provisioning by General Vincent, who was seeking to explain why he abandoned valuable stores in the Niagara Peninsula during a hasty retreat to Burlington Heights in early October of 1813, provides insight into the British perspective on the relative importance of the civilian population.⁵⁸

With the threat of a marauding American force chasing General Proctor all the way to the

⁵⁵Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol. II, p 153

⁵⁶Wood, (ed.), *Select British Documents*, Vol. II, p 330

⁵⁷William Weekes, "Civil Authority and Martial Law in Upper Canada", in: Morris Zaslow (ed), *The Defended Border: Upper Canada and the War of 1812*, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1964), p 202; George Prevost had given commanders at Detroit and Niagara the power to impose martial law when it was "...an indispensable act for the preservation of their command or the subsistence of the troops."

⁵⁸Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol. II, p 335

Head of the Lake from the west, Vincent believed that a retreat from the Peninsula was necessary. This unfavourable news from the west encouraged militia troops responsible for manning the supply wagons to desert in droves. As Vincent put it, “& tho’ Dragoons were employed,” it was impossible to “procure” enough wagons to transport his baggage and stores.⁵⁹ The important word in this quote is “Dragoons.” They are a particular type of light cavalry unit that carry a carbine. Dragoons had the advantage of being able to fight mounted with their sabres and carbines, or dismounted as infantry. The term however also has a more devious meaning that applies particularly well to Vincent’s reference. When dragoons are used to search for wagons or otherwise make demands amongst the civilian population, the coercive result is often anything but positive for that population.⁶⁰ In this case, Vincent used his dragoons to persuade the local population to provide him with the requisite number of wagons for his stores and baggage. Vincent, like many other senior British officers believed that there was a healthy disloyal element lurking in the Niagara Peninsula, which may be one reason that he thought dragooning necessary to scare up the required wagons. Vincent’s reference to the temporary storage of army goods in the barns of “certain loyal Subjects in that Neighbourhood,” implies that there were some citizens who chose to cooperate with the British for the time being. It is just as likely that a general retreat of the British army would have encouraged self-interested civilians in the peninsula to supply goods to the Americans.

⁵⁹Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol. II, p 335

⁶⁰Philip B.Gove, (ed.), *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary*, Vol. I, (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 1966), p 685; Webster’s Dictionary defines dragoon as meaning “to reduce to subjection: persecute by the harsh use of troops to compel or attempt to compel into submission by violent measures.”

Vincent also gave orders that any of the stores such as flour that could not be transported back to Burlington Heights were to be distributed to "the poor inhabitants of that part of the country, rather than fall into the hands of the Enemy,"⁶¹ Of all the documents that concern the events in the Niagara Peninsula in the fall of 1813, this order is rare because it mentions providing the civilians with much needed aid. Vincent's concern was phrased as a secondary consideration, however, justifying the abandonment of valuable stores. Thus it can be argued that the British, based on their own self-interested stance, saw the most important element as maintaining the ability of the army to operate and not the preservation of the rights, needs and wants of the civilian population in the Niagara Peninsula. As the war carried on, the British faced an increasingly uncooperative population. They resorted to instituting martial law, extending their political influence, and convened courts of Assize in 1814.

The perceived lack of cooperation on the part of the civilian population in Upper Canada in willingly supplying stores to the British military was responded to by the declaration of province wide martial law in April of 1814.⁶² Convinced that stores were being withheld by the local farmers even though fair prices were offered by the British Commissariat, Lieutenant General Gordon Drummond declared in a proclamation, that it was in the interest of "public safety" to

⁶¹Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol. II, p 337

⁶²"A Proclamation, 5th November 1814" in: Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol. III, part I, p 296-97; This is an American declaration which was established to inform Upper Canadians of the American intention of commandeering flour and grain in the district of Lake Erie, is startlingly similar to Drummond's proclamation in terms of the recognition that Upper Canadian residents would be dealt with ruthlessly if they withheld stores from American Commissariat agents.

supply the British troops stationed in the province with the necessary stores.⁶³ The application of martial law gave the Commissariat the power to compel farmers to give up stores without legal recourse to dispute the requisitions. The necessity of declaring a state of martial law showed the resistant attitudes of the Upper Canadian population in voluntarily aiding the provincial defenders. The stated goal of the declaration of martial law, the maintenance of public safety was obviously not considered correct or realistic by a significant number of Upper Canadians generally, and by residents around the Head of the Lake specifically.

The tone of military documents emphasize public safety little; instead they emphasized the survival of the British troops. While one benefit of ensuring that British troops were well fed was preserving the province as a British holding, it did not guarantee that public safety would be maintained. Nor was this the only possible outcome that the population might have feared or welcomed.⁶⁴ A desire on the part of Upper Canadians to profit as much as possible, and also the perception on the part of the people that support of the British may not have been the best choice in a war that at the time favoured the Americans, are two reasons why they might have felt this way. The military could do little else but extend its political influence – something perceived by part of the civilian population as a tyrannical power's actions. The militarily-controlled provincial government set in motion the convening of the courts of Assize at Ancaster, which resulted in the

⁶³Cited in Sheppard, *Plunder, Profit, and Paroles*, p 170

⁶⁴By 1812 for instance, roughly 5/6 of the population of the province was made up of recently arrived Americans whose loyalties to the crown were questionable at best. Dennis Duffy, "The Ancaster Eight", in: *The Beaver*, (June/July, 2000), p 32; Issac Brock felt that his hands were tied as Provincial Administrator when he admitted that, "My situation is most critical, not from anything the enemy can do, but from the disposition of the people - The population, believe me is essentially bad - A full belief possesses them all that this Province must inevitably succumb...Most of the people have lost all confidence."

execution on Burlington Heights of eight men convicted of high treason.

Concerned over the evidence for Upper Canadian disloyalty, the government decided to charge and prosecute as many inhabitants for disloyal acts as possible during the Assizes at Ancaster in 1814. Provincial administrator and commander of forces Lieutenant General Sir Gordon Drummond suggested that the trials should be held near Burlington Heights, but the place was eventually shifted to Ancaster when it was realized that no township of Burlington existed. Clearly Drummond had chosen the Heights as a site because it was near to the place where most of the offences were committed. The trials represented the exertion of a political influence by the military, and, therefore, the placement of the trials on the Heights reinforced the importance of the military presence on the landscape on and around Burlington Heights.⁶⁵

Prior to the trials, Drummond created boards to “secure and detain such persons as His Majesty shall suspect of treasonable adherence to the enemy.”⁶⁶ Fifty men on seven regional boards reported to a special commission presided over by acting provincial attorney-general John Beverly Robinson. Justifiable cause for charging citizens who engaged in treasonous acts including their aiding American raiders, or participating as disloyal elements in units such as the Canadian Volunteers.⁶⁷ In Robinson’s view, this activity was symptomatic of a wider problem.

⁶⁵Stanley, p286; Stanley maintains that Ancaster was chosen as the site of the trials because of its close proximity to Burlington Heights, thereby reducing the chance of an American attempt to free the prisoners.

⁶⁶Sheppard, p 165

⁶⁷The Canadian Volunteers as the name suggests was a unit of militia mostly made up of Upper Canadians. The unit acted as a police force in and around Fort George until the late fall of 1813. They are generally held responsible for the burning of Niagara (Niagara on the Lake) after the retreat of the American militia forces in December of 1813. The unit was formed and commanded by former Upper Canadian assemblyman Joseph Willcocks who along with Benajah

The trials would serve as the best way to “overawe the spirit of disaffection in the Province.”⁶⁸

The trials were presided over by Chief Justice Thomas Scott, William Dummer Powell and William Campbell in a civilian court under great pressure by Drummond.⁶⁹ On May 8, 1814, Drummond through his secretary made it clear to Robinson that the purpose of such proceedings was to achieve quick convictions of the guilty, followed by public executions. Apparently, Drummond was disturbed by Robinson’s slow preparations, which prompted him to suggest that if Robinson could not handle the responsibility of organizing the proceedings, then they should be postponed and relocated to York. From Robinson’s point of view this kind of pressure meant that he might lose his opportunity to preside over the court of Assizes to another. Robinson quickly made the appropriate arrangements and the court convened on May 23, 1814. At that time nineteen prisoners appeared before the judges, of whom fifteen were convicted, and eight were eventually executed on July 20, 1814. The judge read out a pronouncement that promised a grisly fate couched in a long tradition of state retribution for disloyal acts:

You are to be drawn on Hurdles to place of execution, hanged by the neck but not until dead, cut down while alive and your entrails taken out and burnt before your faces, your heads cut off bodies divided into four quarters, heads and quarters to

Mallory were two of the most notorious perpetrators of treasonous acts in the province. Both had charges levelled against them during the Ancaster assizes, but neither was ever brought to trial.

⁶⁸Sheppard, p 166;

⁶⁹Sheppard, p166; E.A. Cruikshank, “A Study of Disaffection in Upper Canada”, in Morris Zaslow (ed.), *The Defended Border: Upper Canada and the War of 1812*, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1964), p 218; Robinson was also convinced that “Executions of traitors by military power would have comparatively little influence. The people would consider them arbitrary acts of punishment but would not acknowledge them as the natural effects of justice.” The trials were to be held as close as was possible to the London district where a large proportion of the treasonous acts had been carried out, in order to more easily secure the testimony of witnesses.

be at the King's disposal.⁷⁰

A hurdle was a frame, sled or other vehicle upon which traitors were transported to the place of execution. In this case, the convicted were transported on public display to Burlington Heights where the executions were carried out in front of a large crowd.⁷¹ The military wanted to ensure that the executions were carried out without incident and it wanted to associate the punishment of treasonous acts with the military presence on the Heights. In much the same way acts of military looting, commandeering and dragooning by soldiers and natives demonstrated the hasty, exploitive, despotic British military approach to the landscape surrounding Burlington Heights. The notion that the army deliberately wanted to associate Burlington Heights with the lingering shadow of the gibbet and a frightening executive function of the government was made clear by James Durand a short time after the war.

During the introductory session of the seventh parliament in 1817, Durand stated that during the war, "the Military domineered over the community" around Burlington Heights. According to Durand, who spoke out despite the suspension of Habeas Corpus, Major General John Vincent, while in command of the Burlington Heights garrison, threatened to burn the homes of reluctant militiamen living in the surrounding area. If Vincent made such comments, he probably did so out of frustration at the high rates of militia desertions, which significantly compromised his ability to allocate manpower to take care of the basic duties of the Burlington Heights garrison. It may be that this reluctance on the part of the militia reflected the wider attitude of a large proportion of

⁷⁰Duffy, *Ancaster Eight*, p 32

⁷¹Sheppard, p 168

the civilian population and might explain why military contingents were placed at crossroads around the Head of the Lake in order to,

stop all sleighs having provisions on board and in consequence the farmers' grists and the travellers' bags of oats were equally precipitated in the military depots, though perhaps a large hungry family were waiting the good man's return from the mill to be fed.⁷²

Durand was largely unsupported by the other assemblymen in this protest of the tyrannical actions of the army during the war. In frustration, he referred to local merchant patrons who gave in to the temptation of "good [military] contracts", as "versatile chameleons of corruption."⁷³ These statements were made in the context of a post-war political message to parliament directed at garnering support for a reform movement, which would eventually be squashed largely by the same "chameleons" that Durand had railed against.

Many Upper Canadians found little favour in answering the British call to militia service, or more importantly requests to supply stores. The pressing need of the British troops to acquire badly needed stores led to unofficial forced exactions by the troops around the Head of the Lake. The many cases of forced exactions by the troops garrisoned on Burlington Heights testify to the negative effect that the British presence on the landscape had on the local population.

While this practice may have been viewed by soldiers as part of their normal existence – a game of sorts referred to as "hooking" – the victims of this so-called game were often left with a

⁷²Cited in Sheppard, p 188-89

⁷³Cited in Sheppard, p 188-89

confirmation of the stereotypical description of the common British soldier.⁷⁴ One particularly nasty example concerns farmer George Castor of Barton Township, who was awakened suddenly one night by unusual sounds in his house. Upon investigation, he encountered three British regulars from the Royal Scots (1st regiment of foot), going through his possessions inside his house looking for food, liquor and money. According to Castor, the soldiers – who had blackened their faces to avoid being recognized – knocked him to the floor and then stole his savings which amounted to 45 pounds in army bills. Ebenezer Jones of Saltfleet Township could do little more than watch as a group of British soldiers shot 35 of his geese and then bayoneted one of his sows.⁷⁵

These activities were not just confined to the British regulars. The native troops also engaged in looting,⁷⁶ although, the victims responded much differently in these cases. Rather than enduring the looting in dumb acceptance, the victims organized vigilance groups which actively and aggressively reacted to native looting. In 1813, three natives were murdered, apparently while stealing from farms near to the Head of the Lake. Augustus Jones, who it was thought because of his close ties to the local Mississauga groups would provide a fair assessment of the situation, conducted the investigation. His inquiries were met with little cooperation on the part

⁷⁴John Keegan, *The Mask of Command*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1987), p 126-7; Stereotypically the British soldier of the Napoleonic period, and in Wellington's army in particular, is often described as the scum of the earth who enlisted for drink or to escape family responsibilities. Both Keegan, *Face of Battle*, p 115, 182-183, 198, 281; and Muir, *Experience of Battle*, p 6, 19, 20, 66-67, 108, 186, 199, 229 agree that looting - though illegal - on the part of soldiers and civilians was a common survival tactic both on and off the battlefield.

⁷⁵Sheppard, p 119

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p 120; "The various Indian encampments in the vicinity of Burlington Heights were the staging grounds for hundreds of incidents of looting."

of his neighbours. This was made abundantly clear to Jones when in the course of his investigation he returned to his home one evening to find his barn on fire. There was little doubt in Jones' mind that the fire had been set to hinder "his exertions to discover the murderer."⁷⁷

Forced exactions would certainly not have been as frequent if the Commissariat had been able to supply the British troops and native allies with adequate food. However the breakdown in the system was in part caused by a lack of civilian cooperation as well.

When the war tested the system, it became clear to the army that it could not depend on the cooperation of the local population. If it were to continue to consider the landscape around the Heights as a commodity to be consumed for its immediate benefit, then it was only a matter of time before the system of requisitions would lead to forced exactions under martial law. It is not unreasonable to expect that the British military had to view the landscape as a foreign and hostile environment. Clearly, the military approach prompted men like James Durand to characterize the British military garrison at Burlington Heights during the War of 1812 as domineering over the community – what amounted to a despotic and tyrannical presence on the landscape.

A PICTURESQUE AND DEVIOUS LANDSCAPE

The idea that the Upper Canadian landscape was a hostile and foreign environment is carried one step further through the assertion that parts of the landscape had inherently devious qualities. Assistant Surgeon John Douglas of the 8th regiment along with others such as Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Bruyeres R.E., and Mr. Griffiths (an officer serving in the Royal Scots

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, p 121

during the war), did not perceive Burlington Heights, as well as many of the commercial centres in Upper Canada, as anything more than under-developed wasteland.

For Douglas, waste was associated with deviousness which in turn defined the landscape as sickly or healthy.⁷⁸ Officers such as Bruyeres, Griffith and Douglas all had considerable experience with the onset of remittent fever (which they encountered frequently in Upper Canada), amongst other diseases which they attributed to unhealthy landscapes around the world. The direct relationship between ill health and the environment that these officers perceived is quite clear.

During the war, Douglas was an Assistant Surgeon in the 8th Regiment of Foot, serving primarily in the Niagara Peninsula. After the war, he retired on half-pay and became a Parochial Medical Officer for Hawick and Wilton, Scotland. He also served for a time as a Certifying Surgeon under the Factories Act. He died at age 72 in 1861. The Douglas family was well placed in Hawick although it is not known whether his branch of the family was so well connected.⁷⁹

⁷⁸Dunlop, *Recollections*, p 4; It is interesting to note that Douglas describes the suffering of the troops during the siege of Fort Erie during the summer of 1814 as horrible, stemming from the sickly landscape. He prefers to blame the immorality of the landscape as the cause of the soldiers' afflictions. In contrast another surgeon, William Dunlop, who was also at the siege of Fort Erie makes little mention of the sickness of the troops. In character, Dunlop's writing is akin to Elizabeth Simcoe's in that it is much more positive than Douglas', and Dunlop is also less inclined to make negative moral judgements. Dunlop was well aware that the problem of soldiers absenting themselves from fighting due to sickness was a running joke - a ploy that was a product of malingering by the "...wors[t] characters in the army..." and not just remittent fever. In Dunlop's view the landscape represented hardship and was a stress upon the body when extended and difficult work was necessary; however, he also came to the conclusion at the end of his recollections that the Upper Canadian landscape was very good for the constitution of the men who worked and lived in it.

⁷⁹John Douglas, *Medical Topography of Upper Canada*, (London: Burgess and Hill, 1819), reprinted by Science History Publications/U.S.A., 1985

Little else is known about his personal life. Certainly he was well qualified to make observations on the work of a surgeon during the War of 1812. His writing style and his frequent references to the canon of the picturesque in terms of the description of the landscape strongly suggest a first class education, which gives him much in common with Mrs. Simcoe, George Heriot and Elizabeth Hale. Using the language and concepts of the picturesque, Douglas pronounces judgements on the landscape.

Judging by the ideas expressed in his *Medical Topography of Upper Canada*, Douglas was not unmoved in his descriptions of the province by the wonders of the landscape.⁸⁰ "The appearances which nature everywhere presents to the eye in this part of the world, are truly sublime, and would arrest the attention even of an indifferent observer."⁸¹ He was obviously fascinated by the "lofty mountains," "immense rivers," "the lakes of great extent," and "huge cataracts, whose precipitated waters strike the eye with wonder and astonishment."⁸² He showed an awareness of the ancient habitations of the native peoples, though he is disappointed that there are no ruins to mark their occupation - ruins being an integral part of the picturesque landscape. The lakes are described as "remarkable" for their beauty and extent. He celebrates the wildness of the storm tossed lakes focusing on Lake Superior, and is awed by the "general stillness of nature, and the awful silence of surrounding solitude."⁸³ At the same time he noted that the country is desolate – full of undeveloped waste.

⁸⁰Douglas, *Medical Topography of Upper Canada*, p 2-3

⁸¹*Ibid.*, p 2

⁸²*Ibid.*, p 2

⁸³*Ibid.*, p 2-3

Douglas judged the landscape itself as either healthy or unhealthy depending on its physical attributes. In general the undeveloped, and therefore unhealthy nature of certain parts of the province caused sickness at certain times of the year. In referring specifically to commercial settlements in the Niagara Peninsula and around Lake Ontario, Douglas related that, "Placed as they generally are on the banks of oozy streams and stagnating rivers; in certain seasons of the year, they contribute materially to the production of sickness."⁸⁴ He singles York out as being a sickly site because the winds off of the lake scarcely stir its stagnant waters. At certain times of the year the inhabitants were commonly afflicted with bouts of remittent fever.⁸⁵ The land around Chippawa is also described as being very swampy which in summer time exuded a "noxious effluvia."⁸⁶

The settlers, he remarks, are gradually "softening" the wildness of nature. Enclosures built by the settlers imposed a much needed order and regularity to the landscape. He saw potential in harnessing the bounty of what nature offered, which at the time of his observation, was scattered and undeveloped. The area north of Chippawa Creek (located just south of the escarpment), including what is today Niagara on the Lake and Queenston, was a much more satisfactory environment because it retained the necessary craggy wildness, while also having the development of prosperous agricultural, commercial and industrial communities. As he put it, "The scene is diversified by valleys and mountains and by streams of water which in summer are refreshing to

⁸⁴Douglas, p 5

⁸⁵Ibid, p 6

⁸⁶Ibid, p 7

the sight. The woods are cleared; the fields are enclosed; the frontier is well peopled.”⁸⁷ The fringes of the village of Niagara were wild and refreshing. For Douglas, they provided the broken and craggy vistas that framed the scene, while in the central focus of the community the enclosed fields were planted in neat rows around rectilinear structures such as barns and farmhouses. Nature at a distance was a highly desirable complementary feature of the landscape. In the present it provided a stunning backdrop, for the future it was full of potential for development.

North of the Chippawa, Four mile Creek was the only water course suitable for mills, which explains why settlement was more concentrated in this area. In contrast, only one mill was located on Black Creek which empties into the Niagara river south of the Chippawa.⁸⁸ Douglas considered in his description of York, Kingston, Chippawa, Fort Erie and Burlington Heights, that nature in too close proximity, or in un-improvable form, was overwhelming or dissatisfying. In contrast to his description of the well developed landscape north of Chippawa Creek, his description of these places shows the opposite. Each is situated in an unhealthy environment, due to slow or still water courses, and stagnant marshes. All of these areas were largely undeveloped. Each had a small population, and were surrounded by lands which were not under cultivation nor enclosed by fence lines. They had little industrial development. Overall, Douglas’ descriptions of these landscapes defined the conditions that the troops were exposed to during the War of 1812. Troops were positioned at Burlington Heights, Chippawa, Fort Erie, and York on and off throughout the war. Out of necessity the troops shifted their positions accordingly, depending on

⁸⁷Ibid, p 8

⁸⁸R. Louis Gentilcore, “*The Beginnings of Settlement in the Niagara Peninsula, 1782-1792*”, in: *The Canadian Geographer*, Vol. # I, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963) p 79; By 1792 there were 5 sawmills and two grist mills located on 4 mile creek.

the ever-changing strategic frontier in the Niagara Peninsula.

As Douglas stated in his *Medical Topography of Upper Canada*, "The troops when ordered to advance on any particular position, or again to retire to their several places of occupation, were harassed by long and fatiguing marches."⁸⁹ The stress on the troops factored in the development of diseases and injuries which medical men such as Douglas contended with. Douglas maintained that the causes of disease amongst the troops came largely due to the environment in which they were living.

Douglas considered much of the Upper Canadian landscape poisonous and deadly, unsuitable for habitation by British troops. He believed that the major cause of disease stemmed from the nature of the landscape rather than from overcrowded barrack facilities, poor quality food, food shortages, manpower shortages, and inadequate sanitation procedures. His judgements rendered on the health or ill health of the landscape were often morally based. Areas considered unhealthy such as Burlington Heights were described as having landscape features which were rude, or devious. These moral judgements were applied based on the extent to which agricultural and industrial development had occurred. As was the case with many of the proponents of the picturesque, Douglas' writing reveals that the more the landscape resembled that of England, the healthier it was considered to be. Given this assertion it is interesting to read Douglas's description of Burlington Heights and its surrounds. Douglas creatively describes this part of the Upper Canadian landscape as featuring,

shores which are narrow and confined, sinuated by long bays, which run deviously into the woods. [T]he eye is arrested by rudely projecting hills, overshadowed with forests. Here, the mountains of Burlington, a military position of considerable

⁸⁹Douglas, p 1

strength, may be seen towering amid the clouds, and overlooking the neighbouring wilderness. These mountains, which are almost inaccessible to an approaching enemy, were reserved as a suitable place of retreat from the Niagara frontier in the event of a discomfiture. Their summits abound with morass, and in autumn are almost perpetually obscured by thick clouds. The western limits of the lake are but partially settled, and withal very unhealthy.⁹⁰

Later on in his text Douglas relates what he believes to be the reason for so much sickness associated with unhealthy areas such as Burlington Heights. He notes that the country generally abounded with insect life that in full view of the observer went through a “putrescent revolution” The sun, in heating the ground, put forth bad smells and “thus operating on a humid soil, and completing the decomposition, tends to the production of diseases by which men, [who are not acclimatized] are always liable to suffer.”⁹¹ He is confident that it is the land that makes people sick by a cycle of rot followed by the rising of foul and sickly vapours. Officially he refers to this rising effluvia as “marsh miasmata.”⁹² Douglas believed that the vapours actually contained a poison which the soldiers breathed in while traveling through unhealthy places, and that the poison could remain dormant within an individual for some time. Often it was only after the contaminated individual was put to fatiguing labour that the poison caused the development of disease.⁹³

Medical wisdom sometimes associated cholera morbus with marsh miasmata, but the most

⁹⁰Douglas, p 7

⁹¹Douglas, p22

⁹²Ibid, p 22; Philip B. Gove, *Webster's Dictionary*, vol. II p 1426, defines “miasma” as ‘...a vaporous exhalation (as of a marshy region or of putrescent matter) formerly believed to contain a substance causing disease (as malaria).

⁹³Douglas, p 24

common ailment caused by the sickly vapours was autumnal remitting fever, which was referred to as “Lake fever” by the inhabitants of Upper Canada.⁹⁴ It was present at Chippawa in the summer of 1814, where it was responsible for making half of Douglas’ battalion sick over the space of six weeks. The condition was quite debilitating, causing Douglas’ battalion to abandon the position to a healthier one.

An officer of the “Royals” (probably the 1st Regiment of Foot, or Royal Scots) by the name of Griffith who served in Upper Canada during the war confirmed that he had no doubt, “that the remittent fever of Upper Canada is produced by the putrid effluvia with which the shores of the lakes and the low wet grounds of the country in many parts abound.”⁹⁵ His troops were severely troubled by the fever which made the work of throwing up breastworks to fortify their position close to impossible. Griffith’s men were also sent out on frequent night patrols. Labour in the hot sun and patrols at night, combined with conditions in which they lived (green wood huts covered with live turf) and the unhealthy landscape meant that in Griffith’s view the onset of disease was inevitable.⁹⁶

These descriptions match well with the report of Lieutenant Colonel Bruyeres commander of the Royal Engineers in Canada concerning the health of the troops on Burlington Heights.⁹⁷

⁹⁴Ibid, p 22

⁹⁵Douglas, p 24

⁹⁶Ibid, p 24

⁹⁷Griffith may actually be describing his troops activities while in garrison on Burlington Heights. The presence and timing of remittent fever in the summer and fall of 1813; the temporary barracks; fortification building, and night reconnaissance missions all point to the typical activities of the troops posted on the Heights.

Bruyeres, in September and October of 1813 explained to Prevost, the lack of progress of work on the public buildings (storehouses, barracks), on the Heights as related to the scarcity of skilled artificers, militia desertion and most significantly, sickness. Bruyeres wrote in September,

the situation [on the Heights] is also very unhealthy owing to the exhalation of a stagnate swamp which extends the whole length of the Peninsula, which is at present very severely felt by the Troops stationed there nearly one half of the number being sick. This must unavoidably increase during the rainy seasons in the Fall, and spring of the year notwithstanding this is a very important point [for a fortified supply depot].⁹⁸

The condition of the troops had not changed for the better by October. Militia desertions were so great as to prevent the remaining troops from, “supply[ing] the ordinary duties of the place (which would include work on construction, sentry duty, outlying guard picquets, etc).”⁹⁹

Bruyeres goes so far as to recommend the abandonment of the depot because “Sickness and Fatigue has nearly worn out the Troops; and the inclemency of the season will soon render them incapable of much exertion.”¹⁰⁰

There are key points of agreement between Douglas’ description of Burlington Heights and Bruyeres’. For example, both said that at certain times of the year (the rainy season) the Heights were very unhealthy, with this unhealthiness being related by them, to the effects the rains have on the landscape and on the stagnant swamp in particular. Further both saw it as inadequate in many

⁹⁸Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Bruyeres to Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost Bt., 4th September 1813

⁹⁹Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Bruyeres to Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost Bt., 4th September 1813

¹⁰⁰Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Bruyeres to Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost Bt., 11th October 1813

ways, but still an important strategic position throughout the war, which justified maintaining a post in such an unhealthy place. The perspective of these three serving officers of the British forces in the Niagara Peninsula was that the Upper Canadian landscape was unhealthy. This is not an uncommon conception given that Upper Canadians also dealt with seasonal remittent fever due to living by the lake. There are no statistics provided as to the number of civilians afflicted by remittent fever, but it is not reported as though it was an unexpected, or major concern to the civilians.

The real cause of the fever is unclear; however, the close proximity of wetlands and mosquitoes to many Upper Canadian settlements and British military establishments virtually guaranteed that they would be exposed to malaria. The soldiers were more strongly affected with the fever than the civilian population because they were usually quartered in concentrated groups. Thus, any affliction would be passed easily from man to man, especially if in trying to avoid marsh miasmata, which traveled on the night air, they kept their barracks closed up during the night. Diet may also have been key in terms of the health of soldiers and their ability to resist disease. A soldier's diet was largely dependant upon what could be supplied to him. Very often shortages meant that the required number of calories and the proper variety of healthy foods were not available, which made them more susceptible to disease.

The opinions of Douglas, Bruyeres and Griffith reflect the idea that soldiers who were afflicted by remittent fever suffered as a reaction to local conditions which were foreign to them.¹⁰¹ The very character of the natural landscape is to blame for the sickness. This is made

¹⁰¹Douglas, p 23-24; Douglas and Griffith both contend that the remittent fever in Upper Canada was very similar to that experienced by troops stationed in the West Indies - both foreign lands for British troops. The disease according to Douglas, "...are found...only in the elevated

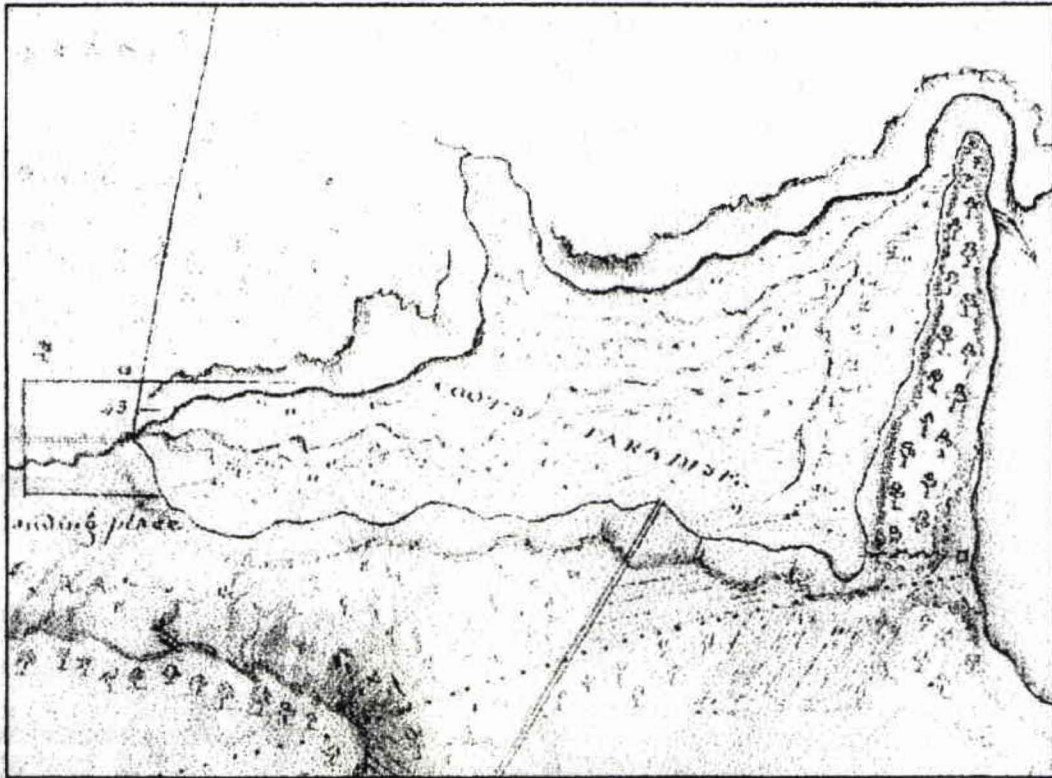
clear in the critical descriptions of the lake shoreline near Burlington Heights, which he refers to as “sinuating” deviously into the woods, as though it, as an animal entity, plotted to resist human ends. The hills around the Heights were perceived as uncouth, and uncooperative. The summits of the escarpment abounded with a morass,¹⁰² which made the terrain mysterious, unknowable or unpassable without considerable effort. Douglas’ negative view of the Burlington Heights landscape as a sickly backwater, has implications for perceptions of Richard Beasley’s property. While developed along the lines of the picturesque, Beasley’s estate did not meet the expectations of Douglas. Clearly, that which passed as a picturesque seat of a country gentleman in Upper Canada was not necessarily very impressive to a visitor such as John Douglas. Alternatively, Douglas may not have actually visited Burlington Heights, but instead may have only had it described to him by others or viewed it only distantly, from the deck of a ship. For whatever reason, Douglas concentrated on the healthiness and military potential of Burlington Heights, without the barest mention of Beasley’s estate.

From the writing of Douglas and Bruyeres in particular, there is a definite sense that Burlington Heights was valued for what was useful to the British army, regardless of the perceived unhealthiness, hostility or foreignness of the position. As might be expected, the garrison on the Heights was to be used or abandoned based on an ongoing assessment of the threat from American attack. Not surprisingly, documents concerned with provisioning, reveal that British military policies regarding the landscape surrounding Burlington Heights were self- interested,

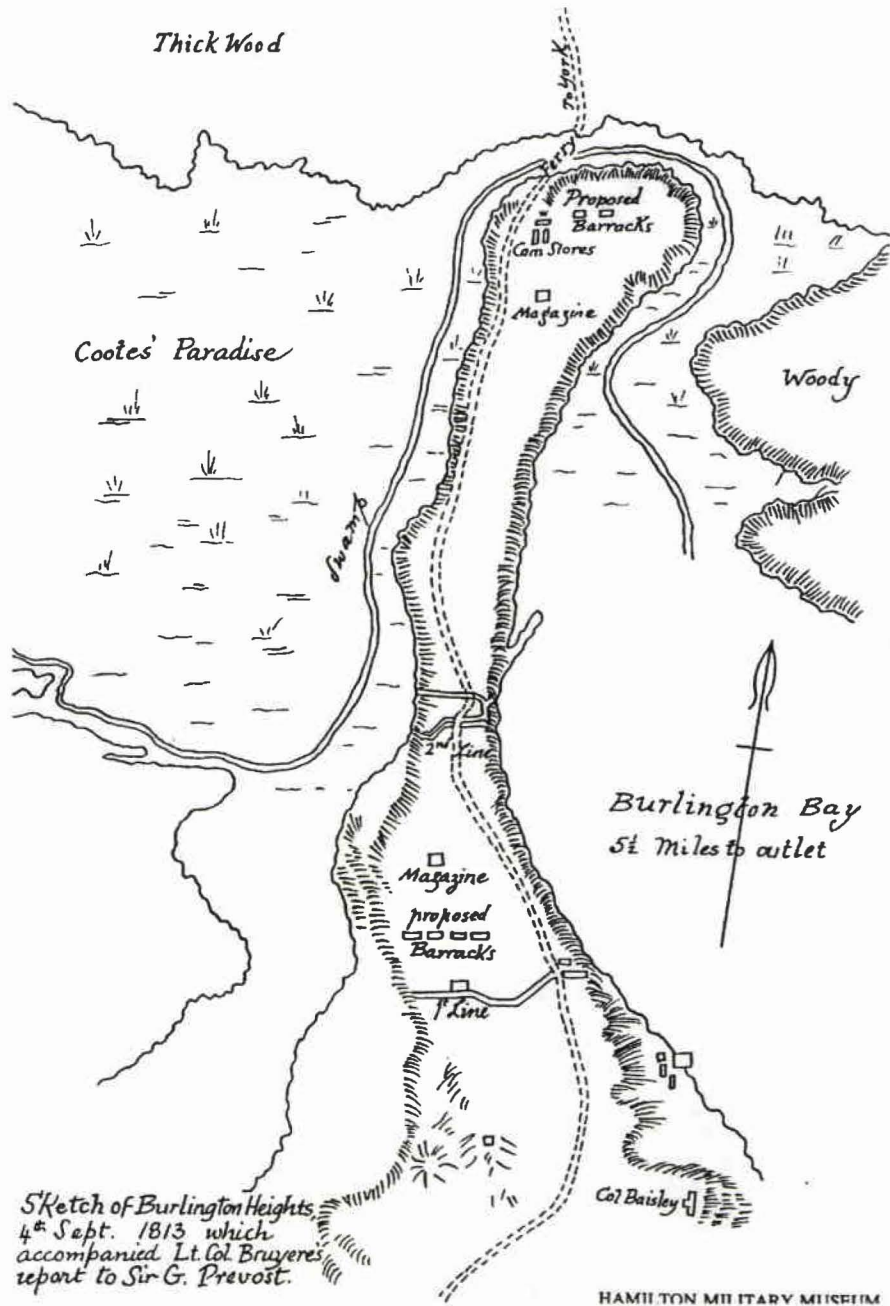
ranges of atmospheric temperatures.” In other words the hot wet summers of Upper Canada produced conditions similar to those experienced in the West Indies.

¹⁰²Philip B. Gove, *Webster’s Dictionary*, vol. II, p 1469; A swampy, marshy mire...something that traps , confuses, or impedes...entangles.

reflecting the survival of the army. These military procedures – including incidents of commandeering and forced exactions – did little to endear the British garrison at Burlington Heights to the local population; nor did the extension of military political influence around the Head of the Lake through the declaration of martial law, the convening of courts of Assize, or the grisly execution of convicted traitors in front of a large crowd of local inhabitants. The military presence on the landscape was tyrannical, resembling an invading army in enemy territory, rather than a benevolent provincial defender. To the army, the landscape was important not in terms of the wants, needs and liberties of the population, but as a strategic frontier to be maintained or forsaken based on the interplay of externally determined policy arrangements which were inherent in the reasons the war occurred in the first place – a situation that little involved the majority of the population of Upper Canada.



Burlington Heights and Coote's Paradise, 1793, in: John R. Triggs, *An Archaeological Assessment of Part of the East Shoreline Coote's Paradise, Hamilton Ontario*, (Toronto: Historic Horizon Inc., 1994); This map shows Beasley's property in 1793. Note the snake fence which extends across the Heights from east to west. This fence was probably the one that was built on a Middle Woodland Period mound and used as the basis of the British hasty defense in the late spring of 1813. It also shows large, enclosed fields, which Beasley established as part of his goal of developing his picturesque estate.

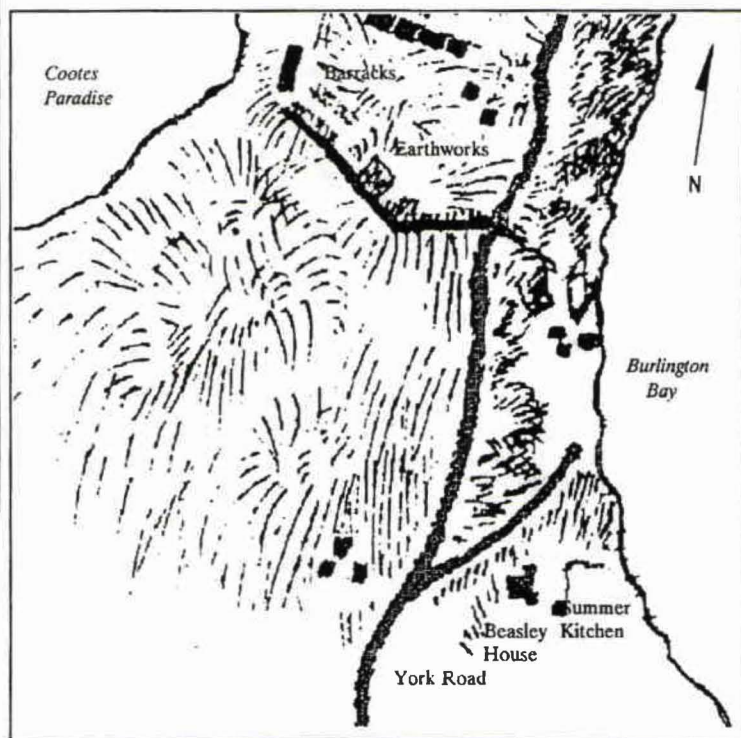


Lt. Col. Ralph Bruyeres, Royal Engineers, *Sketch of Burlington Heights, 4th Sept. 1813*; Beasley's fence line has been altered by this time into the 1st Line of Defense. Note the inclusion of Beasley's barn (square structure on a rise to the south of the line), which was used as a blockhouse by the army. On the bay-shore are three storehouses and a wharf.



**1823 British Military Plan
of Burlington Heights**

Detail of 1823 Plan of Burlington Heights



1823 British Military Plan of Burlington Heights; Less than ten years after the war, Beasley has reclaimed his property from the military. He has added two barns and a summer kitchen. The old fence line which served as the basis for the 1st Line of Defense is clearly shown.

CONCLUSION

When one walks around Dundurn Park on Burlington Heights today, it has the appearance of an island of peace and harmony surrounded by a sea of technological progress, and the glow of material prosperity. The noise of commuter traffic, the clatter of heavy transport trucks, and railway cars laden with goods for a burgeoning market are all around the park; but within, there is a stillness and peace that reflects what was at one time a world which was brimming with a spiritual potency. The wind shivers over the grass-grown mounds of Middle Woodland peoples, over the leaves of the oak, maple and chestnut trees. The trunks and leaf canopy obscure the fast-moving traffic on York boulevard, once a strategic trade route for Iroquoian peoples and eventually the road to the capital at York established in the late 18th century, and the sight of shunting railway cars on the bay shore.

The grand edifice of Dundurn Castle stands gracefully amid one of the last preserved picturesque landscapes in the country. Sir Allan MacNab owned the property from 1832 to 1862 and continued to develop the landscape where the first European settler on the Heights, Richard Beasley had left off. MacNab added gardens, a picturesque walk with a view of the bay, and a house that was unmatched in size and elegance within the province. This part of the Burlington Heights landscape remains as a record of the past, hinting at a series of differing perspectives on landscape held by different inhabitants of the site over thousands of years.

The Burlington Heights landscape was socially constructed. It was viewed, used and transformed by the humans who inhabited it. The different world-views of the Mississauga, Richard Beasley and the British military, provided the basis for what the Heights could and should

be used for.

The Mississauga using Burlington Heights depended on plant and animal diversity as part of their pursuance of an annual movement through the seasonal round. They had little contact with markets and no motivation to become more sedentary than they already were. They accepted the inevitable seasons of scarcity and abundance as a part of life. The land was used and not owned. Demonstrations of material prosperity revolved around open-handed redistribution during the seasons when these groups gathered to celebrate abundance and cooperation, and ultimately consolidating close kinship ties. While they did eventually participate in a European market system through the exchange of gathered goods such as maple sugar and fish in return for European decorative and practical implements, it was not done in the spirit of competition to attain a privileged position in a European styled hierarchy, but in the spirit of maintaining good relations for the purpose of cooperation with Europeans.

They were stewards of the land holding the privileged position of harvesters of nature's abundance. Any attempt to bound the land, thus limiting its use by others, would have conflicted with the egalitarian social formation they maintained. In turn, widespread alteration of the landscape through forest clearance for attaining firewood, establishing bounded crop land, and pastures, would have tied them down to a system of subsistence and settlement that was undesirable to them. It did not fit with their spiritual conceptions of landscape inherent in an ecological organization that they chose to work within.

In contrast, Richard Beasley and the other European settlers viewed the landscape around the Head of the Lake, as a series of spaces with potential for improvement. Representing as they did a vanguard of English Protestant, capitalist society, the land was there to serve their ends. For

Beasley that meant working towards the goal of building, and perhaps more importantly, demonstrating material prosperity, which opened the door to social and political influence. While the sublime qualities of nature were recognized, the patchwork of meadows and forests, the fast moving streams and the natural harbours. traditionally held in reverence by the Mississauga), were viewed with an emphasis on how they could be altered to bring the organization of the landscape into line with English ideas of proper husbandry and industrial development. Success in these ventures was demonstrated through the maintenance of clients and dependants who provided support for such local patrons in their bid for political power, and the construction of English aristocratic-styled estates. In other words, they had a particular 'picture' of landscape development in mind. They worked towards making the North American landscape 'picturesque' – a reflection of the English countryside.

English social formation was hierarchical and supported not only by capitalism but also by the tenets of the Protestant church. Diligence in ones calling as demonstrated by material prosperity was key to understanding whether one was of the elect destined to go to heaven. For English settlers it was ridiculous to consider that there was a possibility of angering the manitous of the land or sky by ignoring rites of propitiation, to ensure ones privileged position in the universe, as would have been the case for Historic Ojibwa peoples. These fairy tales were considered as a testament to the backwardness of native peoples, a hindrance to their advancement into the light of civilized society. English will was imposed upon the landscape.

When the British military occupied Burlington Heights, they transformed it into a fortified supply depot which served as a regional fortress and a place of rest and recuperation. The Heights had a very specific military meaning which was quite different than that understood by Beasley or

the Mississauga. While the army was an offshoot of English society, it was not a democratic institution entirely motivated by free market capitalism. Through 1813 and 1814, the Heights and the surrounding landscape were used to guarantee the army's ultimate goal, which was to gain control of the shifting strategic frontier in southern Upper Canada. In creating the military Heights, the army did not long tolerate what it perceived as a disloyal and uncooperative population. Military prerogatives were to be met regardless of whether they were perceived as tyrannical or not. A significant part of the population did not welcome them and they in turn did not feel welcome. The landscape was perceived as a series of immoral, unhealthy spaces, which were considered disease ridden wastes, unfit for habitation.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect that has come to light in the course of this work is the concept of waste and improvement. Taken as a relative view there are some ominous considerations that come to light about society today. The English view that the landscape around the Head of the Lake was a waste land in need of improvement led to the development of sedentary agricultural settlements with corresponding commercial and industrial complexes. Improvement of the landscape meant favouring certain plant and animal species over others, ultimately changing the environment from one of burgeoning bio-diversity to an agricultural/industrial ecozone. In a sense, by reducing the complexity of the environment and favouring enclosure and the development of industrial complexes, a wasteland of sorts was created. The landscape is no longer rich with a multitude of naturally available opportunities for settlement and subsistence. Instead, human choices are constrained by a network of roads and buildings which are designed to direct us as rapidly and conveniently as possible to places of employment and the marketplace. The land itself is not as important as the presence of a rapid

transportation route. We live in a bounded series of hard surfaces which no longer reflect the natural patterns of drainage or plant growth. Municipal legislation determines what we can and cannot grow on our little patch of grass out in front of our houses. The filling-in of the wetlands in what has become the northeastern part of the city which was done to facilitate massive industrialization, also got rid of the source of the deadly miasmatic noxious effluvia. In its place the industry in the northeastern part of the city transformed Burlington Bay into a space usable only by Great Lakes shipping. What used to be a pleasant swimming and fishing area turned into a poisonous waste by the turn of the twentieth century. What was considered a necessary transformation for the purpose of virtuous improvement and the reduction of immoral, unhealthy spaces ultimately resulted in a new and hazardous series of environmental problems. Some progress has been made since the mid twentieth century to clean up the dirty spaces of the harbour, but a long road must be traveled before major environmental problems are solved. What is clear is that the root of these problems stem from the transplantation of English, Protestant, industrial, capitalist society in the 18th century. That is not to say that we should judge the actions of the past population so critically. They did what they thought necessary, right and good, for their own survival and enjoyment. We live, however, with the legacy of that system which emphasizes hierarchy, private ownership, demonstrations of material prosperity, and an overly intensified use of resources, often with little concern for the environmental consequences.

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