

old
FORT ERIE





EW historic sites in Ontario have had a longer or more eventful history than Fort Erie, established first by the British almost two centuries ago. The present Fort Erie, the third fort to occupy the site, was erected just prior to, and during the troubled days of 1812 to 1814 when the United States and Canada were at war. Captured by the Americans, in turn besieged by the British, the old fort was the scene of

one of the most desperate struggles along the Niagara frontier. Today Americans share with Canadians equal veneration for this place, consecrated with the blood of their respective nations.

In 1764 General Bradstreet of the British Army, was organizing a retaliatory expedition against the western Indians in revenge for the conspiracy of Pontiac. Accordingly the General's chief engineer was sent to

the outlet of Lake Erie to select a proper place for fortifications.

The site chosen was subsequently approved and 500 men were dispatched to start work on the new fort. The first Fort Erie was a rectangular enclosure composed of four bastions with connecting walls or curtains, as they were called. Adjacent to the lake the two demi-bastions with their curtains were of rubble masonry of moderate height. The remaining bastions and curtains consisted merely of upright timbers in the form of a loopholed stockade. There was no ditch of any kind.

Log barracks, officers' quarters and a large storehouse were built within the enclosure, and the ground was levelled for a parade. The fort was officially named "Fort Erie" on August 4, 1764. Fort Erie was a stop-over for



ships carrying merchandise, troops and passengers to Detroit and Michilimackinac during the next 50 years and in winter served as a trading post. Ships were berthed for the winter nearby. In 1779 Fort Erie was badly damaged during a storm and was later rebuilt some distance to the south by members of the 8th and 47th Regiments of the British Army. A violent storm again destroyed most of the Fort on February 5, 1803.

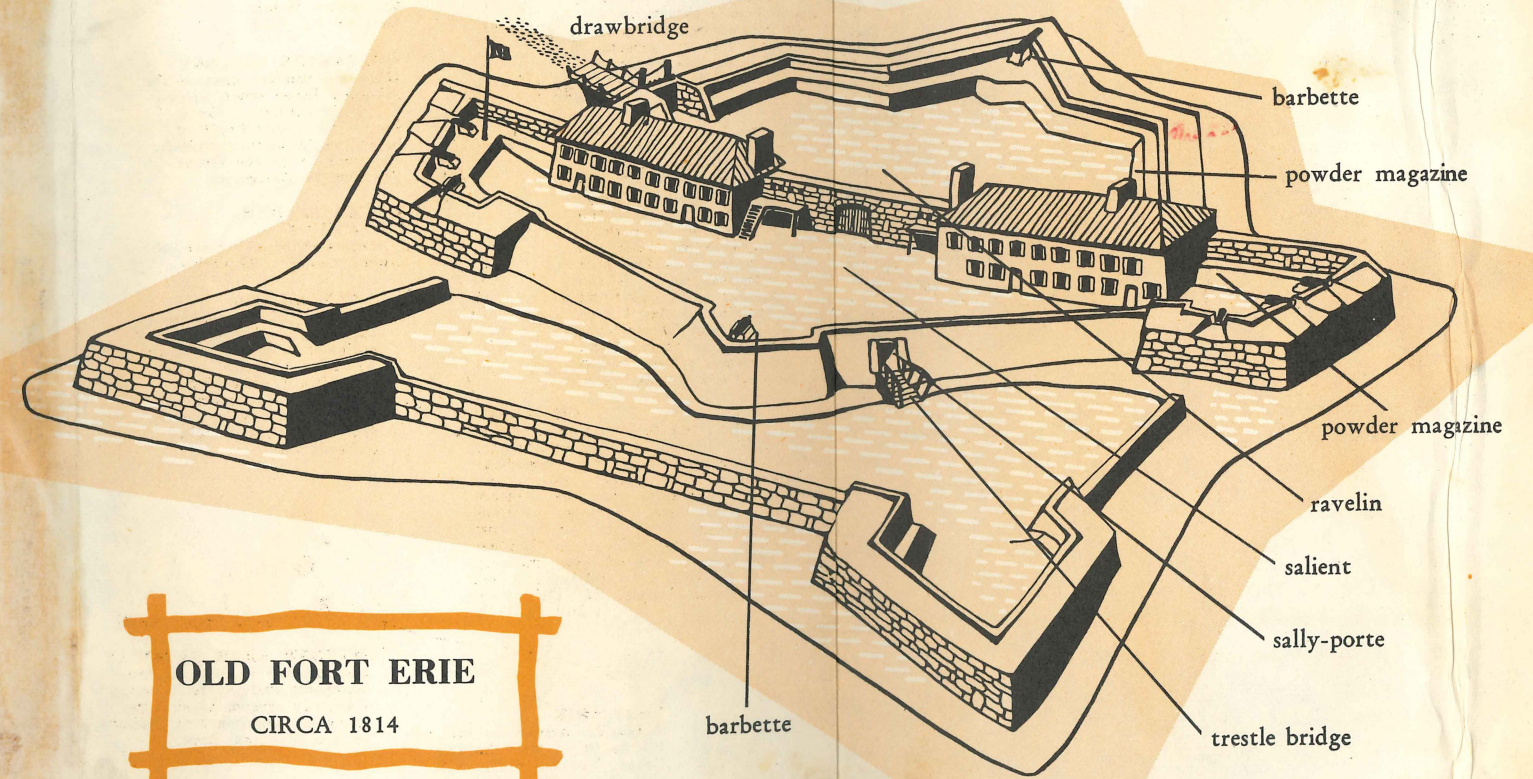
Approval was granted on January 9, 1804, to rebuild the Fort farther back from the river. It was to consist of four bastions connected with curtains in the form of a simple square with all works and buildings constructed of solid masonry. Construction of the new fort was slow and while still not completed was attacked by a force of 4,500 Americans on July 3, 1814 under the command of General Brown. The 180 British soldiers holding the fort surrendered after offering

little resistance.

On August 14 a British force under Lieut.-Colonel Drummond attempted to re-take the fort. They

occupied the northeast bastion but were obliterated when a store of powder exploded accidentally. The Americans destroyed the fort when they left in November of that year. In 1825 a commission sent out by Lord Wellington reported "the remains of an old fort, and a range of barracks perfectly in ruins and abandoned."

Restoration of the fort was carried on jointly by the Ontario and Federal governments, starting in 1937, and was officially opened July 1, 1939. Fort Erie represents early 19th century fortifications such as were used by the British and Americans.



OLD FORT ERIE

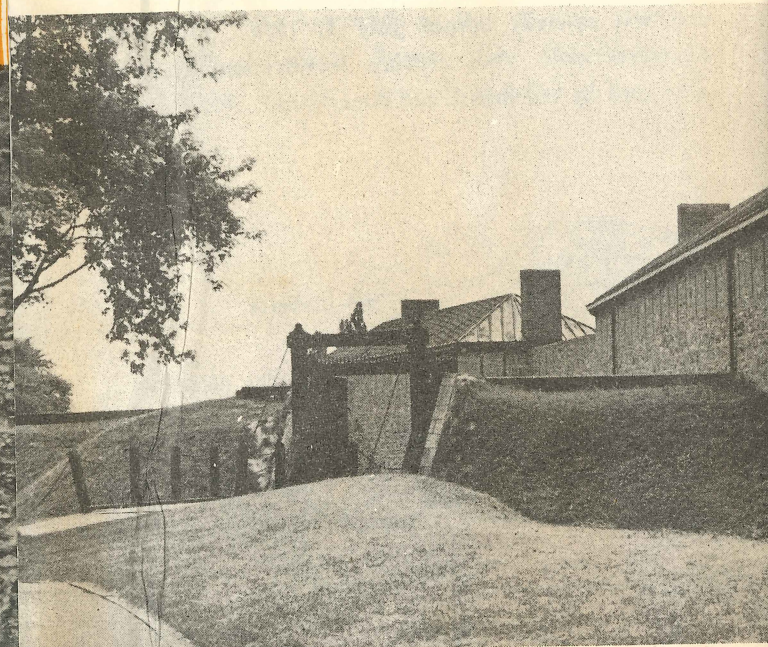
CIRCA 1814

old FORT ERIE



Visitors see in the barrack buildings fine collections of antique weapons and other relics reminiscent of an era long past. The museum contains other interesting relics found during the restoration of the fort and includes uniform buttons, buckles, as well as bayonets and other mementos of those embattled days. There is also a complete collection of military equipment of the period.

Be sure to visit Old Fort Erie. Walk over the drawbridge into 1812 past a sentry in the colorful uniform of the period. Visiting hours are from 9.30 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. No tour of Niagara Parks will be complete without a visit to historic Fort Erie.



Drawbridge at Old Fort Erie

OPEN ALL YEAR

Labour Day to June 1st - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
June 1st to June 30th - 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
July 1st to Labour Day - 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Pavilion Free Parking Souvenirs

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