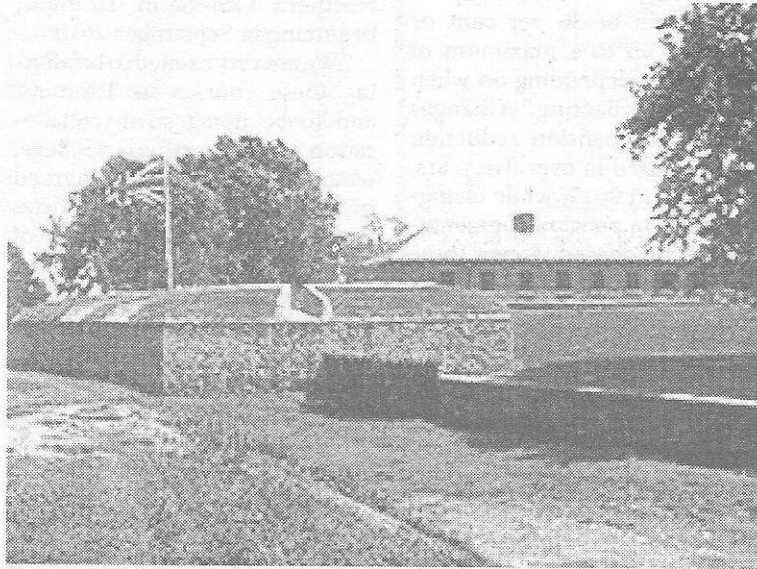


Things That Go Bump In A Canadian Night

by Ronald Wolf



Fort Erie

Like most Canadian forts, Fort Erie is rich in Canadian history, war and of course, spirits of soldiers who defended the fort with their very lives. Today, we pay homage to Fort Erie and their soldiers, who fought and died, for their homeland. The War, of 1812 was a significant period of Canadian history for the fort.

Fort Erie was unfinished when the United States declared war on June 18, 1812. Fort Erie was held for a period by U.S. forces and then abandoned on June 9, 1813. The fort also played a huge part of The Underground Railroad in the mid 1850s when American slaves found freedom in Canada.

Daryl Learn, senior interpreter for the fort has been holding his title for six years. He has heard and seen some strange, weird and even paranormal events.

Most paranormal events have centered on war time. For example, people have seen foot prints in the snow from the inner gate to where the outer gate used to stand.

The foot prints were flat sole horseshoe heel very much like the hobnail style. People often heard a voice calling out to them in the dark, challenging them as a guard would.

"We actually believe it was a man who froze to death in 1810." In that year guards were on duty for 30 minutes at a time but when they came to relieve him, he already froze to death. He was leaning on the gate when they found him."

The guard is only seen when it is snowing or in the winter Learn said.

"In our upper museum people hear a small girl crying and calling for her mother."

Young women in their early 20s and pregnant women are the ones who often hear the young girl but some men would hear the cries as well.

"One former staff member still won't go up there."

In the officer quarters Captain Kinsley served in the Kings Aid Regiment was believed to have died in his bed from The Ug which is a mix of some basic lung diseases.

"He actually drowned in his sleep in his bed. We had reports up there from very simple things from people hearing whispering, feet shuffling on the floor, people hearing shrieks coming from the

room, stomping up and down the stairs, windows and doors opening and closing."

During our All-Hallows-Eve tour we always have the newest employee to stay in the fort in case a visitor would wander off somewhere by mistake. We would have a burning of Guy Fox outside near the fort, he said.

It was six years this October that an event took place. That year since it was Learn's first year he was the one who acted as guard in the fort. In the parade square an event happened to the new employee.

"I'll swear by it that a man came out of the kitchen. He was a tall guy he looked like he was wearing a top hat or something like that. I thought it was just a visitor. I thought he was someone to get more cookies for sale.

"I called down to get his attention and direct him back up to the burning of Guy Fox. He paused, turned; I couldn't make out a single feature of the guy other than his eyes. They were pure white. That scared the ever living daylights out of me. Every bone in my body said to run away but part of me said it was a joke."

The figure made its way to the gun powder magazine Learn ran after him expecting to see one of the employees playing a joke on him.

"But there was nobody down there and the door to the kitchen was locked."

There are many other paranormal activities the fort holds. Should you be in the area of Fort Erie, Ont., be part of the Friday night tour if you dare.