

Niagara-on-the-Lake offers historical fare

Looking at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, one would never guess that it had been occupied by enemy troops, burned to the ground and through the years been dealt a number of setbacks.

It was just over 200 years ago that Loyalists — fugitives from the American Revolution — crowded Fort Niagara on the east bank (now the American side) of the Niagara River and overflowed onto the west bank.

The settlement, known variously as West Niagara and Butlersburg, prospered and in 1792 Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe chose it as the capital of Upper Canada, renaming it Newark.

Two years later he decided it was too vulnerable to invasion from the south and moved the capital to York (Toronto).

However, Newark continued to grow as a port and military station. Fort George was built there between 1796 and 1799, and Lieutenant Colonel Isaac Brock, having distinguished himself in the Napoleonic wars, was sent there in 1802 and was ready to take command when war broke out in 1812.

The Americans attacked Fort George in the spring of 1813 and then occupied it and the town until December. When they retreated, they burned both fort and town, some say in reaction to the British use of Indians in battle.

After the war the citizens rebuilt Newark and prospered for 25 years, until the Welland Canal was built in 1829.

This took shipping traffic away from Newark, and its port, shipbuilding and other businesses declined.

Tourist spot

The railroad came in 1854 and gave Newark a new lease on life and a new name, Niagara. (The steam locomotive was called *The Niagara*.) The train brought tourists and summer people to this mild and pleasant spot on Lake Ontario and the Niagara River. Sumptuous summer houses, restaurants and inns were built, providing work for craftsmen and a market for shopkeepers. Later the railroad introduced fruit storage cars, which allowed fruit growing to expand into a cash crop for the farmers for the first time.

A high school principal, Janet Carnochan, put her finger on the direction of the town when she started the Historical Society in 1895. Five years later, as if to confirm its new direction, the town was renamed, Niagara-on-the-Lake, chosen this time for postal reasons.

The Depression actually gave the next boost to interest in the town's past; the rebuilding of Fort George, abandoned in the 1820s, was begun as a make-work project in the late 1930s.

Since then the townspeople have taken control of their own destiny, promoting restoration and preservation of the old buildings within the town limits. The town has a number of fine houses and

other buildings from the early 1800s, from Georgian to Regency style.

Not only is Niagara-on-the-Lake lovely to look at, but there are also many attractive shops to enjoy. Some are very old, like McClelland's grocery, serving the townfolk since the 1800s. Some have grown out of a local industry, like Greaves' jams and jellies, made in the town since 1928. Others appeal to the tourist market, offering antiques, fine crafts or other gift items.

In 1973, a new building was added by the town to house the Shaw Festival Theatre — the annual summer theatre festival established in 1962 to present works by Shaw and his contemporaries. The company also puts on lighter works in the Court House and the Royal George Theatres.

For variety, visitors to the town can play golf on the lake-and-riverside course, whose second hole is within the walls of unrestored Fort Mississauga, built in 1814 to replace the less effectively situated Fort George.

The Niagara Historical Museum has worthwhile reading material as well as well laid out rooms showing material from Indian to Victorian times.

Mediterranean is subject of lectures

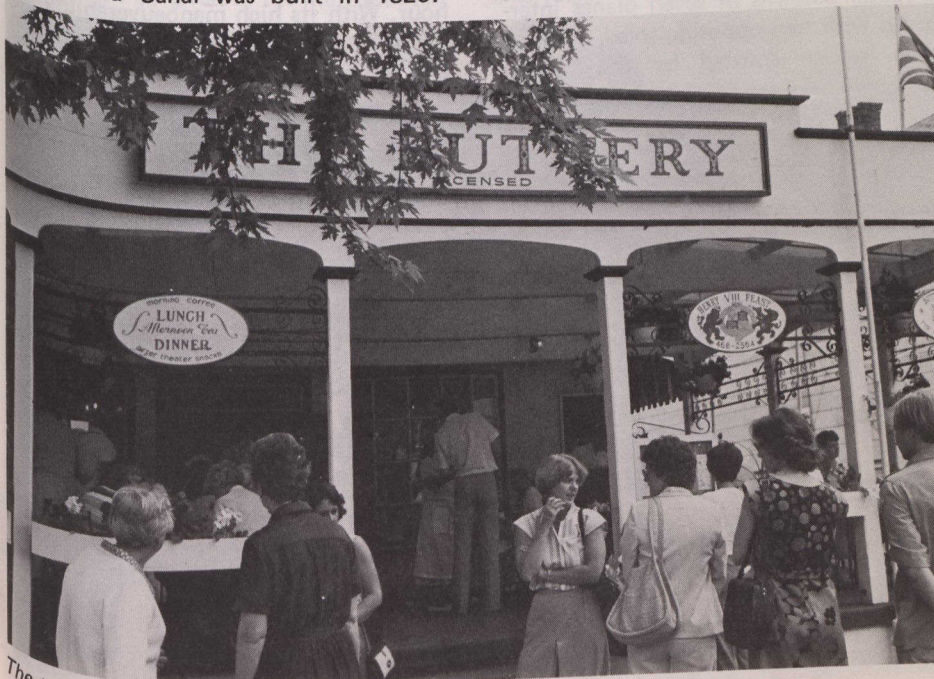
A new series of annual lectures on Mediterranean cultures is being presented by the Canadian Mediterranean Institute at the National Library of Canada in Ottawa.

The lectures are being sponsored by the institute's president G. Hamilton Southam as part of the institute's program in Canada.

The first Southam lecture, entitled *The Eastern Mediterranean — Where Ancient Cultures Met and Mingled*, was presented at the National Library on May 28 by Professor of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Toronto, Dr. Ronald Williams.

The institute has the financial, administrative and program responsibility for the Canadian Archaeological Institute in Athens, Greece, the Canadian Institute in Cairo, Egypt, and the Canadian Academic Centre in Rome, Italy.

The National Library has also offered to help the institute establish libraries in Cairo, Rome and Athens which would provide reference and research facilities based on local needs and would be used both by visiting Canadians and residents of the host countries.



The terrace of the Buttery in Niagara-on-the-Lake, is a popular place for tourists.

Canadian Government Office of Tourism