

THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS ADDRESS

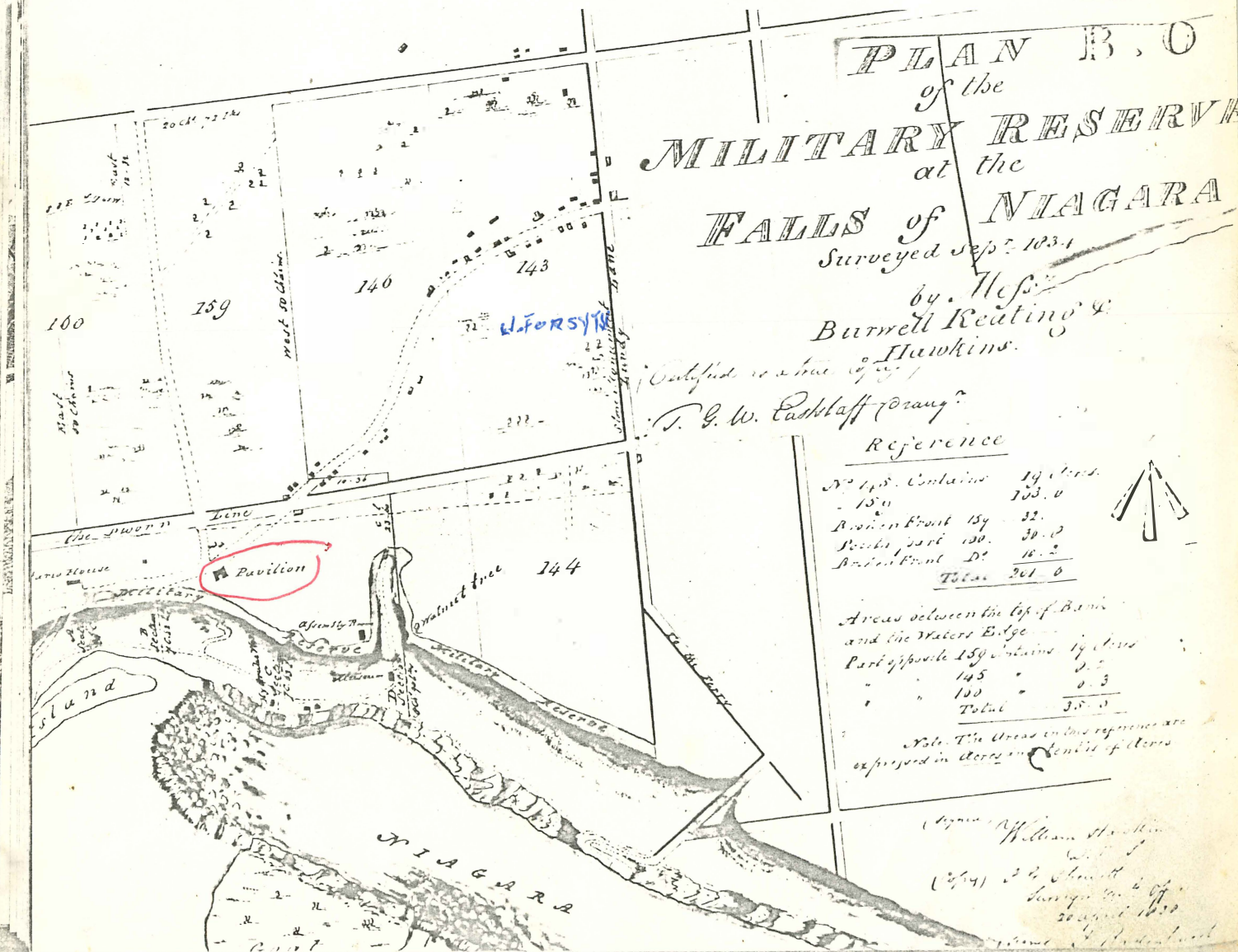
Father Louis Hennepin, who first saw the Falls of Niagara in 1678, was the forerunner of the 9,000,000 visitors who come to Niagara Falls each year. While there are indications that other explorers may have seen or heard about the Falls of Niagara before Hennepin, it was he who first wrote about them and depicted them in his now famous sketch. He was the man who stimulated the imagination of the people of Europe, making them want to come to see the Falls for themselves.

Through the writings of Hennepin and the priests, soldiers, explorers and fur traders who

followed him, many of whom were artists, the Falls of Niagara became known to the people of Europe even before Plymouth Rock and Jamestown, Virginia. As each year passed more and more men came to see the Falls and contributed to the written records. Dozens of widely published accounts of the beauty of the Falls and the works of art reproduced in them made a trip to Niagara Falls the fashionable thing in the nineteenth Century. George Heriot's "Travel Through Canada" published in 1807 is a noteworthy example of the valuable works left to us.

Plan of the Military Reserve, c. 1834.

Public Archives of Canada

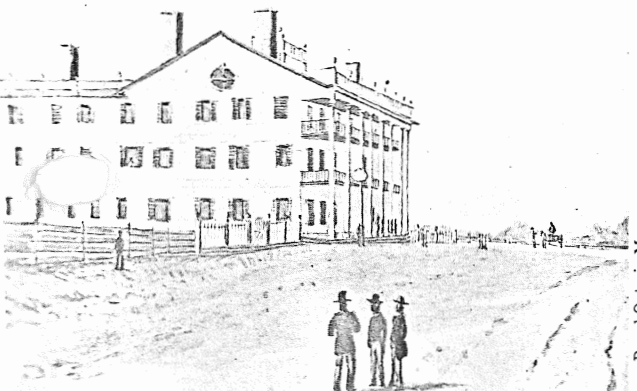


Early visitors to the Falls of Niagara came by horseback, stagecoach, wagon, by ship from Toronto, Buffalo and other lake ports, some came on foot. All were obliged, at first, to find accommodation either at Chippawa, or at one of the inns along the Portage Road. The first man to see the financial possibilities in catering to the needs of tourists was William Forsyth, who built the Pavilion Hotel.

In 1798 Forsyth's father, James, received a Crown Grant of 388 acres, fronting on the Niagara River, right at the crest of the Horseshoe Falls. While this was a choice piece of property, the boundary line stopped one chain length (66 feet) short of the river bank. This 66 foot frontage along the river was reserved by the Government for possible use as a military road and was called the Military Reserve, or the Chain Reserve. The foresight of this action is evident today, when we realize that the Military Reserve extended from Lake to Lake. Because this strip of land was held in reserve we have the Niagara River Parkway, which runs unobstructed from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario.

In 1822, Forsyth built the Pavilion Hotel, on the hill overlooking the Falls, just north of the present Seagram Tower. James Morden in his book "Historic Niagara Falls" wrote: "It was for many years the principal hotel in the vicinity of the Falls and retained that proud distinction until the era of the steam railway was ushered in. From the balconies of this house, a fine view could be had". The popular and far famed Pavilion and the Ontario House, built farther south on Portage Road, by John Brown, were listed in all early guide books.

The Pavilion Hotel, Portage Road, c. 1829, by James Cockburn.



Royal Ontario Museum

Forsyth was aggressive and in order to assure that his hotel would get the bulk of the trade, he ran stage coaches on the Portage Road, from Newark (Niagara-on-the-Lake) and Fort Erie to Niagara Falls. He provided for the diversion of his visitors when in 1818, he built the first stairway down the bank at Table Rock and began the first ferry service across the lower river. He undertook these ventures without the formality of asking for Government permission to operate these projects on the Military Reserve.

Later, others applied for the right to operate the ferry and Forsyth lost this business. Other obstacles were placed in his way by people who feared and envied him. In retaliation he built a fence down to the river bank in 1827, enclosing his property and shutting off access to the Falls and the Military Reserve. Only those staying at his hotel were to be allowed to view the cataract from this point. Government intervention, instigated by Sir Peregrine Maitland, brought Forsyth into litigation with the Crown. The cost of this legal battle finally broke Forsyth and he sold his holdings in 1832, estimated by him in 1829 to be worth \$50,000, to his arch enemy Samuel Street. The sale price was reported to be no more than \$15,000. Forsyth then moved to Bertie Township.

While in business, he was always active and at times co-operated with his competitor John Brown of the Ontario House. To Forsyth, Brown and Parkhurst Whitney of the Eagle Hotel in the "United States Falls" belongs the dubious credit of having staged the first sensational stunt with the avowed aim of enticing visitors to the Falls. In 1827, they co-operated in promoting the voyage of "The Pirate Michigan", a lake schooner fitted out like a pirate ship and sending it, with a cargo of animals, over the Falls.

The event took place on September 8, 1827 and was witnessed by a crowd estimated to number from 15,000 to 30,000 people. On board at the beginning of the trip were two bears, a buffalo, two racoons, a dog and a goose. All

NIAGARA FALLS CANADA
 HISTORIC 1967

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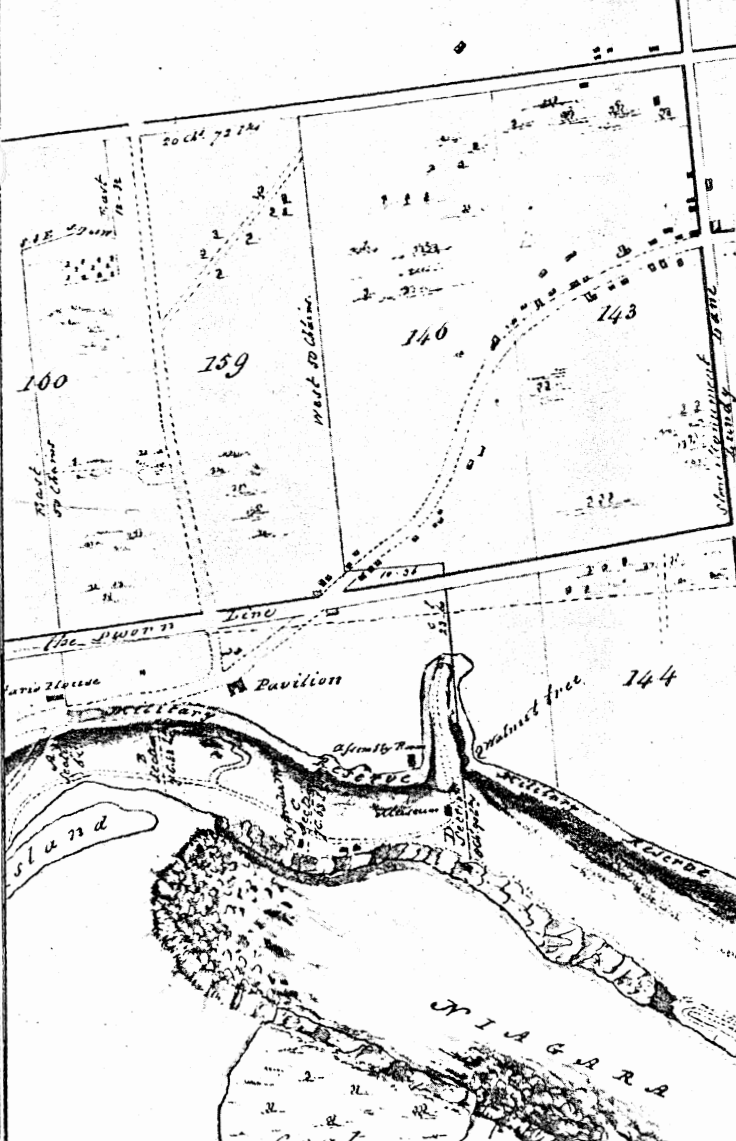
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PLAN B.O.
of the
MILITARY RESERVE
at the
FALLS of NIAGARA
Surveyed Sept. 1834
by Messrs
Burrell Keating &
Hawkins.
Certified as a true Copy
T. G. W. Castlebluff (Orange)



Reference

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| No 145. Contains | 19 Acres. |
| 159 | 203.6 |
| Broken front 159 | 32. |
| South part 100. | 38.0 |
| Broken front D. | 16.2 |
| Total | 209.6 |

Areas between the top of Bank and the Water's Edge.
Part opposite 159 contains 14 Acres.
145 " 2.2
100 " 0.5
Total 35.3

Note. The Areas in this reference are expressed in Acres and Tenths of Acres.

(Signed) William Shackleton
of the
Surveyors Office
25 April 1835
T. G. W. Castlebluff