

exempt although they were apparently reconciled to the fact that the Provincial Marine would not contribute to the fund.¹² It is perhaps ironic that in the fall of 1804, the Provincial Marine's schooner *Speedy* was lost in the night in a storm off Presqu'Île Point, in what is perhaps one of the best known peacetime shipwrecks of the entire period. Would a lighthouse there have made the difference? Probably not, as virtually every version of the story of the wreck tells of a beacon lit on shore as it grew dark.¹³

By this time, the first light on the Great Lakes was in place. After the first season's worth of the tonnage duties had been collected, it was clear that the lighthouse fund was going to be inadequate. Kingston, perhaps the most active port in Upper Canada, had returned a mere £38; by 1808 this would grow to all of £63 per annum.¹⁴ Meanwhile, the total accumulated in the fund after the 1805 season (presumably less the expenses associated with the Mississauga lighthouse) had been something less than £100.¹⁵

Richard Cartwright of Kingston and Robert Hamilton of Queenston, perhaps the two most influential businessmen in Upper Canada, approached the lieutenant governor, General Peter Hunter, declaring that: "if the Erection of three Light Houses were to be deferred til sufficient Funds should be previously collected under the present Law, those who now pay would probably derive no advantage from them." In short, they would be dead of old age! What Cartwright and Hamilton proposed was a lantern raised on a wooden scaffolding at Mississauga Point at the entrance to the Niagara River "where a Light will be of more general benefit than in any other situation." Their interim solution was, in fact, not significantly different from the modern structures that support many of the current lights around Canada.¹⁶ In his other role, as commander in chief of the British army in the Canadas, Hunter was in a position to order more a substantial alternative. He commissioned Gustavus Nichol, a captain of the Royal Engineers then stationed at Niagara, to design a tower in consultation with Hamilton. The resulting plans and estimates were passed to John Symington, the collector of customs at Niagara. Symington was ordered to manage the work with strict instructions for economy, but was promised labour from the garrison at Fort George, including the company's masons before they were sent up the Lakes on military projects. The result was a forty-five foot stone tower built for £196.17.6 and apparently first lit about 25 June 1804.¹⁷

¹² Jos. Anderson to John McGill, Kingston, 16 May 1803, LAC, RG 16, A-1, v. 133.

¹³ Most of the reasonably contemporary accounts are cited in Brendan O'Brien, *Speedy Justice: The Tragic Last Voyage of His Majesty's Vessel Speedy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press for the Osgoode Society, 1992), 100-01.

¹⁴ Returns for 1803 and 1808, LAC, RG 16, A-1, v. 133.

¹⁵ The *Journal of the House of Assembly of Upper Canada* for the years 1805, 1806, 1807, 1808, 1810, 1811, in *Eighth report of the Bureau of Archives for the province of Ontario ... 1911 (JHA)*, (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1912) 91, for 25 Feb. 1806.

¹⁶ "Observations relative to the projected Light Houses for the consideration of His Excellency Lieut. General Hunter," enclosed in LAC, RG 8, C Series, v. 1211, 368, James Green to Capt. Nicolls, 29 Feb. 1804. Both Hamilton and Cartwright also served on the Legislative Council.

¹⁷ Ibid., 395, James Green to Capt. Nicols, 26 March 1804; p. 404, same to same, 2 April 1804; 404, James Green to John Symington, 2 April 1804 which enclosed Captain Nichols' estimates. As would be true later, the notion of a house for the light keeper (in this case a log cabin) was an afterthought, but built at the same time. (Ibid., 422, James Green to Capt. G. Nichols, 19 April, 1804; 435, James Green to Mr. Symington, 1 May 1804). There would be later discussion about