

Torontonians on committees for the reception of the prince, and was formally introduced with well over a hundred others.⁶⁵ That he met the Prince of Wales is far less significant than the fact that he was inside the – admittedly large – circle of men who organized the event.

Some of Wyatt's social activities kept him on the waterfront. In the winter of 1861-62, Wyatt was the captain of a volunteer "Naval and Pilot Brigade" that met initially at his offices on Front Street.⁶⁶ In 1862, he and Elizabeth attended the ball of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club.⁶⁷ Three years later Wyatt had acquired a leading yacht, *Arrow*, and was competing for the club's Prince of Wales cup. In 1867, he was vice-commodore of the club, in which role he assisted in its incorporation.⁶⁸ For a number of years he was one of the senior officers of the Toronto Rowing Club.⁶⁹

By 1866, George Henry Wyatt was well-established on the Toronto waterfront. His persistent advertising on behalf of the Inman line kept his name in front of newspaper readers. While he acted on behalf of fewer other steamboat lines by that point, he was still brokering sales and charters as well as selling coal and wood from his wharf near the Union Station. With A.M. Smith he had run a number of ventures to the Atlantic including some vessels built to their account. As such he had just the right connections when the government came calling in the wake of the June invasion of Canada by the Irish-American Fenians.

Gunboat Agent

Wyatt entered government service as a result of his participation in the mobilization of Canada's defences following the invasion at Fort Erie by a force of about 1500 Fenians on 1 June 1866. The Fenians, after defeating a force of inexperienced militia at nearby Ridgeway the following day, then withdrew as British regular troops neared the scene, and US forces arrived in Buffalo to shut down the insurgency. Intelligence of other Fenian plans, however, kept large British and Canadian forces on the border that were only significantly reduced starting in the fall of 1868.

Wyatt, as we have seen, had shown an interest in defence when he raised the "Naval and Pilot Brigade" in the winter of 1861-62. At that time, leading citizens at several lake ports raised units to drill for potential naval service in

⁶⁵ *Globe*, 20 August 1860, 6 September 1860, 10 September 1860, 28 September 1860.

⁶⁶ *Globe*, 11 January 1862, 18 January 1862, 1 February 1862, 8 February 1862.

⁶⁷ *Globe*, 10 September 1862.

⁶⁸ *Globe*, 5 September 1865, 30 September 1865, 6 March 1867, 9 September 1867, 3 March 1869, 8 September 1870, 24 November 1874.

⁶⁹ *Globe*, 9 April 1866, 4 May 1868, 4 May 1869, 17 May 1870.