

## Neighbours, Then and Now

In 1811, isolation was part of the daily routine for the Bradleys, but as more families moved into the area that we now call Mississauga, a sense of community evolved. Neighbours were still miles away but they shared their unique skills, often they shared a common faith (most were Methodists or Anglicans) and they all shared a common obligation to help the burgeoning nation grow. *Lewis Bradley* and *John Skynner* were neighbours in a close-knit community known as *Merigold's Point*. Today their homes share the same property.

### An Anchorage

When *John Skynner* retired to his new home in Upper Canada he proclaimed, "Here I will rest; this is my anchorage." The Anchorage now contains the offices of the Museums of Mississauga, plus a gift shop and a tea room. The cottage was moved to its present location in 1978 having been a home, summer cottage, office and lastly a warehouse for the *National Sewer Pipe Company* but was left unused until sufficient funds for its restoration were raised in 1991.



The Anchorage was originally located south of Lakeshore Road, west of Southdown Road on land that had been granted to *Colonel Stephen Jarvis* in 1812. Commander Skynner purchased the property in 1839. Whether he had The Anchorage built or not is still undetermined. In fact, Jarvis family history relays a story of purchasing a house in the Town of York in 1816 and floating it by barge along the shores of Lake Ontario where it was then pulled up on the beach; The Anchorage was situated on that same piece of land. Whatever its date of construction, it is considered an excellent example of the 'Regency' style of architecture. A transition between earlier Georgian and later Victorian styles, Regency homes were popular among the British military and are derived from the Indian bungalows of the Far East. The broad overhanging eaves and large windows were intended to keep the summer heat out of the building, however they were not suitable for harsh Canadian winters.

### Commander John Skynner (1762 to 1846)



John Skynner served with the Royal Navy at a time when Emperor *Napoleon* challenged Britain's commanding naval power. Skynner served in all of *Admiral Horatio Nelson's* campaigns except for Nelson's decisive victory over Napoleon, at Trafalgar in 1805. Skynner was there in spirit, however. He was commanding his own ship, the *Hirondelle*, with the Mediterranean fleet at the time, preventing French ships from joining in on the battle. Years earlier, Skynner served aboard the ship that saw the safe return of the *Duke of Kent* to Great Britain. The duke was the future father of *Queen Victoria*. Imagine how history would have changed had the young Lieutenant Skynner and his mates faltered in their duty to king and

country!



### International Man of Intrigue

Skynner is a man with an enigmatic past. He retired to Upper Canada at the rather advanced age of 76 and he kept up a pen-pal relationship with a Russian admiral, *Pyotr Rikord*. Diplomatic relations between Britain and Russia were sour in the 1830s but the pragmatic Rikord knew that only British experience and technology could help him complete his daunting task of modernizing Russia's archaic fleet. What kind of advice did Skynner offer the ageing Russian admiral? Why did he chose to retire and settle in this part of the world? These are just some of the many mysteries to be discovered at the Bradley Museum.

For more information about *Lewis Bradley*, *John Skynner* and the



Museums of Mississauga  
\*Shedding Light on the Past\*