

OBSERVATORIES ON LUNDY'S LANE

Between the early 1820's and the end of the American Civil War in 1865, War of 1812 battlefields were a popular tourist attraction. Of these, the most popular was the site of the Battle of Lundy's Lane. Because both sides claimed victory in this battle, the site attracted Canadians, British and American tourists alike. The visitors would be given tours of the battle ground by a veteran of the battle, and would normally view the battlefield from the gallery of the second Drummond Hill Presbyterian Church, which was built in 1836 at the south-east corner of Drummond Road and Lundy's Lane. Drummond Hill was the highest ground in the area, and the view which could be obtained was magnificent, inspiring a series of five observation towers on Lundy's Lane.

First Observatory

Known as the Anderson Tower, the first observatory was built around 1845, by a veteran of the Battle of Lundy's Lane, Captain Anderson. Located on the north side of Lundy's Lane, on a lot north-east of the present Drummond Hill Church, this tower was a crude wooden structure which lacked a foundation. It consisted of four logs which were placed in the sand, and which tapered to a height of 40 feet. The outside of the tower was covered with wooden lattice-work, offering some protection for the visitors who ascended and descended the stairs which were located within. The posts of the tower soon began to decay, however, and the observatory collapsed during a winter storm and was never rebuilt.

Second Observatory

The second observatory, the McKenzie Tower, was erected by Donald McKenzie on his property on the south side of Lundy's Lane, in 1846. Located west of the Drummond Hill Church, it was the only one of the five observatories to be located on the south side of Lundy's Lane. Rising to a height of 80 feet, the tower had a sturdy stone foundation and its bottom two stories were covered with clapboard. The tower had three observation platforms with protective railings: at the top of the second storey, 2/3 of the way up the tower and at the top, where a telescope was located to supply distant views of the surrounding country. The observatory contained a flight of stairs, and was covered by lattice work where the clapboard ended. On the ground floor, souvenirs such as Indian bead-work, bullets found on the site of the battle, stone specimens, bows and arrows, and canes were sold. There was a 25 cent charge for tourists visiting the tower, but it was free to local residents and school children. In early 1851, McKenzie enlarged and renovated his observatory, which was operating very successfully. Unfortunately, the tower was destroyed in a spectacular fire on July 4th, 1851, which some suggested was deliberately set. No photographs of the first two observation towers are known to exist.

Third Observatory

This observatory, also known as Scott's Tower, was constructed by Adam Fralick about 1850. It was located on the north side of Lundy's Lane, east of the Tavern which Fralick operated and almost opposite the Drummond Hill Church. Like the second observatory, the Fralick Tower had a wooden structure covered with lattice-work, but it was built on top of a two storey building. The tower remained in operation for many years, but it ultimately collapsed during a storm.

Fourth Observatory

The fourth observatory was built prior to 1855, and was located near the north-east corner of Lundy's Lane and Drummond Road. It was constructed by a Mr. Davis, and later run by a Mr. Durham, as a consequence of which the tower is referred to as both the Davis or Durham Observatory. It was built on top of a two-storey red-brick building whose second floor was used by lodges for meetings. As the fourth observatory was located on lower land than the previous towers, it surpassed them all in height. This observatory was used by area residents to glimpse the Battle of Ridgeway during the Fenian Raids of 1866. In 1869 or 1870, several pieces of the observatory were blown down during a fierce storm. The tower was dismantled in 1870, but its competitor, the Fralick Tower, stood for many years after the closure of the fourth observatory.

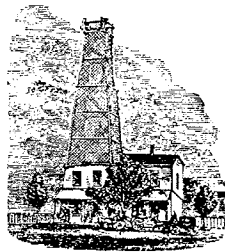
Fifth Observatory or Steel Tower

In 1893, a group of local citizens formed the Lundy's Lane Observatory Company and erected a steel tower on the site of Fralick's Tower. The construction of the 102 foot tower (the first such tower in Canada) was financed by selling \$10,000 worth of shares to local citizens. The base of the observatory was a 50 foot square two-storey building and the girders of the tower

were not simply anchored to the roof, but passed through the actual building. Part of the building was to be used as a museum and storehouse for relics recovered from the Lundy's Lane Battlefield. The Steel Tower had a steam-operated elevator which took visitors to platforms located 3/4 up the tower and at its summit. Although the steel tower was widely publicized, it failed to attract significant numbers of tourists, and the observatory was forced to close within six years of its construction. The property was sold to William Crawford in 1921, and he had the building and tower removed.

General Scott Tower!

LUNDY'S



L A N E.

The most Romantic and Interesting point at Niagara Falls.

This place being beautifully located on an elevation of 400 feet above the FALLS and TABLE ROCK, offering to the visitor a PLEASANT AND INTERESTING DRIVE, passing through the beautiful town of

DRUMMONDVILLE & LUNDY'S LANE.

On arriving here the visitor ascends the Tower, where an hour can be delightfully spent in viewing the most magnificent scenery on this Continent, the rich, highly cultivated, and beautiful country for over one hundred miles. Here is placed before the visitor, a scenery, it is believed, which

Has no Equal in the World.

By the aid of the large and powerful Telescope the most distant scenery is brought plain to view, viz:

Lakes Erie and Ontario, Brock's Monument, Buffalo, Allegany Mountains, Burlington Heights, Queenston Heights, Chippawa and Lundy's Lane,

and the wildly rushing rapids and still waters, with its numerous islands of the beautiful river above the

MIGHTY CATARACT.

An Old Veteran who received wounds during the midnight struggle at Lundy's Lane, under the command of Gen. W. Scott, will entertain visitors with a true and correct history of the war of 1812-13-14. From the thousands who visit this place annually it is acknowledged by all to be a scene of surpassing beauty and never-ceasing charm.

LUNDY'S LANE, W. FRALICK, Proprietor.

Left: Pamphlet advertising the General Scott Tower (Fralick's), the third observatory built on Lundy's Lane