

ROMANTIC STORY OF DONOR OF HIGH PARK

John George Howard as Architect and
Surveyor Played a Large Part in
Toronto's Development.

WAS DRAWING MASTER
FOR YEARS AT U.C.C.

The Tomb in High Park Has Railing
From St. Paul's in London
and Cost \$3, 20.

Star W. 1896
By MARY C. HARVEY.
FOR sixty-five years John George Howard, the donor of High Park, was a familiar figure in the streets of Toronto, and it is to be hoped that for centuries his memory will be kept green in the minds of the people of Toronto and of Ontario by the magnificent park which he presented to the Queen City.

John George Howard was the descendant of that war-like and chivalrous Sir William Howard—the "Belted Will"—of Sir Walter Scott, and was born twenty-one miles north of London, England. At fifteen he was sent to sea through a firm of Hamburg traders, whose chief place of business was in Crutched Friars, London. He followed the sea for two years, shipping as a boy before the mast, but like a certain British general who enjoys worldly fame, Howard was compelled to abandon the sea, after having found that he was a constant victim of mal de mer.

Having learned navigation, practical geometry, and marine surveying he turned his attention to land surveying, engineering, and architecture, a knowledge of which he had acquired in the office of an uncle who was a contractor, and afterwards in the office of John Grayson, an architect.

On May 7th, 1827, he married a Miss Jemima Frances Meikle, and in the spring of 1832 they emigrated to Canada. After an extremely rough, adventurous, and dangerous passage, of which Mr. Howard kept a log, which was privately published many years ago, they reached Toronto in the September of the same year.

At that time Sir John Colborne was Lieutenant-governor of Ontario, then called Upper Canada, and William Lyon Mackenzie was the first mayor of Toronto.

Sir John Colborne took a great interest in the clever young architect, and it was through his influence that Mr. Howard was given the appointment, quite a plum at the time, of drawing master at Upper Canada College, at which famous old school, then located at the corner of King and Simcoe streets, the three young sons of Sir John Colborne were then pupils.

He went on duty at the college on the 1st of April, 1833, three hours a day for four days a week at one hundred pounds sterling per annum, and he was to be allowed to carry on professional work in the college in order that the pupils might see the process. He held this position for twenty-three years—until 1856.

From 1833 to 1890 Mr. Howard took a very active and prominent part in the building up of the city of which we are all now so proud. As an engineering expert, as an architect, a marine and land surveyor, his services were invaluable, and all through the city are evidences of the work of this clever pioneer citizen.

In 1838 Sir George Arthur, then Lieutenant-governor, employed him to make alterations and additions to the government house, and to build a fine ball-room, and provide and arrange the furniture, which cost altogether about \$10,000. Sir George Arthur also gave him the Lieutenant's commission for volunteering to lead the scouting party on December 7th, 1837, when Montgomery's tavern was burned down by the Royalists, the rebels all running away.

In 1842 he built two stores on King street, Nos. 103 and 105, "with German silver sashes and plate glass." No. 103 was built with the first white brick used in this city. He gave the brickmaker sixty pounds for 20,000. They were made from clay on Yonge street from the lot of Mr. Sheriff Jarvis.

In 1842 he surveyed the ground and made plans for St. James Cemetery, laying out the ground in burial plots and prepared two books, with the lots and corresponding numbers, with roads and paths.

In the same year he built a stone church on Manitoulin Island for the Indians, and churches and schoolhouses on Snake and Walpole Islands in Lake Simcoe.

As city surveyor, appointed by William Lyon Mackenzie, he surveyed a great part of the city, Toronto Island, and many other towns in Ontario. He drew the design for Brock's monument, laid out the grounds at Osgoode Hall, and built the present provincial asylum on Queen street.

Gift to City Before Death

ON the 23rd of December, 1837, John G. Howard and his wife, Jemima Frances Howard, moved from Chewitt's Buildings, King street, out to their new home in High Park, which they had named in honor of Sir John Colborne "Colborne Lodge," and there they spent the remainder of their lives, John G. living until 1890 and Jemima Frances until 1877. Two days after their occupancy of the new home, on Christmas Day, John G. Howard shot a deer and some quail at the rear part of High Park, near Bloor street. In 1851 he had his farm cottage and barn in High Park built. This cottage is now the well-known cottage of the superintendent of High Park, Mr. William Lightfoot, whose pride the beautiful surrounding garden has been for a good many years.

Mr. and Mrs. Howard had no children, no direct heirs, and so, he having been largely employed by the city as an architect and civil engineer, he considered it his duty to return a portion of the property he had accumulated to the city, which with the exception of the one-eighth of an acre, the consecrated ground on which the monument to himself and wife was erected in 1874-1875, and about forty acres surrounding his own home, Colborne Lodge, in 1873, Howard conveyed 120 acres of the present park to the corporation of the city of Toronto "as a public park forever." At his decease the corporation were to have Colborne Lodge and the surrounding acres.

In 1876 the city of Toronto conferred the title of forest ranger upon Mr. Howard at a salary of \$1,200 per year for the remainder of his life. He thereupon began making great improvements in High Park, forming roads, making drains, surveying the land, forming boundaries, and clearing the underbrush.

On the 27th of July, 1883, the mayor and certain members of the corporation visited Mr. John Howard at Colborne Lodge, High Park, on his 80th birthday and presented him with an address. In the same year the Marquis of Lorne made him Royal Canadian Academician. It is claimed by many who knew the charming chataine of Colborne Lodge, Mrs. Howard, that her ability as a landscape artist was superior to that of her husband.

In May, 1881, Mr. Howard donated the paintings in his art gallery which had been done by himself and wife to the city of Toronto, and today they may be seen in the Carnegie Library on College street.