

Spirits of the Speedy
Saturday, October 9, 2004
8:00 p.m. at the Presqu'ile Provincial Park amphitheatre

Explore what happened to H.M.S. Speedy that fateful night 200 years ago.

Twenty-year-old John Anderson was first person enrolled in the Law Society of Upper Canada who was not called to the Bar. Why? He disappeared, along with many others aboard H.M.S. Speedy in 1804. He was articled to Jacob Farrand, a cousin to Robert Isaac Dey Gray, the Solicitor General of Upper Canada who was also aboard the Speedy. Anderson was heading to Newcastle (Presqu'ile) to assist Gray and distribute copies of the law to local people who could read.

No government investigation of the loss of the Speedy was ever undertaken. Two hundred years later, you are invited to a ghost walk along the shores of the Presqu'ile peninsula. Join two of John Anderson's fellow law students to investigate the tragic events yourselves. Meet witnesses who may fill you in on the details of the sinking and acquaintances of those who disappeared with the schooner. Then decide what you think really happened to the Speedy.

Through this event, the Remembering Speedy Committee plans to commemorate the loss of the H.M.S. Speedy. In the early hours of October 8, 1804, H.M.S. Speedy was sighted off the shores of Presqu'ile. Since there was no lighthouse, residents of the peninsula built a large fire to guide the schooner around Presqu'ile Point. But the Speedy never made it to the Presqu'ile harbour. Instead of delivering its passengers to the newly built courthouse for its inaugural trial, the schooner disappeared into the night, never to be recovered.

The loss of this schooner, and more importantly those aboard it, was a devastating blow to this area and Upper Canada. The passengers included some of the most prominent figures in Upper Canada: the Solicitor General of Upper Canada, a Judge of the King's Bench, the Treasurer of the Law Society of Upper Canada and the High Constable of York. With such a tragic event occurring here, the plans for the district capital town of Newcastle, to be located on the Presqu'ile peninsula, were cancelled and moved to Cobourg. Today, Cobourg remains the administrative capital of Northumberland County, a destiny that could have been Brighton's.

Regular park admission fees apply for this event. For more information on the Speedy and commemorative events, visit www.Speedy1804.com or call (613) 475-4324.

Remembering Speedy events are brought to you by Brighton History Week, Brighton and District Chamber of Commerce, Friends of Presqu'ile Park, Brighton Kin Club, Law Society of Upper Canada, Municipality of Brighton, Northumberland Tourism, Ontario Parks, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Presqu'ile Point Property Owners, Presqu'ile Yacht Club, Brighton Rotary Club, Save Our Heritage Organization, Tal Trees Inc and The Apple Route.