

The Armoury/ Farmers' Market Building

36 Mulcaster Street, Barrie

Prepared For Heritage Barrie

By

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The Simcoe Foresters

The Simcoe Foresters originated under the authority of a Military General Order dated September 14, 1866. It was formed through the amalgamation of seven independent militia Rifle and Infantry Companies, the earliest of which was No. 1 Company, organized December 27, 1855, at Barrie. Known first as the 35th Simcoe Battalion of Infantry, the title was changed the following year to the 35th Battalion (The Simcoe Foresters). Their motto was *Spectemur Agendo*.¹

Early Armouries in Barrie

In 1862, a building on Owen Street, which may have been the first armoury for the reserve companies in Barrie, was destroyed by fire. (Figure 1) "The armoury, or building used for keeping the arms, ammunition, and clothing of the Rifle Company, all of which was lost, except a few rifles which happened to be in possession of some of the members of the Company."² The Rifle Company soon found "the want of a suitable armory and drill ground being found to be a serious injury to the Company, by interfering with the regularity of the drill, and a proper place for the safe keeping of the arms, being in fact by law absolutely necessary, we understand that Captain McKenzie has applied to the Corporation for the use of a portion of the now unoccupied Market square, on which to erect the necessary buildings."³ (Figure 2) By November the "enterprising Rifle Company [had] built for their use a neat Armory,

Figure 1: Barrie Northern Advance, June 6, 1862 (Simcoe County Archives)

THE FIRE ON OWEN STREET.

Another destructive and most dangerous fire occurred here on Saturday morning, by which three dwelling houses and the same number of buildings used for storage purposes, were entirely consumed. Amongst the latter we regret to say was the armory, or building used for keeping the arms, ammunition, and clothing of the Rifle Company, all of which was lost, except a few rifles which happened to be in possession of some of the members of the Company.

It is not known how or where the fire originated. It was first seen behind or close to the armory, and soon caught the buildings on Owen Street, occupied by Mr. Wm. Mann and Mr. Booth, as dwelling houses, and by Mr. McKenzie, as a dwelling house and watchmaker's shop.

These three buildings, together with a storehouse belonging to Mr. Jonathan Lane, the armory and stable of Mr. King's, were so rapidly enveloped in flames that it was considered useless to attempt to save them, and the whole energies of the Fire Company were employed to prevent the fire extending southwards to Dunlop Street. This they fortunately succeeded in doing, although owing to the buildings being of wood, crowded together, and a quantity of dry lumber and other combustible material being scattered around, they had no light task to perform. The men of the Rifle Company rendered valuable assistance in removing furniture, and otherwise aiding the Firemen, although had there been a wind from the North, it is probable that no exertion would have availed to save the block of buildings so closely packed together on Dunlop Street.

It was suspected by some that the fire was the work of an incendiary, but we are at a loss to find a motive for such an act, and trust, for the credit of our town, that this suspicion is unfounded. We are rather inclined to think that it must have proceeded from that very fruitful source of fires—an ash barrel.

In connection with this fire we may call the attention of the proper authorities to the great advantage of having a few of what are known as garden engines, to prevent the extension of a fire like this last one, by keeping the adjoining house well saturated with water. They are easily supplied with water, which they can throw on any roof of a two story house, and can be often used where the large engines, if not engaged elsewhere, cannot. They only cost, with a sufficient length of hose, about \$24 each, and four or five of them would be of as much service as a large engine.

We have no doubt that many persons in the town who have gardens would be willing to take charge of them—keep them in repair—agree to bring them to every fire, and pay to the funds of the Fire Company yearly, a small sum for their use. The suggestion at least may be worth taking into consideration.

Owing to the late fire, which destroyed the armory and contents, the Riflemen's Excursion is postponed until the Company's outfit is replaced—probably towards the end of the summer.

Figure 2: *Barrie Northern Advance*, August 8, 1862 (left); Figure 3: November 19, 1862 (right) (*Simcoe County Archives*)

THE RIFLE COMPANY.

The want of a suitable armory and drill ground being found to be a serious injury to the Company, by interfering with the regularity of the drill, and a proper place for the safe keeping of the arms, being in fact by law absolutely necessary, we understand that Captain McKenzie has applied to the Corporation for the use of a portion of the now unoccupied Market square, on which to erect the necessary buildings. It is thought that the voluntary labour of the men, aided by the contributions of their fellow townsmen, which will not be wanting in so good a cause, together with the grant given by Government for the care of the arms, combined with the proceeds of an excursion which it is proposed to have during the summer, will be amply sufficient, not merely to erect a neat structure suitable to the purpose, but also to put the ground in such order that the whole will be an ornament to the town, and a credit to all concerned. We trust therefore that when the project is put in proper shape before the public it will meet with every encouragement, both from the Corporation and the people generally, and that before autumn the most essential portions, if not the whole of the design will have been carried out.

THE RIFLE COMPANY ARMORY.

We are pleased to notice that our enterprising Rifle Company have built for their use a neat Armory, 30 feet by 20, and which stands on part of the Market Square, and affords a marked contrast to the unsightly shed which is used as an Engine House, and occupies a prominent position on the other side of the square. The Armory has been built partly by Captain McKenzie and the men of his company, and partly by the gratuitous work of some of our tradesmen who appreciate the spirit of the Company. The materials were obtained through the instrumentality of Mr. McKenzie, who gave a great amount of time and trouble to the unpleasant task of soliciting pecuniary aid, but which, we learn, was not often refused. It was originally intended to rough-cast the outside and plaster the inside, which would have rendered it far less liable to fire, which caused the destruction of the building before used for the same purpose. The danger, however, is much lessened from the isolated position of the present one. The lateness of the season and the inadequacy of the funds will preclude the possibility of finishing in this particular until next summer; but the racks will be prepared for arms, great coats, &c., which are expected ere long, and the building will be fit for use immediately. In consideration of the generosity of the members of the drill association in handing over the sum of \$42 towards the building, they will have the privilege of the use of the armory in common with the Riflemen, and, as we understand Captain McKenzie has kindly undertaken to drill such of them as wish it together with his Company, the arrangement will be beneficial to both parties. We are requested to state that the 12 days' drill, ordered by the Commander-in-Chief, will commence on Monday, the 24th instant, at the Town Hall, at 6 p.m. when all the men are expected to attend.

30 feet by 20, and which stands on part of the Market Square...." (Figure 3)

In the latter part of 1865, Canada was threatened by the Grand Army of the Irish Republic. Known as Fenians, the members were a group of residents of the United States who armed and organized themselves for an invasion of Canada. By 1866, the Fenian raids were menacing enough that the militia companies at Barrie were placed on active service. The remaining troops were ordered to "hold themselves in readiness and the Companies drilled assiduously."⁴ The Fenian threat prompted Lieutenant-Colonel Dennis, on behalf of the federal Minister of Militia, to visit Barrie in October 1866 "with a view to select a suitable site for the erection of a County Battalion Drill Shed...."⁵ (Figure 4) The first site selected was St. Vincent Square as it could accommodate a drill grounds as well as the agricultural buildings needed to replace the inadequate market facilities at Market Square.

There is little evidence of what transpired over the decision to locate in St. Vincent Square. It is known that a wood drill shed was erected by November 1868 in Queen's Park (on the 1995 armoury site) rather than at St. Vincent Square. During construction, a sudden storm destroyed most of the building material, killed one worker, and injured the contractor, William Graham. The Council granted Graham a \$200 bonus. When completed, it was said to be the finest drill shed in Ontario.⁶ In September 1870, the Barrie *Northern Advance* newspaper noted that the roof supports

Figure 4: Barrie Northern Advance, October 24, 1866 (Simcoe County Archives)

A BATTALION DRILL SHED

Lieut. Col. Dennis paid a visit to this town lately, with a view to select a suitable site for the erection of a County Battalion Drill Shed, and if possible make such arrangements as would enable the building to be gone on with during the winter.

In making such a selection it was necessary, as far as possible, to combine three things—proximity to the business part of the town, a place of ground capable of being levelled without very great expense, and a position where a rifle-shooting range could be formed. After inspecting several pieces of ground, St. Vincent-square, at the east end of the town, was fixed on as the most suitable place for such a purpose, in the control of the municipality, and a letter from Col. Dennis is now before the Council, asking that body to pass a resolution appropriating it to this object.

In establishing these drill-sheds, both here and elsewhere, it is sought to make them answer several purposes of a public nature, such as an agricultural show room, a place to hold large public meetings in, &c., and in this way some contribution towards the cost of preparing the ground is generally obtained, and the premises put to a good use when not required exclusively for military purposes.

The cost of the shed which would be required here is estimated at \$2,400, and its size would be 80 by 160 feet. It would contain, besides the large drill-room, a keeper's apartment, an armory, and several board-rooms, to be used by the military authorities; for agricultural society meetings, and other purposes of a like nature.

The land attached to the building would be also used for drill purposes, and for a show ground.

The building fund is formed by a government contribution of \$1,000, a like sum from the county, and the balance is expected to be obtained from local sources.

Although St. Vincent-square is only eight or ten minutes' walk from the Market House, it might in some respects have been an advantage if even a more central position could have been chosen; but it could not be found, and perhaps it is as well that such is the case. The site spoken of contains about two acres, has a natural plantation of evergreens, which, if carefully thinned out, and the ground

nicey levelled and fenced, will make a very pleasant and agreeable resort for summer evenings for our townspeople, besides forming a nice picturesque camping ground for the volunteers, when assembled for battalion drill.

A very numerously signed memorial was presented to the Town Council last year, setting forth the advantage of having some suitable place purchased, fenced in, and planted as a park or pleasure ground for the public, and it seems to us that this square, if put to the use we have been speaking of, will at the same time exactly answer the purpose which the signers of the memorial had in view.

The Directors of the County Agricultural Society of this riding have always been more or less dissatisfied with their present show ground—the market-square; and, in fact, the rather inferior display which has been made at late exhibitions is attributed in a great measure to the want of a suitable place to hold them in. The Society owns a piece of ground, about an acre in extent, near Kempenfeldt; but it is in no respect as suitable for their purposes as St. Vincent-square can be made; and we have no doubt but that the Directors will be very willing to assist in getting the latter place put in order, on condition of being allowed to use it; and as to the immense advantage of having such a building as the drill shed will be, at their command, there can of course be no question.

We understand that Col. Dennis had an interview with Mr. Raikes, the President of the Society, on the subject, and that the latter gentleman highly approved of the project, and promised to bring it under the notice of the Directory at an early day.

If a sufficient portion of the ground was at once levelled, before the frost sets in, and the post-holes dug, the erection of the shed and fencing of the lot could be gone on with this winter, if the necessary funds are forthcoming; and as the season is not a busy one with our builders, it would be an advantage to have it in progress then, besides diminishing the cost. A small outlay, at present, would get the building ground at least into proper condition to enable the work to be proceeded with at any time; and we hope, wherever the money comes from—let it be from private subscription or otherwise—that this necessary-preliminary will not be neglected.

Figure 5: *Barrie Northern Advance*, September 29, 1870 (*Simcoe County Archives*)

THE DRILL SHED.

During the visit of inspection last week, the attention of Colonels Durie and Dennis was called to the condition of the supports of the roof of the Drill Shed, which were evidently being affected by the weight of the upper part of the structure, and probably by the force of occasional gales from the west and north-west. Several of the arches are becoming bent where the upright posts supporting the roof rest upon them, and a break even in one arch might occasion serious damage to the building. Col. Durie expressed his intention of making a report of the matter to the Minister of Militia, and Mr. McConkey who was also present, promised to communicate with the same authority on the subject, so that it is to be hoped that steps will be taken to protect the building by strengthening the apparently weak parts. The contractor of the shed, Mr. Graham, pointed out what he considered would remedy the defect, and estimated the work at about one hundred dollars, so that it is to be hoped that the risk of serious injury to so valuable and costly a building will not be suffered to continue for the saving of so small an outlay.

If these sheds are to be maintained, the Government must be prepared to make some expenditure upon them occasionally, and a small amount spent in carrying a defect when first observed is likely to save a much greater outlay afterwards.

were in need of repair and strengthening. (Figure 5) An 1875 view of the Queen's Park area⁷ shows what may have been the drill shed as a large structure with a two or one and a half storey centre section with right and left single storey wings. Nellie Rankin Sissons described the structure as having been enclosed by a high picket fence. Sissons also wrote to the Editor of the *Barrie Examiner* recalling the following event.

"Echoes of Four Wars"

Beginning in 1885 with the North-West Rebellion led by Louis Reil. To all of us this was a great war with the loss of 40 killed and about 150 near casualties.

It was March 30, 1885 that we gathered at the old drill shed in Queen's Park to see our troops off to war and wearing red coats of that period..... There was a fine bit of drama put on when the Battalion departed in March. From a house in Balf's row across from the drill shed, there came a girl's sweet voice singing. The Spanish Cavalier, accompanied by an organ.⁸

The Mulcaster Armoury

The Queen's Park drill shed burned in August 1886. Prompted by the loss, William O'Brien, Lieutenant-Colonel commanding the 35th Battalion Simcoe Foresters, wrote to the Warden and Council of the County of Simcoe. In his letter, dated November 21, 1887, O'Brien appealed to Council for financial support towards the construction of "suitable accommodation for the Head Quarters of the Regiment."

Barrie November 21st 1887

TO

The Warden and Council of
The County of Simcoe

Sir and Gentlemen

Relying on the good will which has on various occasions been shown by the County Council of Simcoe to its County Regiment, and the interest it has taken in promoting its welfare and efficiency, I again desire to bring under your notice the position in which the 35th Battalion is placed by the destruction of the Drill Shed, and the great need which exists of providing suitable accommodation for the head quarters of the Regiment. Under existing regulations this can only be done through the cooperation of the municipal councils interested, as "the Government will in no case give more in aid of military Drill Sheds than the sum equal to that which is bona fide expended by the locality in the actual building of the shed." (See Regulations and Orders 380 & 381) The sum which under these regulations the Government would contribute for the purpose required viz:— for Battalion Head Quarters — would be \$1000, to which a like sum would have to be contributed from some other source. For Two thousand Dollars the necessary building could no doubt be erected, and arrangements could also I trust be made with the town of Barrie for providing a suitable and convenient site as well as for other assistance towards the end in view. A plan will be submitted sanctioned by the Militia Department showing the nature and extent of the accommodation actually necessary. It is hoped however that if the matter is taken up by your Honorable body such a plan will be adopted as will be suitable to the wealth and standing of the county and to the credit of the County town.

In conclusion I have only to say that it will be the object of the officers and men of the Simcoe Foresters to maintain for their Regiment that high character for efficiency and discipline which has hitherto distinguished it, and on which they mainly trust for your favourable consideration on the present occasion.

I have the honor to be
Sir and Gentlemen

Your Obedient Servant

William E. O'Brien

Lt. Col.

Commanding 35th Batt. Simcoe
Foresters⁹

As O'Brien stated, the funding formula for the Mulcaster Street armoury was governed by federal regulations. The county's Standing Committee on Finance agreed to pay "the sum of \$500 towards the building of a Headquarters Drill Shed and Depot for the Military Stores of the 35th Batt.," with the understanding that the town of Barrie would be paying an equal share "and that the Government will supplement the said sums by an equal amount...." (Figure 6)

At that date, the county was also appealing to the House of Commons for compensation for the cost of supplying Kits to the men of the 35th Battalion who were on duty during the Northwest Rebellion in 1885. About one thousand dollars plus three and one half years of interest was received by the county in 1889.

On March 19, 1888, the Barrie town Council passed a motion "that Sufficient land for the proposed Drill Shed be granted to the Dominion Government on that triangular piece of land owned by the town South of Mark St. and east of Bayfield" The following April, "S. Lount and others" appealed to council not to build the armoury on the parcel south of Mark St. Instead, they requested a site on the Market

Figure 6: Minutes of June Session, Simcoe County Council (Simcoe County Archives)

APPENDIX
Minutes of June Session, A. D. 1887.

JOHN STEWART, ESQ. WARDEN.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

To the Warden and Members of the Council, &c.

Your Standing Committee on Finance beg to report:

That they have considered the application of Lt. Col. O'Brien for the grant from the county of the sum of \$500 towards the building of a Headquarters Drill Shed and Depot for the Military Stores of the 65th Batt., and as it is understood that the Town of Barrie has agreed to pay \$500 for the same purpose and that the Government will supplement the said sums by an equal amount, and as it appears to be absolutely necessary that such a building should exist at the Battalion Headquarters, your Committee beg to recommend a grant of \$500 to be paid to Lt. Col. O'Brien, or to his order, as soon as the said Drill Shed and Depot shall be finished, and the Town of Barrie shall have paid a like sum, and to be paid on the certificate of the Reeve of Barrie showing that the said building is finished and the sum of \$500 paid by Barrie.

All of which is respectfully submitted,
GEORGE MOBERLY
COMMITTEE ROOM, BARRIE,
22nd November, 1887.

Square. Council responded on May 1 with the following motion:

Whereas the Department of Public Works is desirous of erecting on the Market Square of the Town of Barrie and County of Simcoe an Armoury

And whereas the land in question is owned by the Town upon trust for Market purposes and it is highly desirable in the interests of the public that an Armoury should be erected thereon notwithstanding it has been set apart for another public use

It is therefore resolved that the Mayor and Town Clerk be authorized and they are hereby required to execute in favour of Her Majesty the Queen a conveyance of the said parcel of land which is described as follows commencing on the westerly side of Mulcaster Street produced Northerly at the North easterly point of a lane twelve feet wide adjacent to the Northerly boundary of lots fifteen and sixteen on the North Side of Dunlop street thence westerly parallel to Dunlop street Sixty feet thence Northerly at right angles to said last mentioned course forty six feet thence easterly Sixty feet more or less to the westerly Side of Mulcaster Street produced thence southerly in a direct course to the place of beginning

It is further resolved that the Government of Ontario be requested to favour the passing of an Act at the next meeting of the Legislature confirming such conveyance and vesting the land in question in the Crown for purposes in connection with the Militia of Canada

It is further resolved that a copy of this Resolution be at once transmitted to the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario and to the Honourable the Minister of Public Works.¹⁰

The Market Square was set aside in 1846 as a three and a half acre reserve within Plan 2 for the Council of the District of Simcoe. In 1854, the County of Simcoe sold it to the municipality of Barrie as trustee. It was to be used for a public

(market) purpose. Evidently, the condition of this grant did not allow the erection of a federal building such as an armoury. In June of 1888, the land was transferred from the town to Her Majesty the Queen "concurring in the recommendation of the Minister of Lands, Forests, Mines and recommending that the Corporation of the Town of Barrie be released and discharged from the trust expressed in the Patent."¹¹ In October, the town issued "a notice of intention to apply at the next session of the Ontario Legislature for the Act to confirm the deed herein given to the Queen."¹²

The Architecture

On July 19, 1888, the *Advance* reported that: "The foundation of the new armoury is finished, and the superstructure will soon rise upon the solid stone base."¹³

On September 6, 1888, the following was published.

The Armoury on Mulcaster street is now far enough advanced to develop its architectural peculiarities. Considering that it is the joint production of the Militia department, the County Council and the town fathers, it is a remarkable structure. It is a small cramped up affair for a battalion building, and if the whole battalion should ever want to get inside of it at once it will strongly remind the men of the historic black hole of Calcutta, so far as size is concerned. The thing has the look of an unwise cheeseparing economy.

In November it was reported:

The Armoury is nearly finished and we would like to see the full battalion of Foresters set inside. It would be pretty close quarters.

Perhaps however it was never intended to be used by more than a company or two. It is rather a poverty stricken looking affair for a government concern. It seems to us that the men who volunteer to be the country's defenders do not get from the government what they deserve.¹⁴

The armoury was described in 1888 as "a brick structure on Mulcaster street, which contains a drill hall, company armories, orderly room, quartermaster's stores and band room."¹⁵ As the structure was not completed until late in 1888 or possibly early 1889, it does not appear on the original rendering of the 1888 insurance plan for Barrie. An overlay was added to the plan, probably prior to the update undertaken in 1900. (Figure 7) It depicts a solid brick one and a half storey building identified as an "Armory & Gymnasium." Windows are indicated on the second storey and along the rear (although there may have been a recording error as the ground floor windows appear to be original); a wood shingle roof; parapet walls on the front (east) facade; and a wood cornice (eaves) on the west (rear), south, and north facades. To the rear was a one storey shed or outbuilding. An illustration dated 1897 depicts the structure at that time. (Figure 8)

The insurance plan for 1907 indicates that the wood shingles had been replaced by a metal roof and that there may have been alterations to the windows on the west. A shed abutted along the north half of the west facade. There was also a change in the size and placement of the outbuilding at the rear. (Figure 9)

Figure 7: Insurance Plan of Barrie, 1888 updated to 1900 (with some earlier overlays)
 (Simcoe County Archives)

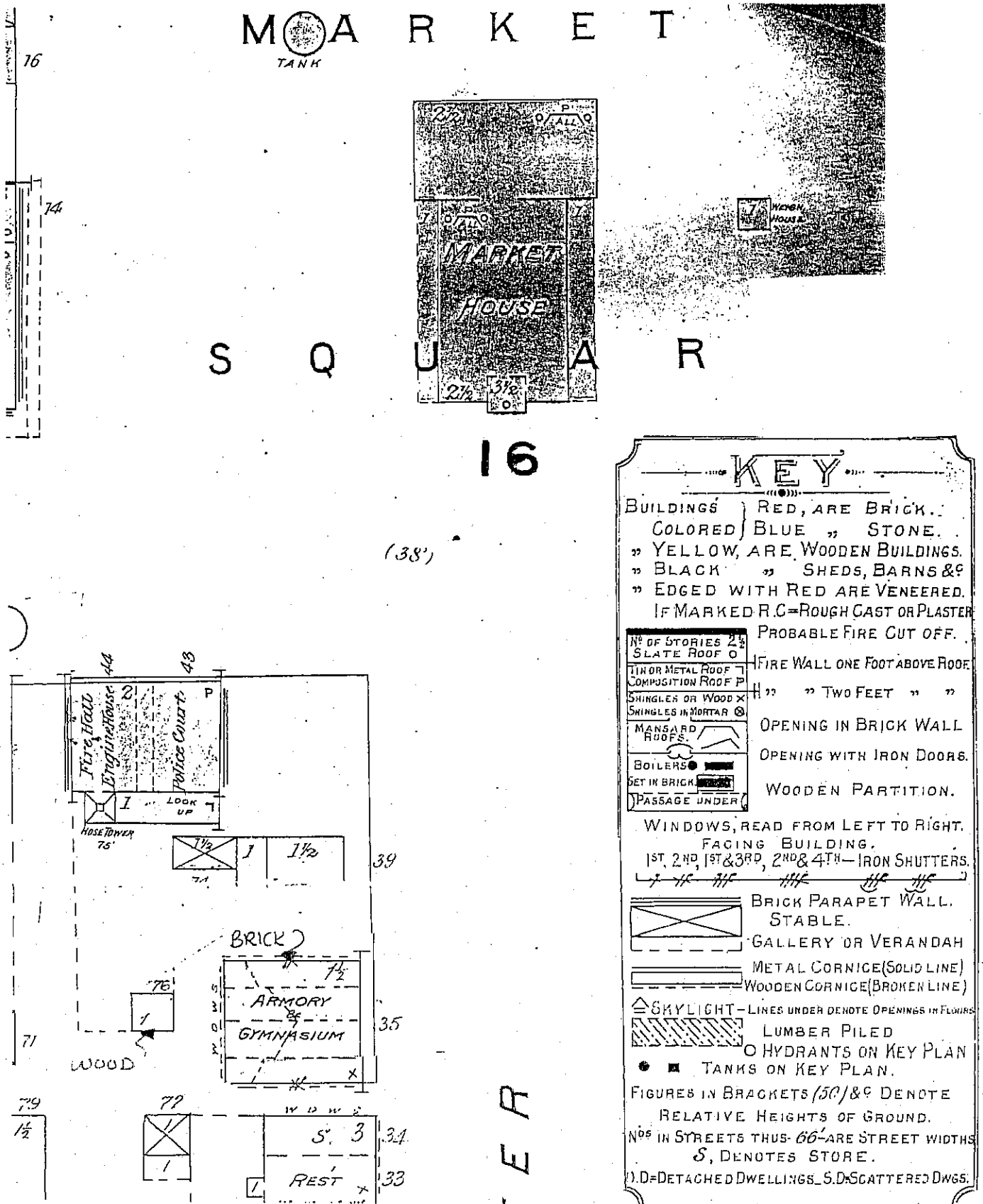
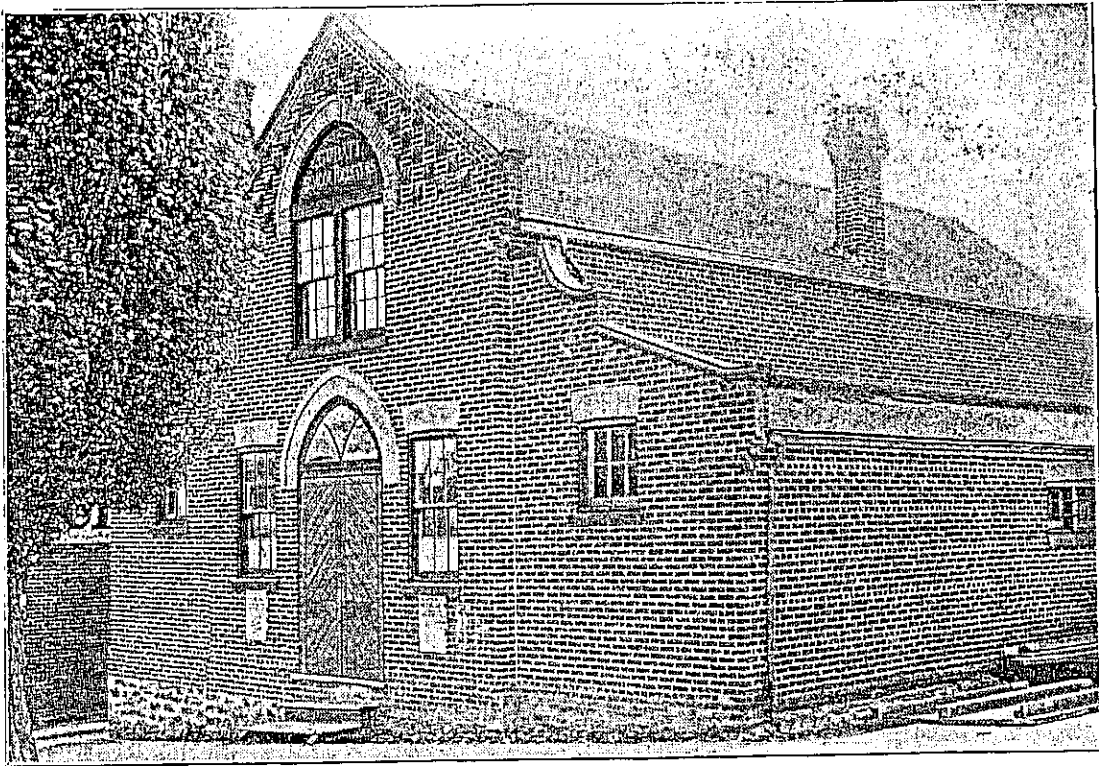


Figure 8: 1897 Souvenir Edition of Barrie, E23B64B-3-3A (*Simcoe County Archives*)

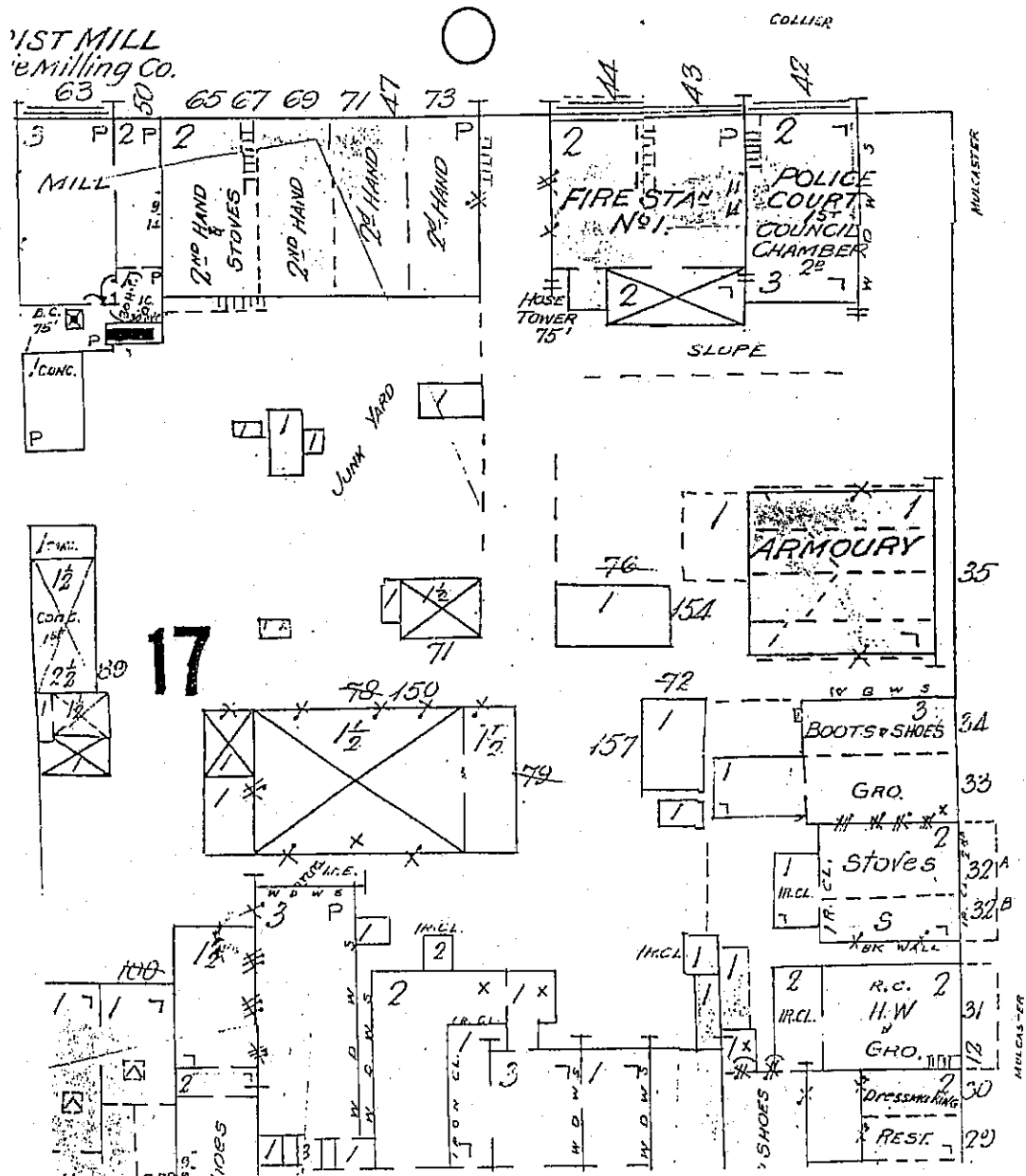


ARMORY OF 35TH BATTALION.

Figure 9: Insurance Plan of Barrie, 1907 (Simcoe County Archives)

(5A)

COLLIER



MULCASTER

In August 1911, the *Advance* reported a number of improvements to the armoury.

During the past week the 35th Regt. Armouries, Mulcaster St., have been undergoing much needed repairs. The interior and exterior of the building has been entirely repainted, and now presents a very pleasing appearance. The company rooms have been fitted with lockers for the keeping of the uniforms. During the winter months the company officers will hold classes of instruction and also meet in a social way the men of their companies.¹⁶

In 1914, it became evident that the increasing demands of the first war on the military would necessitate larger quarters. In September, work commenced on a new armoury which was still standing in 1995 in Queen's Park. The contractor was the W.A. Thompson Construction Company.

By the end of the first war, the Mulcaster Street building was used as an auxiliary drill hall and as a rehearsal hall for the Barrie band which used to accompany the 35th on its ventures. The insurance plan for 1907, updated to 1917, identifies the building as an armoury. There was little structural change from 1907, apart from a small outbuilding attached to the north facade at the west corner; a large one and a half storey storage shed added parallel to the rear; an open cordwood storage area and a straw and storage outbuilding placed to the west of the large storage shed.

Following the war, the town was allowed to use the premises for its own purposes, so the Board of Works occupied the building. By 1946, the outbuildings to the rear had been replaced or retrofitted as a wood and concrete automobile/drive shed. The attachment on the north at the west corner was retained.

In 1947, when renovations commenced on the market/town hall building in the centre of Mulcaster street (later City Hall, now demolished), the market vendors were displaced. For several years they had been complaining that the market facility was inadequate and were seeking new premises. In order to provide space for the display and sale of produce, the Board of Works moved their machinery and vehicles from the armoury building to another location. The Board's offices remained in one of the wings, leaving the centre space for market use. Shortly after, the Board moved to the former town offices on Collier Street (probably the Fire Hall) and the entire building was left for market purposes.

In a *circa* 1948 view of the building, it is evident that the following changes were been made to the original structure at or by that date. (Figure 11) Additional modifications, notably to the rear and interior, may have been undertaken, however, there is no known documentation to verify this.

Figure 10: *circa 1910* post card view of Barrie, Encl. 3 E1B74A-1-5 (*Simcoe County Archives*)

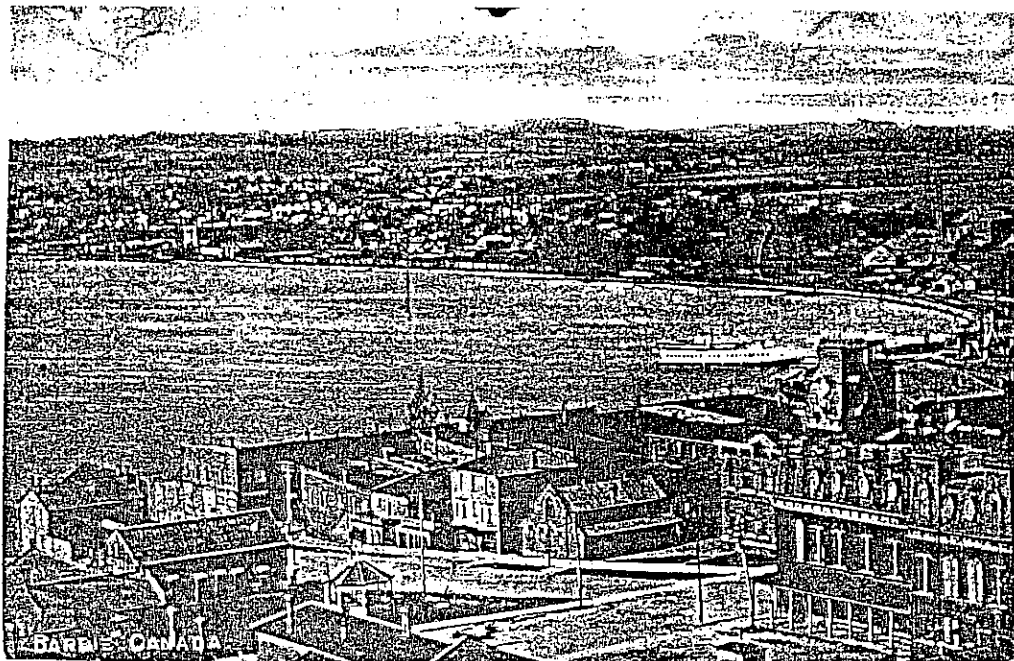
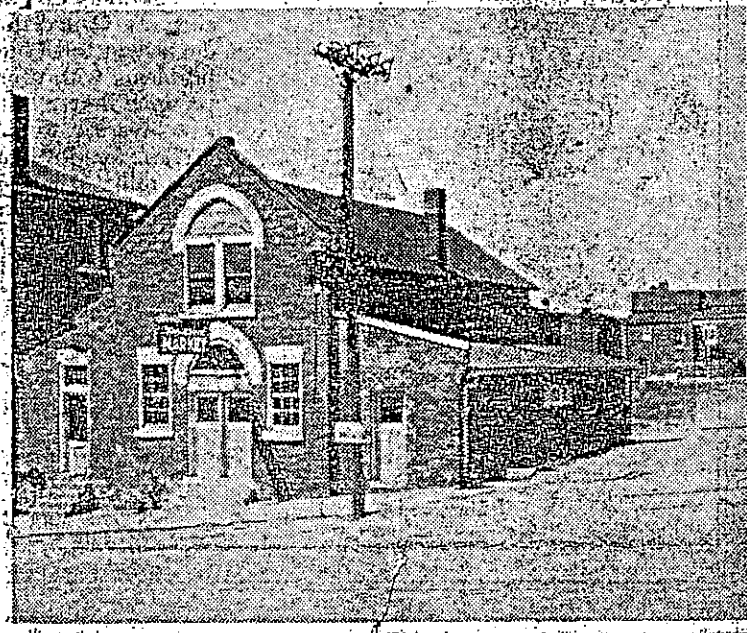


Figure 11: circa 1948 newsclip, E9B54B-3-5,p218 (Simcoe County Archives)

Utilize Former Armoury Barrie Market Building



The Town of Barrie market building, which was remodelled and redecored for the vendors following their loss of the town hall building as a place to display and sell their produce, is in the memory of many townspeople the home of the 35th regiment of Simcoe Foresters. Built in 1887 to house the 35th after their original battalion drill shed had been burned down, its outer appearance has

changed very little although it has been used for various purposes down through the years.

The first battalion drill shed was begun following the Fenian Raid in 1866. It was built on the site of the present armoury in Queen's Park, said to be one of the finest in the province, it was completed in November of 1868 and burned down in August, 1866.

Following a request of the county council, in 1887 the Dominion government refunded \$1,024.32 to Simcoe County for kit supplies to the men of the 35th while they were serving in the Northwest rebellion of 1885. On receiving it, the council contributed \$500 to the erection of a headquarters armoury at Barrie. The Town of Barrie contributed \$500 and the dominion government \$1,000.

The two wings, which now provide the farmers' section of the market building and their entrance, were used at that time for storing arms. The public could pretty well wander in when they chose and take a look around the building. The main purpose it served was that of rehearsal hall for the Barrie band, which used to accompany the 35th on its ventures. At the time of the first World War, James Henderson was bandmaster of the band, which was composed entirely of citizens. Band concerts were then extremely popular. They were given in the Post Office Square on summer evenings. People used to listen to them from the balconies of the building along the main street.

When the first world war came upon the town, rather suddenly and the tiny armoury, which had up to then been more than sufficient for the reserve army's use, proved rather inadequate. The present armoury was begun and towards the end of the war the original building was being used merely as an auxiliary drill hall.

Following the war, in 1918 or 1919, the government deeded the building to the town for its own purposes. The board of works was housed in it until 1947, when renovations began on the old market building. At first, the town council considered building a separate building in the Market Square. The board of works, however, moved their machinery and vehicles down to the old gas works and kept their offices in one of the wings of the building, leaving the centre space for the market use.

The board of works moved last fall to the former town offices on Collier Street, leaving the entire building to the market vendors. Renovations were completed recently. The re-plastered and re-painted interior, with its modern counters and fine insulation, little resembles the old drill hall of the 35th.

Colonel K. MacDonald, who was colonel of the 35th during the 1st Great War, died last year in Chatham, one of the sole survivors of the commanding officers of the 35th when it trained at the Mulcaster Street headquarters. At one time, he had been town engineer. He went overseas with the 35th during the first world war.

Interior, 1948

- in 1947-48 the interior was replastered and painted and *modern* counters and insulation added¹⁷

Exterior, 1948

- the original diagonally panelled double-leaf doors in the centre of the east facade (shown in the 1897 view as possibly storm doors) were replaced with panelled doors with upper (one-third) glazing; the brick voussoir and Gothic transom were maintained (the transom may still be in position but is only visible on the interior); centre stairs were added

- the ground level windows of each wing on the east facade were altered into door openings; the south window was maintained as a transom and the masonry cut for an opening with a door with a lower panel and upper (two-thirds) glazing; concrete stairs were added. The south window is still visible on the interior.

The north window was removed and an opening cut for a panelled door with upper (one-third) glazing. The north window may have been relocated to the south facade where it was in place in 1995.

- the curved and stepped section of the parapet wall on the east facade, north wing, was removed; the south wing was not changed

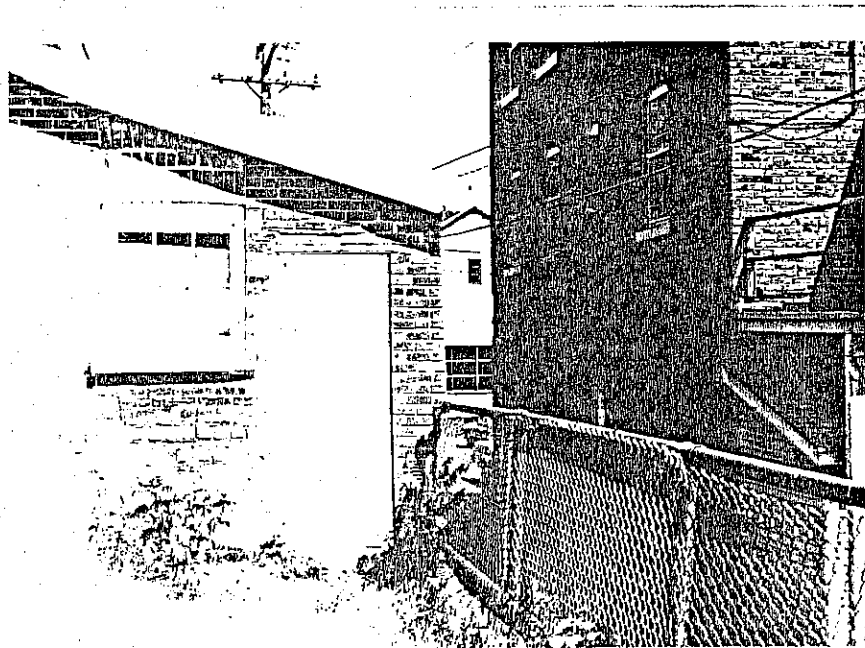
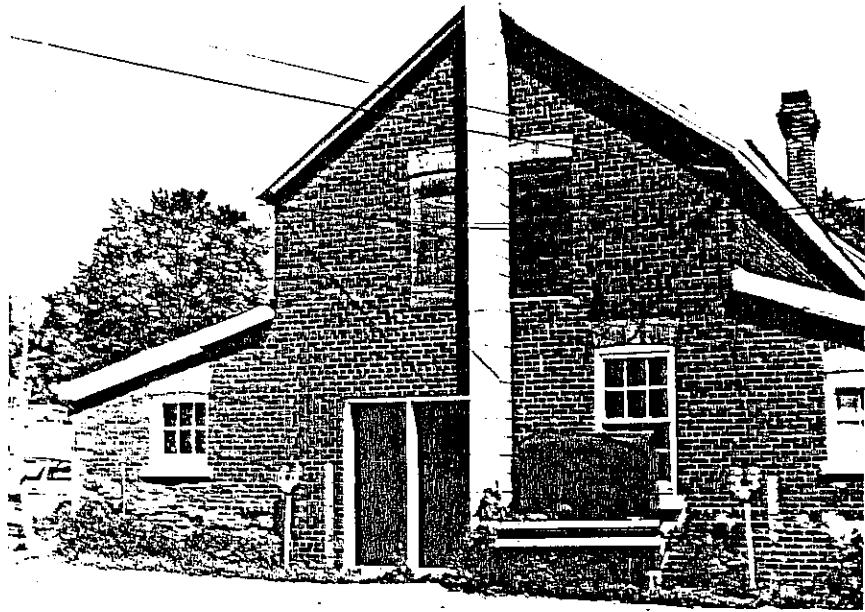
- the corbelling of the north chimney was removed (and possibly the other chimneys altered)

A building permit dated 1967 on file with the Planning and Development Department, City of Barrie, indicates that the east and north facades were lathed and stuccoed and aluminium doors installed. A 1971 permit allowed the interior north wall to be strapped, insulated, and panelled by Woodwork Unlimited, Blake Street, Barrie for \$500 (*see Appendix*). In 1977, Hasting Electric undertook some work on the building.

The City of Barrie was granted the site from the Crown in 1981. Within that year, the City sold it to Manufacturer's Life Insurance Company who leased it back to the City for use as a Market Building, recycling depot, coffee house, and various other transient functions. In 1991, it was repurchased by the City in an effort to reconstitute all of the original Market Square reserve holdings.

During the recent ownership of the building by the City and possibly Manufacturer's Life, several maintenance repairs and upgrades were undertaken. These include the addition of an access ramp, metal flashing, concrete parging on the east and south foundation walls and sills, a suspended ceiling, poured concrete floor, and various mechanical installations. The rear facade was coated in stucco plaster after 1977. (Figure 12)

Figure 12: 1977 views of west facade, Heritage Barrie files.



Observations

Constructed in 1888-89, the Mulcaster armoury could be identified with the Classical Revival period of architecture. It is, however, more a standard-issue design that was dictated by its function rather than an attempt at period styling. The need for unincumbered interior space for group assembly and the storage of arms, uniforms, and equipment is reflected in the plan of a storey and a half centre section with right and left single storey wings. The east facade was made attractive by the use of parapet walls which were stepped and curved to rise to the centre gable. The use of red brick laid in stretcher bond, buff brick voussoirs, the raised squared brick patterning in the gable, the semi-circular transom over the door, and the identifying plaque over the second storey windows gave the street facade an attractive appearance.

The photograph dated 1897 (*Figure 8*) should be the guide to the original appearance of the building. The following are observations regarding the original building and its present state.

- the original structure was unpainted solid red brick with buff brick voussoirs; the east facade was laid in stretcher bond; the balance of the building may have been in common bond
- the parapet walls on the east may have been capped in cut stone
- decorative raised cut brick squares were laid parallel to the roof line in the gable

- the applied wood moulding at the soffit survives in sections
- all original wood elements were painted
- the foundation was coursed stone; now parged with concrete
- a basement was probably only partially excavated on the south side
- the original roof cladding was wood shingles; replaced by 1907 with metal
- there were possibly three chimneys, now removed or reduced; a centre exterior stacked chimney was added at a later date on the west

Windows

- all windows had a simple moulding
- the windows are flat openings with segmental voussoirs in buff brick (see 1897 and 1977 views for example)
- the large scale windows on the east and west facades were/are 6x6 double hung wood frames and sash with wood lugsills and buff brick voussoirs
- the second storey pair of windows on the east had an identifying plaque transom inscribed "35th BATT. SIMCOE FORESTERS"; the windows and possibly the transom survive on the interior above the suspended ceiling
- several windows have original or early glazing
- the small scale windows on the east and west facades were single fixed 6 pane wood sash and frame; one remains in place but is only visible on the interior; the other was relocated to the south facade

- the horizontal windows on the north and south facades are comprised of one frame with three fixed wood sash; the centre section has three vertical divisions and the right and left have two vertical divisions; these appear to have been barricaded with iron bars perhaps due to the storage of armaments; each has a single buff brick voussoir

West Facade

- as evident in an 1977 view of the west facade; the original structure had a pair of second storey large double hung wood windows with buff brick voussoirs, with at least one, possibly two ground level matching windows, and a small 6 pane window in each wing
- a panelled door in the rear south wing and the side by side doors in the centre section may date to 1948 (there may have been an original rear entrance but no documentation could be located)

Interior

- the interior window wood mouldings survive
- all of the tongue and groove vertical wall panelling is likely a later addition
- the suspended ceiling is a later addition
- the poured concrete floor has replaced a tongue and groove 3-5" wide board floor; original boards are evident in the wings
- several original building components such as the transom and windows are visible

on the interior above and below the suspended ceiling

- the original ceiling is above the suspended ceiling
- the counters were probably created by cutting out sections of the original solid interior masonry walls and door openings
- stove chimneys are still in place

In form and mass the structure is essentially unaltered from its original construction. The obvious alterations have been in the adjustment of door and window openings, some interior modifications, and exterior and interior finishes. The most damaging has been the 1967 flattening of the decorative elements on the east facade, and the application of wire mesh in order to adhere stucco plaster. With care and concern, the building could be brought back to its former state and become a reminder of the military and architectural heritage of Barrie.

Appendix

Building permit dated 1967

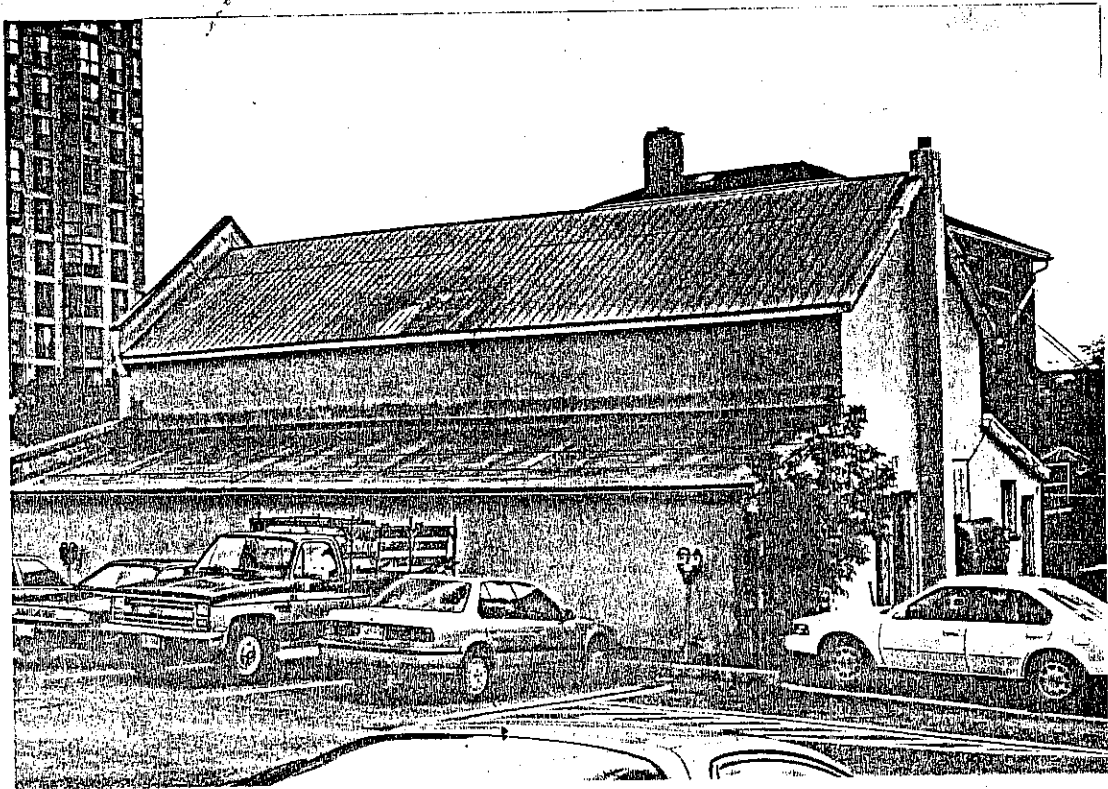
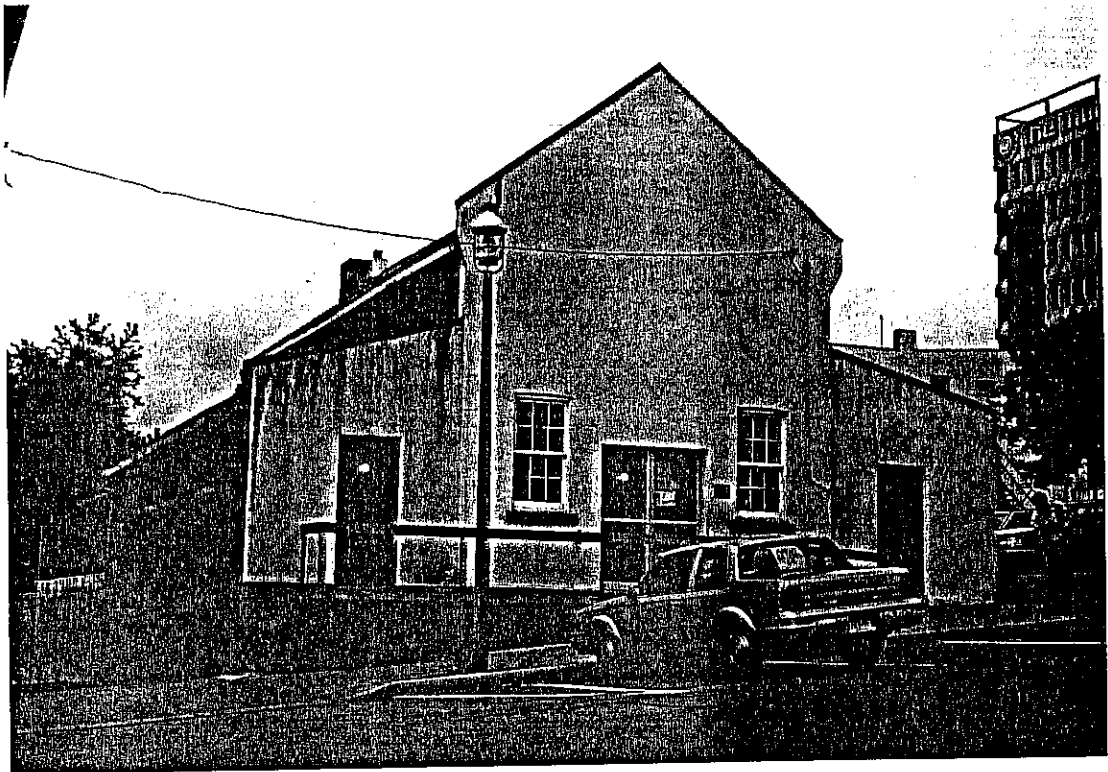
Circa 1900 photograph

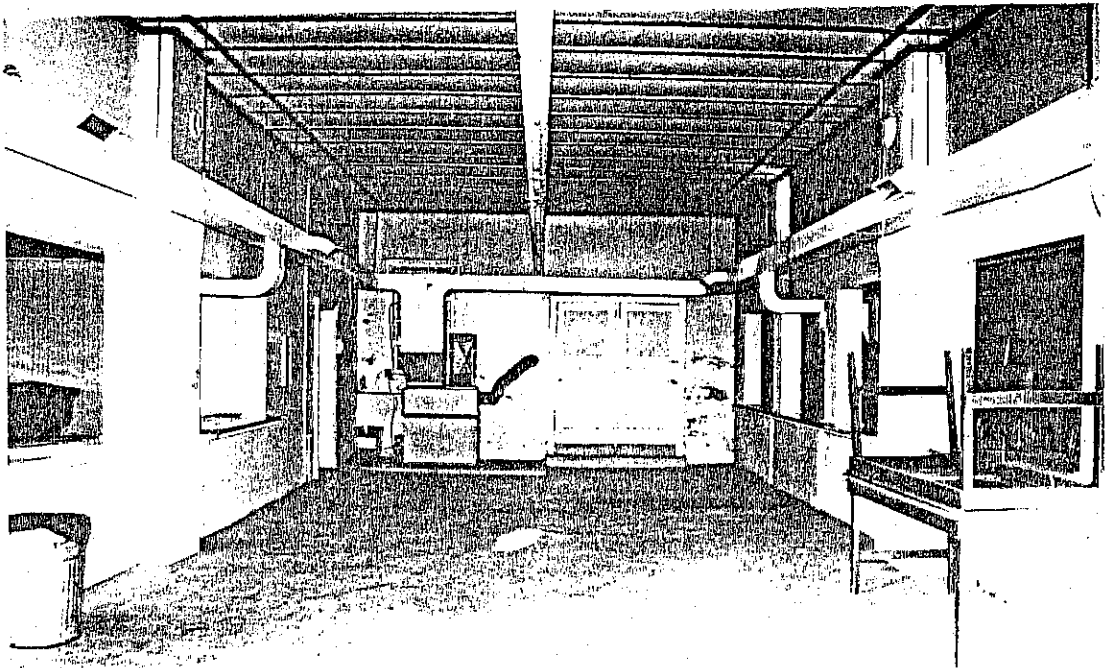
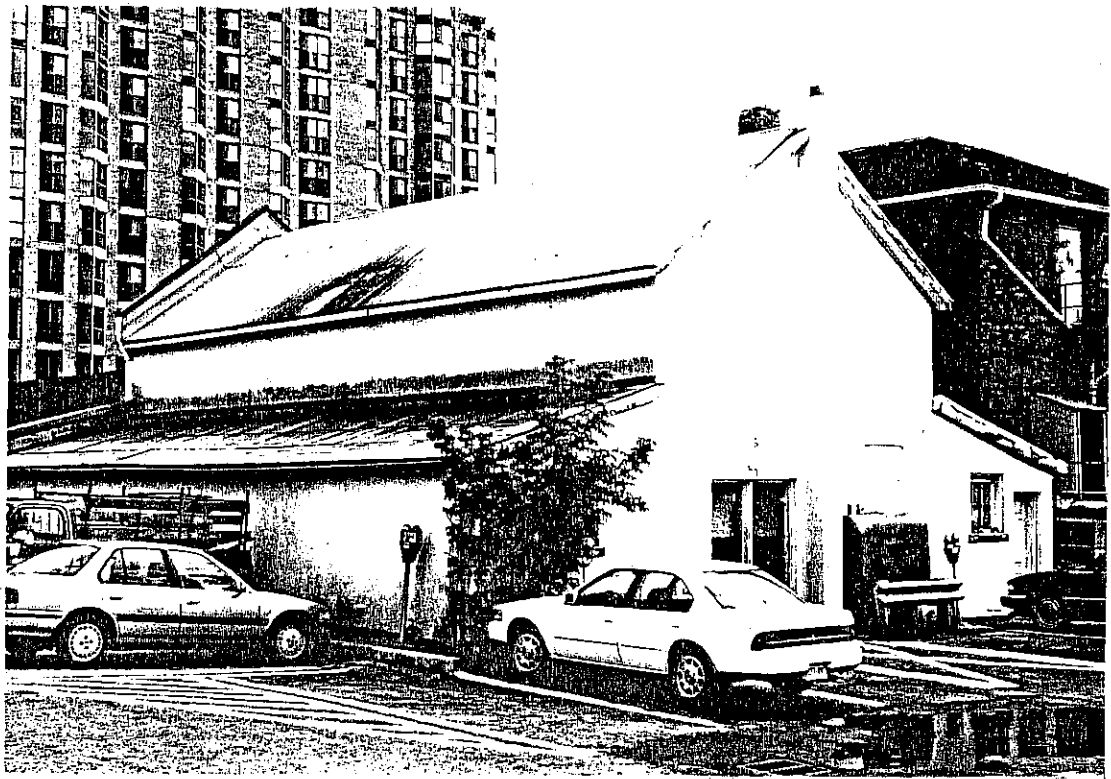
1995 photographs

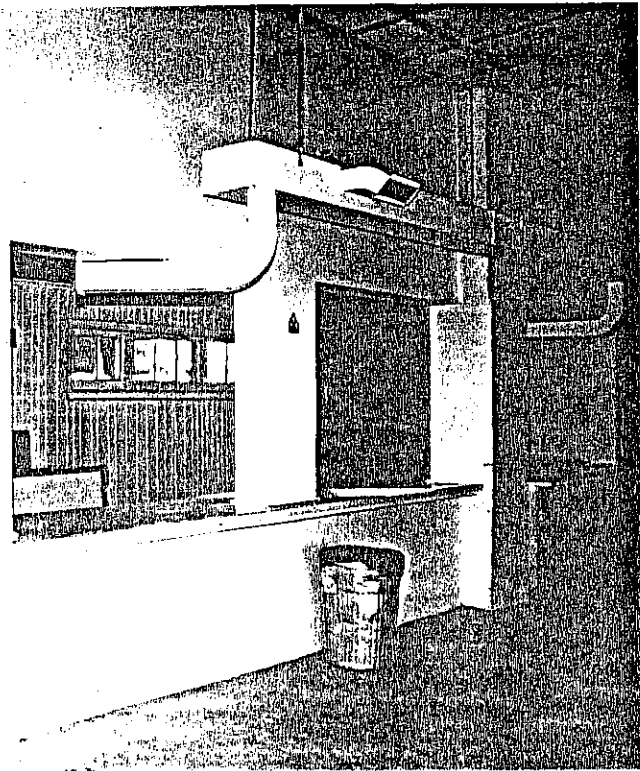
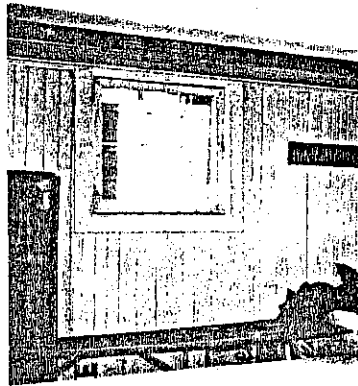
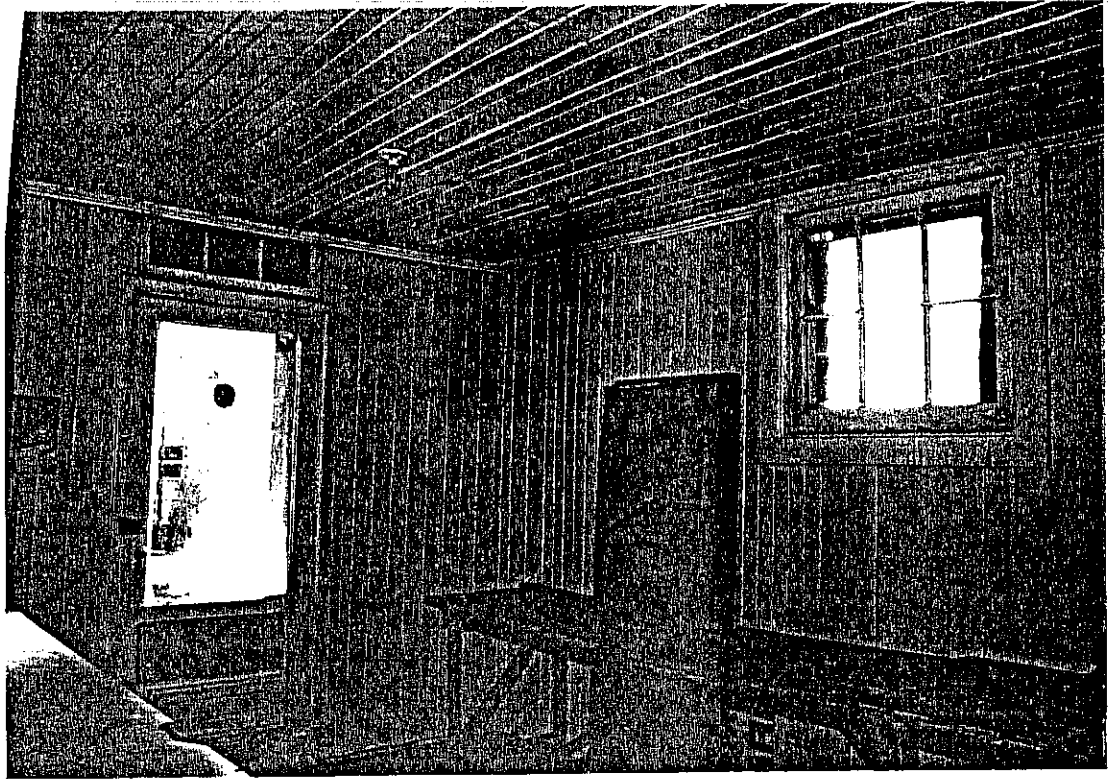
Although this photograph is identified as the interior of the Mulcaster armoury, the window configuration can not be matched to the known evidence. It is possible that the windows on the west facade were dramatically altered between this photograph and the current state, however, further investigation is required to prove the identification. The view was taken by a Toronto photographer. (E8B15R3B-5-4 *Simcoe County Archives*)

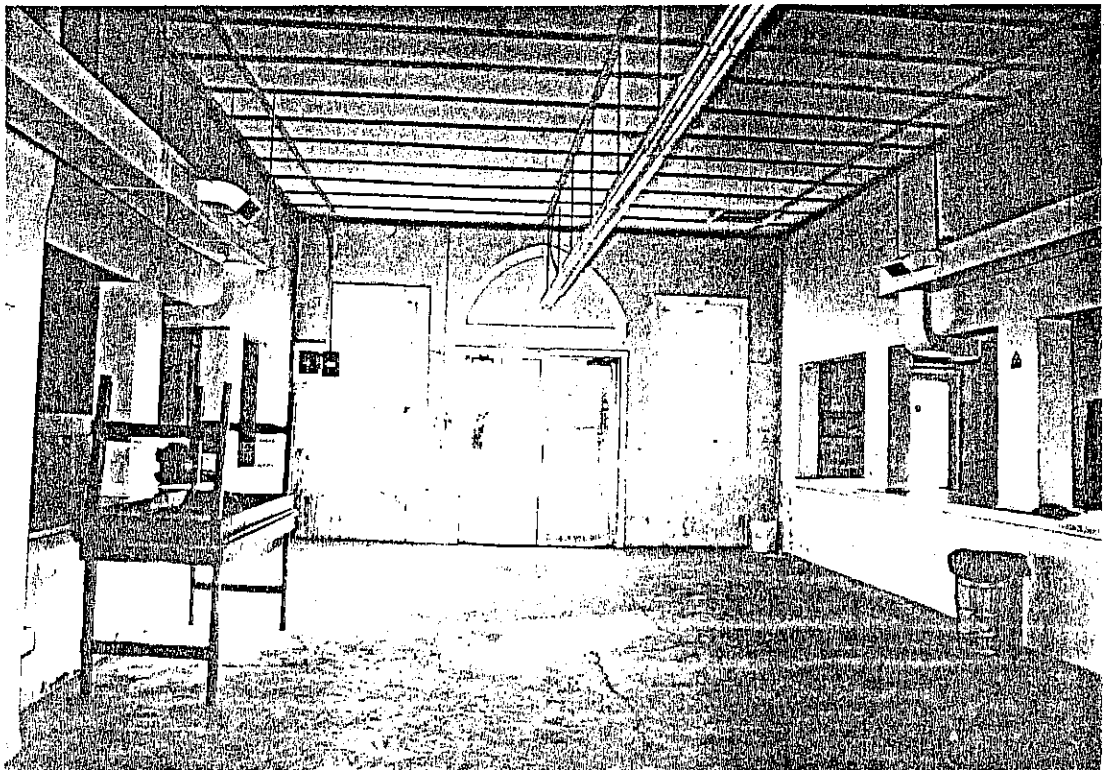
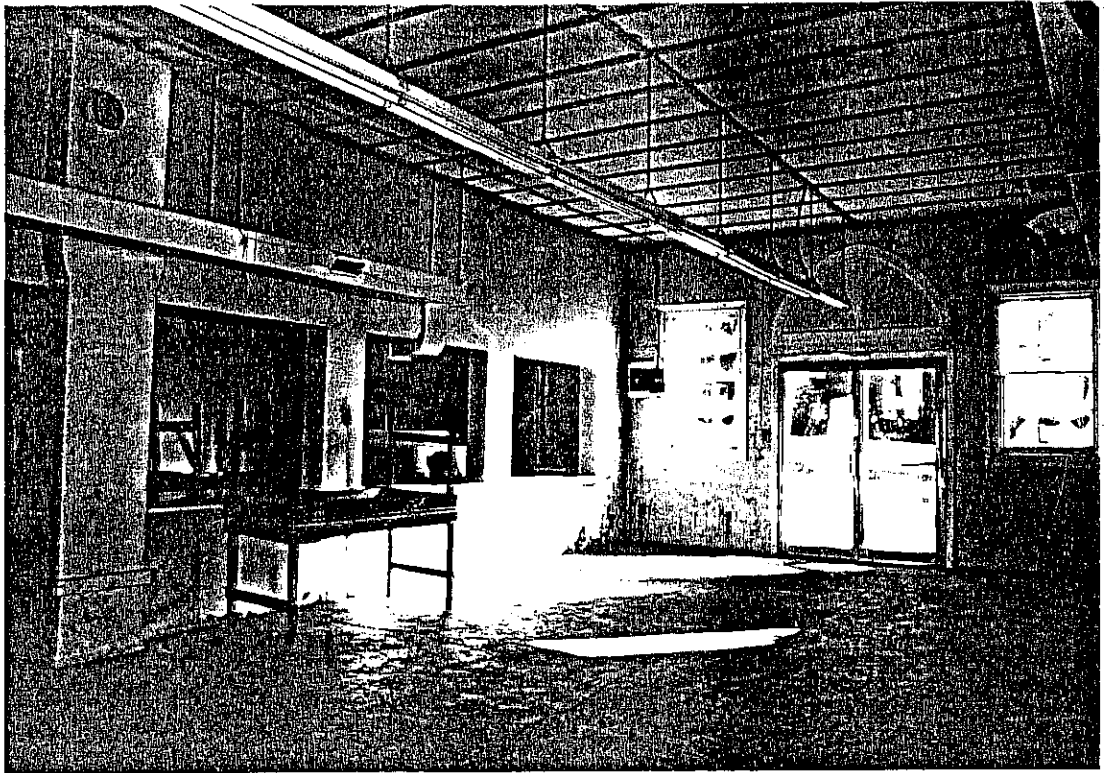
Simcoe Foresters; 1900-1901 (?).
Taken in the old Armouries located on
Mulcaster St., Barrie,; later was, and
is, used as a Farmers' Market.
Edward Partridge as the soldier on
extreme right; Edward Partridge was
connected with the Military for many
years; at one time ran a grocery store
on Bayfield St., later was a civilian
painter at Base Borden till retirement
(son, Harry Partridge an employee of
Barrie Postoffice) NEL# 585N/M.











Endnotes

1. A plaque on the east facade of the building acknowledges the achievement of the Grey and Simcoe Foresters, 1866-1991.
2. *Northern Advance*, June 18, 1862 p2,c4 (*Simcoe County Archives*)
3. *Northern Advance*, August 6, 1862, p2,c6 (*Simcoe County Archives*)
4. "History of Simcoe Foresters Dates Back To 1866," E9B54B-3-5, p212, Fred Grant Collection (*Simcoe County Archives*)
5. *Northern Advance*, October 21, 1866, p2,c4 (*Simcoe County Archives*)
6. Andrew F. Hunter, *A History of Simcoe County*, Vol.I, p278.
7. The building is depicted in an 1875 lithograph attributed to Dickenson (*Simcoe County Archives*)
8. "Nellie Rankin Sissons Tells of Years Ago," E12B54B-3-5, p269, Fred Grant Collection (*Simcoe County Archives*)
9. Letter from W.E. O'Brien to the council of the County of Simcoe, Clerk's Collection (*Simcoe County Archives*)
10. All motions are contained in the City of Barrie council minutes collection held by the Clerk's Department, City of Barrie.
11. Instrument 3526 dated June 11, 1888, *Simcoe County Land Registry Office*, Barrie
12. *Northern Advance*, October 18, 1888, p1, c2 (*Simcoe County Archives*)
13. *Northern Advance*, July 19, 1888, p1 (*Simcoe County Archives*)
14. *Northern Advance*, November 15, 1888, p5, c2 (*Simcoe County Archives*)
15. E4B44B-3-5, p94, Fred Grant Collection (*Simcoe County Archives*)
16. *Northern Advance*, August 10, 1911, p1, c3 (*Simcoe County Archives*)

17. undated clipping, E9B54B-3-5 p218, Fred Grant Collection
(Simcoe County Archives)