

BATHURST TOWNSHIP'S KNIGHT OF THE REALM

Major Sir Henry George Elliott CMG, KCMG, CB (1826-1912)

Henry George Elliott¹, born on Christmas Day 1826, near Fallbrook and Playfairville, Bathurst Township, was the eldest of eight children² born to Perth Military Settlement soldier-settler Lieutenant John Furzer Elliott. Henry George's father, both of his grandfathers, at least one great-grandfather, an uncle and his father-in-law were all soldiers. He would sustain that family tradition of military service, and two of his own sons would fall in combat.



Officer of the Royal Marines c1812

Henry George's father, John Furzer Elliott, had been born in 1795 at Stonehouse Barracks, Devon, England, the son of Royal Marine officer³ Henry Elliott (1760-1848) and his wife Katherine Furzer (1770-1848).⁴ Henry Elliott was a native of Roxburghshire, Scotland and Katherine Furzer-Elliott was born at Kinsale, County Cork, Ireland.⁵ She was a sister to Royal Marine Colonel H. M. Furzer, and the daughter of Royal Marine Colonel Henry Reddish Furzer⁶.

On January 4, 1809, at the age of 14 years, John Furzer Elliott was commissioned in the Royal Marines, and posted to the 1st Royal Marine Battalion as it mobilized in November 1810. A 2nd Marine Battalion formed in July 1812, and both battalions saw service in Spain before they were shipped to North America in April 1813. The Royal Marines participated in the amphibious hit-and-run campaign along the American eastern seaboard before being sent to Canada. Late that year, 1813, the 1st Battalion was posted to Ile aux Noix, south of Montreal, and the 2nd Battalion to Prescott, on the St. Lawrence River.

In 1814 a detachment of the 1st Battalion fought at the Battle of Lacolle Mills and elements of the 2nd Battalion saw action at the Battles of Oswego and Big Sandy Creek⁷. Other detachments

¹ In period documentation the name is spelled both as Elliot (one 't') and as Elliott (two 't's').

² His siblings were – Eliza (b.1827), Anne (b.1834), Caroline (b.1835), Jane (b.1836), John (b.1839), Catherine (b.1841), Charlotte (b.1843), and Helen (b.1845). DOBs calculated from 1851 census.

³ One family genealogy ranks Henry Elliott as Regimental Colonel, but that seems doubtful. The Royal Marines Colonel of the day seems to have been his brother-in-law, H.M. Furzer.

⁴ They were also the parents of Dr. Henry Elliott (1790-1860) b. Kinsale, Ireland, died Sherbrooke, Nova Scotia, Margaret Anne Elliott, Jean Elliott (1805-1870), Nancy Elliott, Katherine Dorothea Elliott, and George Elliot (1803-1895).

⁵ *The Elliot Families of Roxburghshire, Scotland, 1497-1850* – by David Elliot, says that Henry and Katherine Elliott emigrated to Canada. Other family histories say Henry died in Scotland and Katherine died at Kinsale, Ireland.

⁶ Lieutenant Colonel Henry Reddish Furzer, Royal Marines - Second Lieutenant June 10, 1778, First Lieutenant October 24, 1780, Captain May 6, 1795, Brevet major April 25, 1808, Major November 10, 1808, Brevet Lieutenant Colonel June 4, 1814, retired as Lieutenant Colonel on full pay c1815, died at Kinsale, Ireland, 1820.

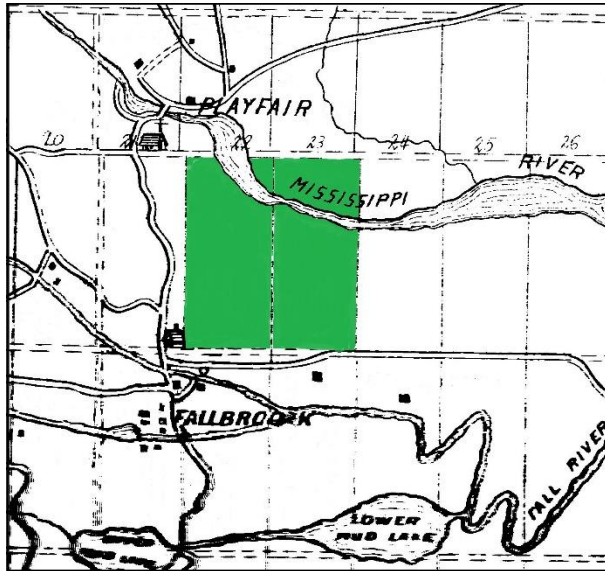
⁷ Ellisburg, New York.

served aboard ships of the Royal Navy on Lake Ontario and Lake Champlain. In November 1814 the 1st and 2nd Battalions were amalgamated at Quebec City and sent to support operations on the coast of Georgia, USA. Some elements fought at the Battle of New Orleans (January 1815) before the regiment returned to England in May 1815.

John Furzer Elliott does not seem to have had a stellar military career. Although he served for 10 years with a regiment that suffered significant casualties, due to both combat and sickness, when he was placed on half-pay on April 23, 1819 he had not been promoted to fill any of the office corps vacancies and was still ranked only a Second Lieutenant, the lowest commissioned rank in the Royal Marines⁸.

While serving in Canada in 1813-1814, Lieutenant Elliott must have seen something he liked. In September 1819, five months after retiring from active service at the age of 24 years, he arrived at the Perth Military Settlement where he was issued location tickets for land at Bathurst Township C-11/L-22(All) (200 acres) and C-11/L-23(NE) (100 acres).

*John Elliott, Lieut. Royal Ms., 1 adult male, years of service left blank, country Ireland⁹, located Sept. 18, 1819 Bathurst, C11 NE23 and C11 lot 22.*¹⁰



John F. Elliott Land Grant, Bathurst Township, C-11/L-22&23

The following year Lieutenant Elliott secured additional land at North Sherbrooke Township C-1/L-13(All)¹¹, representing the 200-acre balance of 500 acres due him at the rank of Lieutenant.¹²

John Furzer Elliott settled on Bathurst C-11/L-23(NE) and in 1827 purchased the other (SW) half of that lot for \$100. His Bathurst Township land was bisected by the Mississippi River and lay directly across the concession line from the C-12/L-22 & L-23 property of Lieutenant Andrew William Playfair (1790-1868), formerly of the 104th Foot, who, from 1817, developed the potashery, and lumber, grist and carding mills around which the hamlet of Playfairville would grow.

As indicated by the notation “1 adult male” in the Location Ticket records, Lieutenant Elliott was an unmarried man in 1819, but sometime in the early to mid-1820s he married Harriett Kinnear. Harriett, born in Ireland in 1805, was the daughter of David Kinnear, a former Lieutenant

⁸ Equivalent to an Ensign, the lowest officer rank in the army. In later documentary sources, in Canada, Elliot is ranked a Major, but that is an Upper Canada Militia rank, not his rank in the Royal Marines.

⁹ The birthplace of 'Ireland' seems to be an error, the preponderance of evidence indicates he was born at Devon, England.

¹⁰ *Transactions of Land Grants Made at the Military Depot, Perth 1816-1819*, National Archives of Canada, MG9, D8-27, Vol. 1, Microfilm Reel #C-4651, Transcribed by Christine Spencer. Six other men from the Royal Marines drew location tickets at the Perth Military Settlement.

¹¹ *Location Report Transcription*, R. E. Sargeant & J.R. E. Miller (1988).

¹² The army granted Subalterns, i.e. Ensigns and Lieutenants, 500 acres each.

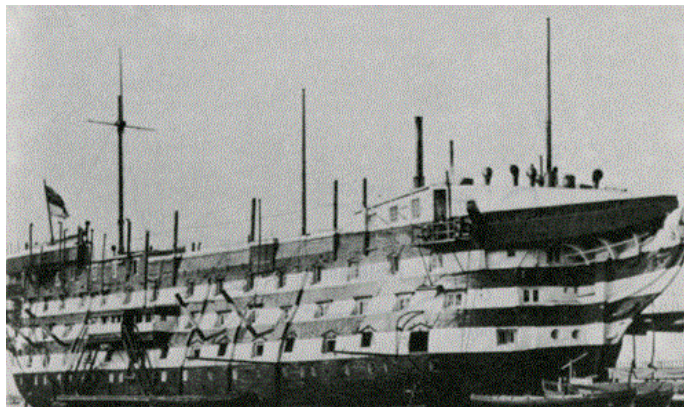
in the Royal Artillery, who located in April 1820 on Bathurst Township C-11/L-18¹³, a short distance west of John Elliott's clearing.¹⁴.

In 1821 John F. Elliott was commissioned a Captain in the 1st Lanark Militia Regiment and served as such until at least 1830. On November 12, 1833 he was appointed a Bathurst District Magistrate and in the same year named a Road Commissioner.

In March of 1834 John and Harriett Elliott sold their Bathurst C-11/L-22 property for \$300 and on May 18th that year John F. Elliott received a land patent for 150 acres at C-12/L-24(W) of Moore Township (now part of the Municipality of St. Clair in Lambton County, Ontario). In 1835 the Elliott family, including nine-year-old Henry George, moved to Western Ontario. In about 1840 John F. Elliot was appointed Collector of Customs at the Port of Windsor, a position he held for more than two decades. He died at Windsor in 1869.

Eldest son George Henry probably received his first two or three years of education at the Fallbrook school house, located a short distance south of the Elliott home. The school, established in about 1825,

*... was not much to look at ... it was built of cedar logs chinked with splits and plastered. It stood high upon the bank of Bolton Creek, furnished with the rudest description, seats around the wall and made of butternut. There were only two windows, one in the east and one in the west ...*¹⁵



Training Ship HMS Excellent

George Henry completed his elementary and grammar school education at Windsor and then in 1845, aged 19 years, sailed for England to pursue the family tradition of soldiering in the Royal Marines. He was admitted as a Cadet on the training ship *HMS Excellent*,¹⁶ at Portsmouth, and in 1847 received his commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Marines Light Infantry.

Six years later, still ranked a Lieutenant, George Henry Elliott found himself on active service in the Crimean War. At the opening battle of the conflict, at Alma River (September 20, 1854);

¹³ David Kinnour (sic), Lt. Royal Ay., 1 adult male and 2 females over 12, years of service left blank, country Ireland, located April 14, 1820 Bathurst, C11 Lot 18. - *Transactions of Land Grants Made at the Military Depot, Perth 1816-1819*, National Archives of Canada, MG9, D8-27, Vol. 1, Microfilm Reel #C-4651, Transcribed by Christine Spencer.

¹⁴ The seven-year gap between the birth of John F. Elliott's first two children, in 1826 and 1827, and their six siblings, born between 1834 and 1845 may indicate a number of infant deaths, or could suggest that Harriett was a second wife and not George Henry's mother.

¹⁵ *Early Settlement of Fallbrook and Playfair*, by Mrs. George Kerr, Fallbrook Women's Institute – *Perth Courier*, July 16, 1926.

¹⁶ In 1845 the training ship *HMS Excellent* was the hulk of the former *HMS Boyne*, built in 1810, a full rigged ship of the line, armed with 98 guns on three decks. *Boyne* was renamed *Excellent*, and became a training ship, in 1834.

... he commanded companies of HMS Albion and Vesuvius, on September 25-26, 1854, when they were employed in removing the wounded Russians from the field following the Battle of Alma River, and covered the embarkation of the unarmed parties of the latter when they were obliged to retire in consequence of an advance of a strong force of the enemy's cavalry. For his conduct on this occasion he received the thanks of S. Lushington¹⁷ and won the [Crimean Campaign] medal with clasp and fifth class of the Medjidie¹⁸ Turkish medal.¹⁹



HMS Albion

Lieutenant Elliott went on to serve as adjutant of the Royal Marines' 1st Battalion at the siege of Sebastopol (October 1854-September 1855), and was present at the Battle of Balaclava (October 25, 1854), the bombardment of Odessa (April 22, 1854), and the surrender of Kinburn Peninsula (October 17, 1855).

Promoted Captain in 1859, Elliott served as Royal Marine Adjutant and Paymaster at the

Chatham, Kent, recruiting establishment from 1863 through 1866.

On February 15, 1865 he married Emily Frances Drummond (1843-1878) at St. Mary-the-Virgin Church, Dover, Kent, England. They would have five children; Charlotte Meme (b.1865), John (b.1868), Effie/Georgina (1869-1878), Henry Charles (b.1871), Florence Beatrice (b.1873), and Herbert Walter (1878-1901).

From 1866 to 1869 George Henry Elliott was posted at London, England, and on February 22, 1869 was promoted Honorary Major²⁰. Ten months later, after a career spanning 25 years, poor health forced Elliott's retirement from the Royal Marines. He was 44 years of age.

Hoping to recuperate his health in a better climate, in April 1870 he moved to Natal, South Africa. After just a few months he was feeling sufficiently restored to make his way "... to the diamond fields, even before the existence of Kimberley"²¹. He spent the next seven years in retirement, much of it exploring the South African colonies, travelling "... over almost every part of the country, from Aguihas²² to the north of Delagoa Bay^{23,24}.

¹⁷ Sir Stephen Lushington (1803-1877) Commanding Officer of the Naval Brigade, Rear Admiral from July 1855.

¹⁸ Mecidiye Nisani, a military and knightly order of the Ottoman Empire, instituted in 1851 by Sultan Abdulmecid.

¹⁹ *Perth Courier*, July 28, 1899.

²⁰ Brevet Major.

²¹ *Natal's Who's Who* (1906). In 1871 the discovery of an 83.50 carat (16.7 g) diamond on the slopes of Colesberg Kopje led to a diamond rush, the foundation of Kimberley Mine, and eventually the town of Kimberley.

²² Headland in the West Cape.

²³ At Maputo, Mozambique.

²⁴ *The Dominion Annual Register & Review, 1879* – Edited by Henry James Morgan.

In 1877, as Elliott was preparing for his return to England, Cape Colony Prime Minister John Molteno (1814-1886) persuaded him to accept an appointment by Governor Sir Henry Barkly (1815-1898), to the position of Resident Commissioner (Chief Magistrate) of Thembuland²⁵.



Until 1875 the Kei River represented the northeastern border of Britain's Cape Colony. Beyond the river lay the nominally independent Transkei territories including Thembuland which, that year, sought British protection, leading to Elliot's appointment as British Resident Commissioner in the protectorate. In 1877, as Elliot took up his new post, an inter-tribal war broke out between the Transkei nations of Fingo and Gcaleka. Leading an armed force made up primarily of Thembu warriors, Elliott occupied Gcalekaland in 1877-1878 and then, in 1879, the British proclaimed the adjoining nations of Fingoland, the Idutywa Reserve and Nomansland integral parts of the Cape Colony.

²⁵ Northeast of present-day East London. Historically defined as the area between Umtata and the upper Kei River. As such it formed an area of 50 by 120 miles.

In acknowledgement of his role in incorporating the new territories into Britain's southern Africa colony, on January 31, 1879, Queen Victoria invested Elliot a Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George (CMG).

In 1878 his first wife, Emily Drummond, died and on July 23, 1879 Elliott was remarried to Emily Claridge Gardner at St. John's Parish, Umtata, Kaffraria. Emily Claridge would bear him three more children; Harold 'Harry' George (1880-1916), Reginald (1886-1967) and Lionel (b.1888).

During the First Boer War (1880-1881) Elliot commanded Britain's irregular native forces defending Thembuland against Afrikaner Boer incursions. Then, in 1885, occupied Gcalekaland, together with Thembuland, Bomvanaland and the coastal regions of Transkei, were annexed to the Cape Colony, pushing its northeastern border to the Umtata River. In Pondoland, across the Umtata, Elliott negotiated with the Chiefs to acquire land at the mouth of the Umzimvubu River and established a trading settlement. Coasting vessels could dock there or steam as much as 11 miles (18 kilometers) upriver to load exports of maize. The little outpost grew into the community of Port St. Johns which was proclaimed a British territory in 1881 and, along with the lower reaches of the St. John's River, incorporated into the Cape Colony in 1884.

Elliott's greatest achievement in his service to the Cape Colony's ambitions was the bloodless annexation of Pondoland, the last independent territory in southern Africa. In 1889 Lord Loch²⁶ succeeded to the posts of Governor of the Cape Colony and High Commissioner for Southern Africa, while arch-colonialist Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902) was Primer Minister of Cape Colony. Both Loch and Rhodes favored the occupation of Pondoland, to block the Boers in Natal and the Transvaal Republic from access to the sea. Loch proposed seizure by armed force but, fearing that an armed invasion could spark a widespread war, Rhodes thought there was a better way. He suggested that Major Henry George Elliott, known for his diplomatic skill in native affairs, might bring Pondoland into the British fold without setting off an armed conflict. Elliott was appointed Special Resident Commissioner to Pondoland in February 1894 and, through negotiation over the next few months, brought eastern Pondoland and then western Pondoland under British control.²⁷

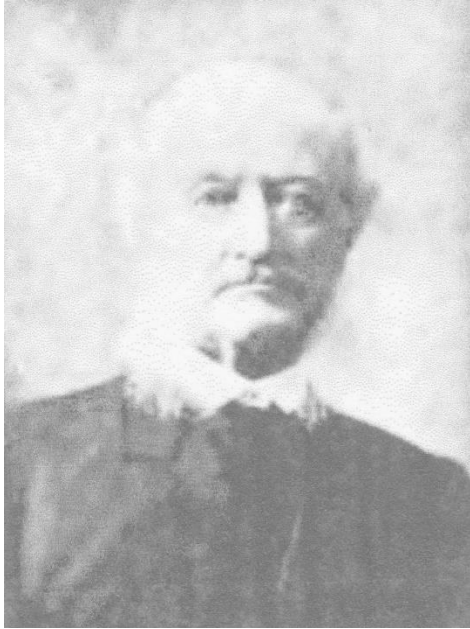
In July 1899 the *Perth Courier* reported that its native son would henceforth be known as Sir Henry, the Queen having made him a Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George (KCMG).

*Among the recent birthday honors was the award of a K.C.M.G. to a native of Perth, Ontario, who can be ranked among the empire builders, Major Henry George Elliott. Sir Henry, as he now is, for years has been the chief magistrate of Tembuland, Transkei and Pondoland, in Cape Colony. He is the eldest son of the late Major J. F. Elliott [and] was born at Perth, December 25, 1826.*²⁸

²⁶ Henry Loch, 1st Baron Loch (1827-1900).

²⁷ That Elliot had a superior armed force readily available, should he wish to call upon it, no doubt made the Pondo Chiefs more receptive to his proposals.

²⁸ *Perth Courier*, July 28, 1899, reprinting an item from the *Toronto Globe* of July 22, 1899.



*Mjr. Sir Henry George Elliott, CMG, KCMG, CB
(1826-1912)*

Sir Henry's successful career as a colonial civil servant was rooted in the respect he garnered from all parties, regardless of their 'side' in a dispute. "*Sir Henry Elliot ... was revered as a kind man with a unique ability to reason with antagonists and defuse potentially explosive situations*".²⁹ In 1900 Elliott received additional honors when he was made a Companion of the order of Bath (CB). "*To the wise administration of Major Sir Henry G. Elliott, who served in various official capacities ... the country owes much of its prosperity*".³⁰

During the Second Boer War (1899-1902) Elliott once again commanded Britain's native forces in the Transkei. On November 21, 1901, a 53-man Boer commando, avoiding pursuit by British forces in the Northern Cape, attempted to cross the Drakensburg Mountains through Thompson's and Jordaan's Pass into the Transkei. Near village of Ugie they were stopped by a company of 300 Transkei Irregulars, and "*driven up the mountain and forced to abandon 40 of their horses and pack animals*". In the skirmish, four Boers were killed. Six Black Transkei soldiers also died, along with their white officer, Captain Herbert Walter Elliot (b.1878), son of Transkei Chief Magistrate Major Sir Henry George Elliott.

On July 18, 1916, another son, Lieutenant Harold 'Harry' George Elliot (b.1880), died fighting with the 1st South African Infantry, while commanding C-Company of the 3rd Battalion at the Battle of Deville Woods in France.

Sir Henry retired in 1902, on which occasion he "*... was presented by natives with a purse of £1,030, which he generously handed to Umtata Hospital, for wards for native patients*".³¹ He died at his home in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, on November 29, 1912.

Elliott's name lives on in Eastern Cape Province of the modern Republic of South Africa. The towns of Elliot, in Chris Hani District Municipality, and Elliotdale, in Amatole District Municipality, were named in his honor and still bear his name. Also, Elliot Provincial Hospital, at Elliot, Chris Hani District Municipality, and Sir Henry Elliot Hospital, at Mthatha (formerly Umtata), Tambo Municipality, are named for the boy born in Bathurst Township, between the Fall and Mississippi Rivers, who became Chief Magistrate and Resident Commissioner of the Transkei Territories.

- Ron W. Shaw (2017)

²⁹ StayZA <http://www.stayza.com/elliott/>

³⁰ *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1911).

³¹ *Natal Who's Who* (1906).