

# Elizabeth Posthuma Gwillim Simcoe... a lady of means, Part II

*By Mary Beacock Fryer*

Elizabeth Gwillim supposedly spent her childhood at Hembury Fort House, Devonshire, the home of her mother's sister, Margaret, who married Admiral Samuel Graves. However, Margaret Spinckes did not marry the admiral until 1769, when Elizabeth was 7.

In fact, Elizabeth Posthuma

Gwillim felt at home in four places. She spent her early childhood at Aldwinkle with her maternal grandmother, Jemima Spinckes, and paid visits to Old Court in Whitchurch, where her father's sister – also named Elizabeth Gwillim – ran the household; and later to Hembury Fort House. Not until her Grandmother Spinckes died in 1776, when

she was 14, did Elizabeth begin to regard Hembury Fort House as her most permanent home.

Of the child Elizabeth, a distant cousin Mary Walcot wrote to her son, then at school: "I have been very little abroad since you went away, only two or three times to Mrs. Spinckes. She went yesterday into Herefordshire and took your

little cousin with her who is grown a fine girl."

The fourth place where Elizabeth felt at home was Admiral Graves' townhouse in St. James St., Westminster. The many homes and frequent travels in her early life help to explain why Mrs. Simcoe readily accepted her many journeys in primitive Upper Canada.