



*The Admiral's House on Governors Island, built in 1840*

## Chapter 6

**W**ith the latest war safely over and peace assured for the time being, Governors Island settled back into a calmly ordered existence, becoming one of the nation's most important artillery posts. Inevitably the postwar Army fell heir to those destructive influences from which the minutiae of regulated discipline must always suffer under combat conditions, and the island garrison was no exception. In an initial effort to offset this casual indifference of both rank and file to their spiritual and sartorial responsibilities, headquarters at Fort Columbus published the famous order of March 14, 1815, relative to all such details, concluding with the following admonishment:

A long standing General Order regulating the cut of Hair and Whiskers has for some time past been too little attended to and there appear in the ranks as many fashions with regard to this part of the dress as there are kinds of men. There may be some excuses for these irregularities in new-raised

regiments, but it ought to be expected that so old and respectable a corps as the Artillery would set the example of neatness. At the next weekly inspection every noncommissioned officer and soldier will appear with his whiskers trimmed off in a line from the tip of his ear to the bottom of the nose and the Hair cropped, and it is expected that Officers of Companies will set the example.

Not the least among the problems posed by the island's population was the matter of water transportation for Army personnel to and from New York. Since the days of the Dutch there had always been boat service available in one form or another – the English maintained large rowing barges at a dock at the Battery which has ever since been called the barge office. But, the schedules were highly elastic and undependable; under the pressure of increased usage this informal ferry system bid fair to collapse entirely. A Garrison Order issued in September 1815 “for the preservation and better regulation of the boats belonging to the Island” set matters straight by directing that “the boats formerly in the use of Lt. Col. House, Major Hall and