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PAVING THE WAY TO PARADISE:

*W.G. MACKENDRICK, WILLIAM JAMES, AND
THE INTERCONNECTED DEVELOPMENT OF
PARKS, SUBDIVISIONS AND ESTATES IN
TORONTO AND OAKVILLE*

The car's power to let one retreat to a home surrounded by parks and the corresponding destruction of the rural environment is one of the worst legacies of the last century. MacKendrick's contribution as a major road builder and promoter of city parks and gardens makes him an arch protagonist of this troubled story, captured in its earliest moments by pioneer photojournalist William James.

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INTRODUCTION

This is a story told through photographs created for Torontonians in the years before the First World War. Although the city was at that time in the midst of a building boom, we can already recognize the design of our neighbourhoods, homes, parks and green zone ravines. More foreign to our eyes are the farmers' fields and orchards tucked into the urban landscape. These last vestiges of rural life were disappearing even as they were recorded.

One hundred years ago Toronto's gradual economic ascension over its surrounding small industry towns and rural hamlets was complete. Since the opening of the West in the decades before Confederation, grain farming in this part of the province had been replaced by mixed farming to feed the provincial capital's growing numbers. Families who worked the land were losing their next generation as the young were drawn to the greater earnings in the city's manufacturing and service industries. By 1900 the balance between rural and urban populations had tipped irreversibly to the latter.¹

Moving to the city involved not just a locational shift. The unfolding of seasons and the effect of this on plants and animals is the essential measure of rural life. City zoning imposes the logic that production, not just manufacturing but also the growing of food and the keeping of animals, must exist separate and apart from residential areas. Country life and city life began to be experienced as counterpoint realities.

¹ Careless, J.M.S. *Toronto to 1918, An Illustrated History*. Toronto: Lorimer & Company, National Museums of Canada. 1984. 157

There were two vexing questions attached to big city life. How would residents maintain their connection to the natural and rural worlds? And, how would farm culture and small town life be protected from the effects of the city?



Last Toronto snake fence 1910 (Anonyme, Institut Dufferin, Lt. (1932) #3198
City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, F1244_I13198

City of Toronto Archives f 1244, 3198 'Last Toronto snake fence 1910'



City of Toronto Archives F 1244, 180 a

The flip-side of Toronto's residential boom is seen in Oakville's struggle to maintain its identity as an integrated small-town community despite being in the path of commuter subdivision development. The town's conflicted identity, caught between its idealized sense of itself as a friendly main street-focused village and the reality of its continual expansion began during Toronto's building boom a century ago and continues today.

This identity crisis is echoed in each one of the Greater Toronto Area's constellation of municipalities. Markham, Brampton and numerous other ex-urbs have turned to New Urbanism for answers. This movement invokes the design vocabulary of the 19th century village to create more human scale and less car-centric environments. Mixed use spaces, traditional architecture and transit oriented design are the new bywords in the fight against 'place-less' development. The familiarity with a bygone pre-car era as understood through nostalgia-tinted postcards created a century ago fuels New Urbanism's contemporary appeal

Heritage, in its built and natural forms, are key selling points for any municipality. Beyond the scaffolding of urban planning, desirable town growth depends on its 'brand'. Glossy publications replete with photographs offer proof of why *this* is the most desirable place in which to live or to establish a business. The genesis of this 'city boosterism' its motives and image-based means lie at the turn of the last century.

At that point, rather than websites and pamphlets, it was postcards that selectively framed everyday environments to heighten town identity. Neatly printed images of landmark churches, public buildings, parks and surrounding landscapes were sent through the twice-daily mail service to give a brief message/image. The postcard could be sent out of civic pride but just as often it was a touchstone of continual rail travel. It was the dawn of the modern obsession with conquering space and time. Beyond the scrawled message, the postcard said, 'I was/am here, but may not be tomorrow.'

William James intimately understood how the photographic image played into this fluid dynamic of travel and place-identity, rootlessness and community self-definition, dissemination and consumption of idealized cities and landscapes. As a producer of magic lantern slides, stereoscopic views and later photographs created for promotional publications and postcards he interpreted through the camera eye what the public cared to see.

This output was balanced by James' photo-journalism. For while his postcard images traded on a sense of a timeless pictorial reality, his images of city life, that he daily peddled at the offices of the local newspapers, countered this reassuring reality with the day-to-day scenes of poverty, impassably muddy streets, and the poignant remain of the past disappearing under road crew machinery.

Driving between my home in Toronto and my workplace in Oakville between 2000 and 2004, I daily wondered at the endurance required to escape the city amidst some of the worst highway gridlock in North America. What values led my fellow drivers to sacrifice so much of their daily lives on the road?

The counterpoint iconographies—idyllic spaces and gritty places—offered by William James reflect the interconnected development of parks, residential subdivisions and private country estates in Toronto and Oakville. It is not only in the messages of his pictures but also in their commercial circulation to heighten existing perceptions and prejudices that the first moments of commuter culture are revealed.

In the same years that I was a commuter, a contentious debate about the future shape of a neighbourhood park half a block from my house helped me to re-interpret my immediate environment. The St. Clair and Bathurst district had been well documented by James perhaps because of its road construction challenges, the diversity of housing types, the remaining pockets of farming and the distinctive geography. The heated exchanges taking place around the park's development from 1996 to 2005 were echoes from a century before.

At issue was how to balance public and private needs in the design of a city park.

The research in the following pages was begun while I worked at Oakville Galleries where I was recruited to strengthen the relationship between the gallery and the town. The contemporary art gallery's cosmopolitan focus did not always sit well with its local conservative-minded community. Playing to the interest in local heritage I developed orientation materials as well as a web project series entitled *Site Scope*. It invited artists and writers' to lead Oakville residents in explorations of the relationship between the gallery's lakeside estate heritage and that of the town of Oakville.

This historical study grew from what I learned through these initiatives. Its focus alternates between W.G. MacKendrick's actions and the larger picture—the circumstances that brought him to the heights of Edwardian era success and the lows of post-First World War disorientation.

It is important in setting this story to start with directions on how to get to and from Toronto and Oakville. This, after all, is a story about two places whose meaning is shaped by the journey between them. Setting out on Lakeshore Road west-bound from Toronto you pass Port Credit, Clarkson and other Mississauga lakeshore hamlets. After Winston Churchill Boulevard you are in Halton County. Here the road narrows and is flanked by mansions. You are now in the historic entrance route to the town of Oakville. The trip takes about one hour.



Before the point at which Lakeshore Road becomes Main Street, you will see a public parking lot at the gate to a park. This is Gairloch Gardens. The stone gates, house and grounds remain much as they were designed and built between 1909 and 1922 by MacKendrick. The estate was left to Oakville in 1971 by a later owner to be used as a park and art gallery.

Oakville Galleries is critically recognized for site-specific art projects by artists who stay for an extended period in its third floor apartment. Not surprisingly, the themes of location and memory recur in the resulting artwork. Among the interpreters of the site, the estate's creator has been forgotten. Yet the architecture and landscaping embody his life. W. G. MacKendrick's ghost returns to pose questions at the heart of Oakville's development at the turn of the 21st century.

One hundred years ago, through postcards and pamphlets the town's Chamber of Commerce and real estate companies promoted specific image of the town and its surrounding region so that prospective residents could picture themselves there. Today, the municipality uses multiple charts, maps and interactive features towards the same ends. The goal is to develop civic pride linked to a sense of ownership. This is conveyed through the portrayal of the town as a composite of natural and architectural heritage in sync with the latest in urban planning. The message from City Hall is that Oakville's is in the middle of a managed metamorphosis through which its

essential heritage identity with its traditional, comfortingly human scale extends to its suburban nether regions.

What was MacKendrick's role in this history? The car's power to let one retreat to a home surrounded by parks and the corresponding destruction of the rural environment is one of the worst legacies of the last century. His contribution as a major road builder and promoter of city parks and gardens makes W.G. MacKendrick an arch protagonist of this troubled story.

Mackendrick himself never identified with Oakville. Like many other lakeshore estate owners he bitterly opposed the 1962 amalgamation of the southern part of Trafalgar Township into the town of Oakville. He claimed that Oakville coveted the wealth, including the Ford Plant, in his district.² The truth of the relationship between the Lakeshore estate district and Oakville was that the two represented worlds that were mutually interdependent but rarely in direct contact.³ From the beginning of the twentieth century the town recognised that its future was, to some degree, bound to the urban tourists who came by steamer and radial streetcar for the day excursion to the village. The country estates were considered an economic boon for their presence gave credibility to Oakville real estate agents' claim that the town was "the Newport" of Toronto. Agents of a 1910 subdivision survey using the age-old real-estate

² "40 Years Ago Today". *The Oakville Beaver*, 16 Sept. 1994. A report of citizens' meeting eight years before the amalgamation.

³ Ahern, Frances R. *Oakville : a small town, 1900-1930*, Oakville Historical Society and Boston Mills Press.1981.

Mathews, Hazel C., *Oakville and the Sixteen : the history of an Ontario port*. University of Toronto Press. 1953.

mantra 'location, location, location' extolled one of its primary virtues as its proximity to the lakeshore estates.⁴

From 1909 to when he took up residence in his newly built home on the outskirts of Oakville in 1922, MacKendrick gradually purchased 400 acres of farm property. His plan was to retire to his lakeside home in surroundings that offered scope for his landscaping and gardening; to possess a prestigious estate; and to invest in property that would escalate in value as industry and suburban settlement radiated westward along the lake.⁵

Torontonians who make the journey to Oakville Galleries, weigh the effort of the journey against the rewards of the destination. Once they cross the estate's stone entrance with its iron gates and continue up the winding path to the house they may feel that they are intruding in a privileged zone of privacy. Their initial sense of unease is put to rest once the discrete signage confirms that this is indeed a public art gallery. Despite its white walls, clinical gallery

⁴ Griffin, George A. *Oakville Past and Present, Being a brief Account of the Town, its Neighbourhood, History, Industries, Merchants, Institutions and Municipal Undertakings*, approved by the Oakville Town Council. Toronto: Griffin & Griffin Publishers. 1912

W.S. Davis the leading estate agent convinced the Town Council to carry out significant groundwork for the Brantwood Survey. Unfortunately, despite its advertised merits it failed due to the market stagnation of the war years. "Some months ago a syndicate purchased some 200 acres (known as the Anderson farm) at the easterly end of town. This they have subdivided into building lots. Streets have been put through the property, miles of cement walks have been put down, roads have been graded, water mains laid and new sewers have been constructed. These lots are beautifully wooded and are restricted to high-class residential homes. The situation is ideal: 10-minute walk from the Grand Trunk Railway station and 10 minutes walk from the lake." 44

⁵ "He had 350 acres that ranged from the lake to Upper Middle. He had the vision of the industrial expansion along the Lakeshore on down to Buffalo. He was "land poor" for a great number of years. The farm extended from the lake to Morrison Grove due north to Ninth Line."—Harry MacKendrick (W.G. MacKendrick's son in interview 1986)

"He was hanging on to his property for many decades confident that it would fetch a premium price when the Ford plant enlarged."—Gordon MacKendrick (W.G. MacKendrick's grand nephew in interview 2003)

lighting, information panels and professional attendants it is palpable that this building once held private lives.



Freedom of Assembly, installation view. Oakville Galleries in Gairloch Gardens, May-September 2013

If you follow the stepped path to the shoreline and crane your neck to the left, Toronto appears along the curving shoreline as a distant speck. Through a sensitively attuned exhibition programme Oakville Galleries is known for providing a curious vantage point between its opposing qualities of being both close and far from the art world, private and public, institutional and domestic, historical and contemporary. Visitors speak of how, in the displacement that this provokes, it is as if they travelled much farther than the objective distance they covered to get there.

Like Oakville Galleries' hovering state, the abstract space between home life and work life shapes the life of the commuter. Behind-the-wheel is a limbo reality. I grew to love this hour-long interlude of detachment. The minimal attention required to drive on the highway loosened my mind just enough to let it roam freely.

In the Fall of 2009 I designed an Oakville Galleries installation that evoked MacKendrick's brooding on the meaning of the Great War in the location in which he would have done this. An easy chair beside a

table with a scrapbook, an umbrella stand with a walking stick and a floor to ceiling projection of a newsreel were the installation elements. Chapter Six, *The Apocalypse, the King and the Walking Stick*, is based on this presentation that explored a reclusive individual's obsession with history and prophecy as well as the role of souvenirs and photographs as touchstones of memory. For a description of this exhibition click [Here](#) As in the preceding chapters, James' record of Toronto life anchors the narrative.

MacKendrick saw his home and gardens as the destination of a journey. The estate was a refuge from the trauma of the First World War; his driveway a literal end-point for his professional paving activities. Maybe with the hindsight of his advanced age he recognized his life's work as part of larger crusades. The first involved building and designing a healthy city, the second fighting a global war to end all wars: both struggles with a poignant and eerily contemporary cast.



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CHAPTER 1

'THE GARDEN OF CANADA'

Oakville's natural beauty figured prominently in reports published to attract settlers. Its geographical setting, the northern edge of Lake Ontario stretching from Niagara to Toronto, had long been known as a place of agriculture. The indigenous Woodlands people cultivated corn, squash and beans "the three sisters" alongside each other. Later, attracted by the quality of the land, emigrants from the British Isles populated the district. Many tracts were reward for military service in the wars fought by the English against American invasions in the late 18th and early 19th century. Farming was largely established by 1873 in the area of Burlington and Oakville and fruit production probably at its peak in 1902.

That year, a pamphlet titled *The Garden of Canada Oakville, Burlington and district* was published to promote further settlement of the area. It described a prime agricultural region with farms that yielded impressively high volumes of fruit. Highlighting the existence of the infrastructure necessary for a farm owner to reach profit after very few years, it described steamer lines with frequent service, efficient ports, railways and the availability of seasonal labourers. With proximity to the markets of Hamilton and Toronto the boast was that fruit picked early in the morning could arrive still fresh with dew to the table of consumers.⁶

The Garden... targeted investors without in-depth knowledge of farming but who already had the means to take it up as part of a

⁶ *The Garden of Canada*. Toronto: William Briggs.1902 Reproduced in 1973 on the centenary of the founding of Burlington by the Joseph Brant Museum and the Burlington Historical Society.

pleasant lifestyle. It created the winsome illusion that one could enjoy hunting, fishing and boating while reaping the profit of berry patches, fruit orchards and dairy cows. *The Garden of Canada* touted the region as a showpiece of horticultural progress and collective industry. Its use of the Biblical quotation: "By their fruits ye shall know them," imparted confidence in the material and spiritual rewards of investment in the area.



From scrapbook made with photos glued onto a ledger of the Fruit Growers Association, Oakville, circa 1900, Oakville Historical Society

An impression of the contemporary society in the region can be found in the details of Mazo de la Roche's 1923 novel *Possession*. As the author explained to her publisher, the setting accurately reflects

Oakville and its environs at the turn of and in the early decades of the century. During that period, she was living with her father as he attempted to run a farm. This was a wealthy man's hobby farm near the village of Bronte, now part of Oakville. There, de la Roche began to develop her fantasy world of rural aristocracy that would become the best-selling series *Jalna*.⁷



City of Toronto Archives, f.1244, 1073 'Oakville 1909?'



City of Toronto Archives, f.1244, 1065 'Oakville 1909?'

⁷ Givner, Joan. *Mazo de la Roche: a hidden life*. Oxford University Press. 1989.



City of Toronto Archives, f.1244, 1058 'Oakville 1909?'

In *Possession* a well-educated young Nova Scotian arrives in a farming district to take possession of an inherited farm. "Grimstone" is contrasted with the sensuality of its natural setting:

Massive trunks supported such fragile foliage that it scarcely threw a shade ...but towered in upright dignity above the solid walls. No shrubs or hedges softened the stern aspect of the place. Grimstone fronted an unbroken view of cliff and lake and sky. Yet all was not harshness for a cherry orchard crowded to the very kitchen door... Behind the cherry orchard rose the ordered ranks of the apple orchard barely in bud excepting a few crab apple trees in pink flower that filled the air with their lovely scent. West and south of the orchards were the plantations of small fruit and beyond were the fields and pastures and a dark pine wood.⁸

Marks of the unshakeable belief in their owner's sense of belonging, the farmhouses depicted in *The Garden of Canada* were solid, brick

⁸de la Roche, Mazo. *Possession*. Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada Ltd. 1923 16-17

or wood constructions. In most, adornments such as railings, shutters, gingerbread and picket fences softened and ornamented the facade. The grander of the homes featured pebbled pathways with carpet-planted flowerbeds and elaborate carriage drives with wrought iron fences. Many were situated so as to have the open vista, over farm acreages that stretched from the lakefront to the road. The gardens consisted largely of flowering trees and vines covering sharp angles. Tennis courts were a common feature in the wealthiest properties.



INDIAN BERRY-PICKERS ON FRUIT FARM OF W. GHENT, ESQ.,
BURLINGTON.

Invisible in the landscape as it was photographed by James were its original inhabitants, they nevertheless played an important role. Described by the central character in Mazo de la Roche's novel as untrustworthy and child-like, Native, itinerant farm labourers held the balance of power at harvest time when rapid picking was required to prevent crop spoilage.⁹ In a scene in which the novice

⁹ Ahern, Frances R. *Oakville, a small town: 1900-1930*, Oakville Historical Society and Boston Mills Press. 1981. 'A farmer with a large "patch" of fruit, or orchard, was very dependent upon his pickers and his hope was to have the help of "clean picker" -those who left no fruit behind on the vine, bush or tree, to be wasted. Many town "regulars" had a good reputation in this regard and were always welcome on the farm. Also in demand were itinerant Indian pickers, some of who returned year after year to the same farmer. '34

farmer admires the sea of baskets of strawberries spread in rows over the bare floor, the pickers' manager gives him an assessment of the relative value of the labourers.

The best pickers could pick four hundred boxes each in a day in the height of the season. The women picked well but were not to be depended on, often leaving the patch half-picked to take the tram car to Brancepeth where they would spend all of their earnings on fancy shoes and hats and often their man's earnings too.¹⁰

The Garden of Canada describes another amenity for the farmer in the form of the local horticultural society. The Ontario Horticultural Society was established in 1834 and many local chapters formed shortly thereafter. These carried out education and experimented to identify the best-yield crops for their region. The climatic and soil conditions encouraged the commercial growing of a wide variety of flowers. The dynamism and influence of the local horticultural societies led to the founding of the Royal Botanical Gardens on 1100 hectares of land, the largest botanical garden in the world in 1936, in Burlington.

The Victorian ideals of progress through personal industry, scientific outlook and accumulation of property were the roots of the society depicted in the novel *Possession* and celebrated in *The Garden of Canada*. In the pamphlet, the land is promised bounty for anyone who participates in these values. However, the novel presents the darker side of 'taking possession' of the land in the central character's struggles with an untrustworthy labour force and the patronising and competitive attitudes of established farmers.

While, on one hand, the local culture as described in *The Garden of Canada* is settled, rooted and defined by tradition and self-sufficiency, in de la Roche's novel this is de-stabilized by the servants

¹⁰ de la Roche. 55

and labourers who are essential to the economy but blind to the social codes of the place. Confident in their options in the new world, or belonging to a non-European culture the workforce perversely holds the balance of power during harvest. To add insult to injury, the allure of a beautiful Native woman, perceived by the hapless farmer in the novel as a conduit to a romantically mysterious culture, is revealed to be as duplicitous as the beauty of the countryside. Ultimately, his hope of running the farm is laid to waste by the desertion of the far more self-sufficient characters. His struggle to possess the land takes an allegorical turn when he marries in the Native; an act which rounds off his humiliation when she too betrays him by running away.

The Garden of Canada's halcyon view of farming in Oakville and its environs contrasts with the landscape of social tension and cultural solitudes at the heart of Mazo de la Roche's novel. The novel highlights the tension between the firm Anglo-Protestant foundations and the destabilizing influence of 'foreign' cultures. The writer dramatizes the fickle nature of fruit farming, its dependence on timely and skilled harvesting and the parochial, racist attitudes of the community that guaranteed ruin to newcomers unaware of the unwritten rules governing farming and local life.

Would-be farmers would soon be out-numbered by buyers who were drawn to landscape for its views rather than its soil quality. At the turn of the last century however the promotion of the area's agrarian economy converges with its presentation as a rustic utopia whose prosperous society enjoys the many amenities for outdoor recreation available on the lakefront. Beyond all else, the ease of transportation to Hamilton and Toronto through rail and steam ship lines was key to the economic success of the Oakville-area.



Through the communication and transportation network, tourism grew to be an important part of the local economy. The area was shaped by the seasonal influx of strangers—pickers and tourists. These waves interact with a community that enjoys the British colonial legacy of ready-made roots to farming land and a class-oriented, hierarchical structure. In this light, *The Garden of Canada* was the first “visioning” exercise, projecting a civic and local identity through a distinct imagery.





Details of scrapbook made with photos glued onto a ledger of the Fruit Growers Association, Oakville, circa 1900. Oakville Historical Society

With the growing dependence on motor vehicles and the paving of Lakeshore Road between 1910 and 1916, Oakville was promoted as an ideal destination for a drive to the country from Toronto. Locally, motor tourism was seen, on one hand as an economic benefit and on the other as a threat to village life. By 1929, the first alarms are sounded over the town being overtaken by development beyond its control.

The local paper ran a front-page feature: "Real Estate is Brisk." It highlights that the reputation of the town has sealed its future for better or for worse. 'Again we have abundant evidence that Oakville and district is ever increasing in popularity as a high-class residential district. No other town or district has just the same charm and advantage. As time passes the popularity grows.'

An example of a typical residential real estate transaction by the busy local agent Mr. Davis is offered. 'Mr. Stone is retaining a portion of the farm and his architects have plans for the erection of a palatial home of imposing design. This promises to be among the best of our lakeshore residences.' The article continues in the glowing tone announcing that Mr. Davis has made four sales. 'According to rumours three are for sites of attractive highway service stations. These will tend to make our main street a "great white way".'

Clearly this prospect was greeted with horror, rousing town residents to such prompt action that, in the same edition, next column it is announced:

Deputation Urges Building By-law with Restrictions

All members were present for the council meeting on Monday evening, when there was a lengthy discussion on building restrictions for different parts of the town. ...A deputation was present with a petition to protest against the erection of service station at the corner of Colborne and Watson. No application to build had been received but there was a rumour and the near residents were up in arms to object. That section of the town was regarded as purely residential and the deputation desired that it should be kept as such. The idea of business houses here and particularly service stations was opposed.

...The councillors discussed the matter at length and finally passed a resolution instructing the chief of police not to grant permits for business houses on Colborne Street, east of Reynolds street and west of Brant street. Another resolution requested the town solicitor to draft a by-law placing certain restrictions on the purposes for which buildings can be raised in different sections of the town.¹¹

¹¹ *Oakville and Trafalgar Standard* 25 January 1929: 1



Making #2 Highway thru Oakville 1911?

#110B

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_it0110b

City of Toronto Archives, f.1244, 110c 'Oakville, paving #2 hwy 1907'

Oakville has never looked back: it is one of the most planned municipalities in Ontario. The Strategic Services Department, accomplishes town planning on a staggering scope. Its communication campaign to raise residents' awareness of the town's evolving form is titled 'Blueprint Oakville'. Seen from a long-range perspective this level of commitment to planning is rooted in the challenges, seen already in the first decades of the last century, for Oakville to define itself.

To protect its integrity Oakville's heritage character was granted legal protection early in the town's history. The efficient electric rail service to and from Toronto, the economic lifeline for market and dairy farms, had begun shuttling increasing numbers of day trippers and the first suburban commuters. Oakville, Burlington and the farming district, was appreciated by nearby urban dwellers as a place to unwind from the stresses of modern life. Local entrepreneurs using this romance of the countryside as a lure began methodically to market the area as a tourist destination and an ideal location for country homes and residential subdivisions. At this

historic juncture Oakville's split identity was set. It was on one hand a calm pastoral village with adjacent private country estates, while on the other, a bedroom community of frenetic Toronto commuters.

The moment in history when farm properties were first being converted to country homes with landscaped gardens is symbolized in the creation of what is now Oakville Galleries in Gairloch Gardens. The transformation of southern Ontario from a place of agricultural production to sprawling urban development is crystalized in this first historical chapter of local commuter life.

The legacy of the Lakeshore Road estates, whose owners orientated their properties to lake views rather than towards any place identity of Oakville, is echoed in the attitudes of those who search for child friendly neighbourhoods, three bedrooms and good-sized lawn over any other consideration of the civic and geographic character of a location. For ex-urbs, the challenge is to engage residents with a specific municipal identity as opposed to an abstract location within driving distance of work that meets their real estate needs. This is neatly encapsulated in Oakville's earliest chapter of self-definition through planning.

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CHAPTER 2

DESIGN FOR MODERN CITY LIFE: TORONTO

I CITY BOOM

William Gordon MacKendrick had an epic sense of his own destiny. It was inherent in his personality but also came with the time and place in which he grew. Born three years before Confederation, he was raised in a country coming into its own. It was accepted that in Canada any man had wealth within his reach. A product of this confident climate, MacKendrick developed a visionary outlook that helped him rise to the top of his field. Recognising the opportunities in the newly industrialized society, he was one of the many to accumulate handsome profits from the rapid expansion of Toronto in the first decade of the 20th century.

His roots, however, were not in the city but in the rural municipality of Galt, now part of Cambridge Ontario. He was among eight children born to an English mother and Scottish father who had settled in the area in the 1840's. According to family legend, his grandfather had fought with Wellington in Spain in some of the decisive battles that guaranteed Britain's global power. Will's identification with the British Empire and his family's military antecedents was a decisive influence in his later years.¹² A photograph taken in 1905 shows that he was a large barrel-chested man with thick fair hair, determined jaw and a direct gaze.

¹² MacKendrick Family Tree, courtesy of Joan Hyde (daughter of Dane MacKendrick son of W.G. MacKendrick)

James MacKendrick, his father, is listed in an 1884 directory as a plasterer.¹³ More accurately, he was a general builder, an excellent craftsman whose true passion, the making and racing of boats, was shared by his sons.¹⁴ Will's competitive instincts and physical powers were honed through canoeing, a sport that provided the men in the family local fame and opportunity to travel around Lake Ontario and New York to the numerous regattas that were highlights of the summer season. In an international boating competition in 1889 Will MacKendrick, representing the Toronto Canoe Club, won the trophy for all-round canoeist—paddling and sailing. In the same year the three MacKendrick brothers, Will, Harry and John, plus their father, James, won the first four-in-a-canoe race at the American Canoe Association annual meet.¹⁵ The MacKendrick crew disbanded in subsequent years as brother Henry stayed near home, trained as a tool and die maker and later became a doctor whose manual skills and earlier training permitted him to design new forms of surgical instruments. John joined an insurance company and settled in London, Ontario.

¹³ Evans, William W. *Waterloo County Gazetteer & Directory for 1884-85*. Toronto: Hill Weir Partners. 1884

¹⁴ Harry MacKendrick: "I think one of the events that gave me the greatest pleasure & thrill was my canoeing in the late 80's & early 90's.... Each year 1886-87, 89-90, 91 & 92 my brother and I we attended canoe meets in different parts of Canada & the States & always lived in tents & did our own cooking for the 2 weeks the canoe meet lasted. The list of races won by the MacKendrick Family at the World's Championship at Jessups Neck Long Island, N.Y. is as follows: Lady and Gentlemen's tandem 1st prize won by Alice & Harry MacKendrick of Galt Ont.; Single blade 1 mile won by Harry; Tandem race 1 mile won by Jack & Harry; World's Championship paddling won by Harry breaking the world's record; Decked Canoe paddling race won by Harry. Upset Sailing race won by Will. Upset Paddling race won by Harry. There were 13 prizes and of these, the Canadian contingent consisting of 26 male & female persons captured 11 prizes and the 230 Americans who were present captured on 2 prizes –Hurray for the Canadians. *Recollections of Dr. Harry Frederick MacKendrick M.D* (1886-1950) written in longhand in March, 1950

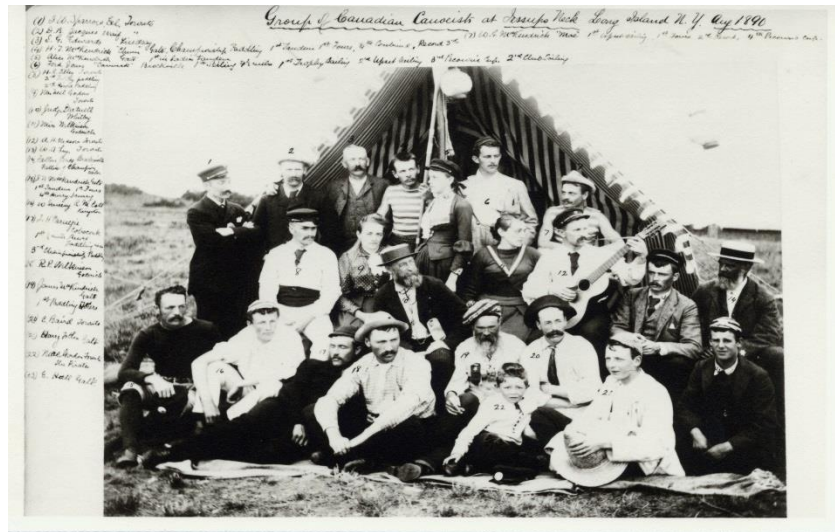
¹⁵ Johnston, C. Fred. *Book of Champions of the Canadian Canoe Association, 1900-1984*. Canadian Canoe Association. 1988.



The MacKendrick family at regattas. circa 1890's. Collection Gordon MacKendrick.



The MacKendrick family at regattas. circa 1890's. Collection Gordon MacKendrick.



Will, like his brothers, was educated at Galt's Central School and Collegiate Institute.¹⁶ Following this basic education he learned the trade of road building through hands-on experience. He admits proudly to his choice of a life of active outdoor activity over indoor study. 'Besides, I realized I was never made to sit still long enough for quill driving and my mental equipment was unsuited for such work, for be it known, the call for the 'out of doors' at the age of thirteen caused me to play "hooky" for several months (there being no truant officers in those days) and my young form darkened school doors no more.'¹⁷ In the 1880's or early 1890's he was hired by the Warren Scharff Company to work on the construction of roads in various American cities. In 1893 he married Sarah Corinne King who came from a comfortable middle class family in Goderich, Ontario. By the turn of the century, when he returned to Canada and settled in Toronto, he was an expert in the construction of roads.

MacKendrick's move to Toronto in this period could not have been better timed—the city was assuming its role as the financial

¹⁶ MacKendrick, Gordon, interview 2003

¹⁷ MacKendrick, W.G. "The Roadbuilder" *The Destiny of the British Empire and the U.S.A. with an Appendix Who are the Japanese?*. London: Covenant Publishing Co. Ltd (Eighth Edition Revised) Foreword XI

powerhouse of the nation. The settlement of the West created new markets and this, combined with cheap electricity and efficient railways, proved a boon for manufacturers. The Massey Company, producers of farm machinery, and the garment industry that supplied such retailers as Timothy Eaton and George Simpson were in full expansion thanks to the opening of new frontiers for farming and the introduction of the mail-order catalogue. Banks and other financial institutions profited from a surge of speculation in lands, mines, railways and utilities. Toronto was no longer a provincial town dependent on trade and agriculture; it had become the economic hub of the Dominion.¹⁸



City of Toronto Archives F 1244, 596 'From T Eaton factory 1910 looking SW'

¹⁸ Careless, J.M.S. *Toronto to 1918, An Illustrated History*. Toronto: Lorimer & Company, National Museums of Canada. 1984. 109



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, F1244_10104

City of Toronto Archives, F 1244, 104 'Immigrants 1908?'

Large waves of largely English immigrants¹⁹ had been arriving in Toronto since the late 1880s. The population of the city grew by 80% between 1901 and 1911. Many arrivals stayed, others set out to farm and a great many of the latter came back to the city after meeting with failure on the land. Those who did not have skilled trades stayed, often in the downtown squalor of “the Ward” and scrambled for work in the factories or as labourers. Many women supported their families on the meagre income from sewing in the home for clothing companies. Workers’ wages fell while company profits grew. The increasing density close to factories in the centre of town raised fear of those Wards becoming incubators of labour unrest, crime and plague. For those who could, it was time to leave the city.²⁰

¹⁹ Careless. 158

²⁰ Careless. 157



Toronto slums 1920? #679
An Abraham Litowitz lot lived at 38 Hayer St. in 1912 according to Dirontene's

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_lt0679

City of Toronto Archives F 1244, 679 'Toronto slums'

II CITY EXODUS

There was a dramatic flow of settlement over the official boundaries of Toronto from 1901 to 1913. This phenomenon has been comprehensively charted by urban historian Richard Harris who argues that this suburban development was driven by two types of agents. The first were farmers or land speculators who sold slivers of un-serviced property to individuals who could not afford anything else, the other were building companies that targeted upscale clients looking for a half acre lot connected to integrated, fully serviced, landscaped and planned communities.

Real estate sign 1910

CIV 183 # 153



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, F1244_11153

City of Toronto Archives, F 1244, 1153 'Real estate sign 1910'

Spurred by the desire to own their own homes and faced with the housing shortage in the city core, a large number of labourers, many recent immigrants, settled outside the city limits where there was cheap land and low tax rates. Industries attracted by the outlying townships' promises of tax breaks and of services also moved out thus attracting further residential development. The promised services were often slow in coming. Within these rural townships farmers were not eager to invest in public works for the benefit of the new residents and resented the prospect of higher taxes needed to finance this. Nevertheless, for the vast majority of the working class suburban settlers who moved to these areas and lived for years in primitive conditions and often at awkward distance from their place of work, the incentives to own their own home outweighed the disadvantages.²¹

²¹ *Your Home Our City: 100 Years of Public Control over Private Space*. City of Toronto Archives virtual exhibit (2004): Since these developments were outside of the city, they were without the services and improvements available to city taxpayers, relying instead on the inadequate services provided by the rural townships. In an effort to exercise some control over the indiscriminate subdivision occurring along its fringes, Toronto petitioned the province for regional planning legislation, which was achieved in 1912.

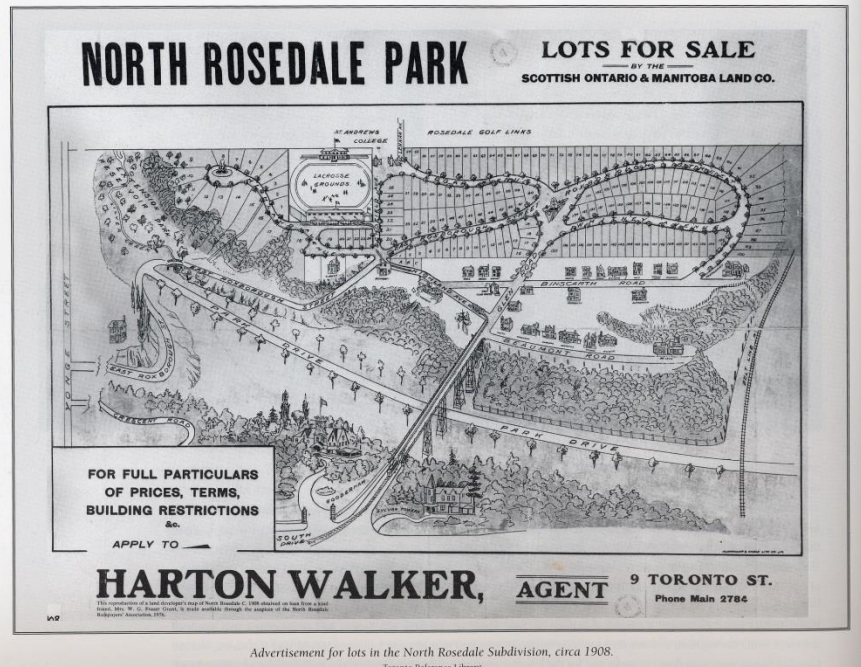


House built in a day 1920? ref # 2489 #2489
City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_JC2489

City of Toronto Archives F 1244, 2489 'House built in a day'

This early form of urban sprawl was not merely the product of workers' quest for cheap housing. At the other end of the spectrum it involved an increasing number of comprehensively planned and well-serviced subdivisions. Harris describes how sewers, water pipes, roads, fire department and roads were initially selectively extended to the areas possessing the more upscale subdivisions. In fact such neighbourhoods as Forest Hill formed themselves early into municipalities in order to organize the provision of sewers, roads etc. In Rosedale and then High Park local ratepayers associations were instrumental in securing building ordinances and zoning restrictions as well as lobbying for improved roads and other infrastructure.²²

²² *The Canadian Architect and Builder* v.18 (1905) n. 6 p.82
<http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/cab/>



Advertisement for lots in the North Rosedale Subdivision, circa 1908, Toronto Reference Library

Many of the outlying districts settled in a scattershot manner were officially absorbed by the city between the turn of the century and 1914.²³ The annexation was ultimately due to rising concerns over the need to impose sanitary and other safety standards in the unplanned, under serviced working class suburbs. The legacy of the working class exodus to the frontiers is now visible in the traces of slap-dash owner-built housing that remains a strong feature of some Toronto neighbourhoods. The area north of St. Clair and west of Bathurst for example, the un-annexed York Township was at one point known as “shack town.” The patch-work of subdivisions and unplanned residential developments—such as around the Casa Loma-Bathurst area where large mansions were located several blocks from modest workers’ cottages created truly “mixed-income” neighbourhoods. Often through the influence of the nearby wealthier zones, the city gradually annexed the unregulated and poor along with the more privileged areas.

²³ Toronto flooding beyond its existing limits, ...led to a big new set of suburban annexations. They began in 1903 with minor additions both north of Yorkville and bordering Humber Bay. Then in 1905 the bulk of Rosedale and lands northward up Avenue Road to above St. Clair Avenue . Careless.161



City of Toronto Archives, F 1244, 30 'Arlington Avenue'

The dream of a family home set in a garden within a tree-lined street was fed by the distaste for the effects and by-products of industrialisation. But while workers had to be content with narrow lots on scrub land or former farms, the newly minted class of managers, merchants and bankers required lawns and gardens for activities reflective of their social status. The earliest and most notable examples of upscale developments were Chestnut Park (1904) and Lawrence Park (1910).

Will MacKendrick's family aspired to live in these northern residential districts planned as integrated environments. Their exclusive nature was based not only their remove from the city but their distance from other, more mixed neighbourhoods, a feature guaranteed by the lack of public transit, winding streets and difficult to negotiate ravine roads. When the family moved into 255 East Roxborough Street (now 55 Roxborough Drive, probably in 1910, at least half the street consisted of vacant lots.²⁴ The well-heeled

²⁴ City of Toronto. Annual Registries of Applications for Building Permits, 1908-1912.

members of society had been moving north since the 1880s creating the character of the surrounding Rosedale area. In 1910, the designed, residential enclave of Chestnut Park was the northwest beachhead of this privileged area. Building permits issued for the Roxborough Streets, West and East as well as East Roxborough (east of Mount Pleasant Road) attest to the numerous garages constructed at this time.

Rosedale is bifurcated by Rosedale Drive an east-west ravine, as well as Mount Pleasant Road, a north-south ravine. Cars that could negotiate the grades and bring residents quickly in and out of the city were increasingly a necessity here. Equally, in Lawrence Park, the “garden suburb” further north that opened for business (not long after Chestnut Park) homes were constructed with garages rather than carriage houses.²⁵



Photograph-Roxborough Street E. near Mount Pleasant Rd. 1927 Dept. of Public Works Tor. Ref. Library 976-47-6

²⁵ *Walking Tour of Deerpark*, local history brochure published by Toronto Public Library. 9

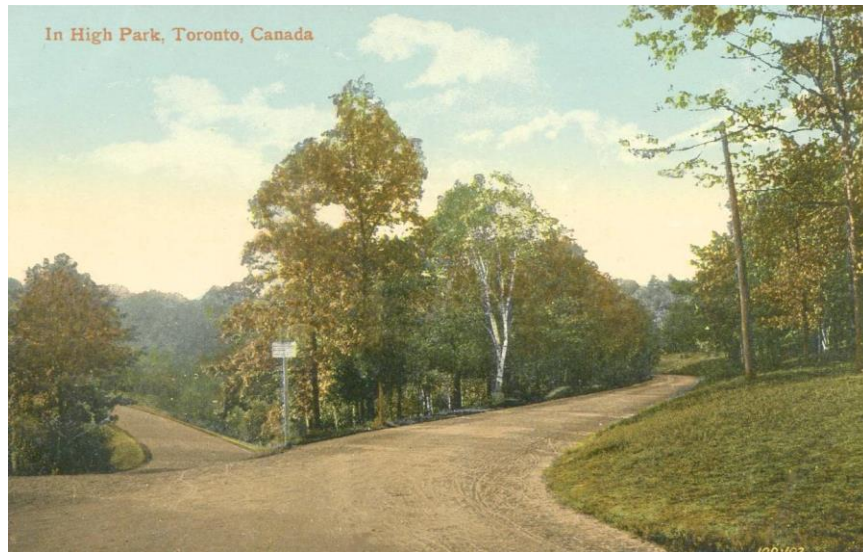


Dovercourt Company promotional image reproduced in *Lawrence Park: A Historical Walking Tour*, Barbara Myrvold and Lynda Moon, Toronto Public Library Board in partnership with Lawrence Park Ratepayers' Association and North Toronto Historical Society, 2007.

Urban transit and roads came to be a paramount concern as the city moved outward. While the poorest depended on walking or cycling to work, those who had money enough for the fare relied on streetcars. Frustration grew with the lag in track construction and the existing poor service from the private, profit-driven urban transit companies that extended the city's downtown system to the newer districts.

The first automobiles appeared on the roads as early as 1898.²⁶ For a newly mobile society roads were truly arteries in the body of the modern city. They were essential not only transporting goods and resources but as a means to disperse and regroup the labour on a daily basis in the manufacturing, commercial and financial centre.

²⁶ *Yesterday's Toronto 1870 -1910* ed. Linda Shapiro .Toronto: Coles Publishing Company Limited. 1978. 'The Good Roads Association was formed in 1894 to encourage better road construction and maintenance. In 1904, the province of Ontario first issued motor vehicle licenses and in that year, there were 535 passenger cars but no commercial vehicles or motorcycles.' 121



III ROADS, ANNEXATION AND THE TOWN PLAN

Since the mid-1880s Toronto's muddy streets had been variously covered to make them passable.²⁷ By the turn of the century the range of road surfaces, plank, macadam, asphalt, to name a few, was as broad as the forms of transportation that intermingled on them. Horse drawn wagons, electric streetcars, cars and bicycles struggled to sort out rules of the road as well as to negotiate the grades of the ravines and the metamorphosis of the roads at different times of the year. These struggles were documented in dozens of William James' photographs of vehicles mired in mud.

Around 1903 when the Public Works Department jumped into high gear, road construction increasingly involved the more costly and

²⁷ Careless: In 1884, out of 163 miles of city streets, over 44 had been cedar-surfaced, to some 52 more cheaply macadamized; and cedar paving covered Yonge Street from King to to rutted gravel or plain mud-holes, remained popular till about 1893, but still split and heaved and its cracks collected noxious diet. It was gradually to be replaced by asphalt, introduced from Trinidad in 1887, a crucial change for increasingly heavy central city traffic. 147

durable asphalt surfacing. Managed through the Office of the City Clerk, road construction and surfacing absorbed increasing amounts of the city's revenue. It was skyrocketing expenses such as these, related to annexation of the outlying residential area that forced the city to call a halt to the expansion of its boundaries.



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f.1244_10022

City of Toronto Archives, f.1244, 22 'St. Clair Ave. W. line bridge'



City of Toronto Archives, f.1244, 24a



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, F1244_10042

City of Toronto Archives, F 1244, 42 'Yonge St. at Balliol 'Russell' Car 1913'

The Toronto public was enlisted in the debate on the future shape of the city largely through the Toronto Civic Guild. This collection of architects, artists, town planners and social reformers organized in 1903 to design and propose a town plan. Its goal was to achieve, through design, the balance between the city as a machine of modern commerce and the city as a humane environment. Their plan outlined the need to create recreational areas for children in the city, to protect pockets of nature and to provide easy access from downtown to areas of residential growth through a system of road arteries. City Hall however took up a more interventionist role slowly. Its first bylaws to enforce recreational, residential or commercial use of property were passed in 1912²⁸; a full seven years *after* the ratepayers association of Rosedale became actively involved in zoning.

The Civic Guild's town plan acknowledged the new mobility of the population through cars, electric streetcars and radial train lines. The new city could spill from its borders with the threads of roads and track knitting together the whole and offering the dispersed citizens a sense of community and geography.

²⁸ Careless. 193

A speech of Mr. Byron E. Walker, General Manager of the Canadian Bank of Commerce at the Annual Dinner of the Ontario Association of Architects in 1906 is an impassioned plea to the citizenry to adopt the plan and so join the quickened pace of modern life.

My last word...to the people of Toronto... is really a question of whether the people of Toronto at the present time are going to join the movement which is taking place all over Canada—there is a larger movement in railway building, to banking, in the distribution of goods, a larger feeling from one end of the country to the other—whether the people of Toronto have got into this movement and into this larger wave of action enough to do the thing for their own city, which is not only eminently reasonable but is to the last degree necessary.²⁹

A corollary of the new mobility within the modern city was understood to be the potential to make a quick exit out of it. Purchase of property surrounding the city for development as parks was of paramount importance to the vision of the town plan according to Mr. Byron. His remarks underscore the connection between a city's identity and citizens' access to views of surrounding countryside.

The Mayor seemed to think there would be some difficulty in buying, for instance, the banks of the Humber. ...So far as the city is concerned we can remember the time when it was perhaps a third of its present size, and the general impression most people had of Toronto was that was an unusually uninteresting place. It was not exactly flat, but a flat slope. Now that it has grown larger and by means of street cars we can reach the Humber and the Don and the Rosedale valleys, we realize that it is not by nature an ugly place at all, but that it is by nature a beautiful place.... We can

²⁹ *The Canadian Architect and Builder*, v.19 (1906) n.2. 18 <http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/cab>

have with as little expense as any city of the same size a wonderful investment of parks.”³⁰

In other words Mr. Byron’s enlightened view was that that the geometry of a modern city made for the dislocation of its residents, a problem that could only be remedied through giving them access to places where they would be brought back in contact with their geography.



City of Toronto Archives, F 1244, 2573 ‘Scarboro Heights Park (Step 31) 1911?’

³⁰*The Canadian Architect and Builder*, v.19 (1906) n.2. 19

<http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/cab>



Scarboro Bluffs near Toronto.

(Courtesy Toronto Public Library, Special collections)



Humber River 1908

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, fl.244, IT0183a

#183A

City of Toronto Archives, F 1244, 183a 'Humber River 1908'



Fig. 3.3 Map of City of Toronto, showing Queen's Park, Island Park, High Park and Don Valley, 1888. Public Archives Canada, 20764.

It was in this period of rapid evolution of technical standards and innovation in the inter-related fields of architecture, town planning, landscape design and civil engineering that MacKendrick began road building in Toronto. The level of activity and professional debate is reflected not only in Canadian trade journals, notably *Construction* and *Canadian Architect and Builder* but also in such periodicals as *Canadian Horticulturalist* that from 1903-1905 regularly featured 'Civic Improvement schemes in North America'. He would have turned to the two former magazines not only for such background information as trends in town planning in Europe but to keep up to date on municipal projects and building legislation, professional competition and technical advances. The content of the journals reflected professional information needs during a North American economic boom that triggered a search for forms defining of modern life. At a popular level this was understood as the City Beautiful Movement and it was as much as anything a product of the widening gap between rich and poor. While the boom fuelled specialisation it

also gave opportunity to those who had hands-on skills and an ability to read public mood and desires.

The modern city called for confident builders who understood the interdependence of all of its elements from bridges to curbs to sewers and parks. Among those forward-thinking individuals was William MacKendrick; a man emblematic of the time and place, for his enterprising and lucrative road building activity was balanced by his involvement in the popular lobby for the cultivation of gardens and parks.

Roads and residential developments were inextricably inter-twined as the basis of migration from the city to the suburbs. The grid of roads along concession lines created a chequer board pattern that often juxtaposed planned privileged neighbourhoods with those of ad hoc settlement by workers. As the conduits and demarcations between centre and radius, public and private space, residential, commercial, and recreational zones, affluent and struggling neighbours, roads were the syntax of the modern city. Roads, it could be argued, created the possibility and the necessity for new kinds of parks that embodied the geographical and symbolic space that city occupied in the landscape.



City of Toronto Archives, f.1244, 24a 'Glen Road Bridge'



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_r1261

City of Toronto Archives, F 1244, 1261 'Glen Road bridge 1907'

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CHAPTER 3

THE PARK

...the deeply Protestant city fathers many from farms and small towns held a fear of high density building equating close living quarters, specifically New York-style tenements with political agitation, crime and vice. In the eyes of politicians and the God-fearing and steadfastly parochial citizenry the problem of the city had arrived in Toronto's new, guise as a modern metropolis. J.M.S. Careless

I THE LAKESHORE AS PARK

The rise of the city gave new significance to its surroundings. In Toronto, steamers and trains could whisk one away from the vicissitudes of urban life and into the pure air and wholesome influence of woods and fields. Within the city, Nature could be found in such landscaped recreations of the countryside as High Park. But, like in many other lakeside cities, Torontonians were drawn first and foremost to the water's edge for recreation. Frederick Olmstead designed the 1893 Chicago World Exposition so that the host city could use Lake Michigan to best advantage. The fair presented full-scale models of civic spaces, from plazas to fountain-dotted public gardens. It invited pedestrians into a virtual utopia, one that celebrated the park as touchstone of urban living. Not coincidentally, one decade later, Toronto considered a design to extend the exhibition grounds so that it would encompass waterfront spectacles and sports. It was as if at the turn of the century everyone was awakening to the lake as not just a place of commerce but as a vast park connected to the city.



City of Toronto Archives F 1244, 599 "Toronto from Island"



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, F1244_16025

City of Toronto Archives F 1244, 6025 "Toronto Island 1907"

In the City of Toronto Archives are 6,000 images, a depository of press photographs taken by William James and, later his sons. An outsider who emigrated from rural England, William set up practice in Toronto as a commercial photographer.



City of Toronto Archives F 1244, 153 'Centre Island 1907'



City of Toronto Archives F 1244, 3515 'Wm James Sr. 1900?'

His views of city life are balanced with those of “unspoiled wilderness” embodied in such recreational areas as Rosedale ravine and High Park. Balancing the documentation of a city forming itself through large and small construction projects are photos of its residents in healthful pursuits in parks of all kinds—from boating by the riverbanks of the Humber to Balmy Beach to the Upper Crust on their mounts in the estates of North Toronto.³¹ The visits of fashionable society to summer resort and cottages were noted in the pages of the eight Toronto dailies. Among the public, the desire to participate in outdoor sports grew with their association with the country house lifestyles of the wealthy.

During the summer the White Star Steamship Line offered one-day excursion packages to waterfront parks west of the city. The steamer brought out holiday crowds and loaded farm produce for its return trip to the city. Among the most popular destinations for picnickers was Lorne Park just west of Port Credit Harbour.

Disembarking on a wooden wharf, visitors could roam through the wooded residential park, bathe on the beach and take advantage of the meals, teas and other attractions offered by the hotel in the centre of the park. The custodians of the park were its seasonal residents—wealthy cottagers who maintained the genteel atmosphere through their custom of afternoon teas, lawn bowling and tennis and meals in the elaborate rustic Victorian dining pavilion. Saturday night dances (dry) and Sunday service were offered in the hotel where the guests intermingled with cottagers and park visitors.

³¹ Price, Linda. *William James, Pioneer Press Photographer*, brochure/catalogue. Toronto: The Market Gallery & City of Toronto Archives, November 21-January 17, 1982.

‘His work appeared in leading publications of the day including *Toronto World*, *Mayfair*, *Canadian Horseman*, *Hunting in Canada*, and *Chatelaine*. His best customer by far however was *The Toronto Daily Star*.’



City of Toronto Archives F 1244, 1079 'Port Credit 1908'

Farther west on the lakeshore was the White Star picnic grounds developed at the foot of Oakville harbour. William James' captured the lively waterfront scenes, as he recorded them on his frequent hikes from Toronto to Hamilton and back.³² His photographs highlight the lakeshore, enjoyed by travel on water, rail or road, as an important recreational corridor. Its waterfront parks offered access to the cottage life, if only temporarily, for all classes of Torontonians.

³² Christopher Hume and William James .*William James' Toronto Views: Lantern Slides from 1906 to 1939*. Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd, Publishers.1999.

'...James was ...a serious walker who thought nothing of hiking to Hamilton and back to take a few shots. Trudging tirelessly with tripod, camera and bags of equipment in tow, he covered the distances effortlessly.' 7



City of Toronto Archives, F 1244, 1064 'Oakville water sports 1909?'

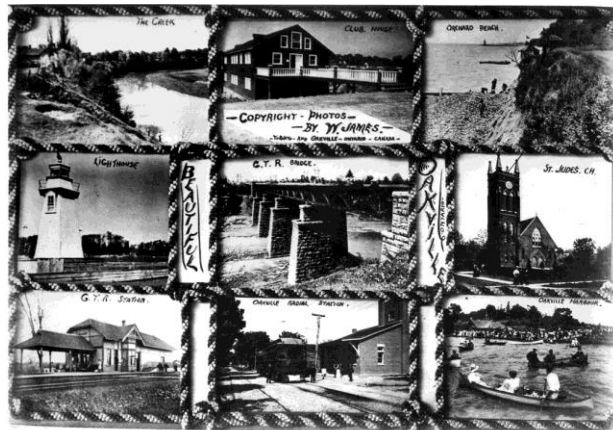
At the outset of his career in Toronto William James produced magic lantern slides and hand-tinted stereoscopic views. These photographic images that required viewing devices were only briefly popular. Postcard sales however grew steadily with the increase in leisure and travel. James' copyrighted photos appear in Oakville postcards printed in 1908. It seems likely that he took advantage of the village's prominence as a tourist destination to promote sales of his scenic photography. As a native of rural England, James would have been conscious of the role of images in preserving vanishing landscapes, characters and way of life for a nostalgic public.



Oakville 1908 Postcard
 City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, F1244_13046

#9046

City of Toronto Archives, F 1244, 9046 'Oakville 1908 Postcard'



Oakville postcard 1908

#9052

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, F1244_19052

City of Toronto Archives, F 1244, 9052 'Oakville postcard 1908'

The beauty of Lakeshore Road was an important theme in the promotions of Oakville land agents. One, promoting the survey for “Tuxedo Park” the town’s planned subdivision came up with the following lyrical flight of publicity in 1910:

From Lorne Park, and for nine miles west, paralleling and within easy gaze of the lake, the highway is one grand and glorious series of the finest hedges, tree rows, and groves conceivable. Likewise, the properties flanking the road-way on either side, and refreshing the vision as far as the eye is allowed to reach, are outlined or studded with monster hemlocks, cedars and pines, freshened by cool breezes wafted across the bluest corner of Lake Ontario, basking in sunlight reflected from the pearl of the Great Lakes, protected from raw winds by forests, sprinkled by every warm shower of rain, and scented with woodland and garden fragrance, this Eden has remained practically undiscovered until the last season or two simply because it has been hidden from the aesthetic eye by a cluster of plain buildings,

unsightly signboards, and ploughed fields which line the railway.³³



City of Toronto Archives F 1244, 1074 'Oakville? Dirt road? 1901'



³³ Tuxedo Park promotional article in *Toronto World*, 1910

The symbolic importance of country roads at the turn of the century was such that it began to influence the approach to road construction. Creating a highway would now involve landscaping: a mere 70 to 80 years after the triumph of clearing land for agriculture, forests were to be re-introduced as a necessary agent of civilization. Provincial Road Commissioner Archibald W. Campbell made it more than clear that leaving nature on its own through failure to extend the improving hand of man to the land flanking the highways had reduced them to a sad state. "... it was time to mould and reshape those highways in a manner consistent with the principles of balance, harmony and form—to undertake, in short, 'the artistic treatment of roads'"³⁴



City of Toronto Archives, F 1244, 7237 'Probably Clarkson 1910 or prior'

³⁴ Campbell, A.W., "Artistic Country Roads", *CM 8* (1897) qtd in "Farms, Forests and Cities: The Image of the Land and the Rise of the Metropolis in Ontario, 1860-1914" Smith, Allan ed. *Old Ontario, Essays in Honour of J.M.S. Careless*. Toronto: Dundurn Press Limited. 1990

'Even clearer evidence of the new thinking was provided by remarks which, in essence, amounted to the following: the land beyond the city was not only linked to and capable of being transformed by the metropolis; it was also a resource at the city's service. Here, too, what Road Commissioner Campbell had to say was of significance, for it offered a particularly graphic example of the manner in which this variation on the basic theme might be played. In arguing that "the artistic treatment of highways would be a constant reproach to the shiftless; neglected lawns would become fewer; ramshackle houses and barns would be less common; the eye (would not only be) refreshed (but also) educated at every point...'

By the turn of the century it seemed imperative to escape the city rapidly and frequently in the summer: the lakeshore as both a route and destination was crucial to this. Lakeside sports and entertainments provided diversion and an opportunity to mix socially within or outside of church, school and neighbourhood networks. Photography, most notably the work of William James, was used to entice excursion parties to such lakeshore destinations as Oakville, promoting an enduring association between lake and leisure.

II THE PARK AS TONIC

The North American explosion of public parks between the years 1883-1914 was linked with a widespread impulse to improve conditions for the urban poor as well as to enhance quality of life for society as a whole. The Parks Movement was based on the belief in the beneficial effects of beauty as it was manifested in nature. In Toronto this reform movement acquired further impulse from the Methodist attitude that country life as imbued with higher moral standards.³⁵

Beyond dignifying public spaces and appropriating Nature as an extension of the city, the visibility of the poor who in St. John's ward were cheek by jowl with the financial centre gave impetus to the need to "clean up." Beautification in the form of playgrounds with gardens, an integral part of the Civic Plan, was intended to counter the socially degrading and visually displeasing sights of such sights as those captured by William James' camera.

³⁵ Careless



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_11033

City of Toronto Archives f 1244, 1033



Slum house in the "ward" 1911?

#682

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_10682

City of Toronto Archives F 1244, 682 Slum houses in the "ward" 1911?

The contemporary interest in designing an oasis for the city populace was the basis John Howard's bequest of his grounds to the city in 1873. Howard, an architect and for a time the official city surveyor, devoted the balance of his life to the design of a public park. The Olmstead-trained landscape architect Todd created the

final design after Howard's death and the park opened in 1890. It is of no small significance that one of the major streetcar routes in the city; the Dundas/Roncesvalles line terminates within the landscaped woods of High Park. The city could discharge, through the transport of the streetcar, its most volatile social elements of the Ward into the healing bosom of Nature.



Opening High Park gates 1912? Gov Gen Duke of Cornwall, etc (N149) #1225
City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_11225

City of Toronto Archives F.1244, 1225 'opening High Park gates 1912'

“Tenements” was a term loosely given to the ramshackle overcrowded housing that dominated certain downtown wards. These were widely considered to be crucibles of vice and crime. In his study of the earliest forms of social housing Richard Harris has pointed to the preoccupation with the separation of one family's living quarters from others as well the amount of frontage required to maintain the distinction between private and public space. Crowded housing was thought to undermine a community's moral standards; the privacy of the family and the dominion of the worker over his own living space were essential to the development of civic

values especially among the immigrants and to reduce the likelihood of labour unrest.³⁶

The alarm over the visible poverty was given scientific expression through chief medical officer Dr. Charles Hastings. In 1910 he began exhaustive photographic documentation of the un-sanitary conditions and unsafe housing in the heart of the city. Reformers motivated by a sense of social justice and/or civic pride joined forces in calling for an answer to the shortage and sorry state of workers' housing.

New thinking in building design and town planning promised salvation from the slums. In its first venture into housing the city of Toronto invited Eden Smith, the architect who produced leading examples of Arts and Crafts residences, to design two housing developments for workers one on each side of the Don Valley and north of Gerrard Street. The focus of his design was a large grass courtyard, a form of "common" where children could play, sheltered from the dangers and temptations of the city streets.



Bain Ave. apartments (first urban renewal?) 1920?

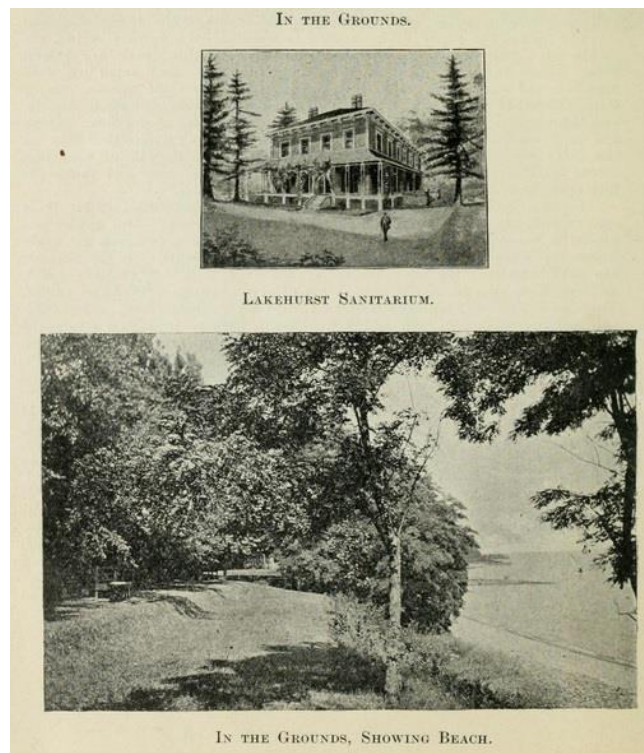
#3106

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, F1244_13106

City of Toronto Archives F.1244, 3106 'Bain Ave. apartments (first urban renewal?) 1920?

³⁶ Von Baer, Edwina. *Rhetoric and Roses, A History of Canadian Gardening, 1900-1930*. Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside. 1984

The belief in the park as a restorative environment was behind the lakeshore location of the Mimico Hospital for the Insane (later Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital) and the Lakehurst Sanitorium in Oakville the latter specialising in care of “inebriety” or alcoholism. Promotional materials for both institutions stress the influence of the landscaping of the lakeside grounds as an important element of treatment.



The Garden of Canada. Toronto: William Briggs.1902

At the turn of the century Torontonians felt a new connection with their landscape as they began to understand the influence of the natural environment on their quality of life. ‘Progress’ defined variously—from social reform to economic development was of paramount concern. Alongside this zealous desire for improvement was a growing interest in the social chronicles of the city, a curiosity reflected in the photo subjects of William James. The view of the country, specifically summer lake resorts, as an elegant social setting

is popularised through reporting and photographs in the Society section of Toronto newspapers in the years before the First World War.

II THE TORONTO ISLANDS AS PARK

The most popular way of escaping the heat, grime and congestion of the city one hundred years ago was to take the streetcar and ferry to the Toronto Islands. An important summer amenity that offered along with Scarborough Beach the gamut of typical Edwardian popular water's edge entertainments from bathing to amusement parks, stadium sports and boat regattas. While Torontonians could relax in the great outdoors by going east, west or north on by rail, their connection to the landscape was dominated by the lake largely through the public sites of recreation on the lakeshore, and among these the most notable was the Island Park



Hanlan's Pt. hotel & regatta 1907

(M129) #163

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 11244_10163

City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, 163 'Hanlan's Pt. hotel & regatta 1907

An announcement in the *Toronto Daily Star* Society Column for July 5, 1901 reads: Mrs. (Dr.) MacKendrick of Galt³⁷ and her son, Master Harry, are guests in town. Readers are also informed that: Mrs. Harry King is staying with Mrs. W. C. MacKendrick of Centre Island. Two months later,³⁸ the same column informs readers that Mr. and Mrs. MacKendrick have returned from the Islands. The identification of Mrs. MacKendrick as being *of* Center Island indicates that she owned an Island summer residence on the scale and elegance suitable for seasonal guests. What form of island life would have been experienced by a visitor to the MacKendricks in 1901?

In the decade before the First World War the entire spectrum of Toronto society made the pilgrimage to the park to swim or lounge the beaches, to feel the thrills offered by the Centre Island amusement park or to attend baseball or lacrosse games in the outdoor sports arenas. For those lucky enough to secure a campsite on the Hanlan's Point campground or to own a cottage there or on Centre Island, day-to-day island culture revolved around outdoor sports, particularly boating and swimming. Boating clubs such as the Argonaut Rowing Club, the Royal Canadian Yacht Club and the National Canoe Club played an important role in the life of the community. Their clubhouses visually dominated the island waterfront and their regattas marked the height of the season.

³⁷ Harry MacKendrick was William MacKendrick's brother, a doctor and resident of Galt, the family's hometown he is listed in the 1896 Galt Directory MacKendrick H.F. physician

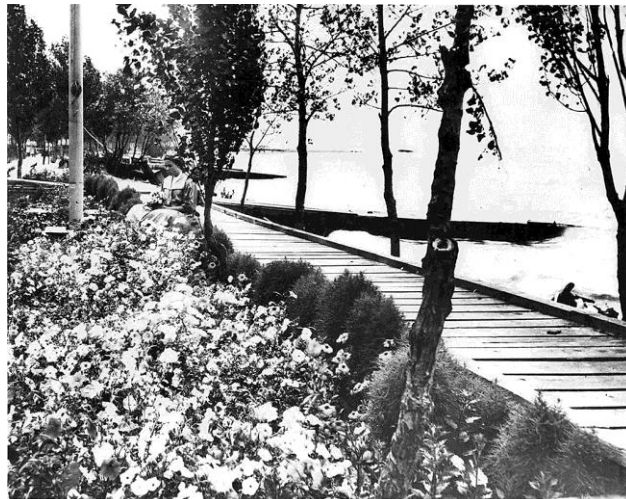
³⁸ 2 October 1912



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 1244_11429

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 1428 'Toronto waterfront boat club house, band & spectators 1908?'

The elegant Center Island homes and the Royal Canadian Yacht Club grounds gave a tone of gentility to the boardwalk promenade that provided an appealing counterpoint to the commercial entertainments. The Centre Island gardens, velvet lawns and club houses were considered one of the pleasures offered by the park.



West Hanlan Pt 1907
City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 1244_10182

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 182 West Hanlan Point 1907'



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 1510 'RCYC burned to ground 1918 rebuilt exactly...'

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 1510 'RCYC burned to ground 1918 rebuilt exactly...'

Island “cottages” could be, according to their location, luxurious summer homes. Such families as the Gooderhams erected imposing residences. The exclusive areas of Centre Island were leased only to those who had the means to enhance, through the quality of their builder and architect, the elegance of the island promenade. Sally Gibson, city archives historian, observes that:

After Lakeshore, the best address on the Island was probably Iroquois, which was opened for development around 1906. To ensure that a better class of Island residences appeared on this very important thoroughfare, the City had taken the extra precaution of requiring each Iroquois lessee to build a house worth at least \$2,000.³⁹

MacKendrick’s Island address was 7 Chippewa Avenue.⁴⁰ From there he could see the clubhouses and the activity on the lake. His island

³⁹ Gibson, Sally. *More Than an Island, A History of the Toronto Island*. Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1984. 128

⁴⁰ Lorne Park as well as Centre Island used the Native tribe names for their streets

garden is represented in two photographs among others depicting notable gardens in the Toronto Horticultural Society Yearbook for 1912. His first ambitious rose garden was planted here and he would later advise gardeners that Island sand was the secret ingredient to the best rose soil mix.

To be known in Toronto Society it was helpful to appear with the prominent families, such as the Eatons, the Gooderhams, the Flavelles, as they boated, swam and raced against each other at the Royal Canadian Yacht Club at its headquarters on Centre Island. An important official of a paving company at the height of the city's boom and a lifetime club member MacKendrick could happily network through the summer months and at the same time share his passion for boating, with his children.

As the monarchical association of its name suggests the Royal Canadian Yacht Club was a bastion of British manners in Toronto, a city that was, until after the First World War, overwhelmingly English. Its island headquarters reflected the club's social hegemony and cultural roots

...By 1894 the (RCYC) club's membership of 750 was reportedly the largest in the world and there were over sixty yachts flying the club colours. The Island clubhouse opened in 1881 was by now comfortably over-grown with vines, while the lawns, bowling greens and tennis courts were properly manicured. ...The new clubhouse was... quite blatantly a piece of facade architecture, designed more to be seen and admired "mirrored white and shining, in the lake as a proud expression of the Club's importance" than to be used, except as a shelter while awaiting the club steamer Hiawatha or as a grandstand for watching regattas on the bay.⁴¹

⁴¹ Gibson. 116

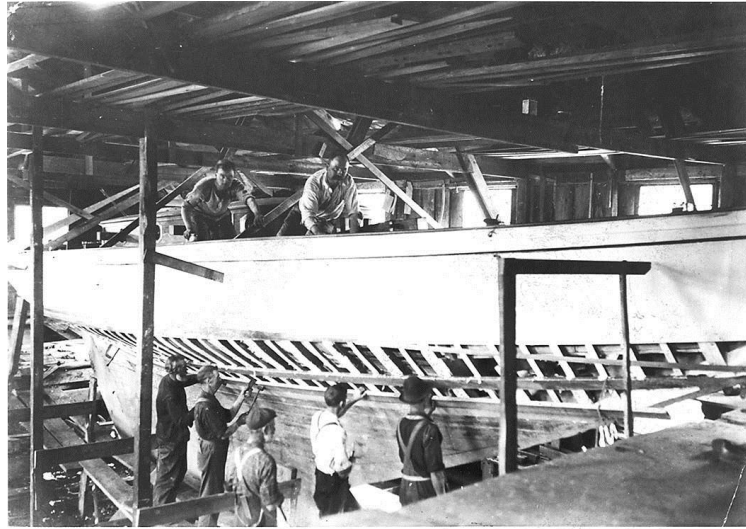
To the common Torontonians the word “park,” in this period, would have been associated with an area set aside for public recreation. Alternatively the same word could suggest a landscaped estate garden. The RCYC was an example of the two meanings of the word coming together: a private club whose grounds were set within a very public one.

One could argue that the RCYC’s sense of boundary for their park extended over the waters to the port of Oakville where many of the award-winning yachts were built or repaired. Oakville was also the home of one of the first of the club’s Commodores and a popular summering hole for many of its members. The town’s harbour also served as the turn-around point for many club regattas.⁴² The building of recreational boats had taken over from the tannery and the basket factory as the leading industry in Oakville. Local celebrity Captain James Andrew raced pleasure yachts for their wealthy owners. Regrettably, the behaviour of these yachtsmen during post-race celebrations in Oakville harbour, as a contemporary observer noted “would deteriorate as their numbers increased.”⁴³

⁴² Ahern, Frances R. *Oakville : a small town, 1900-1930* , Oakville Historical Society and Boston Mills Press.1981. 174

⁴³ Mathews: Industrially Oakville made little if any headway during the first decade of the twentieth century. Those two old established industries, the tannery and the basket factory, had things mostly their own way. However, Oakville was again becoming well known for its shipbuilding, through the lake craft which slipped from the ways into the waters of The Sixteen were the very antithesis of an earlier day. Captain James Andrew was building racing and pleasure yachts for wealthy sportsmen, and the emphasis had shifted from weight durability, and capacity to lightness of construction for speed. 437

Ahern: Yachting on Lake Ontario had increased enormously during the seventies. Oakville was chosen as the objective of many Royal Canadian Yacht Club races, and over a summer weekend fifty or more yachts were commonly seen in the harbour. On Saturday nights the yachtsmen built huge bonfires on the wide beach that then bordered the west side of the harbour. At times the town was overrun with yachtsmen, whose behaviour deteriorated as their numbers increased. They were often a drunken disorderly lot who considered it their privilege to create an uproar in whatever port they honoured by their presence, but in general the townspeople were tolerant of the destruction they caused.

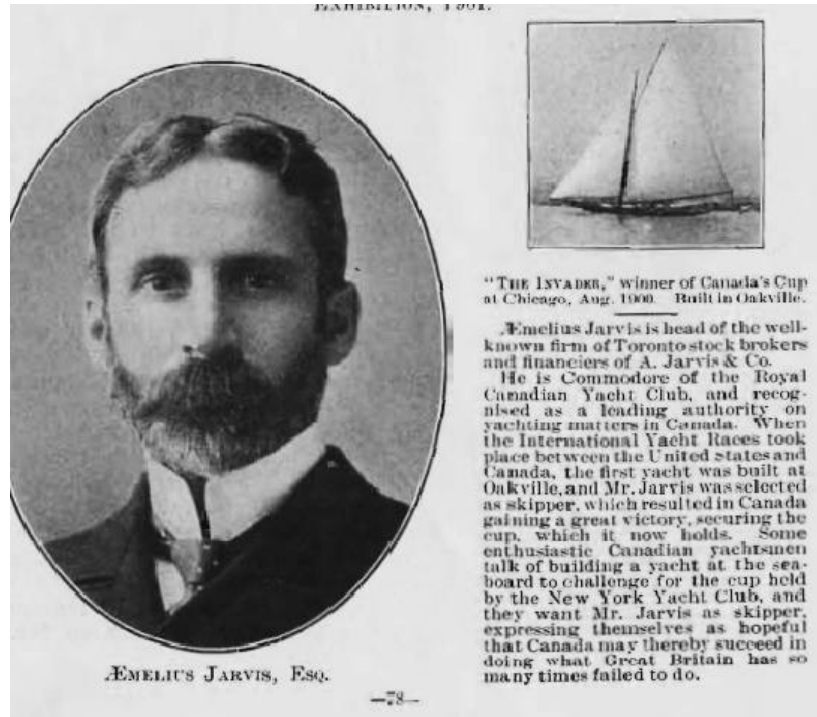


Andrews Shipyard, Oakville 1908

#142

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_t0142

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 142 'Andrews Shipyard, Oakville 1908'



The Garden of Canada. Toronto: William Briggs.1902

New public parks were created in areas soon to be encompassed by the city such as the Humber River. The Parks Department acquired greater prestige, responsibility and resources. The Riverdale Park and Zoo were completed by the 1890's. The Toronto Islands' popularity as a public park and summer community increased through the two first decades of the century and with this the responsibility of the city to regulate usage and provide services.

The Toronto Islands did not emerge from or merge with a settled year-round residential district as was the case in High Park or Rosedale. In the Island Park, on a larger scale than Port Credit's Lorne Park, there was a constant intermingling of seasonal residential life and tourist spectacle. On Center Island in particular, the seemingly contradictory aspects of "park" the residential exclusive and populist recreational was closely interwoven. All island users—the cottagers, the day visitor, those searching for raucous entertainment and those looking for a quiet idyll in the

gardens—relied on each other as audience for their tribal amusements on lake and shore.



Toronto Island 1891

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_it6043

#6043

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 6043 Toronto Island 1891

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CHAPTER 4

SUBDIVISIONS

I ADAPTING NEIGHBOURHOODS TO THE LANDSCAPE AND THE RESULTING IMPORTANCE OF ROADS

Notwithstanding the rugged self-sufficiency of those who settled in the un-annexed extremes of the city, for the majority of Torontonians it was the streetcar routes that defined the possibilities of where they could live. The layout of these routes created the higher density zones of city in the first decade of the century. Banks erected their imposing facades to command intersections crossed by streetcar lines. Shops hugged the streets so that passing streetcar passengers could not fail to see the window displays. Developers' planned subdivisions in lockstep with the spreading tracks giving the city an east-west axis.

In opposition to the increasing density in the city, a high standard was placed on a home with a view, one set within a picturesque setting. In the early 1890s, Moore Park the brainchild of developer John T. Moore, offered properties to the north of the city "whereon taste and wealth may rear palatial mansions—beautiful in their immediate surroundings, and commanding vistas over valley, hill and lake will yield perpetual pleasure."⁴⁴

To reach the new residential area Moore and his partners had to build not only bridges over ravines but an entire Belt Line Railway to shuttle the prospective owners in and out of the city. The venture suffered due to lack of investor interest during the depression that coincided with its opening. As a result, the development and railway went bankrupt shortly after its opening in 1892. Nowadays the Belt

⁴⁴ Moon, Myrvold and Ridler. *Historical Walking Tour of Lawrence Park*. Toronto: Toronto Public Library & North Toronto Historical Society. 1994. 40-42

Line is a jogging trail, ghost pathways of the earliest would-be commuters.

By 1900 the disgust with the conditions of the city and the social desirability of a private, park-like setting gave impetus for a general move northward by the middle and wealthy classes.

It was at this point, between 1903 and 1913 that increasing use of cars along with road improvement became of paramount importance. Roads were the means for citizens to attain their suburban idylls while land speculators and builders reaped handsome profits. The expansion, precipitously anticipated by Moore a decade earlier, began in earnest.



POPLAR PLAINS RD 1910(N314) #518
City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, T1244_00518

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 518 'Poplar Plains Rd. 1910'

The grid layout of the city made it a sign of distinction to live in a neighbourhood where the natural topography was the basis of the architectural design and street plan. Rosedale's winding tree-lined streets, inaccessible other than by carriage or car, became symbols of the genteel life of remove from the day-to-day frenzy of the city.

Even today the blending of park ravine areas with residential streets is the hallmark of Rosedale. By the early 1900's this district was a popular destination for out-of-towners. *Canadian Architect and Builder* pointed out that the "not in my backyard" attitude and advocacy for protection of the natural setting of their neighbourhood gave Rosedale residents a distinct edge over less picturesque zones of the city.

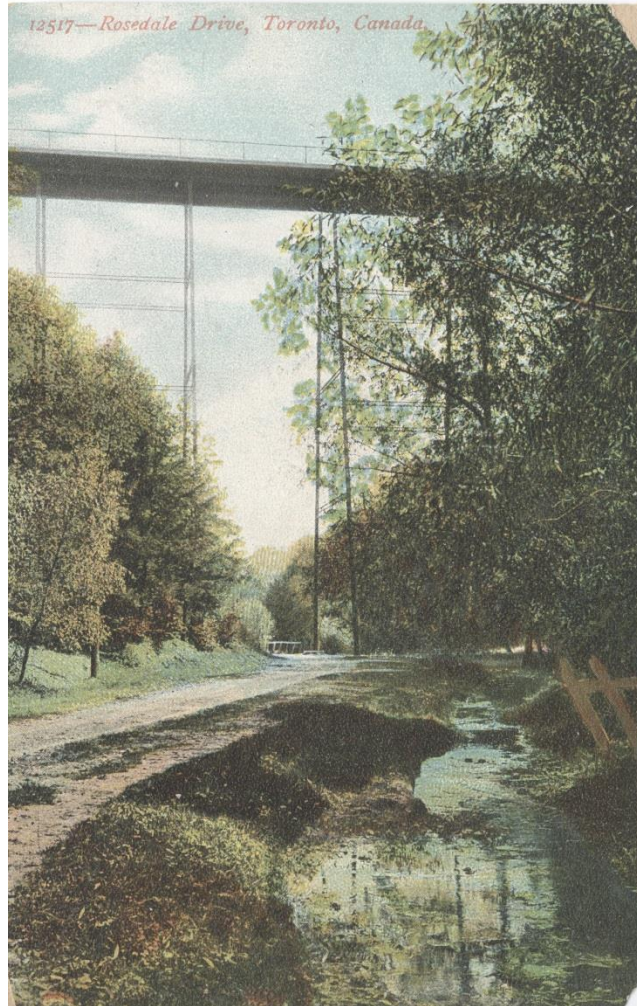
Rosedale is a distinct district in Toronto, cut off in a natural way by ravines, and, as these force some curvature upon the roads, the distinctness from rectangular Toronto is still further emphasized. The residents formed an Association two years ago, to obtain recognition by the city authorities of the principle of local option in matters not in conflict with the general welfare of the city, and to see that the ordinary functions of the city departments were properly attended to in their case. Since then the Act has been passed empowering cities to establish residential districts By-law; and Rosedale promptly had itself made a residential district; so that neither the butchers, apothecaries and undertakers, (the pioneers of civilization) nor the Chinese laundryman, (the harbinger of the yellow invasion) can plant their outposts there. They have attacked and made to move on two disagreeable smelling industries. The Association have prevented the erection of a crematory in their immediate neighbourhood and subsequently of a planing mill in the same place. They have poked the city up to keep in proper repair the bridges, which form their way of approach across the ravines. They have made an alliance with the Park Commissioner so that he has consented to take them into his councils in the matter of planting trees and in the still more anxious matter of cutting them down. And sundry sidewalks and roads for portions of Rosedale, which would be constructed in the ordinary course of affairs, have been got through with greater smoothness because endorsed by officials of the Association. There is no question but that, in serving their own needs, the property owners of Rosedale are serving the interests of the whole city. Rosedale is now

one of the places to which the tally-ho drivers from the hotels take the summer visitor. ⁴⁵

The city permitted a new level of jurisdiction by residents' associations to preserve the desirable features of their neighbourhoods. The early formation and degree of intervention of the Rosedale Residents' Association was seen as a watershed. The neighbourhood's remove from the city required the ratepayers to exert political pressure to secure the costly roads and bridges that guaranteed its survival as a secluded yet well serviced enclave.



⁴⁵ *The Canadian Architect and Builder* Vol 18 (1905) no. 6 p.82



North Rosedale was the location for the first integrated-plan residential development offered in Toronto. This kind of venture provided an arena for innovative design blending landscaping, services and architecture. Boulby's transformation of the northern Rosedale property formerly MacPherson Estate to the most up-to-date integrated development plant named Chestnut Park was a recognition of the desirability of an integrated plan design in which

every aspect of the street—from curb to gas to telephone wire to architecture was designed to ensure a pleasing whole.⁴⁶



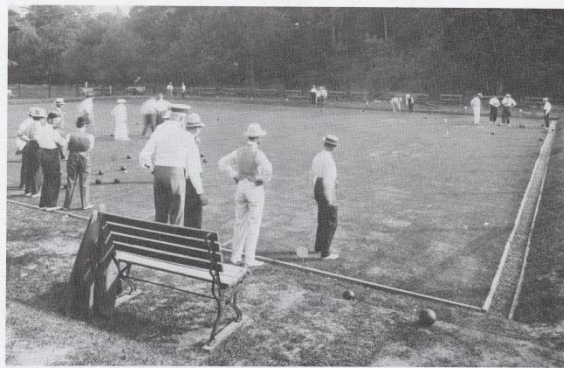
City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 503 'Crescent Rd near Yonge St'

In 1910 when Chestnut Park properties had already been occupied, the subdivision of Lawrence Park near the intersection of Lawrence and Yonge, began to be promoted by The Dovercourt Land, Building and Saving Company as 'the Hampstead Garden Suburb of Canada'. Walter S. Brooke, a British engineer laid out the estate. Hills were not levelled, nor were major trees cut down. Houses and gardens were

⁴⁶ "Architect S.H. Townsend laid out the Chestnut Park subdivision with winding streets and several deluxe features - brick sidewalks, paved streets, telephone and gas service to the rear, and posh street lamps. Townsend designed street widths that allowed two carriages to pass while a third was parked at the curb, but the streets were narrower than many being built at the time. An article that appeared in *The Canadian Architect and Builder* in 1905 explained, "Automobile speeding is not desirable in a residential district and the roads need not be designed to suit its requirements." The first bids for building contracts were opened in 1902, and additional lots were severed in 1905. The exclusive area was promoted as North Rosedale, and most of the large homes were sold before or during construction. Houses were set back according to the topography, which resulted in pleasant boulevards, pretty stone retaining walls, and graceful corners."

Lundell, Liz, *The estates of Old Toronto*, "Chestnut Park", by David MacPherson, Boston Mills Press, Erin, Ontario, 1997 p. 99

well landscaped and had terraces, croquet lawns and gazebos. The principal architects were Chadwick and Beckett, who carefully adhered to the standards set out by the Dovercourt Company.⁴⁷ W.S. Dinnick, the man behind Dovercourt Company, was canny enough to set up a nursery on the edge of Lawrence Park. Residents were offered trees, shrubs and landscaping services at cost. Products included the trendiest garden ornaments and features including rustic bridges, rockeries and fountains.



Lawrence Park Lawn Bowling Club, ca. 1911.

⁴⁷ Ritchie, Don. *North Toronto*. Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co.1992. 90

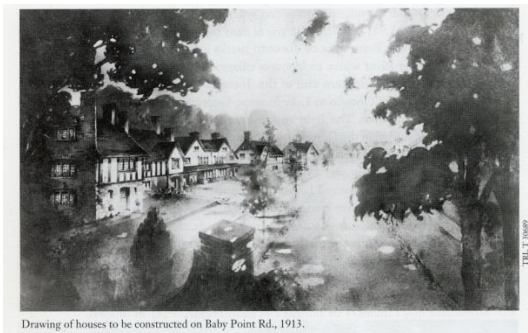


40 Dawlish Avenue, 1911

Dovercourt Company publicity

photographs and drawings reproduced in Moon, Myrvold and Ridler. *Historical Walking Tour of Lawrence Park*. Toronto: Toronto Public Library & North Toronto Historical Society. 1994.

Not long after Lawrence Park was offered to the public, Home Smith completed Kingsway a development close to the Humber River. Created for a variety of family sizes and largely middle class income levels, this suburban planned community also featured tree-lined serpentine streets, parks, sidewalks and large lots.



Drawing of houses to be constructed on Baby Point Rd., 1913.

Toronto Reference Library T 30689

MacKendrick's rise in fortunes is reflected in his changes of address to increasingly elegant neighbourhoods between 1900 and 1910. The desirability of these neighbourhoods can be correlated to the contemporary hunger for gardens and parks. The changes of address, although they are somewhat justified by the need to house

his growing family⁴⁸ are numerous, moving four times in a period of ten years.⁴⁹ In 1907 the second notice of the family appears in the Society Column of *The Toronto Daily Star*, an announcement of the family's "At Home" (an invitation for visitors to drop in) on Hawthorne Avenue in the west Annex. This neighbourhood had more ample gardens than those of MacKendrick's previous addresses but greater glory was to come.

⁴⁸ Six children were born to the MacKendricks in Toronto between 1894 and 1909 Gordon b. 1894, (d. France 1916) Lorna Corrine MacKendrick, b. 1896, (d. Toronto 1976) Dane Evan MacKendrick, b. Toronto 1900, (d. Vancouver, 1952), Albert (Harry) b. Toronto 1906 d. William John b. Toronto 1907, d. Toronto 1907, Clara Georgina b. Toronto 1909,d. Toronto 1992.

⁴⁹ He is listed as living in Toronto in 1898 at 3 Sultan Avenue and working as Manager of Warren Scharf Asphalt Paving Co. By 1900, his occupation in the 1903 Toronto Directory is "Superintendent of Forest City Paving Co. and Manager of Warren Bituminous Paving Co.

1902 W.G. mngr. Warren-Scharf Asphalt Paving Co.----h. 3 Sultan Ave,

1903 " supt. Forest City Paving Co. and Warren Bituminous Paving Vo. h. 3 Sultan

1905 W.G. Vice Pres./manager Warren B. Paving Co. -----h. 4 St. Vincent St.

1907 "" "" "" ---h. Hawthorne Ave. e.s. Corner of

1908 41 Hawthorne Ave. Nanton

1909 ditto



W.G. MacKendrick and family, 1905, collection MacKendrick family

II GARDENS AND THE ENHANCEMENT OF PROPERTY

The major arbiter of real estate value in Toronto between 1904 and 1914, a decade marked by speculation-driven subdivisions and haphazard sprawl of residential development, was the degree of planning behind a residential development. At the apex of the market were those created with gardener-clients in mind. Edwardian Toronto took gardening seriously. It was generally acknowledged that the city was in the grip of a “gardening craze;” newspapers extolled the soothing effect of gardening for the man after a hard day in the city, for the woman as healthful exercise and for children as a form of nature study. “It may be only a tiny suburban patch surrounded by palings, but is full of possibilities, and can be transformed into an exquisite vista of flowers and foliage if we will.”⁵⁰

⁵⁰ *The Toronto Daily Star*. News 07. 31 May 1910

The 'Backyard Garden Competition' launched by North Toronto developer W. S. Dinnick, offered prizes amounting to \$1,000 for the most carefully planted and maintained back yard garden in Toronto. The initiative was a response to the backlash against builders, nicknamed "subdividers," whose razed and barren tracts of land were becoming an eyesore to established home owners.⁵¹

The popularity of the gardens and gardening was nostalgically traced to the English love of the land.

But it is a matter of common observation in Toronto that Englishmen are eager to take up land in the suburbs and acquire homes of their own; that they are fond of open air life, of gardening and of taking long walks. A walk through any of the suburbs of Toronto will show hundreds of little homes that are being built and improved by the owners, under great difficulties, and it will be found that a large proportion of these pioneers are newly-arrived Englishmen." This provided a somewhat rose-coloured view of those workers who, forced by inadequate housing in the city bought small lots in former farm fields, and so were often seen walking long distances to and from work.⁵²

On a lower rung to Rosedale's Chestnut Park and North Toronto's Lawrence Park, High Park was not developed as a planned community but through yard to yard "beautification" by determined ratepayers it was spruced-up to attract a certain type of resident. Motivated by the need to maintain the social desirability of a district, which may have been cheek by jowl to workers' owner-built housing on unpaved, unlovely streets, such organizations as the High Park Horticultural Society were formed as a spin-off to the activities of the district's Ratepayers' Association.

⁵¹ Moon, Myrvold and Ridler. *Historical Walking Tour of Lawrence Park*. Toronto: Toronto Public Library & North Toronto Historical Society. 1994. 10

⁵² "Englishmen and the Land" *The Toronto Daily Star*. 23 May 1910. 8

The transformation that has been effected within a few years borders almost on the miraculous. Hundreds and hundreds of beautiful homes have been erected. A desire for the beautiful in nature has been created which has permeated the whole district until the neighbours vie with each other in doing what they can to advance the cause in which all have shown so much interest. Most of the improvements from a horticultural standpoint have been effected within the past four years. In 1911 a campaign was launched to interest the people in the matter of improving the lawns, gardens and general appearance of the property in their district. Prizes were offered for the best kept lawns; gardens and window boxes.⁵³

The garden represented the values of self-sufficiency, dignity and one's natural entitlement to the land. It symbolized the final retreat in the home-oasis from the vicissitudes of city life.

This fever for contact with the land was not lost on real estate developers. Playing on the desire for home-ownership and the romance of the suburbs their marketing materials are targeted directly at their clients' aspirations

III MARKETING SUBDIVISIONS: WALMER HILL VERSUS SUNSHINE PARK

The ear-lug for The Toronto Daily Star in the spring of 1912 proclaims: Toronto's Greatest Real Estate Year Are You Taking Full Advantage of It?⁵⁴ Real estate companies' promotions reveal the

⁵³ The Canadian Horticulturalist (1905?)

⁵⁴ *The Toronto Daily Star*. 1 May 1912

general preoccupation with the factors affecting property values. The desirability (and thus investment value) of the neighbourhood was consistently linked to lot size, housing density, and enforceable zoning and building codes.

A mark of a luxury residential location was proximity to the city along with detachment from its distasteful conditions through the area's natural features. The advertisement for Walmer Hill lists just such qualities for a new neighbourhood, south of Forest Hill and near the future site of Casa Loma. It runs down the checklist of attributes sought by home buyers in 1912 Toronto.

Walmer Hill ...adjoins the Hill District, overlooks it, drains with it, is restricted with it approached by it, built like it.... Walmer Hill is the closest subdivision to Avenue Road, and St. Clair Avenue hence the closest to the business centre of the city. It is actually closer to the City Hall than Roncesvalles Avenue, Kingston Road or North Toronto. The Star's City Map published on May 1st showed Walmer Hill on the 3 1/2 mile circle. Again we say that is the closest in HIGH CLASS subdivision. The lots are all well restricted and this does not only mean that the houses are made of brick or stone, and to cost a certain amount. Every house or garage or coach house must be of brick or stone, and must be built a definite distance from the street, must be detached, can be used for no business of any nature whatsoever, excepting that of a Dentist or a Medical Practitioner. Buildings must be a definite distance from the next lot, and the restrictions, concerning height and location of the fences must be complied with... Walmer Hill is situated in the healthiest, cleanest part of Toronto. The prevailing winds are from the north and northwest; pure, fresh, exhilarating, healthful air comes in unobstructed from the fields and hills and valleys of York Township. Not a factory or a railroad car near; there is never a trace of smoke or dirt or grime or soot such as one encounters in every other direction from the centre of the city. The altitude is very great and dampness is unknown—an abundance of sun-washed air. The view obtainable is magnificent. To the south looking over the old, tired, built up

Toronto is the great broad expanse of clear blue water of Lake Ontario, kissing the sky and glistening in the sun by day and the moon by night. If you want a truly entrancing view of Toronto visit WALMER HILL at night and look down on the myriad of Hydro Electric lights, stars here, and streams of light there, truly magnificent.⁵⁵



Casa Loma view looking S 1914? #4123
City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_i4123

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 4123 'Casa Loma view looking S 1914?'

Within reach of streetcar lines and therefore targeted at investors with more modest incomes the admittedly suburban subdivision of Sunshine Park promoted itself also as strategically in the path of the city's growth.

Sunshine Park is a clear-cut subdivision –surveyed in lots of sufficient size to provide for a garden of table requisites and dainties as well as a beautiful front elevation and landscaped lawns. Sunshine Park commands your attention at these prices. We know of no better buy in or near Toronto. Streetcars and all city advantages are within easy access and

⁵⁵ *The Toronto Star*. 17 May 1912

all the added advantages of the suburban home are obtainable. Landscaped lawns, front elevation and garden-size lots are features stressed in the promotion of the Sunshine Park 50-foot lots.

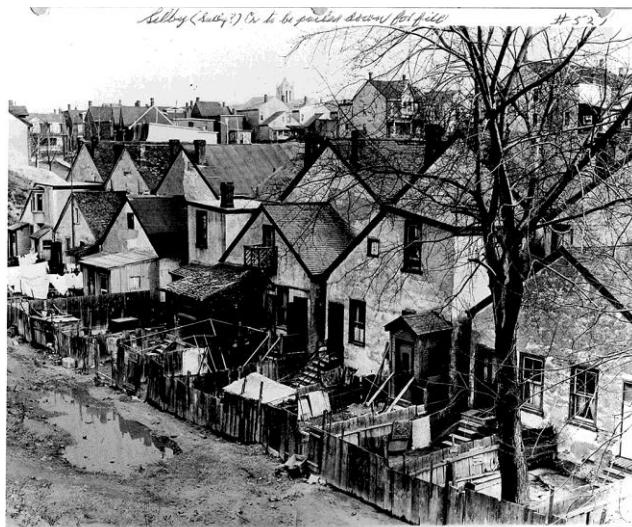
The marketing of subdivisions in, 1912, a banner year for real estate placed high stakes on the local confidence in the continuing city growth. Agents worked with the public's distaste of the inner city as a place of visual blight and unhealthy contamination. Significantly, one selling point of Walmer Hill is the beauty of the streets through which one would commute in carriage or car sheltered from the sight of urban blight. Contact with nature, a plot to cultivate at the very least, a kitchen garden, and a landscaped elevation in front of your home symbolized the ideal degree of separation from the street or the city as a whole.

The advertisement's insistence that Walmer Hill belongs within the "Hill District" evokes the metaphor of the hill Stephen Leacock's satire of the plutocrats of the Gilded Age in *The Arcadian Adventures of The Idle Rich*.

Just below Plutoria Avenue, and parallel with it, the trees die out and the brick and stone of the City begins in earnest. Even from the Avenue you see the tops of the skyscraping buildings in the big commercial streets, and can hear or almost hear the roar of the elevated railway earning dividends. And beyond that again the City sinks lower, and is choked and crowded with the tangled streets and little houses of the slums.

In fact, if you were to mount to the roof of the Mausoleum Club itself on Plutoria Avenue you could almost see the slums from there. But why should you?⁵⁶—Stephen Leacock

⁵⁶ Leacock, Stephen. *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart. 1914. 8



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 1244_10527

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 527 'Selby (Sully?) Cr. to be paved soon for fill'

In *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich* (1914) Leacock satirizes the captains of industry in the Mausoleum Club on Plutoria Avenue overlooking the town from a height whose reform ventures take the form of yet another round of speculation.



Touring car 1910?
City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 1244_10066

#66

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 66 "Touring car 1910?"

Toronto's version of the fictional downward view from Plutoria Avenue is the vista created by Henry Pellat who in 1914 built himself a castle, Casa Loma, on the summit of Spadina Road and immediately east of Walmer Hill. The vision of a sea of lights promised to would-be residents of Walmer Hill is also Pellat's symbolic dominion over the city for he was a leading stockbroker heavily invested in the Toronto Electric Light Company the city's street-lighting franchise.⁵⁷

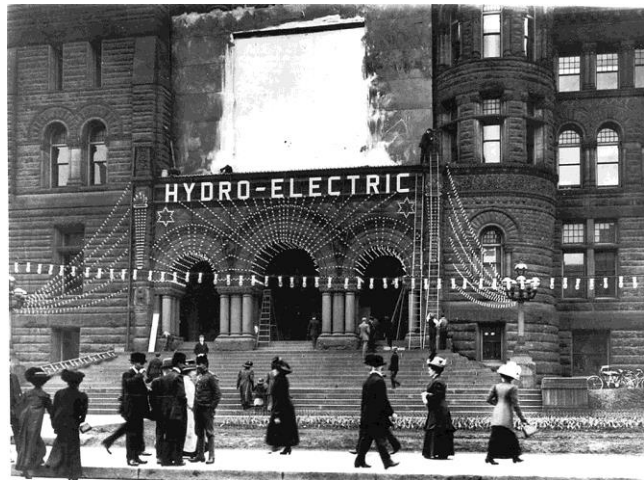


Casa Loma 1914-15?
City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_14079

#4079

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 4079, 'Casa Loma 1914-15?'

⁵⁷ p. 152 Careless



Tor City Hall Niagara power inaugural 1910? 1911 #323M
City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_10323m

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 323M 'Toronto City Hall Niagara power inaugural 1911'

J.M.S. Careless points to Pellat as an example of new style of financier who, unlike the hard working, plain living Methodist millionaires around him in Toronto, delighted in conspicuous consumption. He built Casa Loma to enhance his colonial aspiration to the aristocracy—he was given encouragement in this flight of fancy by being granted a knighthood in 1910 for taking the “Queen’s Own Rifles” a regiment that he bankrolled, for imperial manoeuvres to England.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Careless p. 163



Sir Henry Pellat (R) 1914?

#4024

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_i4024

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 4024 'Sir Henry Pellat (R) 1914?

The insipid life supported by largely abstract investments and the remove on the hill of The Mausoleum Club contrasts with the incessant construction and hustling for contracts by MacKendrick and others at the levers in the city's physical growth. The Mausoleum Club members grow rich from the corporate investments, utilities and real estate and land speculation all traded at a remove but intimately linked to the hopeful investments of those individuals perhaps living in "Sunshine Park" who aspired to ascend to Walmer Hill.

At the other end of the economic spectrum from Plutoria Avenue, "where the city sinks lower and is choked..." was the problem of worker's housing. The cost and scarcity of low income housing became a visible problem in Toronto between 1900 and 1910. The problem of "the ward" related to unsanitary conditions, ineffective shelter, and pests that made the infectious disease outbreaks common.

The social unrest and the labour activism that grew in the years before World War I boiled over into strikes and other forms of protest over the low wages and poor work conditions. "Tenements" was a term loosely given to the ramshackle overcrowded housing that dominated certain downtown wards. These were widely

considered to be crucibles of vice and crime. Disaffected workers and "foreigners" represented dangerously loose threads in the social fabric.

It was in this climate that Toronto began to consider the removal of the poor from the very visible centre of the city and in this respect considered the English experimentation with "garden suburbs." A first Housing commission was named in 1907, and Dr. Charles Hastings, the medical health officer urged "garden suburbs" as the answer to urban overcrowding.⁵⁹ "Garden cities," rooted in the socially motivated experiments in creating humane and autonomous communities for workers in England was a concept only vaguely understood by Toronto residents. It was likely popularly associated with garden suburbs such as Lawrence Park the local example of planned suburbs that sported landscaped recreational amenities such as bowling greens, tennis courts and parks.

In a 1905 article titled "Garden Cities and Suburbs," *The Canadian Architect and Builder*) the writer summarizes the suburban phenomenon as the antithesis of the ideals of the workers' Garden City such as those self-sustaining, integrated village being planned at the time in Letchworth, England:

The suburbs themselves are ... seldom satisfactory as a refuge, either in London or on this side of the water. They are compounded of building speculations in which, in so far as the speculators think of their own land, without reference to that of their neighbours. There is no general design only more streets added to the town. There is no difference from the rest of the town but in the more open character of the streets. There is no variety of public and private space; no

⁵⁹ Careless. 179

composition of functions, or classes; but long strings of houses, all of the same kind.⁶⁰

The long strings of houses that were prevalent in working class suburbs of England did not materialise in Toronto; it was much more profitable to develop property for the high-end market. Workers' desire to own homes led to a particular kind of unsightly urban landscape. Overnight farmers' fields sprouted do-it-yourself houses made after work and on weekends. It was this very visual phenomenon of building anarchy, the tarpaper shacks that only slowly, when money was available, grew into the semblance of a proper house that dismayed many Torontonians.

Reform efforts against poverty included the diligent campaigns by the Toronto Horticultural Society designed to convince residents of such rag-tag neighbourhoods to "beautify" their surroundings with vacant lot gardens and window boxes of flowers. Several miles to the west of Casa Loma in the district of Earls court residents of do-it-yourself housing were the beneficiaries of street beautification competitions sponsored by such eminent citizens as Pellat through his involvement with the Toronto Horticultural Society. The results of the competitions were mixed. For example, the 1912 Society Yearbook, informs readers that within Earls court "of the fifteen streets selected to participate in the Street Improvement Competition "none were found to have made sufficient effort to be entitled to a medal."⁶¹

⁶⁰ *Canadian Architect and Builder* Vol 18 (1905) Issue 8. p 115

⁶¹ *Toronto Horticultural Society Yearbook*, 1912. 16



A street in Earlscourt (Toronto) 1910?

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 1244_167274

#7274

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 7274 'A street in Earlscourt (Toronto) 1910?

In his book *Unplanned Suburbs* Richard Harris contrasts the city's service to the suburbs comprised by owner-built houses on cheap building lots on unregulated land to that of more affluent suburbs. In the cases of Rosedale, Forest Hill and North Toronto services were provided before other far flung settlements. The divide between rich and poor, worker, middle classes and the wealthy was measured not only in the type of home, street and garden they settled into but how far away from the city they were able to get with full provision of city services.

The first-impression character of a neighbourhood was important in Toronto, nicknamed "the city of homes". Subdivisions of greater or lesser respectability were distinguished by ratepayers' organization and activity. This was most visibly expressed in proprietary enhancement and upkeep of streets and gardens.

At the level of reform, the beautification of neighbourhoods where workers housing predominated was considered to be an important step for building individual and collective health through the cultivation of nature. Unfortunately, the exhortation from the more privileged city residents to those who lived in the latter neighbourhoods to "beautify" missed crucial distinctions in the relative circumstances of annexed and serviced versus un-annexed and un-serviced districts.



Wychwood wooden houses

#2265

1907-8?

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_r2265

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 2265 'Wychwood wooden houses 1907-8?'

IV CITY AND COUNTRY HOME

A mere eight years after the 1902 publication *The Garden of Canada, Oakville, Burlington and district* promotional writing to attract investment to the area omits mention of the soil conditions although they make ample use of the terms park and garden. The subdivision in question, Oakville's Tuxedo Park, boasts sterling features: proximity to the city (by radial) healthy country living with town amenities (churches, electricity, telephone) and last but not least the social cachet (and attendant increase in property value) of nearby summer resorts of the rich. Instead of describing the up-standing citizenry at the helm of general stores and lumber mills of the region the emphasis is on sound analysis of the factors that drive the real estate market. As in Toronto's subdivisions the value of a lot is objectively related to the social status of the area and the degree to which its restrictive character is ensured through city ordinances regulating building type and lot size. Other highlighted benefits are the area's healthful effects as this is defined as the antithesis of an urban environment.

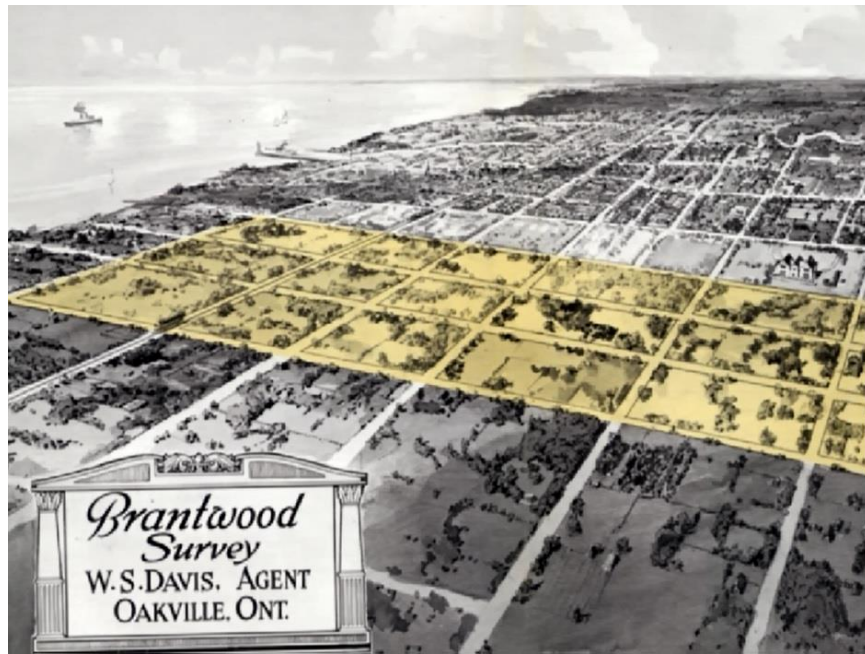


Oakville radial car bridge 1909?

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 10522

#1052

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 10522 'Oakville radial car bridge 1909?



Developed before its time, the 1910 Tuxedo Park would-be subdivision along with others that together comprised the Brantwood Survey, although completed with paved streets, cement sidewalks and sewers, did not find a market in pre-war Toronto. Hazel Matthews, chronicler of Oakville history, points out that "...a few houses were built in Tuxedo Park and on the fringes of the Brantwood survey, but the centre of the Brantwood Survey remained open fields through which cement sidewalks stretched

forlornly.⁶² In a 1912 publication *Oakville Past and Present, Being a brief account of the town, its Neighbourhood, History, Industries, Merchants, Institutions and Municipal Undertakings (approved by the Oakville Town Council)*, the writer extolls “the country home idea” as the basis for investment in its newly surveyed sections. Branding Oakville as Toronto and Hamilton’s “country home district” it goes on to describe what this might entail for the prospective commuter.

Life in the country includes a cow, a pony, chickens and an abundance of fruit, vegetables, milk and eggs—and these at first hand. 5 acres of the right kind of land make a snug little farm 5 acres will keep a hired man busy and pay his wages, besides supplying the owner with all that makes life in the country enviable.⁶³

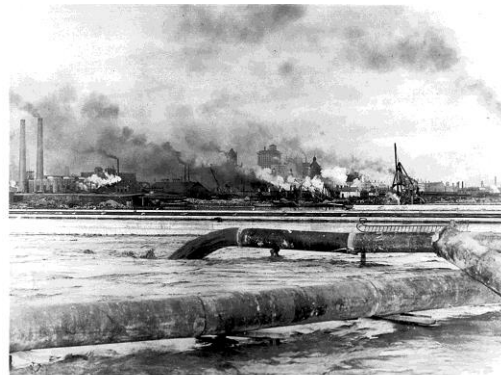
A standard of the desirable life was contact with nature especially through the opportunity to own a large, attractive garden as a setting for one’s home in the city. By 1910, when MacKendrick built his Arts and Crafts-inspired home with an ample garden in the supremely tasteful Rosedale, a neighbourhood modeled on the Hampstead Garden suburb in London⁶⁴ his life and activities perfectly embody one of the prime factors affecting urban life in Toronto. The experience of the preceding decade underlines the importance of

⁶² Mathews, Hazel. *Oakville and the Sixteen, The History of an Ontario Port*. Toronto: University of Ontario Press. 1953. 433-4

⁶³ Griffin, George. *Oakville Past and Present, Being a brief account of the town, its Neighbourhood, History, Industries, Merchants, Institutions and Municipal Undertakings (approved by the Oakville Town Council)* Toronto: Griffin & Griffin Publishers. 1912. 40
“Robinson and Chisolm are the pioneers of the Country Home Idea at Oakville. They are selling 5 acre holdings with frontage on the “Morrison Road”; which road, a mile long, they are presenting to the Township of Trafalgar.” Robinson & Chisolm, Real Estate and Insurance Brokers phone 158

⁶⁴ Crawford, Bess Hillery. *Rosedale*. Erin, Ont.:The Boston Mills Press. 2000

roads from which he makes his livelihood—not only to the city’s economy but also for escape, to tree-lined residential enclaves, away from such noxious fumes as those of an asphalt plant.



Toronto skyline & smog 1912? #1122A
City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, F1244_01122a

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 1122a “Toronto skyline & smog 1912?”

In the Toronto Directory of 1898, the first year MacKendrick is listed as manager of the Warren-Scharf Paving Company, on East Roxborough Street fully one third of the street is comprised of houses. By the spring of 1910 he had installed the family and probably also the outlines of the garden in 255 Roxborough Street East.⁶⁵

On the west side of Mount Pleasant the distinguished planned subdivision of Chestnut Park added lustre to a Roxborough address. While travelling widely throughout Great Britain and Europe in the 1880s, its designer, Townsend, witnessed the emergence of the Neo-Tudor style of architectural design. He would experiment with various features of this design in the Chestnut Park suburb.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Crawford: His lot was part of the former Township Lot 18 owned originally by Joseph Price whose mill was located on the river in the ravine near the present intersection of Mount Pleasant Road and Roxborough Street East (now Roxborough Drive.) 127

⁶⁶ Crawford: “One of the homes he designed for his development was the Boutbee House at 35 Crescent Road in 1895, a home at 48 Crescent Road in 1901, the John Dixon house at 52 Cluny

The *Canadian Architect and Builder* and *Construction* reflected, in its search for new models of building, not only the interest in revival styles of architecture but also the influence of the City Beautiful Movement. With respect to domestic architecture both publications also celebrated the elegant country homes that epitomized the prevailing fashion for the away-from-the-city “country living”. As well, there were many competitions for designs for suburban country homes of varying scale. Clearly a reader of *The Canadian Architect and Builder*, a letter by MacKendrick’s to the editor criticizes the anecdotal evidence of another writer concerning the durability of granite blocks as paving material. He counters this with his own experience with a variety of paving techniques specifically in relation to the problem of streetcar tracks in Toronto.⁶⁷

The material and social ambitions of the MacKendrick family echoed those of the city’s growing middle class. Such illustrated magazines as *Canadian Home Journal* and *Saturday Night* gave transparency to fashionable society and a boost to local trade through the display of their taste in homes, furniture, gardens, cars, etc. The closely guarded power of the Family Compact, object of political discontent for so long in the nineteenth century had long passed into history. Since the 1880’s the social register for Toronto had been expanding and admitting a new class of individuals who could put their self-made wealth into philanthropy and entertaining. *The Toronto Daily Star*’s Society Notes column and other forms of social reporting were important sources for charting the personalities, allegiances and habits of the city’s growing affluent class.

Drive in 1904 and numbers 24 and 49 Chestnut Park in 1905. Other architects in the Chestnut Park mini-subdivision included. Burke, Horwood and White, designers of James Ryrie’s house at 1 Chestnut Park (1915). Ryrie owned a lakeshore estate near Oakville.” 109

⁶⁷ *The Canadian Architect and Builder* Vol 10 (1897) Issue 6. 109

Following the custom of his Rosedale neighbours for lobbying government for improved infrastructure, MacKendrick's, a recent arrival, writes in the July 7, 1910 edition of *The Toronto Daily Star* in an open letter to the Mayor and City Council.

Gentlemen—Are you aware that the 1908, 1909 and 1910 Councils have allowed a most dangerous condition of affairs to exist in the heart of one of our best residential districts? I refer to the hill on East Roxborough street where for some years the Engineer or Park Commissioner has recommended the making of the hill passable by raising the road eighteen feet with ashes, and widening the ten foot strip (that passes for a roadway) to twenty feet. ... Yesterday when going up this hill in an auto I found a poor man lying in the road insensible with his head split open and covered with blood. Nearby was a load of lumber upside down with wheels in the air. A citizen living at the top of the hill said that not a week in the year passed without an accident at this spot.



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 1776 'Mount Pleasant Rd. 1910?

According to family history MacKendrick was the designer and builder of his home. It sits nestled at the foot of a ravine a short distance from what is now the four-lane Mount Pleasant Road. From

the vantage point of, Chestnut Park neighbourhood on the west side of the ravine, one can see the MacKendrick's back garden. This view, in a 1923 family photograph, shows the outlines of the landscaping. Working with the slope of the ravine he graded the garden with rock and shrub tiered and winding pathways. At the base of the garden there is an infant orchard with broad paths separating the rows of trees. The rose garden is close to the west side of the house.



Photograph of Marilyn Scriver, daughter of Corinne Lowry with written note by latter on back of photo "Home of Col. William Gordon Mac Kendrick prior to 1923-Roxborough St. east side mount Pleasant, south side toward top of hill.

All of these features were reproduced in his Oakville estate in the 1920's and documented in a contemporary issue of *Canadian Homes and Gardens*. To replicate the Rosedale ravine grading on the flat lakeshore property MacKendrick created a rise using the road building machinery that was typically used to level such geographical features. Trellises on the verandah, a garden room sheltered by a dry stone wall that connected to the interior through French doors, numerous casement windows and a teahouse in the garden are features of the home's design. The appeal lay in the way it

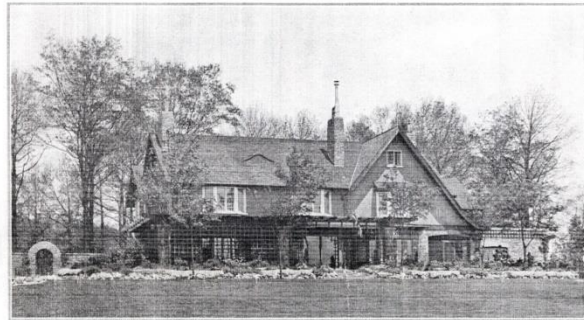
combined indoor and outdoor living areas in an organic, seamless manner.

40

Canadian Homes and Gardens for August, 1926

"CHESTNUT POINT," RESIDENCE of COL. W. G. MACKENDRICK
Near Oakville, Ontario

With its house and gardens designed and executed by its owner, this estate on the Ontario lakeshore is distinguished by originality and natural beauty



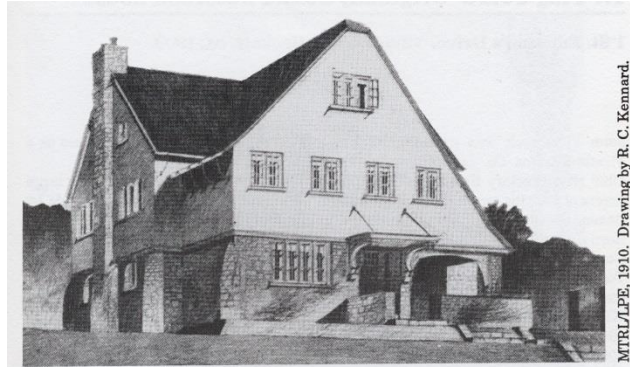
"Chestnut Point" expresses in its every detail the personality of its owner and the time and thought he has spent upon its construction and development

The taste for an English style cottage nestled gracefully in a naturalistic setting was most aptly packaged for Toronto consumers in the form of the Lawrence Park development. Its creator W.S. Dinnick, offered consumers a picture of a leisure-oriented lifestyle available to those who lived there. The promotional images of his model homes and gardens became emblematic of the desirable Toronto home. At least two of these ended up in the 1912 Horticultural Society Yearbook as illustrations of exemplary house gardens. Beside them, photos of MacKendrick's own gardens those of Roxborough Drive as well as his Centre Island home bore many of the same characteristics.

In Rosedale, in contrast to Lawrence Park, a wide variety of architectural styles developed to accommodate a diversity of clients and their imaginations. Building permits for 1909 brick dwellings in Roxborough listed among other architects, Langley Howard, W.F. Rutley, R.J. Edwards and Saunders, Curry and Sparling, and Chadwick and Becket⁶⁸ Toronto architects in this period were in the process of creating their first regulatory association. Four of the

⁶⁸ Crawford. 99

thirty-two practicing architects that were recognised by peers in their profession lived in Rosedale.



Grey Gables, 16 Dawlish Avenue, 1910 - 1911.



Dovercourt Company's

promotional image reproduced in [Lawrence Park: A Historical Walking Tour](#), Barbara Myrvold and Lynda Moon, Toronto Public Library Board in partnership with Lawrence Park Ratepayers' Association and North Toronto Historical Society, 2007. Also featured in the [Toronto Horticultural Society Yearbook, 1912](#).

Grey Gables, 16 Dawlish Avenue was landscaped by Dovercourt to be a showplace. The company's 1910 brochure on Lawrence Park included Chadwick and Beckett's garden plans, a photograph of the rose garden, and this description:

The shape of the grounds of "Grey Gables" has enabled the architects to develop them along especially charming lines. The whole front is a sweeping curve, terraced back to the house, with a rose-garden and sundial on the right-hand side. Opening from this is the lawn and formal garden, with its walks and fountain, and at the further-end, the pergola

arranged in semi-circular form. The same flowers and shrubs, wall and hedges are found here as in other gardens.⁶⁹

By 1911 the gardens at Grey Gables were beginning to grow. A photograph of the formal garden and another of the rose garden appeared in the 1911 promotional pamphlet on Lawrence Park. Further details about the gardens are provided that year in the journal *Construction*:

The rose garden is paved with large Credit Valley flagstone, from Mr. Graham-Bell's quarries; in the centre is a Roman stone sundial, and a cedar hedge surrounds the whole. From the rose garden a gate leads to the formal garden in the rear, in the centre of which is an octagonal basin of rubble masonry with a Roman stone fountain modelled by Messr. Green & Wicks, and a pergola. A dry stone wall encloses the whole. The French window from the living room leads to the formal garden. On the north side of the house, the drive leads to a small stone garage and drying ground, separated by a dry stonewall from the garden.⁷⁰

Adaptive planning in its most picturesque form was epitomized by the artists' colony of Wychwood Park. In 1873 landscape painter Marmaduke Matthews bought 10 acres of in the Davenport embankment where it was traversed north to south by the meandering Taddle Creek. Eden Smith, a resident himself of the park, during the high point of its development between 1907 and 1911, designed many of its houses in an Arts and Crafts style to harmonize with the woods and the ravine. The residential park attracted artists such as the George Reid and his wife Mary Hester Reid whose studio is recreated, using a William James photograph, at the Art Gallery of Ontario as an illustration of the integrated design approach advocated by the Arts and Crafts movement. Eden Smith the

⁶⁹ The house was also extensively discussed in *Construction* (November 1911).

⁷⁰ *Construction* 101, 1911

architect who most successfully interpreted the cottage style for Toronto clients made Wychwood Park his home.



Canadian Architect and Builder Vol. 22 (1908) Issue 1



Wychwood ravine 1907
City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_i1246b

#1246B

City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, 1246 B 'Wychwood ravine 1907'



Wychwood Park 1922
City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_i7368

#7368

City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, 7368 'Wychwood Park 1922'

From the similarities between MacKendrick's Roxborough house and the show homes for Lawrence Park it is clear that the home and garden design in his 1912 home was very much in a prevailing suburban style. Building permits issued for Roxborough Street East and East Roxborough Street (as Roxborough Drive was then known) reveal that the majority of houses built between 1907 and 1913 were brick 2 1/2 storey dwellings. Chadwick and Becket the official

architects for Lawrence Park designed a number of these. The flexibility of the Arts and Crafts principles in domestic design permitted a generous degree of retooling for individual consumer preferences. While the essential values—open-ness to the garden, solidity of form and adherence to English tradition were core values of those who were moving into Rosedale and a little later others who gravitated to Lawrence Park.⁷¹

The term “Arts and Craft” was already well known to Toronto Society in relation with the efforts of the Women’s Art Association to promote the new aesthetic in sales of art and handicrafts. Teas and lectures through the years 1904 to 1907 attracted society ladies to marvel at the objects that represented dying arts and cherished ideals of English country honesty and simplicity. Nature was invoked as inspiration and evoked as effect. On a more prosaic level Mission style and Arts and Crafts style furniture were soon common terms proclaiming the English stylistic adherents of such things as the “Morris Chair”. Purveyors of garden furniture rustic to wrought iron found ready consumers every spring when gardens were opened for entertaining. Beginning in 1910 *Saturday Night* ran a regular feature titled “City and Country Homes.” Reflecting American and British trends, the popular magazine created a market for the houses and furnishings that underpinned the “cottage” oriented lifestyle.



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 1244_10703g

#703G

City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, 703g 'Mary Augusta Hiester Reid in her studio 1907?'



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 1244_20703a

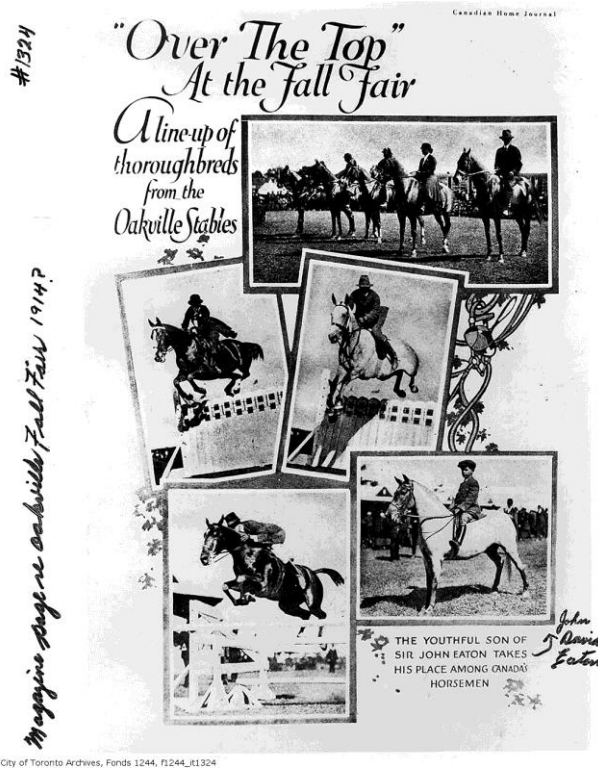
City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, 703a "Carl Ahrens artists 1907? (Carl Henry von Ahrens (Canadian, 1862-1936) was an artist, printmaker, illustrator, ceramicist, writer, poet and teacher, known for his landscape and portrait paintings and his ties with the Roycroft, Elbert Hubbard's Arts & Crafts community in East Aurora, New York.)

Many Torontonians, among them likely the Cox family titans of Canada Life insurance, whose lakeshore estate, Ennisclare,

neighbourhood MacKendrick's, were readers of the London based *Country Life* magazine. The baying of the hounds would have regularly announced to lakeshore estate residents that the Ennisclore Hunt Club was gathering. Roy Strong, a former director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, underlines the role *Country Life* played in defining the ethos of the British landed gentry for readers everywhere.

...the ideal of rural living was a powerful one, for it provided a ready-made encapsulation of the hierarchical values that reflected the social aspirations of the professional and urban based classes who made up the major part of the readership of *Country Life*. The life of a country gentleman was seen as particularly desirable, and the magazine provided, week by week, a pantheon of images that gradually formed a powerfully enticing illustration of national identity: portraits of members of old families, ancient manor houses and gardens, views of an unspoiled landscape depicted through the seasons, ordinary countrymen at their toil and the gentry engaging in country pursuits. The overwhelming impression one received when turning the pages of the magazine was (and still is) of continuity and tradition. ...The facts behind the popular appeal of this selective and fictional reading of rural values seem only to contradict its paradoxical success. *Country Life* apotheosised a lifestyle and culture of what was essentially a defeated class—the aristocracy and gentry of pre-industrial Britain. ...The decline of the aristocratic infrastructure would, it might seem, have made its visible focus—the country house—redundant. But if the aristocracy's political and social power declined, its cultural influence did not: the rural aristocratic lifestyle was what the new rich from the commercial and professional classes aspired to experience.⁷²

⁷² *Country Life 1897-1997, The English Arcadia*. London: Country Life Books and Boxtree. 1996. 36-.37



City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, 1324 'Magazine page re. Oakville Fall Fair 1914'



City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, 1303 'Amelius Jarvis, left + famous gray horses'

In the summer of 1910 the MacKendricks bought the first parcel of property in Trafalgar Township. The seller was the Ontario Oddfellows Home Association. The purchase was likely for the house and surrounding property that is now 1176 Lakeshore Road East and is the lot north of what would eventually be his substantial farm to the north of Lakeshore Road and landscaped residence where Gairloch Gardens is now.⁷³ From accounts of his middle son (Harry) W. G. MacKendrick chose to re-settle in Oakville after the war largely because he wanted a larger garden.⁷⁴ Evidence of this is, according to Harry, is the fact that the house he created in Oakville was an almost exact duplicate of his Toronto home. Another way of viewing MacKendrick's move to Oakville is that by 1922 when he began construction of "Chestnut Farm"⁷⁵ he is in essence undertaking a transposition of his Rosedale home to a more ideal Rosedale, one

⁷³ MacKendrick began buying property outside the city as early as 1909. Registry records show that parts of Lot 7 and 8 Concession 4 in Trafalgar Township were bought by him from Herbert and Louise Cox, and the Ontario Oddfellows Home Association. In turn the MacKendricks sold lands to Gundy who is listed in other sources as being the owner of the Oakville manse named "Holyrood". (Judy Margles-notes) In the Toronto Horticultural Society Yearbook for 1918 Gundy's address is given as Chestnut Farm Oakville. The Gundy's Toronto home is featured in Sheridan Nurseries catalogue for 1935 (?) in the archives of the Oakville Heritage Society.

⁷⁴ He did it all by himself. ...I was born in 1906 and moved into the house in 1922 although before that would come out periodically."

⁷⁵ Land registration records show that PT LTS 7 & 8, CON 4 Trafalgar, south of Dundas Street AS IN 330179, 381274

6th March 1909 date of sale and registered 25 March the Grantor is Ferguson and the

Grantee is Herbert Cox the price is 12,000.00. The land is registered under the name of his wife Louise Cox on the 2nd of May of the same year. In June of the following year (1910) part of the land is transferred from the Ontario Oddfellows Home Association to Sarah and William Gordon MacKendrick for the sale price of \$35,500. On the 30th of March 1912 Corinne MacKendrick and William Gordon MacKendrick sell land to Serena Gundy for \$13,500. On November 1912 Sarah MacKendrick and William Gordon MacKendrick sell property to Serena Gundy for \$16,500. Serena Gundy grants land to William MacKendrick in Nov. of 1916. Louise Bogart and H. Cox in July 1917 sell to Serena and James H. Gundy. In April of 1926 William Gordon MacKendrick and wife sell for \$1 and "love" to Dane MacKendrick a lot on their property and right of way to it from Lakeshore Road East. On 6th of November (registered in April the following year) give another lot to hold as joint tenants to Christopher Armstrong and Clara Georgina Armstrong (nee MacKendrick), his wife. In July 1938 property described as part of Lot 7 and other land is granted from Louise Cox and Herbert Coplin Cox to Combined Assets Ltd. In June of 1946 MacKendrick and his wife sell a portion also described as part of Lot 7 and

that was created in the Edwardian imagination of Torontonians and that began to unravel with the changes after the First World War.

A climax of the successful years in Toronto is a scene one can imagine from the "At Home" Column of *The Toronto Daily Star* for June 6, 1913.

A large "At Home" on Saturday afternoon was that given by Mr. and Mrs. W. G. MacKendrick to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of their marriage when their charming home in East Roxborough Street was profusely decorated with yellow roses, daffodils and violets. Mr. and Mrs. MacKendrick welcomed their guests who numbered about three hundred in the living room. The latter was wearing black satin with overdress of jet and corsage bouquet of violets. Mrs. George Hardy, of Toledo, who received with them, was in green satin veiled with white Spanish lace, with bouquet of violets. Mrs. Franck King and Miss King also assisted. Mrs. Henry C. Wales and Mrs. J. H. Gundy of Oakville, poured tea and coffee, the table being centred with yellow roses and violets. The assistants were Miss McLeod, Miss Lorna MacKendrick Miss Marguerite King, Miss Marguerite King, Miss Gladys Malcolm, Miss Hatch, Master Gordon, and Master Dane MacKendrick. Among those present were Mr. and Mrs. F.H. Deacon, Mr. and Mrs. D.A. Dunlop, Mr. and Mrs. H. Ryrie, Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Ramsey, Mr. and Mrs. J.G. Ramsay, Mr. and Mrs. J.B. Spence, Dr. and Mrs. E. King, Archdeacon and Mrs. Cody, Mr. and Mrs. M. Lowndes, Mrs. C. Lowndes, Mr. and Mrs. G. Playfair, Mr. and Mrs. Evans, Mr. and Mrs. J.E. Atkinson, Mr. and Mrs. W. G. McLennan, Mrs. Taylor, the Misses Davies, Mrs. Gordon, Mrs. Currie, Mr. and Mrs. J.M. Godfrey, Mr. and Mrs. Connon, Mrs. Charles Goad, Mr. and Mrs. G.A. Morrow.

other land to Alfred Lloyd Lunon for \$2,500. In June of 1949 Dane MacKendrick and wife sell their property to William Gould Armstrong. This property is identified as parts of Lot 7 & 8 with easement 21582 (plans). Land Registry Office Halton County)

At this point in his life MacKendrick was a man of significant property, owning a house with extensive gardens in Rosedale as well as his summer home on Centre Island and land outside of Oakville which was becoming known as “the Newport of Canada.”. In addition, he was a successful branch head of an American paving company. As a member and commodore of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club and as a boating enthusiast he combined professional networking with his family recreation The showcase of blooms proclaim his passion for gardening and guest list reflects his association with the Toronto Horticultural Society which he would lead as president through their most active years from 1910 to 1913. The guests represent a significant point of arrival for they are the bedrock of Rosedale society. From Mr. and Mrs. J.E. Atkinson of 64 Glen Road to Mrs. F.H. Deacon of 128 Crescent Road to Archdeacon Cody and wife, the host shines in the reflected glory of his “At Home”.



City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, 421 'Fashions O.J.C. 1913' (identified by author as W.G. MacKendrick and wife, Corinne, at the Toronto Jockey Club)

Happily married with five children ranging from 3 to 17 years of age, MacKendrick epitomizes the success of an Edwardian self-made man and paterfamilias. This scene closes the first chapter of the family's

history. Within six months Sarah King had died and the duties of surrogate motherhood were taken up by her sister Clara who in November 1915 formally replaced her as Mrs. MacKendrick. Three years after this "At Home" celebration Gordon was killed, having been in the trenches of France only a few days. In July of 1913 however war was not on the horizon and this quintessential Toronto scene symbolizes a world that no one suspected would shortly disappear.

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CHAPTER 5

THE GARDEN GOSPEL AND THE PAVEMENT WARS

*Much of the present success and present large membership of the Society can be attributed to the hard work and pleasing personality of our present president, Mr. W. G. MacKendrick.*⁷⁶

The “City Beautiful” movement was at its zenith at the close of the 19th and opening of the 20th centuries. Its relative brevity, argues historian Edwina Von Baeyer, was due to its being a localized phenomenon. Spearheaded by small clubs and societies, it lacked an enduring and concrete programme or national focus.

Ambitious civic projects were put aside as the financial slump just before the First World War made the welfare of the poor and the health of the general population more urgent than beautification. “Beauty was gradually phased out of the urban planner’s criteria for social change and was not re-admitted until the 1920’s.”⁷⁷

Organized at a meeting in St. Lawrence Hall on December 10, 1895, the Toronto Horticultural Society, counting numerous leading citizens among its members, was one example of contemporary civic zeal. The first President was John Chambers who was the city’s Parks Superintendent. By 1913 the society’s goals reflected both

⁷⁶ Historical Data of the Society, Toronto Horticultural Society “Beautify Toronto” Yearbook (1912) Toronto: Aston Publishing Company. 60

⁷⁷ Von Baer, Edwina. Rhetoric and Roses, A History of Canadian Gardening, 1900-1930. Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside. 1984

beautification and welfare concerns. Moreover, there was a strong competitive spirit nurtured through exhibitions and competitions along with garden tours and photographs of leading gardens in the society's annual yearbook and newsletter. Its pages also document the organization's campaigns for civic improvement through plantings and competitions in the poorer neighbourhoods. This was balanced with information on botany, gardening and landscaping. During the war, its blending of personal improvement and social mission through gardening reached a national audience through a series of articles on Victory gardening by Society Vice President George Baldwin in *Canadian Home Journal*.



#7146 Potatoes in front lawn. Crescent Rd.
W.W.I Victory garden. 1916?

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_87146

City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, 7146 'Potatoes in front lawn. Crescent Rd. Victory Garden 1916?'

MacKendrick was most closely involved with the society's growth and activities during his term as president between 1910 and 1913. The meeting minutes for the election of officers for the year ending October 31st 1911 states that W.G. MacKendrick is voted President by acclamation. Perhaps this landslide victory was the fruit of MacKendrick's hospitality to Society members at the tour and reception of his Centre Island garden on Aug. 19th, 1910⁷⁸ Among

⁷⁸ Minutes of the Toronto Horticultural Society for Feb. 27, 1911 make mention of trip on Aug. 19th, 1910 in which society members and friends visit gardens of President MacKendrick at Centre Island.)

the many who would likely have voted for Mac Kendrick was James H. Gundy, a Rosedale neighbour, who was also a fellow resident of Trafalgar Township/Oakville. Another society member who was MacKendrick's lakeshore neighbour was James Ryrie, owner of Birks Jewellers and owner of Edgemere, a celebrated Arts and Crafts villa⁷⁹



City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, 'Oakville (James Ryrie's) 1919?

By 1912 the social activism of the Society was in full sway. This involved advocating for a greater presence of Nature in the city in the form of public and private gardens, raising awareness of the beneficial effects of gardening, and promoting cultivation of garden as the basis of improvement for all social classes. The objective mission of the group is outlined in the 1912 yearbook.

⁷⁹ . "Edgemere" was reproduced in Toronto, Saturday Night, Construction and Canadian Architect and Builder. (Archives of Ontario, Archives description database, Toronto Horticultural Society Fonds)

OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY

To hold meetings for the hearing and discussion of essays and lectures on subjects connected with the theory and practice of improved horticulture.

- To hold exhibitions and award premiums for the encouragement of the production of high-class plants, flowers, fruits, vegetables, shrubs, etc.
- To promote the circulation of useful horticultural literature.
- To encourage the improvement of home and public grounds by the planting of trees, shrubs, flowers, vines, etc.
- To afford its members an opportunity of obtaining free professional information and advice as to the cultivation and welfare of plants and flowers for the garden, greenhouse, conservatory and dwelling.
- By these means we aim to educate citizens to grow beautiful flowers, vines, roses, etc. and make Toronto a more desirable city for ourselves and our children after us to live in.

The Society's hope for influence in particular spheres was reflected in their participation through one representative in the Industrial Exhibition Association (CNE), the Toronto Guild of Civic Art, the Ontario Horticultural Association and the Ontario Horticultural Exhibition. Special Committees listed in the 1912 Yearbook included Street Improvement, School Gardens, Hospital Grounds etc., and Missions.

The minutes of the Toronto Horticultural Society for Nov. 21st 1910 speak of the "beautification of the Civic Guild" by the Society along with street improvement, public school gardens, "four splendid exhibitions and their educative influence and the sale of copies of a

yearbook and pamphlet titled "Beautify Toronto." At the same meeting there is a discussion of bulbs destined for the East End Day Nursery on River Street as well as the progress of plantings for street improvements and school gardens. The special need of the "Jewish and other foreign children" for instruction on the beautification of their environment through planting is noted.



Gardening at Hillcrest P.S. 1917 WW1?

#8212

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_t8212

City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, 8212 'Gardening at Hillcrest P.S. 1917?'

Edwinna Von Baeyer has explored the close interrelation of reform and gardening movements in Canada between 1900 and 1930. Horticultural societies were especially active in promoting children's gardening through competitions run through the local Boards of Education. Rooted in the desire to remedy the worst effects of the modern city especially as these were felt by the largely immigrant working class, the initiative was based on the conviction that individuals of all ages could absorb desirable middle class values through the process of gardening.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Von Baeyer, Edwinna. *Rhetoric and Roses: a history of Canadian gardening, 1900-1930*. Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside. 1984. 40 "

A form of “viral marketing” strategy was behind the Street Improvement Competition. It was thought that the enthusiasm for gardening would spread along a street as this was fired by residents’ ready view of each other’s gardens and their competitive impulse. The “gardening bug” would thus infect specifically designated streets. “The object of the Society is to have the competitions remain on the same streets for two years, or just long enough to encourage the residents to improve their places, that neighbours and others may notice the improvements and emulate the example set. “ Specific awards, five prizes of \$5.00 each were dedicated to the Earlscourt and Wychwood District—For the best general appearance in front and back yards of working men. In other, neighbourhoods presumably with less scope for gardening such as the “York Loan District—Boustead, Ridout, Indian Grove, Bloor, Alhambra--the improvement had to take the specific form of “window boxes, hedges, and climbing vines.”

Report on planting beds of perennials at public charities listed the beneficiary institutions as Girl’s Home on Gerrard Street East; the Infants’ Home, St. Mary Street; Hospital for Incurable Children, Bloor Street East, and the Protestant Boys’ Home, Dovercourt Road. The Reporting member J.W. P. Ross concludes: “If I should plant these places again I would use the very hardiest of plants and the most permanent—as we can understand that onerous duties of the inside must preclude any attention that is of a constant nature being given to the surroundings.”



Casa Loma gardens & stables from E 1908
 City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, fl.244_r4109

(1433) #4109

City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, 4109 'Casa Loma gardens & stables from E 1908'

The Toronto Horticultural Society 1912 Yearbook is illustrated with photographs of its members' gardens. The range among these is descriptive of the levels and types of interest in gardening embraced by the society. Pages four and five juxtapose "Pergola at the home of W.G. MacKendrick" with an image showing "University of Toronto Botanical Garden. Planted Spring 1910. Photographed fall of same year. The following page displays a driveway planting of the summer home of Mr. J.E. Hall of Port Credit with "Driveway to stable through the vegetable garden at "Casa Loma" Sir H.M. Pellat's new home, Toronto. A photograph of an outside backyard garden with a row of houses behind is labelled: Garden of Geo. Baldwin Toronto, 82 varieties of vegetables and 100 varieties of flowers were grown in this garden during 1911. On a previous page there is the familiar "Garden detail of "Grey Gables", residence of Mr. J.H. Evans, Lawrence Park, Toronto. There is a further illustration of MacKendrick's garden, in this case identified as that of his Island Home.

The illustrations of the Yearbook are drawn from Lawrence Park publicity, William James' photographs as well as members' personal photographs. Thus James' views of Casa Loma and the Lawrence Park promotional images would already have been widely circulated as pre-eminently desirable garden spaces. Beyond this, botanical

illustration photos accompany the various articles on Tomato, Celery, Fern and Sweet pea cultivation. Nurseries advertising in the Yearbook display an equal range of market specialties: from English import roses (Benjamin R. Cant and Sons) to the cut-rate “Greenhouse Values” advertising sturdy, plain structures to Nurseries such as Toronto Nurseries and E.D. Smith Company (Winona Ontario) that specialized also in landscape design and consultation.

Urban, suburban, cottage and estate gardens, amateur and professional and academic or recreational the full gamut of garden interests are represented. The lack of illustration of school gardens and street improvement competitions relates to the less than successful record of these. If one scans the list of members however, it is evident that the society members are occupants of the larger brick homes in Toronto. They hailed from Rosedale, Forest Hill, the Annex and High Park. The improvement schemes of the group were, in part, a response to the greater circulation in the city possible with cars and the decidedly unlovely results of the unplanned suburbs. The range of nurseries and other garden-related businesses in the city at the time highlight that there was a prosperous market ready and willing to purchase specialty soils and import prize hybrid bulbs.

Developing a successful practice as a landscape designer and owner of commercial nursery hinged on having a keen eye for the values espoused by the middle classes through their gardens. Lorrie Alfreda Dunnington and Howard Burlingham Grubb were landscape architects who adopted the surname Dunnington-Grubb following their marriage in England in 1911. That same year, they immigrated to Canada, established a practice in Toronto, and founded a nursery, which, as Sheridan Nurseries, continues to this day. Sheridan Nurseries moved to Trafalgar, close to what is now Sheridan College, in the 1920's and continues to make its headquarters in the area.

The Dunnington-Grubbs were not only practicing landscape architects but active promoters of their profession. Cultural landscape historian Pleasance Crawford has documented their parallel activities as lecturers and authors. In 1934, they were

founding members of the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects and Town Planners, today's Canadian Society of Landscape Architects.⁸¹

"The modern home and the Garden City movement." is the title of an illustrated lecture given by Lorrie Alfreda Dunnington-Grubb to the Horticultural Societies of Ontario annual meeting on November 16-17, 1911. Freshly arrived from England Mrs. Dunnington-Grubb took pains to correct local misconceptions about the Garden City Movement. She contrasted garden suburbs, made possible by effective system of transportation (according to her not yet available in Toronto) with garden cities, the experimental, all-inclusive workers' village designed to meet the needs of an entire community. She dramatically juxtaposed images of a Toronto backyard, "What a sorry sight!" to the visual effect of gardens within the designed layout of the garden city. Throughout, she argues for a more integrated approach to the idea of gardening—not merely as a means of covering up urban eyesores but as a professional design practice for creating healthy social environments. Gardening, in other words, should always be an exercise in landscape design.

In a 1917 Toronto Horticultural Society meeting, member Mr. Dunnington-Grubb lays out a very practical checklist of features and factors that must be considered in the planning of suburban and country house gardens. In contrast to his wife's spirited address on the social ideals behind the new models of town planning, his presentation is stolidly practical and sensitive to the need to convey the complexity of planning the inter-relation of outdoor spaces around home according to functional use and aesthetic potential.⁸²

⁸¹ (Abstract from A Preliminary Bibliography of the published writings of Lorrie Alfreda Dunnington (1877-1945) and Howard Burlingham Grubb (1881-1965). Compiled by Pleasance Kaufman Crawford, Toronto)

⁸² "The modern home and the Garden City movement." is printed in the Sixth annual report of the Horticultural Societies of Ontario for the year 1911. Toronto: Ontario Department of Agriculture, 1912, pp. 40-50, 52, 55, and 57. This was an illustrated address by "Mrs. Dunnington-Grubb, London, England" to the annual convention of the Horticultural Societies of Ontario, held in Toronto November 16-17.

As an amateur horticulturalist and civil engineer, W.G. MacKendrick would have been very aware of the contributions of the Dunnington-Grubbs as part of the growing importance of landscape architecture to city building. At the level of domestic gardens, the couple represented the latest tendencies from England, those closely tied with the Arts and Crafts movement⁸³



City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, 1888 'Riverdale Pk 1907'

Earlier, in the century 19th c., intensive growing in greenhouse and cheap labour made possible highly decorative and artificial garden

An address to the annual convention of the Horticultural Societies of Ontario, held in Toronto November 21-22, 1917 by H.B. was titled "The planning of grounds for city, suburban and country houses. Printed in the Twelfth annual report of the Horticultural Societies of Ontario for the Year 1917.

⁸³ . Another link to W.G. MacKendrick's immediate society was the article written by L.A. Dunnington Grubb. "Rock gardens." appeared in the *Toronto Horticultural Society's Garden yearbook 1917*, Toronto: Toronto Horticultural Society, 1917, pp. 24-26, 28, and 30

designs based on producing patterns with hedges, borders, round beds and paths. Flowerbeds were designed like carpets with effects through patterning uniform size and contrasting flower colours. These demarcated path edges or encircled urns, globes or other features. Beyond this the green expanse of manicured lawn was the ultimate testament of the diligence and size of the garden staff. This style of flowerbed design persists in roadside flowerbed signs, boulevard plantings, parks and other situations in which a strong “show” is desired. Eventually this style of planting was rejected as artificial and the more organic and site-sensitive English cottage-style garden became the norm in front and back yards.⁸⁴

Throughout its heyday the Honorary President of the Toronto Horticultural Society was Sir Henry Pellat whose full-page portrait adorned page three of the yearbook. The donors list reads like a who’s who of Toronto financial power. It includes Gooderham, Flavelle, Cox, Ryrie, Wood and Gundy. The 1919 Horticultural Society Officers and members is again a parade call of the city's old boy’s network: Edmund Walker of the Commerce, financier par excellence; Edmund Osler of the Dominion Bank, who emerged from stock broking; Frederic Nicholls, managing director of the combine Canadian The list of General Officers 1918-1919 lists as Honorary President, Sir John Eaton, Honorary Patrons: Sir Wm Meredith, Mr. J.L. Englehart, Sir J. W. Flavelle, Mr. W. G. Gooderham, Sir Edmund Osler, Dr. George Locke, Lt. Col. W. G. MacKendrick, Mr. E.R. Wood, Mr. D.A. Dunlop., Mr. Candee, Mr. Ralph Connable Mr. CE Champers, His Worship the Mayor. Among the members is a J.H. Gundy. Who is resident of a Chestnut Point Farm, Oakville, this likely, the farm sold to MacKendrick and re-named Chestnut Point by him.⁸⁵ The majority

⁸⁴ “The new style, the natural style, had an impact in Canada. Enlightened gardeners would no longer be receptive to pamphlets such as *Semi-Tropical Bedding and Carpet Bedding*... Canadians were now urged to plan their gardens as if they were painting a picture. The gardener was to combine lawn, trees, shrubs and flowers into an artistic whole, with nature as teacher and example. But the garden designer was to create nature idealized rather than nature real. The new, natural school acknowledged their debt to nature, but reminded their followers that any garden created by man was by definition artificial. One was to follow nature by rejecting formalism, not emulating rustic scenes.” Von Baeyer. 105

⁸⁵ *Oakville and Burlington: Garden of Canada* (1902) In this pamphlet a farm that goes by the name of Chestnut Farm, outside Oakville, is listed for sale.

of members have addresses in the most affluent Toronto neighbourhoods notably Rosedale and Forest Hill.



Casa Loma 1914-15?
City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_it4021

#4021

City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, 4021 'Casa Loma 1914-15?'

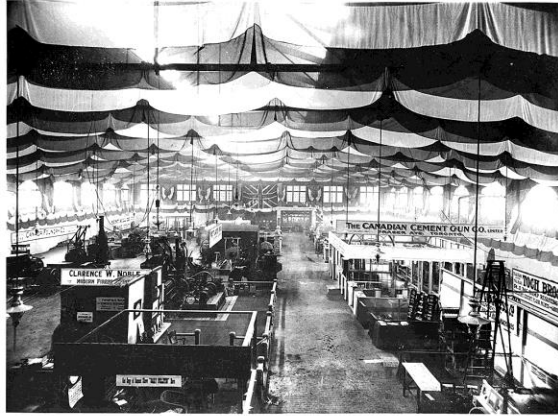
II THE PAVEMENT WARS

Ordinary asphalt, claimed the agents of “Bitulithic”, a new product at the opening of the 20th century, disintegrates with age. Water kills the elasticity of a pavement made with this standard paving mixture, causing it in a short time to break up. Their product, composed of variously sized stone particles bound by a secret recipe for cement tripled the lifespan of sidewalk and street pavement. At the height of Toronto’s building boom, the Warren Bituminous Company⁸⁶ aggressively marketed their patented road surface directly to residents triggering what was locally dubbed “the pavement wars”.

In the years between 1898 and 1913, the latter the date of the death of his first wife and the eve of the First World War, MacKendrick worked intensely, establishing home, family and career. He participated in powerful social networks, steadily gaining influence in the city through leadership in committees and clubs, most notably the Royal Canadian Yacht Club and the Toronto Horticultural Society. Notwithstanding these factors, could an individual, however industrious, talented and connected become wealthy⁸⁷ as the head of a branch of a paving company in just six to ten years?

⁸⁶ It was also known as the Warren Scharf Company.

⁸⁷ Standard price of homes as listed in building permits for Roxborough was \$5,000 to 10,000. The purchase of the Trafalgar Township property is registered in Sarah MacKendrick’s name and the sale price is \$35,500 in 1910.



Toronto Armories (Cement Show) 1912?
City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_82372

#2372

City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, 2372 'Toronto Armories (Cement Show) 1912'

Toronto's first bitulithic pavement was laid in 1903. It was a small section laid by the Warren Bituminous Company as a sample. In 1904 one and a half miles were laid and by 1906 the city had about six miles. The price was \$2.25 per square yard with a ten year guarantee.⁸⁸ While the quality of the pavement proved satisfactory, the fact that the Warren Company held the patent and therefore had a monopoly over this form of road surfacing made the Works Department reluctant to recommend it. Permission for bituminous pavement was available only through a petition from residents of a street who also agreed to cover the added expense of the more costly material through their rates. Between 1907 and 1912 an increasing number of streets demanded the premium pavement. A significant percentage of these were in the neighbourhoods of Rosedale and Forest Hill where Toronto Horticultural Society members and Royal Canadian Yacht Club members lived.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Annual Report of the City Engineer. 1906. 12

⁸⁹The committee decided to have a report from Mr. Rust, and meanwhile Mr. Rust was instructed to recommend the pavement for Bain Avenue, Gerrard Street from the Don to Broadview, Woodlawn, Roxborough, Defoe Street and Bismarck Avenue where the ratepayers have petitioned for it. "Pave Street or City Closes It" The Toronto Daily Star. 1 Oct. 1904,

Such competing companies as the Toronto Paving and Constructing Company denounced bitulithic before the Board of Works. The words of company representative Mr. Pearson, recorded in *The Toronto Daily Star* highlights the local suspicion of 'Yankee' gimmickry relating to the quality and marketing of the new product.

This is fake pavement compared with an asphalt pavement. The company promoting it is an offshoot of a Yankee concern that has a pull fund to induce aldermen to vote for their pavement. It cannot possibly stand the wear. The city is charged \$2.20 per yard for the pavement, and it only costs the company \$1.20 per yard. A clear profit of \$1 is made on every yard of the pavement." ... At the conclusion of this meeting, Mr. Rust, the City Engineer's recommendation favouring the bitulithic pavement was adopted, with Aldermen. Woods, Obel and Sheppard voting against it.⁹⁰

Mr. Rust, an early convert to bitulithic who in later years was MacKendrick's business partner, proposed that the city reduce the cost of laying this form of cement by buying an asphalt plant that could produce bitulithic as well as other forms of asphalt. Mr. F. G. Warren of the Warren-Scharff Co. had offered to supply his patent bitulithic to the city for 75 cents a square yard on the condition that his experts be permitted to oversee the proper handling of material. Rust stated that the purchase of an asphalt plant would enable the city to lay not only asphalt, but also tar macadam and bituminous macadam.⁹¹

In the meantime the pavement war was waged street-by-street house-by-house by representatives of rival companies. *The Toronto Daily Star* of April 15, 1905 reported that four residents of

⁹⁰ "Monopoly Charge Has No Effect, Board of Works Adopts Bitulithic Pavement for Palmerston Avenue, Rival Calls It A Fake" *The Toronto Daily Star*. 14 May 1904

⁹¹ "Engineer Wants Asphalt Plant" *The Toronto Daily Star*. 23 Sept 1904

Kensington Avenue were given permission in Judge Winchester's Court to withdraw their names from a petition asking that a Warren bitulithic pavement be laid on their street. The judge ruled that the agent of the Warren Company had distorted the facts. The article reports the following exchange:

Mr. Curtis, a representative of the Bitulithic Company said that samples of pavement were shown people to let them see the principle upon which it is constructed. The sample shown came from a pavement laid in an American city. "Do you not explain that you do not use the same stone?" asked the judge. "No," answered Mr. Curtis. "Why don't you use the stone you show?" "It would be too expensive to bring it all the way from Massachusetts," said the witness. "We use the best stone that can be purchased in Canada." "Can you not get granite in Canada?" asked Mr. Drayton. "Yes, but it is too expensive. It costs about \$3, while ours costs \$1.30. We find the stone we use the best for our work." "This company is only starting business here," said Mr. H. M. Mowat, the company's counsel, "so that you cannot expect them to have samples from Toronto pavements." "You should explain that to the rate-payers," said Judge Winchester. Mr. Drayton produced a City Engineer's plans of the repairs to be done to a bitulithic pavement in an American city and pictures purporting to show men scraping the pavement off their boots. A piece of the pavement has been laid in Palmerston Avenue for a year now, and, according to report, is proving satisfactory: The decision of the judge did not altogether please the City clerk, Mr. Littlejohn. "It will result in our having no end of applications for withdrawals," he said.⁹²

By the following month the fight over the introduction of bitulithic was reopened before the Board of Control. All the pavement

⁹² THE WAYS OF AGENTS FOR PAVEMENTS ARE SHOWN UP, Judge Winchester Permits the Withdrawal of Names From Petitions—Ratepayers Are Not Told All That They Should Be and Are Told What They Should Not Be.. *The Toronto Daily Star*.14 April1905)

companies were represented and depositions from interested streets were available.

Controller Shaw's opinion was that ratepayers had been manipulated by bitulithic agents. Moreover, the authority of petitions should be weighed against the danger of a monopoly. He conceded however that approved ratepayer petitioned contracts should proceed.

Mr. H.P. Drayton representing the Barber Asphalt Company called bitulithic "old-time coal tar pavement" and claimed that his clients had been trying for two years to get the Warren people into court where the validity of their patents could be tested.

"I don't see why we should refuse to use a good pavement because it is patented," countered Mayor Urquhart. Controller Ward moved to have the bitulithic paving go ahead on Dunbar Road, Roxborough Avenue west and Bismarck Avenue.⁹³ By the summer of 1905 the Board of Control ruled that that the patented pavement would be allowed where the ratepayers were willing to pay the price. This was a decisive victory for the Warren Company and it was awarded the contracts for paving Gerrard and Charles streets, Roxborough, Bismarck and Hamburg Avenues, and Dunbar Road.

With the advent of vehicular road traffic and the proliferation of streetcar tracks as a feature of city streets older methods of road surfacing proved untenable and it fell to the Works Department to, within certain control measures, allow for the testing of new methods and materials.

⁹³ BATTLE OF THE PAVEMENT COMPANIES IS ON AGAIN, Controllers Seem Inclined to Let Property Owners Have Whatever They Want Even if there is a Patent and a Monopoly on the Stuff. *The Toronto Daily Star* 31 May 1905

MacKendrick was the General Manager of the Warren Bituminous Company, an American company that gained a strong foothold throughout Canada from 1902 through 1940 as a result of their cement patent that produced a highly durable road. The dividends of being the founding Head of the Canadian division of the company must have been considerable. The Annual Report of the City Engineer for 1911 states that 80,520 square yards of bitulithic pavement was laid, a mileage of 5.294. While standard asphalt remained by far the choice of pavement, approximately one third of paving was bitulithic. As MacKendrick boasted in the introduction to one of his books: "I may mention that my bank backs my word and judgement to the tune of between a quarter and a half-million dollars over-draft each season, and they, as you know, have the habit of looking into the innermost recesses of one's make-up ere they loosen to the above tune." ⁹⁴

The pavement wars, the arguments that raged at Works Committee hearings over the practices used by the Warren Bituminous Company to break into the local market, offers a glimpse into the frenzied competition that came with the building of Toronto. It also reveals the high level of initiative and organization of ratepayers, particularly of the more affluent streets during the first decade of the twentieth century in Toronto.

Ratepayers could be readily marshalled when the cause was street improvement. On the other hand, the City Works Department under Chief Engineer Rust was also an impressive machine of well-functioning, accountable and prudent bureaucracy. Then, as now, the tendering of competitive contracts is the lynchpin of an economical and above-board municipal government. The ire that the Warren Bituminous Company inspired was due not only to the fact that they were perceived, through their patent, to contravene the rules of

⁹⁴ The Roadbuilder, *The Destiny of the British Empire and the U.S.A. with an Appendix Who are the Japanese?* London: Covenant Publishing Co. Ltd. 1921. foreword p. xiv

competition but also because the company was an outsider, a large American company that, it was claimed, could dupe consumers and underhandedly cut the local asphalt companies out of their own turf.

W. G. MacKendrick appears again in the pages of *The Toronto Daily Star* in connection to a major municipal scandal twenty years later. In this case he was linked to the city's former Chief Engineer Rust as a partner in a company that they claim has been given the rights to dredge the city harbour and so create the western channel through the Toronto Islands. It was alleged that Rust and MacKendrick sold the sand that they dredged back to the city for its asphalt production; an inappropriate use for the grade of sand in question. This scandal, that eventually cost MacKendrick, or as he is referred to "Col. MacKendrick" after his war service, his seat on the Harbour Commission.⁹⁵ Its conclusion also marks his exit from Toronto affairs. The balance of his life is spent in relative isolation in Chestnut Point where he devoted himself to self-published books that outline the bible prophecy of the imminence of the Apocalypse.

⁹⁵ The Toronto City Council appointed him to the Harbour Commission in 1924, but two years later and inquiry into the Harbour administration by a Royal Commission resulted in dissension and they cancelled his appointment. He then served for two years as representative for Toronto Island on the Parks Committee and for six months was asphalt paving expert for the city of Toronto.

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CHAPTER 6

APOCALYPSE AND THE WALKING STICKS

I CRUSADE

He shortly earned the nickname "Macadam," or is he wasn't around, "Old Macadam." His assertions that the allies were certain to win the war cheered his messmates in those dark days. He knew they had not fought their last war because three prophets in the Bible distinctly foretold the battle of Armageddon was yet to come.

MacKendrick's life took a dramatic turn between 1914 and 1919. The last social notice of his family to appear in *The Toronto Daily Star* states that with his wife he would be on a Mediterranean cruise in February of 1913. Perhaps the trip was in aid of her recovery from illness; unfortunately whatever benefit she derived was short-term for her death took place in the same year. The long-planned-for move to the country was delayed.



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_10728

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A proud member of the British Empire, like the majority of Canadians, William MacKendrick was eager to enlist when the mother country declared war on Germany in 1914. In Toronto flags waved and recruitment banners exhorted action from all men. With their collective roots in the Protestant tradition of crusades the city was swept up in a collective enthusiasm for the gathering cataclysm. Overnight the fight for the improvement of society was thrown overboard for this more dramatically noble cause.⁹⁶ Members of the Toronto Horticultural Society like the Pellats directed their garden parties towards the discussion and support of military matters.



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 4032

City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, 4032 'Casa Loma garden party 1919?'

MacKendrick, had been reared in the Edwardian cult of sport with its values of self-discipline, self-improvement, team spirit, loyalty and allegiance to crown and country. Army life, to such a person, would have appeared to hold the promise of ultimate personal realization. The Royal Canadian Yacht Club with its display of rank and polish

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was a perfect setting for MacKendrick's army-command rehearsal as he transferred his colossal energy and sense of purpose from the building of roads to the war effort. A platoon commander with the Royal Canadian Yacht Club Rifle Association, he drilled his two youngest sons nightly to set a good example for the younger men of the Association, of whom more than 450 enlisted. His eldest was drilling with his University of Toronto classmates.⁹⁷



WWI recruits drill
U of T campus 1914

#751C

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, fl.244, R0751C

City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, 751C 'WWI recruits drill U of T campus 1914'

But how could MacKendrick at the advanced age of 50 be appointed to the level of command that he felt was his due? The Canadian army was already over-staffed with officers. Such Toronto entrepreneurs such as Pellat and Dinnick used their own purses to create regiments and so receive officer commissions. As with all Canadian troops at the outset of the war, these regiments were ultimately under the command of the British army. MacKendrick hadn't the means or perhaps the desire to form a regiment. He offered himself as an officer to the Canadian War Office and was promptly turned down.

⁹⁷ Esau, Don, "Lieutenant Colonel William Gordon "The Roadbuilder". MacKendrick, D.S.O." *UBIQUE Journal of the Canadian Military Engineers*, September 1997.42

Undeterred, he left with his family for London in 1915 (with the exception of the eldest son Gordon who was in training) and presented himself at the British War Office. His brother Harry, a country doctor from Galt had been accepted into the Highland Infantry of the Royal Army Medical Corps and had served at Mons the year before.⁹⁸ By showing evidence of his road construction record Will MacKendrick was, by the end of 1915, a captain with the Canadian Corps, building roads in Flanders.

Paving the infamously muddy ground of Toronto, as it turned out had been an excellent training for road construction in the muck of the Western Front. Roads were the army's vital arteries, making possible the movement of armaments, troops and supplies in and out of the lines. MacKendrick's mastery of road construction with the Canadian Corps where he was first assigned was recognized with a promotion to Director of Roads for the British Fifth Army on the Somme. To carry out his work he was given 12,400 men, hundreds of trucks and wagons and 64 steam-rollers⁹⁹

The second battle of Ypres on April 24th was another defence effort that in the end, despite enormous losses saw the Canadians hold the line. Historians Desmond Morton and J.L. Granatstein have written of the yearning for a symbol of moral victory to prevail over the slaughter and destruction of Ypres.

Canadians would come to curse the Ypres salient and the battered ruins it now surrounded. Thousands more would

⁹⁸ Gordon MacKendrick interview 2004

⁹⁹ Esau: MacKendrick's record on roads for the Canadian Corps suddenly catapulted him into the job of Director of

roads for the British fifth Army on the Somme. He inherited four hundred and fifty miles of army roads, mostly broken down with the heavy non-stop traffic of a year's incessant fighting, and by rain, snow, and frost. The Fifth Army... pinned the blue and red tabs of a lieutenant-colonel on him and gave him more than 12,400 men, 250 lorries, 150 general service wagons, 64 steam-rollers, and other equipment. 43

fight and die for muddy fields that their generals should cheerfully have abandoned. But in April 1915, Canadians wanted to be proud of their sacrifice ...and of the terse words in the British official communiqué: “The Canadians had many casualties but their gallantry and determination undoubtedly saved the situation.”¹⁰⁰

The Canadian Corps was formed when the 2nd Canadian Division joined the 1st in September 1915. MacKendrick joined the Corps at the Front in the section between Ploegsteert Wood and St. Eloi.¹⁰¹ Incessant mortar bombardment liquefied the usually muddy farmers’ fields. Soldiers were constantly involved in keeping trenches structurally secure and moderately dry. Once “over the top” they had to brave not only shrapnel and negotiate the land mine craters but also be wary of quicksand-like mud holes. The movement of men, ammunition and supplies depended on a stable road surface.

Into this chaotic environment entered W.G. MacKendrick, a man whose skills in rapid road construction on mud surface had been honed at the height of Toronto’s expansion. According to his grand-nephew his “take-charge” attitude must have contrasted with the dissipated, upper class British officers who would never had had occasion to be near much less direct municipal infrastructure projects.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Desmond Morton and J.L. Granatstein. *Marching to Armageddon Canadians and the Great War 1914-1919*. Toronto: Lester&Operpen Dennys Publishers. 1989. 63

¹⁰¹ Esau, Don

¹⁰² “The reason Uncle Will was successful in building roads on the front was that the fellow looking after roads was a member of the upper class. Because there’s no way Uncle Will could have laid forty times the amount of gravel. But Uncle Will awarded the Distinguished Service Order and got the MID—the French legion of honour---you apply for it but they don’t give it out readily to foreigners.” Gordon MacKendrick, Interview 2004

For the MacKendrick family, as for the nation as a whole, the Battle of the Somme in the fall of 1916 brought death along with glory. On October 18, a small item appeared in *The Toronto Daily Star*:

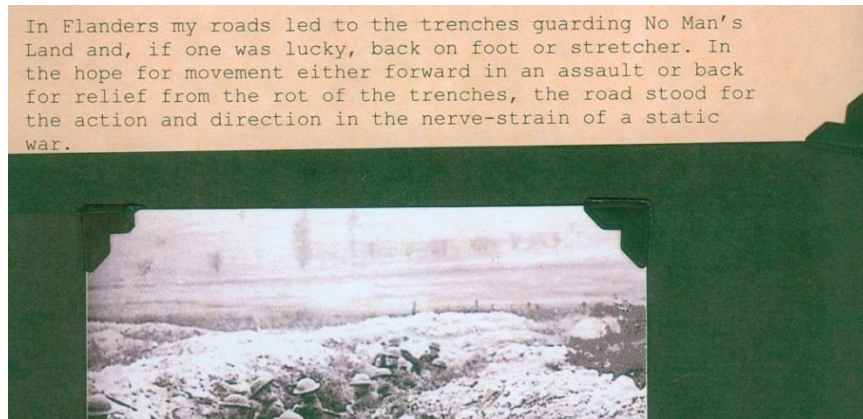
Lieut. Gordon A. MacKendrick was killed while the Canadians were in action Sunday, October 8... Lieut. MacKendrick, who was 22 years old, became attached to the 81st Battalion about a year ago. He went overseas in April, and was transferred to another unit before going to France. Lieut. MacKendrick has been in the trenches only a few days. He was a student at Trinity College School, Port Hope, before going overseas. His father, Major W. G. MacKendrick, is now in France with the Canadian Engineers and engaged in road building. Only recently has he seen his son.

Through the summer of that year there had been a massive build-up of men and munitions on the Western Front. The Canadian Corps, known as excellent shock troops, captured the village of Courcellette during an offensive that began on September. ¹⁵ A new war machine, a primitive version of the tank, was introduced by the Allies during this battle. This cumbersome behemoth had more shock and awe than combat value. It could not, for example, relieve the constant barrage suffered by road-construction crews. The condition of the road was of pivotal importance, not only to bring the heavy new machine to the Front but also to keep a constant supply of men, ammunition and supplies in the trenches and to move the dead and injured back to camp.¹⁰³

Within the vaults of the Oakville Galleries are two walking sticks. For many years they remained, unidentified and un-registered. In the

¹⁰³ Years later, Will Mackendrick's niece Joan Hyde remembered the long-lasting effect of the constant shelling on her uncle. "One day I cut my hand on a broken window while staying at Chestnut Point. At the sight of blood from my open cut my uncle turned pale and walked away quickly. He had returned from the Front with heart palpitations—in those days it was interpreted as a sign of imminent heart failure." Interview 2004

summer of 2002 I came across these artefacts and wondered at the engraved inscription on the spent bullet cartridge that adorned them. It reads: 'Made From Cloth Hall Front Door Ypres/ W.C. MacKendrick Roads/ Presented To_____.' On contacting his



niece, Beverley Campbell, one of the few surviving members of his direct family, I was offered a published article. Military historian Don Esau shares the story of the walking sticks as a curious side story of Canadians in the Great War.

According to Esau, a set of shell splintered doors of the main tower of the Cloth Hall in Ypres was stolen by a Canadian Sergeant under MacKendrick's command. The Sergeant kept the doors in the stone-yard that he managed for road construction. From a piece of this door he made a walking stick with a brass ferrule fashioned from a German shell case, and presented it to MacKendrick. When the sergeant was ordered to the Somme front, he gave MacKendrick the remnants of the doors to make riding crops and canes. The latter presented one of these to the army commander who was proudly sporting it a week later when the King visited. The commander suggested MacKendrick make one for the King and a cane with its ferrule inscribed *To His Majesty our King. Made from Cloth Hall front door, Ypres, by Roads* was duly presented. Ten days later he was called to the commander's office and given an autographed photo and a note of appreciation from the King. For MacKendrick this

exchange was freighted with a significance that surpassed common loyalty to the crown.



A high-ranking officer who had little patience with military hierarchy, years before MacKendrick had nevertheless acquired a set of religious beliefs that made him view the military and political leaders of the Britain and the United States with particular reverence. As a convert to British Israelism, a Christian fundamentalist sect, he believed that the war was a sign of the imminent end of time and the leaders of the Commonwealth held the destiny of mankind in their hands.

With my steam shovels and cement mixers I work on the layers that have accumulated over millions of years. Over the beds of gravel my crews spread and smooth rivers of pavement creating a new kind of geology, the bedrock of the motorized city.

In Flanders I see the earth turned over—its insides displayed on its surface. Busted bits of machines, humans, animals and buildings soon disappear in the mud. This underground layer of destruction is only the first of such for other global battles will be fought after this one.



The Apocalypse, the King and the Walking Stick, 2008. Installation element, fragment view of MacKendrick's scrapbook composed of his writings, photographs and collection of autographed portraits. MacKendrick's words are complemented by the author's speaking in the voice of the subject.

The central appeal of this fundamentalist cult for MacKendrick was that the Bible offered, albeit in obscure, riddle-like expression, an accurate prediction of the future. The past and the future were measured by a series of divine dispensations. The most recent dispensation had ended with the crucifixion; the next would begin with the rapture. The rapture would start the end time clock ticking and would be followed in quick order by the coming of the Antichrist, tribulation, Armageddon, millennium, Satan's comeback and final defeat, resurrection and the Last Judgement.

Beyond this reassuringly concrete schedule, the sect affirmed that British and the American nations were formed and led by descendants of God's chosen people. MacKendrick's walking sticks were tokens of his brief exchanges or correspondence with the men he most admired as leaders of this group.¹⁰⁴ Based on his reading of

¹⁰⁴ MacKendrick's walking sticks belong to the odd genre of artefact the "trench souvenir." Soldiers to pass the time in trenches or during convalescence would recycle copper shell cartridges by crafting many forms of objects.

the bible, the Old Testament patriarch Jacob had foretold the rise of the British Empire and the United States as “God’s servant nations.” His Majesty George V by extension was “the covenant seed of God.”¹⁰⁵ Accordingly, MacKendrick and fellow believers looked upon the monarch as the biblically promised leader of the Christian world.

On a purely secular level, the custom of presenting sticks was a mark of individual esteem and admiration. Victorian walking sticks were part of the attire of the elegantly dressed gentleman, who would change a cane as often as they changed their clothes for different events.

In a newsreel of King George touring the Front in 1917, the monarch brandishes a walking stick, he pokes at captured armaments, war trophies in a French village with his stick and he leans on it in the attitude of a country squire. Does the king, carry the walking stick gifted to him by MacKendrick the same year? ‘The Roadbuilder’ offered the same tribute to Sir Hubert Gough, Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, and Lord Milner, with similar results. The number of autographed portraits he received in return amounted to seventy-nine.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ The theme of *God’s Commonwealth-British and American* was that the patriarch Jacob foretold on this deathbed the rise of British Empire and the United States of America, as God’s servant nations. King David of Israel and his descendants were to rule over Israel afar (Palestine) and Israel in the Isles (the United Kingdom). His Majesty George V, by the Grace of God, King of Israel in the Isles and the Commonwealth of the British Nations, was of the covenant seed of David.



Wall scale projection of 1917 newsreel, courtesy British War Museum. From 2008 installation in Oakville Galleries, Gairloch Gardens, *The Apocalypse, the King and the Walking Stick*. A panel posed the question: *Does the king (far left) carry the walking stick given to him that year by MacKendrick?*

It was this mixture of biblical prophecy, colonial one-upmanship and cultural anxiety that inspired his presentation of a symbol of aristocratic leisure and military authority to the man who would save the modern world in its conflict with the armies of the devil. *The Apocalypse, the King and the Walking Stick*, a 2008 Oakville Galleries installation was designed for visitors to vicariously participate in MacKendrick's brooding on the biblical meaning of the war.





The Apocalypse, the King and the Walking Stick, 2008. Installation view with walking stick and scrapbook composed of MacKendrick's writings, photographs and collection of autographed portraits. MacKendrick's words are complemented by the author' speaking in the voice of the subject. Within the drawer is a list of contents for the scrapbook identifying them as fictional or authentic.

The installation also took visitors back to the tradition of the war museum as a depository of portraits, uniforms, medals and war trophies—presenting history as something created by the actions of great men. While nowadays the Canadian War Museum and the official war sites link public memory to the magnitude of loss measured in fields of crosses, looming memorials and recreations of life in the trenches, MacKendrick's mind was caught in a pre-war time warp and the promise of an empire that was already on the wane.



Cloth Hall Tower, Ipres ca.1918, Archives of Ontario. To see image source click [Here](#)

As a symbol however the Cloth Hall transcends MacKendrick's personal convictions and has an important place in military history. The site looms large in the first documentary press coverage of the Canadian presence at the Front. Max Aitken, the Canadian-born press baron and British politician, set up a London office to record the story of Canada at war through first-hand reports from the field. While the British barred reporters from the Front, Aitken and his staff had special dispensation as creators of Canada's first official war records. His organisation sponsored writers, photographers, painters and some of the first documentary filmmakers.

At the conclusion of the War the British government suggested that the Hall be left in its ruined state to stand as a Memorial. In the end, it was reconstructed and now houses a museum of the First World War. The subject of numerous documentary and underground photos (cameras were not permitted on the Front) the Cloth Hall became an icon of Canadians' enduring and tenacious defence of Ypres and its environs.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Groom, Winston. *A storm in Flanders, The Ypres Salient, 1914-1918: Tragedy and Triumph on the Western Front*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press. 2002. 138



W. G. MacKendrick, seated far left, 13 October 1918, Merville, France, collection Gordon MacKendrick

MacKendrick took part in the post-war reconstruction. He was twice awarded the Distinguished Service Order and was made member of the French Legion of Honour. He returned to Toronto with these and other citations for his outstanding performance. But there was much that he had to puzzle out from his military experience. He retired to Chestnut Point to mull over his experience of the war as this resonated with the message of the Bible.

II POST-WAR PROPHECY

Like many of his contemporaries Will MacKendrick was pre-occupied with time. Time as it related to efficiencies of labour and transport of materials in road building. Time in relation to opportunity: he rapidly recognised the moment in which to deploy

his management, marketing and construction skills for profit. Time, ultimately, in a historical and religious sense, as he sought to see the future through the pages of the Bible.

MacKendrick was born into a stolid, undemonstrative Scots Presbyterian family. Religious devotion was restrained and kept to a minimum. It was as an adult that he was converted to British Israelism, one of the millennial cults that proliferated during the second half of the 19th century in North America. In the following years his faith grew and, by his own admission, he was even in the thick of war eager to spread British Israelite view of the conflict.

I remember going into our mess late one morning when the only occupant was our senior padre, a charming Englishman and fine preacher (now a real live Bishop with gaiters in South Africa). He was shaking his head, and looking very glum as he perused the Times report of our last week's shipping sinkages. "Many ships gone last week, Padre?" I asked. "I am afraid the Hun will beat us at the rate they're re sinking our ships," he replied. Then I quoted: "No weapon that is formed against thee (Israel) shall prosper"; but the Padre being one of those knowledgeable, higher-critic chaps from Oxford, who, together with the German Jew higher critics, have spiritualised¹⁰⁸ away all God's enduring promises from "the latter" and other days, naturally, could not see my cheerful outlook for a minute, and admitted that he could not read my "stuff," meaning a book of Marr Murray's on British-Israelism that I had loaned him (hoping to have an argument on the facts contained there-in), but he ducked the issue by not reading it, alas! My progenitors, when passing out tempers cut mine a trifle short (the way I cut my hair), and I remember we finished the session by my remarking that if I knew as damn little about road building as he did about prophecy and the Bible generally, I'd quit my road job and sign on with the cavalry (who at the time were

¹⁰⁸ MacKendrick uses the term "to spiritualise" in reference to the British Israelite reliance on interpreting the Bible allegorically

mostly eating their heads off in the back areas and had been for years. In language more forceful than polite I had told my parson's mess-mates that the Church of England speaking generally, was as dead as the busted city of Ypres, and that she would continue so until her archbishops, bishops and clergy realized what Jesus meant when he said (Mat.xxi.43), "The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you (Jews), and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof..."¹⁰⁹



Many others whose lives were upended by the Great War searched for a way to understand it as a link within the cause and effect chain of history. As Eugene Weber pointed out in his Massey lecture on Millenarianism, the roots of Christian fundamentalism lie in the search for how the past and present are connected in a way that makes sense.

Nostalgia for a largely un-experienced past outran the benefits of the present. Things were not what they used to be, the world was not as it used to be; too rapid change made consciousness and self-consciousness more acute, and provoked and dramatized self-criticism, self-doubt, anxiety

¹⁰⁹ The Destiny of the British Empire and the U.S.A. p. 49

and guilt. Public inquiries, inspections, examinations, surveys, and statistics all characteristics of the age, confirmed the degeneration of the race. Print, which was more available than ever, published decadence and made it fashionable. The century's approaching end made it inescapable."¹¹⁰

MacKendrick's prophesising encompassed several activities. Rejected by publishers, in 1921 he printed the first two of four self-published books.¹¹¹ *The Destiny of Britain and the United States* and *The Destiny of America which contained an appendix Who are the Japanese?* According to MacKendrick the first of these sold more than twenty thousand copies and went through four editions.

To further spread the message he was regularly a guest speaker in the pulpits of Toronto churches. But perhaps the greatest circulation of his ideas came in the form of the comprehensive publication of these, including the printing of a large lineage chart that described the descent of the British monarch from David, in the pages of *The Toronto Daily Star*.¹¹²

Lastly, MacKendrick hoped to most directly alter the course of the new world order through influencing its leaders. In November 1921, few weeks before the Washington Naval Disarmament Conference¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Weber, Eugene, *Apocalypses, Prophecies, Cults and Millennial Beliefs through the Ages*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1999, p. 18, p. 31,

¹¹¹ MacKendrick's other publications, as listed by Don Esau are: *The Freedom of the Seas-God's Plan* (date?), *Jews Not Israelites According to Scripture*, pamphlet (1931), *God's Economic Plan* (1932), *God's Commonwealth-British and American*, (date?), *This is Armageddon* (1942).

¹¹² According to Don Esau a chart showing the lineage from David down to the Prince of Wales was also found in several of his books.

¹¹³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington_Naval_Conference. Web. August 16, 2009

he sent more than twelve hundred complimentary copies to congressmen, senators, cabinet ministers, ambassadors and representatives of the nations meeting there.

The books that foretold the end of world were written in the of the second floor study of MacKendrick's estate, Chestnut Point. This is where he and his fellow British Israelites such as the artist Oliver Hezzelwood regularly met between 1922 until the 1950s. Upon realising in 1936 that it was not to be the appointed year, they returned to the Bible to pin point, through a British Israelite reading, the year that the series of end-of-time cataclysms would be set in motion. This was repeated as one predicted date after another passed. Eventually, the members of the group either died or drifted away and MacKendrick was left alone to keep the faith.

He died in the study where he was found by his third wife, slumped over his desk on September 22, 1959. The study, with its recessed shelves and fireplace is now used as the Oakville Galleries's curatorial office and so continues to be a place of writing and publication. Through the years artists have been invited to exploit the intimate, sensorial as well as archetypal and culturally specific meanings of the house and garden. Each has responded and woven into site-specific work an appreciation of the evocative power of the location.

MacKendrick's retirement home was also a family compound where he waited for the last chapters of history to unfold. And, in a way, the estate continues to operate as a sort of terminus. Chestnut Point, then as now, is a consciously abstract space. While now it is an art gallery, crucible of conceptual art projects; then it was MacKendrick's final retreat—an escape from the rapid urban rhythms and global political sphere that he had once embraced as city builder and servant of the British Empire.

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CONCLUSION

William James and William MacKendrick were born in the 1860s within two years of each other. Both grew up in the countryside, a fact that made them at home in the outdoors and sensitive to the landscape. Both were talented interpreters of the profound changes that came with Toronto's urbanization. They understood that, in its essence, modern life pivoted around mobility and time. In different ways they searched for evidence of a past that transcended this new reality.

Working under deadline, James trained his camera on scenes that reflected Torontonians' interests. The state of the roads, the beauty of the countryside and the new parks are among his most common subjects. The photos, with their unerring sense of composition, timing and human interest, serve as pictorial collective memory of the city's origins. One hundred years ago they helped city residents to picture and so see themselves as part of the new civic outdoor spaces—from the shore and waters of Island Park to the Rosedale Ravine to High Park and at its farthest reaches—the scenic Lakeshore Road and village of Oakville.

James revealed Toronto as a city whose confident growth was matched by the stresses of industrialization, immigration and the growing gap between rich and poor. His photographs commonly feature the road as a dominant compositional element. Roads were portals out of the city and postcards offered the new horizons for picnicking, boating or motoring. As a counterpoint to downtown sights, his images of rural scenes on the road to Oakville, along with views of its tidy sidewalks, mature trees and picket fences, promoted this archetypal village as a place from a less complicated time.

MacKendrick's road building and street paving helped to define the Toronto of today. Roads separated or united residential areas from

each other and from the rest of the city. Paving created the car-friendly, hygienic streets and tidy sidewalks that were emblematic of a healthy community. Along with electric radial lines for commuters, the asphalt surfacing of Lakeshore Road hastened suburban settlement in villages whose port-based economies had been long ago bypassed by the large railroads. While MacKendrick's roads provided passage through the new metropolis and out to its environs, James' images convinced citizens that, through those roads, all of the city's landscapes were within their reach.

Since early times cities were visited by pestilence each summer; all those who could spent the season in the country. In the period between the end of the nineteenth century and the outbreak of the First World War, roads and commuter rail lines made it possible to do a daily shuttle between a cottage-style garden-surrounded subdivision and the city centre. While there have been peaks and ebbs, the daily exodus from the city centre to places strictly reserved for residences, has never really stopped.

With population growth in the Golden Triangle, a zone economically intertwined with Toronto, such ex-urbs as Oakville have developed suburbs of their own. Sprawling, poorly planned developments are criticized for engulfing existing communities, eradicating local agriculture, absorbing undue amounts of natural resources, and forcing residents to be entirely reliant on cars.

Today, again at a historic crossroads, Oakville and Toronto are responding to urban sprawl in both reactionary and creative ways. The local resistance to the extension of Oakville's town boundaries is an example of the former. It stemmed from the belief that the town in its early archetypal village form was a requirement for a stable, close-knit community. Through a century of projection of this identity through landscaped parks, heritage architecture conservation and picturesque main-street, Oakville had preserved a counterpoint image to that of the city. The backlash to the annexation of its freshly built outer districts in the late 1990's was based on the equation of conservation with social stability.

In response to the problem of Oakville sprawl, the planned community North Oakville represented a venture into integrative planning following the principles of New Urbanism. Accordingly it called for higher density mixed-use zoning that located commercial areas within walking distance of residences. This was a radical and dangerous course of action in the eyes of many townspeople. Their reaction was rooted in attitudes about what Oakville has been and should continue to be, including where its nucleus rests and its boundaries needed to be firmly marked. The ideal of the park surrounded residential environment and the legacy of the landscaped lakeside estates, remained an unshakeable form of community identity for long-time residents. Ironically, New Urbanism is inspired by the typology—the essential shape of Oakville as a village where commercial and residential buildings are within walking distance of each other. The debates about North Oakville exposed attitudes and market forces that had already existed in that town one hundred years ago.

A city's history can be told through its buildings, parks and neighbourhoods. The popular *Jane's Walk* and *Doors Open* festivals grew from this understanding. Interested Torontonians can also seek out the stories behind their homes and neighbourhoods at The City of Toronto Archives. My own interest in the history of my neighbourhood, like my Toronto-Oakville commute, came full circle. Investigating the life of W.G. MacKendrick I was brought back from Oakville and its built form identity crisis to an interesting urban challenge with equally long precedents at my own doorstep.

The City of Toronto Archives sits at the foot of Casa Loma, Henry Pellat's showplace residence with its commanding view of the city. Casa Loma is now a tourist destination and its gardens are a reminder of their original owner's love of garden show and position as Honorary President of the Toronto Horticultural Society.

Although the name of the subdivision has not survived, north and west of Pellat's former home is the "fine subdivision of Walmer Hill"

its solid 'stockbroker Tudor' houses and tidy gardens impregnable bastions of respectability. These are located on a site that, according to real estate promotion from a century ago, guarantees its residents a healthy separation from the miasma of the city below.



Bathurst St 1907
City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_it2470

#2470

City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, 2470

Hillcrest Public School, at the same elevation, on Bathurst between Davenport and St.Clair streets, continues to have a school garden as in the day that this was promoted by the Toronto Horticultural Society and documented by William James. Through my children's student experience there I know that its plantings continue to die every summer while children are on vacation.



Hillcrest PS Bathurst St 1909

#1710

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_1710

City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, 1710 'Hillcrest PS Bathurst St. 1909'



From Hillcrest School tower 1907

(Bathurst St near St. John's)

#2511

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_172511

City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1244,

Bathurst is the dividing line between the Casa Loma district and what were still orchards, farmer's fields and gap-filled rows of largely owner-built workers' houses. Perhaps it was because the Davenport escarpment made for good photos of carts, carriages, trucks struggling up the steep Bathurst Street, or because the photogenic Wychwood Park and Casa Loma were nearby, or the fact that from the cultivated fields one could see the lay of the city. For whatever reason, the James' collection documents the singular character of the Bracondale-Wychwood area over a century ago.



Wychwood Park 1907?

#1246C

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, f1244_11246c

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, 1246c 'Wychwood Park 1907?'

My house is across the street from Hillcrest Public School on the east-west Helena Avenue. In 1995 as we looked around what would be our home, the real estate agent repeatedly called our attention to the fact that the very modest semi-detached house was located "practically at the gates" of the prestigious Wychwood Park

This private, landscaped artist colony created in the 1880's by Marmaduke Mathews is one of the few places where Taddle Creek, one among a network of underground streams that empty into the lake, can still be seen. Just north of its stone gates are five long brick buildings. These were formerly streetcar maintenance sheds or, "car barns" that at one time were the backdrop for a shinny rink caught in

a 1915 photograph in the James collection. The earliest of the barns was built in 1913 during the period when the city had reluctantly entered into public transit to service such newly annexed city districts as ours.



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1231, f1231_it0448

In 1996, when it was still the property of the TTC, the car barns site was about to be sold to developers. Residents of the area who preferred to see it as a park began to organize around this vision. Among the many who were convinced of the importance of the barns to city history was Councillor Joe Mihevic who asked for a Heritage Study to be carried out. After heritage designation was secured, the TTC, unwilling to pay for the necessary renovations to the barns, transferred ownership to the City of Toronto. The Planning Department proposed three plans for mixed residential and park development in 2000. All involved razing the bars. Fortunately, after an environmental assessment and architectural inspection outlined how the barns and site were salvageable, the city was finally ready to entertain the prospect of the car barns and site as a park. But how

was the funding for the necessary preparation of the site and adaptation of the barns to be found?¹¹⁴

In the spring of 2001 local Councillor Joe Mihevc recommended pushing ahead a working vision of the park by enlisting the aid of Artscape, a local non-profit organization with a strong track-record of creating successful live-work artist studios/cultural hubs in downtown neighbourhoods by adapting abandoned buildings.¹¹⁵ It was during Artscape's subsequent community consultation, an element of their feasibility study, that the battle lines became firmly drawn.

A debate that had been percolating reached a rolling boil. Rival visions of what constituted a proper city park for this community turned neighbour against neighbour; opposing coalitions were formed and websites competed for supporters.

At the opposite ends of the spectrum of park plans embraced by area residents, one focused on retaining and retrofitting the car barns the other eliminating them altogether for maximum green space. The first proposed the idea of a park that served the city through such facilities as artists' studios, a greenhouse and kitchen and community group and rental spaces along with a playground and landscaped areas. Critical to this proposal was its goal to spark citizen engagement in the green movement and through its values to break through socio-economic and cultural barriers between neighbours.

The alternate version of a park advocated for the typical amenities to a residential zone in the form of playing fields, park equipment and landscaping. While the barns-centric park idea embraced the heterogeneous people and forces of the city, the more traditional park concept celebrated the power of nature to buffer residents from direct contact with the street. Both visions revolved around the ideal

¹¹⁴ *Artscape DIY Creative Placemaking, Case Studies, Wychwood Barns*
<http://www.artscapediy.org/Case-Studies/Artscape-Wychwood-Barns.aspx#situation> Web 30 May 2013.

¹¹⁵ *Artscape DIY Creative Placemaking, Case Studies, Wychwood Barns*
<http://www.artscapediy.org/Case-Studies/Artscape-Wychwood-Barns.aspx#situation> Web 30 May 2013.

of conservation, and specifically the urgent need to re-connect with nature and to preserve local heritage. But how was 'nature' to be introduced in the most socially relevant way? And, what version of local heritage—public transit industrial or park-setting residential—should predominate?

In the one camp, the members of 'True Patriot Love' rallied behind the more familiar version of a park. James' views of the Wychwood Park homes in their landscaped setting embodied the ideal of a garden-surrounded house. The group advocated for playing fields, playground areas and picnic tables as the ideal amenity for the neighbourhood.

To those who wanted an exclusively landscaped park, Artscape's leadership role added insult to the injury. They condemned the mixed-use vision of the park as a conspiracy for artists to shoe-horn themselves where they were not wanted. The Jane Jacobs oriented City of Toronto Plan; a document that places great stock on parks as instruments of community development was dismissed as irrelevant to the site. Unfortunately for this group, the research pointed to the need to retain and use the barns. In an era of fiscal cut-backs, the architecturally distinct, year-round and flexible rental space was a requisite life-support system for a park.

A proposal for the use of one or two of the barns as a "Green Barn" was elaborated by a steering committee consisting of one representative each from The Stop Community Food Centre, Food Share Toronto, an artist gardener, a Toronto Public Health Department Dietician and two local residents Jody Berland and Bob Hanke. The group's "Dream of a Green Barn" outlined wide-ranging goals.

To provide a public space for spontaneous enjoyment and planned activities where people of diverse backgrounds can socialize, eat, meet their neighbour, and learn about food and nutrition, environmentally friendly practices, social justice and the arts; To allow local people from diverse backgrounds to grow plants from their homelands; To increase the availability of fresh, healthy and safe food for the community; To act as a showcase for innovative and environmentally-friendly growing, building and energy production methods; To provide a place for local school and others to learn about

horticulture and the inter-connectedness between food, water, energy and the environment; To provide a catalyst for neighbourhood and community development.¹¹⁶

This vision, popular prior to the committee's work, became the rallying point for a group 'Friends of the Park' organized in 2002 to counter the implacable opposition to Artscape moving into the neighbourhood. 'Friends', which counted me as a member, wanted the park to be a place of inclusion, dialogue and learning '... Our park can truly reflect our community, with its love of plants and green space, its commitment to lasting green values, and its willingness to listen and learn.' Wanting urgently define themselves in contradistinction to the rival group 'Friends' brought like-minded individuals together and created important momentum for the vision of the park as a creative hub.

Both visions held to the need for residents to connect with nature and to preserve local heritage. But how was 'nature' to be introduced in the most socially relevant way? And, what version of local architectural heritage—public transit industrial or landscaped Victorian artists' colony—should dominate?

The word "park" had gathered a heavy freight of meanings in the past century. This fact would have been keenly understood by members of the 1913 Toronto Horticultural Society because they participated in generating its local symbolic value. Along with the developers who marketed the earliest local residential subdivisions, they knew that the idea of a park was associated with an enclosure that kept the purity of nature and good society in and the undesirable elements of city life out. By extension, they pushed the image of the garden-focused home as the ideal domestic environment and incubator of a model citizenry.

¹¹⁶ "Signs of a new park" by Jody Berland and Bob Hanke, from *Public:Art/Culture/Ideas26* (2002), page 72-99. (PDF file). <http://www.visiblecity.ca/index.php/spaces/32-artscape-wychwood-barns>. Web 31 May 2013.

It was the image of the leisure zones where all classes gathered to enjoy luxurious lawns, dense plantings, and vista-offering winding streets that was already stamped in the popular imagination of pre-First World War Toronto as 'the park'. Local examples of blended private residential and public recreational zones as the Island Park and Rosedale ravine drives, from the evidence of their popularity as postcard subjects, were the most admired districts. Beyond serving as ideal stages for picnics, hikes, and boating excursions, they fueled a widespread desire for a house set in natural surroundings. As speculators bought up tracts in the most picturesque zones for future luxury housing developments, the city was pressured by the Civic Guild and leading citizens to put up the funds for public parks. A benefit of the close and positive association between public park and private development, investment in both forms of park went forward in lockstep. The most recent episode of this valuing of a residential area through it being intensively used and identified as a place of fashionable recreation is the Artscape Wychwood Barns. Homes in the area have significantly increased in value since the hub opened, evidence that the definition of park with its corresponding property stakes has shifted in Toronto in recent times.



In Toronto as it was taking shape in the decades before the First World War, the blended private residential and public recreational form of park fueled the desire for a residence in natural surroundings. This was most notable in the Island Park and along the lakeshore in Lorne Park. As land speculators bought up tracts in the most picturesque zones the city was pressured by the Civic Guild and leading citizens to put up the funds for public parks. Investment in both forms of park went forward in lockstep.

Some private estates evolved into public parks. This was the case with High Park given by John Howard for the city to use as a park after his death. In his later years he envisioned and laid the groundwork for a recreated forest environment with winding pathways and roads. The Olmstead-trained landscape architect Todd created the final design and the park opened in 1890. High Park,

perhaps the most popular subject of Toronto postcards of the period was the epitome of late Victorian faith in the power of nature, in its idealized design, to effectively release the tension of life in the congested city.

When the dust had cleared in the fight over the Wychwood barns the vision that prevailed can be seen as a kind of Noah's Arc of all of the impulses, crusades and desires that marked the history of social reform and park development in our city. However, while the Toronto Horticultural Society would have approved of the "good works" orientation of the Green Barn, their motives and means differed radically. Instead of a new form of meeting ground that brings together a cross-section of the population, the Society's paramount concern was with enhancing the home-life of the lower classes through inspiring them to garden and by doing so developing property pride, responsibility to the upkeep of the street and ultimately, the welfare of the city. Instead of organizing farmers' markets to motivate middle class citizens to connect with local agriculture, the society distributed information on plants and flowers '...for the garden, greenhouse, conservatory and dwelling'. Instead of cooking workshops and market gardening education for food bank clients the Society concentrated on plant donations to 'beautify' institutions for the needy. However, the goals of the Society strike an inspirational note in common with the Friends: By these means we aim to educate citizens to grow beautiful flowers, vines, roses, etc. and make Toronto a more desirable city for ourselves and our children after us to live in. However, instead of being idealized through flower gardens or landscaped recreations of a forest, Nature was to be invoked in the Wychwood Barns Park as plantings and activities promoting food system change as essential to contemporary health and wellbeing.

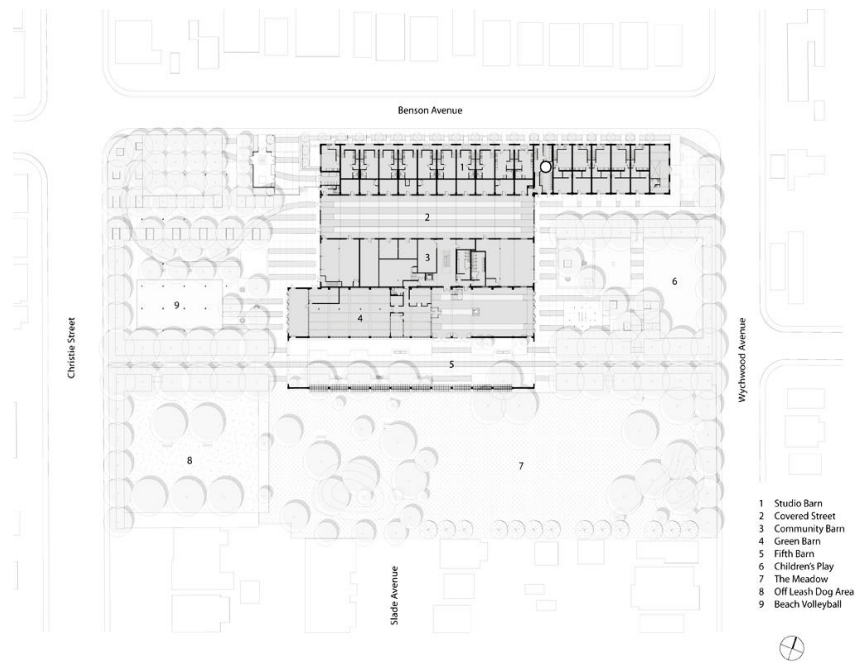
Today instead of the Park Movement and the City Beautiful Movement of a century ago, urban reform flies the banner of 'Creative Cities'. Overturning the assumption that commercial, cultural and residential activities must each be separated from the other, this movement promotes their commingling as essential for the renewal of downtown spaces. Above all it promotes the leading role of culture in a knowledge industry led economy.

A key creative cities strategy is the design of innovation ‘hubs’ where individuals and small groups can develop and launch ventures through collaborations, networks and partnerships. These hubs are the pulse-points of a city where business and cultural forces and products emerge from the interaction between producers and consumers. Equally important is the fact that through distinctive architecture, artisanal and original production and unique settings, the hubs spearhead a neighbourhoods’ “sense of place”. This in turn attracts skilled knowledge economy workers necessary to the financial life of the area.¹¹⁷

The hubs are pedestrian catchment spaces created for lingering, watching and interacting. Each occupies a carefully identified niche within the economic and social eco-system, from which it derives private as well as public revenue. To spawn a life of its own a hub requires a discarded shell, a derelict abandoned building with good heritage ‘bones’ as its body.



¹¹⁷ Ontario Ministry of Culture. *Convergence Centres, Building Capacity for Innovation*. 2009. http://www.artscapediy.org/ArtscapeDIY/MediaLibrary/ArtscapeDIY/Archives/Artscape_Research/Convergence_Centres.pdf. Web 30 May 2013.



In January 2004, based on the final proposal that incorporated the Green Barn, Artscape was given approval for redevelopment of the former streetcar barns. It opened in late fall of 2008 and quickly took its place as one of the province’s flagship urban projects. Recognizing it as an exemplary model of adaptive, sustainable planning the provincial Ministry of Infrastructure offers it on its website as a case study for other communities.¹¹⁸ See the Artscape Wychwood Barns in its completed form [Here](#)

¹¹⁸ Ontario Ministry of Infrastructure, Places to Grow. Web 7 June 2013
https://www.placestogrow.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=390&Itemid=26



On the obstacle-filled route from the initial inspiration to renovate the barns for use as a community resource space to its 2008 opening, many individuals acted as guides. Among them two were especially important in galvanizing the community. One was Cookie Roscoe who in building a pizza oven from the bricks lying in the yard created a hearth and gathering space that heralded the spirit of the new park. Beyond the weekly pizza nights she would, on occasion, take the pizza oven on the road to raise support for this vision. Brick by brick it was transported on her pick-up truck and re-assembled in such locations as Hillcrest Public School where along with the pizza she fed children and parents the dream of the green park.

Cookie Roscoe also laid the groundwork for a farmers' market by coordinating the Food Share 'Good Food Box' program for the neighbourhood. Having inspired us to love our local vegetables and using the front lawn of the church around the corner from the still-under-construction park, she organized a farmers market. When this market moved into The Stop's Green Barn in the Artscape complex, its escalating popularity proved that, in its power to animate and help finance the community programs, it would be a cornerstone of the Wychwood Artscape Barns for years to come.



In the bitterest winter months beginning in the late 1990s the “Lord of the Rink,” as he came to be known to the neighbourhood, would emerge daily from his home beside the streetcar yard and turn his hose on a flat patch of ground. His intention was to re-incarnate the shinny rink depicted in a William James photograph that a neighbour had found in the Archives. Like the pizza oven, the rink was created to signal the opening of a new form of space from what was a vacant field with abandoned industrial buildings.

The rink flushed us out of our houses to collect again and again beside the barns. In the process we began to understand the park as something we were making, not from tangible building materials but from our habitual gatherings. In the memorial that followed the ‘Lord of the Rink’s’ death from cancer last summer his neighbours honoured his contribution to this essential aspect of the creation of our park.



The “Lord of the Rink,” as I had discovered when I met him in 2004 while skating on the rink with my children, was none other than Peter MacKendrick, artist, specialist in architectural restoration, and great grandnephew of William Gordon MacKendrick.

In William James’ and W.G. MacKendrick’s era, postcard and press images helped residents identify with their freshly evolving civic spaces. Today, the desire is for a view of the city as a kaleidoscope of ever-shifting, complex and culturally nuanced realities. Art projects that give glimpses of this prism of meanings complement the traditional city-glorifying static views.¹¹⁹ Reflecting the rise of Toronto as a ‘creative city’ in which cultural services and industry are economic drivers, the portrayal of the city as an idealized space coined through postcards a century ago has now been refracted

¹¹⁹ Among those innovatively employing new technology and social media are projects by the collective [murmur] launched in 2003. See it [Here](#); and, more recently, Adam Bunch’s *Toronto Dreams Project*. See it [Here](#). These initiatives, like *Site Scope*, my 2003-2004 project series for Oakville Galleries, propose that viewers extend a quality of attention usually reserved for listening to music or viewing art to the experience of walking around the city.

through the internet as numerous online private initiatives reveal Toronto in its myriad visible, historical and speculative dimensions.

In this new arena of cultural production such online archival photograph collections as the City of Toronto Archives James Family Fond has proven an important resource for explorations of public space and collective memory. A century after being sold as photojournalism to Toronto dailies, William James images are re-entering the discourse of local politics and planning as they are consulted as evidence of the original fabric of a neighbourhood. A signal example of this was the role they played in my neighbourhood's contradictory yet equally valid visions of what form of park was its proper legacy.

The explosion of blogs on local history highlights Torontonians' desire to see their surroundings through a historical lens. To see one's streets as they were a century ago is to make them more foreign and familiar. Our habit of scouting a location via the web means that we use official maps as only the first of many layers of information about the character of a place. Now in this prolonged period of fiscal restraint when slashed Parks and Recreation Department budgets has created a dearth of official programming, we are in the midst of a citizen-led, image-narrative based approach to the city as a vast and inexhaustible playground.

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