

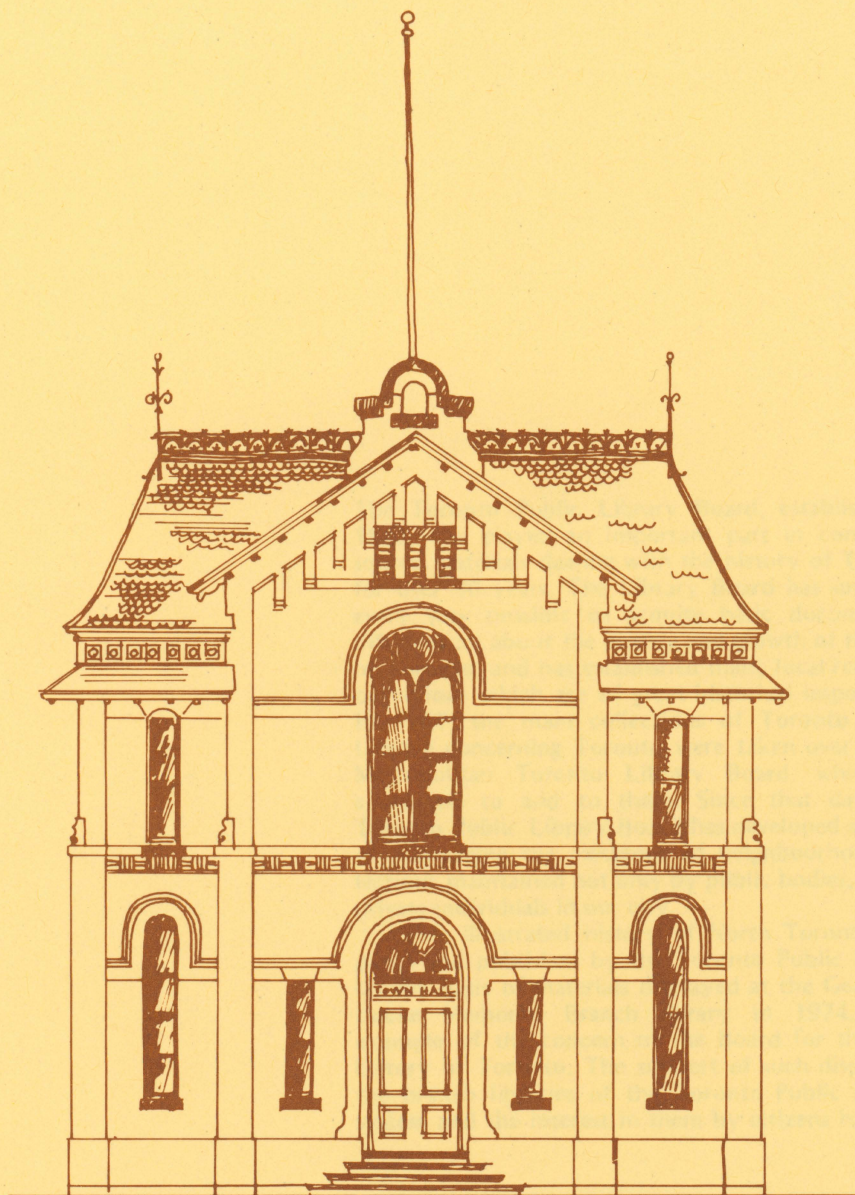


TORONTO  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY  
BOARD  
LOCAL  
HISTORY  
HANDBOOKS

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**NORTH  
TORONTO  
IN  
PICTURES  
1889-1912**





# NORTH TORONTO IN PICTURES 1889-1912

Based on a display at the George H. Locke Memorial Branch, Toronto Public Libraries, to celebrate the Branch's twenty-fifth year in the community, 1949-1974.



## TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

TORONTO, 1974.  
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### OUTSIDE FRONT COVER:

Architect's drawing of east elevation  
of North Toronto Town Hall, 1882

### OUTSIDE BACK COVER:

Architect's drawing (Beck & Eadie) of George H. Locke  
Memorial Branch, Toronto Public Libraries, 1947



## INTRODUCTION

The Toronto Public Library Board, established in 1883, has played an important part in conserving source materials dealing with the history of Toronto for over 90 years. The Library Board has sought in every way possible to acquire basic documentary information about the history and growth of the City of Toronto, and has established many local reference collections which are of great historical importance. In 1967, the main collections of Toronto Public Library concerning Toronto were taken over by the Metropolitan Toronto Library Board, which has continued to add to them. Since that date, the Toronto Public Library Board has developed a policy of publicizing the existence of neighbourhood collections maintained not only by public bodies, but by private individuals in our city.

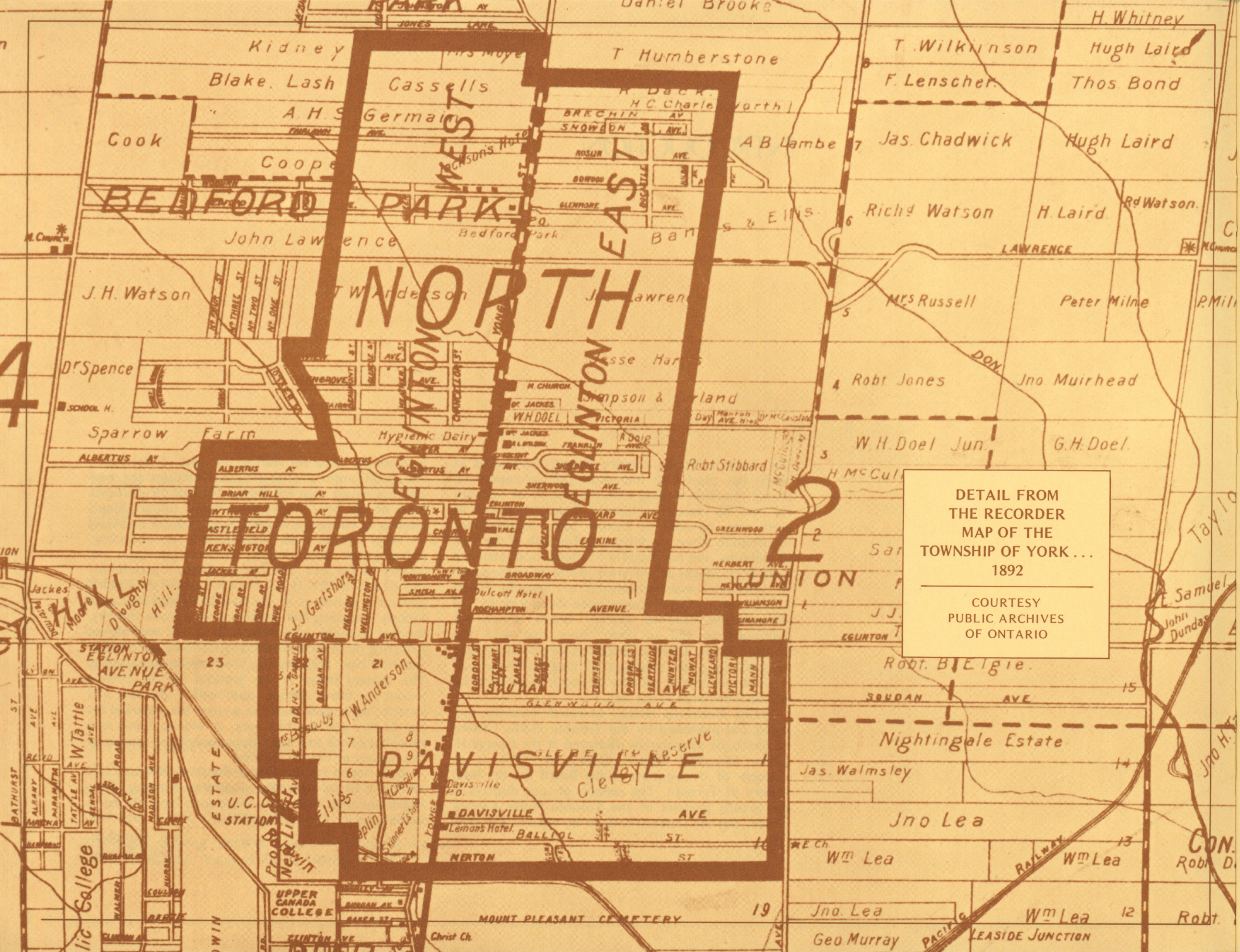
This illustrated history of North Toronto, prepared and published by the Toronto Public Library on the basis of materials displayed at the George H. Locke Memorial Branch library in 1974, is an example of the concern of the Board for the local history of Toronto. The support of such displays in the branch libraries of the Toronto Public Library system and the interest in them by citizens has been

increasingly apparent during the past several years. The publication of this booklet indicates the possibilities which exist for similar local history in other parts of the city. The Toronto Public Library Board intends to encourage in every way possible the work of local groups and organizations in collecting, indexing and disseminating information about the history of Toronto. The Library Board is grateful for the efforts of Miss Helen McNeil, head of the Branch and other members of the staff of George H. Locke Library, including Mrs. Stephanie Hutcheson and Mrs. Barbara Myrvold, who devoted time and attention to gathering pictorial and other materials for the display, and who have prepared this brochure for publication. The Library Board is also grateful for the interest shown by many citizens both within the area and outside, who made available on loan the materials for the display and the brochure, as well as those who provided advice and suggestions concerning sources of the history of North Toronto.

It is hoped by the Board that this brochure will serve as a useful reminder to citizens of today of the important part that many individuals have played in developing the City of Toronto.

H. C. Campbell,  
Chief Librarian





DETAIL FROM  
THE RECORDER  
MAP OF THE  
TOWNSHIP OF YORK ...  
1892

COURTESY  
PUBLIC ARCHIVES  
OF ONTARIO



## A BRIEF HISTORY OF NORTH TORONTO

Barbara Myrvold

On November 22, 1889, the unincorporated villages of Davisville and Eglinton, together with their immediate neighbourhoods, were incorporated into the Village of North Toronto (By-law No. 551, York County Council). Less than a year later, on April 7, 1890, North Toronto was elevated into an incorporated town and its boundaries were extended, by an act of the Provincial Legislature. The town was divided into three wards — Davisville, Eglinton East, and Eglinton West — to be governed by a mayor, a reeve, deputy-reeves and nine councillors, three elected from each ward.

The town was approximately rectangular in outline, two and three-quarter miles from north to south and two and a quarter miles east to west and about four miles square in area. It ran roughly from Merton Street in the south to Glen Echo in the north; and from Bayview Avenue on the east to Avenue Road on the west. It was a geographic entity being separated from Deer Park, the village to the south, by some 200 acres reserved for the Mount Pleasant Cemetery (established 1876) and from York Mills to the North, by the deep ravine leading into Hogg's Hollow. The Town of North Toronto was recorded as having, in 1890, a population of 1,000 and an assessment of \$1,493,120.00. Its boundaries were revised and again extended in 1892 by another act of the Provincial Legislature.



Town status was granted because North Toronto was located on Yonge Street, the main artery linking the city of Toronto to the northern hinterland. Lighting and constant maintenance were needed along this route. Population was expected to increase rapidly and municipal services (sewerage, water-works, road maintenance, etc.) which could only be provided by an incorporated town, would be needed. A piped water system had been started earlier, in 1895. A private company was franchised to operate a steam pumping station at the site of the present water tower on Roselawn Avenue, west of Avenue Road. The water from an artesian well was pumped into a large wooden overhead tank from where it flowed by gravity to Yonge Street, supplying water for homes and for a line of fire hydrants. In 1896, it was discovered that there was enough extra steam in the water works plant to operate a direct current electrical system from a dynamo powered by a pump engine. The franchise owners strung wires from Roselawn over to Yonge Street and a line of sputtering arc lights was installed on the main thoroughfare. By about 1900 an arrangement was made to use surplus power from the Metropolitan Railway for commercial lighting, but domestic power was not then practical. Proper sewers never were installed in the old town. Ditches were dug at the side of the roads but these were insufficient to collect the water in the spring or after heavy rains, reducing even Yonge Street to a muddy quagmire.

All the streets in North Toronto were unpaved, even as late as 1912. Fighting the mud and keeping the roads accessible was a major problem. A crude form of gravelling was used along Yonge Street: large boulders were placed at intervals between Eglinton and Lawrence and workmen broke them down into small pieces and then scattered them. For many years the sidewalks in the town were wooden planks but eventually a paving program was initiated. By annexation, there were twenty-nine miles of concrete sidewalks and five miles of tar walks.

North Toronto's population centred around three nuclei on Yonge Street: Davisville Avenue, Montgomery Avenue and Bedford Park Avenue, all sites of former villages and communities. All three offered similar services: a tavern or hotel, a small group of shops (including a general store and post

office), a church or two, a school, some houses, and a building which housed fire-fighting equipment. Farm lands surrounded these three centres. Davisville and Eglinton had been settled the longest but the growth of the former had been somewhat slower because large tracts of land in it were reserved for church use and remained undeveloped. The centre at Montgomery Avenue, near Eglinton, was the largest. On the north-west corner was the Town Hall, built in 1884 by York Township and sold to the Town of North Toronto in 1891 for \$4,000. This building contained the municipal offices of North Toronto, the police office, the fire station, and in the rear there was a metal shed for the storage of municipal equipment. Rooms were rented to the Masons, who had once owned the land. Across the road stood Oulcott's Hotel, resting on the foundations of Montgomery's Tavern of the 1837 Rebellion fame. Oulcott's was a three storey brick building with extensive driving sheds and stables, the site of many horse auctions. It opened in 1883 but it became a temperance house when "local option" was passed in North Toronto in 1908. Nearby was the Eglinton Public School, the Presbyterian and Anglican Churches, the Orange Hall, and a branch of the Y.M.C.A.

The area north of Lawrence Avenue was the slowest to develop. Bedford Park began to grow at the turn of the century. Two hotels, Nightingale's and the Bedford Park had been built earlier. John Atkinson established a general store there in 1887 and a Post Office was granted in 1891. However the first church, now St. Leonard's, a mission of St. Clement's in Eglinton, was not erected until 1908 and a school was not built until 1910.

All three communities retained their individual identities both for residents and outsiders long after they had been absorbed into North Toronto. The existence of the "Glebe" between Eglinton and Davisville and its late development (by 1893 only three small lots had passed from Church ownership) contributed to the separation of those two communities. Due to the late development of Lawrence Park there were open spaces between Eglinton and Bedford Park. An 1898 Directory still lists inhabitants under the three different places, not under the single town.



Until 1890, North Toronto was largely an agricultural area. Even after that time, employment within the town was limited to only two industries. At Davisville, John Davis and Son ran a pottery, which made hanging baskets, flower pots, sewer pipes, and "all kinds of articles for dairy purposes". Its specialty was a green glazed ware used for rose jars and jardinières. These became very popular all over the United States and Canada. As North Toronto grew, building materials were in such demand that the Davisville and Carlton Brick Manufacturing Company was opened on the north side of Eglinton, west of Yonge, in part of the old river valley that is now Eglinton Park. The Pears family worked the yard for over two decades, producing "brown, red and grey brick, face inside and hard" for most of the homes in North Toronto. The predominant occupation, aside from shops and services, was still agriculture especially garden farms. Farmers could take their produce to the Toronto Poultry and Garden Produce Company on the south side of Eglinton Avenue or downtown to the St. Lawrence Market.

As early as the 1890's large blocks of land in North Toronto were in the hands of developers. Until the 1880's, there were only about half a dozen subdivided areas: the major plans were on Blythwood, registered in 1857 from part of the Jesse Ketchum estate, and on Davisville Avenue, registered in 1868, from part of the farms of the Davis and Riddell families. Both subdivisions ran east between two concessions, Yonge Street and Bayview Avenue. In addition, much of the north-west sector around Eglinton Avenue and Yonge Street, over to Avenue Road and up to Roselawn had been divided into long strips immediately before 1885. However between 1886 and 1890, approximately thirty-five subdivision plans were registered, covering about half of North Toronto's undeveloped lands. The subdivisions at Glengrove Avenue and at Bedford Park were developed at this time.

A second land boom exploded in North Toronto in the years between 1907 and the first World War. Plans were registered for almost all the remaining land within its borders.

The Dovercourt Land Building and Savings Company Limited, headed by Wilfred S. Dinnick and his brother Augustus George Cuthbert, developed two

of the more interesting subdivisions in the town during this period. The company held the 500 acre "Lawrence Park Estates" near Yonge Street and Lawrence Avenue and "Glebe Manor" on the last of the old clergy reserves in Davisville. The latter, a tract bounded by Yonge, Mount Pleasant, Manor Road and Belsize Drive, was purchased from the Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto for \$500,000 in 1912. Both properties were carefully planned to be "high-class suburban sites" – but available at prices cheaper than comparable neighbourhoods in the city proper. They were designed by Walter S. Brooke, an English engineer with professional experience in Brighton and Richmond. The layouts, suited to the landscape, are the only attempts in the town to break away from the grid street pattern. It was developments like these, more than anything else, which changed North Toronto from a small Yonge Street agricultural town into a middle class suburb of Toronto.

After 1905, North Toronto's growth accelerated. Between 1900 and 1906 the population had only increased to 2,580 but for the next four years the annual increase was five hundred. Yonge Street became solidly lined with buildings from Merton Street to Bedford Park, with undeveloped stretches at the Glengrove and Lawrence Park estates.

North Toronto became increasingly a dormitory community; its inhabitants travelled to Toronto for work and for social life. The lives of these new residents focused, not on the Town of North Toronto, but on the city of Toronto. Naturally enough these people also wanted the same facilities available to city residents and were not satisfied with the services that the Town could afford to provide.

Three major problems faced the citizens of North Toronto: taxation of lands held in speculation, water supply and transportation. The search for a solution to these issues accelerated the town's annexation into the city in 1912. Lands held by speculators, but not yet divided into building lots were assessed as farmland by the Provincial Assessment Act. This meant many speculators paid taxes on land at three to five times below its worth; and the town could not develop a sufficient tax base. The Town applied to the Provincial Legislature to enable it to assess all land on an equal basis, but practically all its requests



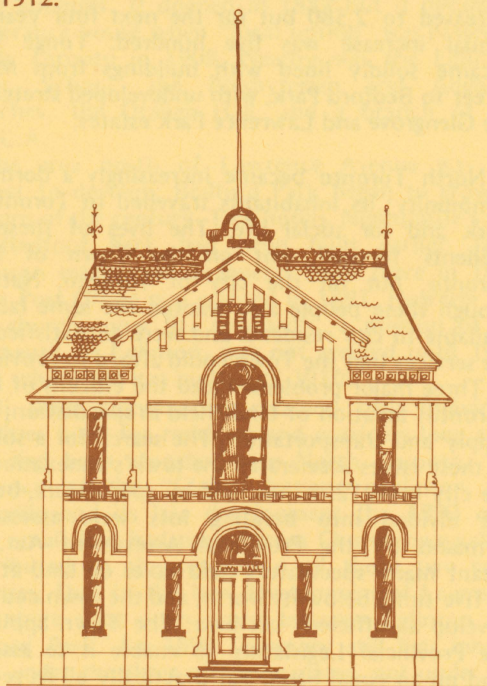
were refused. By the time of annexation the municipal debt was well over half a million dollars from providing new services.

The water supply available within the Town of North Toronto was not adequate to service its population of six thousand. North York thwarted a scheme to draw water from Lemonville in Whitchurch Township, and the Town was forced to link up with the city water supply.

People working in the city commuted by railway. The Toronto Steam Belt Line Railway circled the southern perimeter of the town, making stops at Merton Street just east of Yonge in Davisville and at Eglinton Avenue, but it only ran for two years (1892-94). It was succeeded by the Metropolitan Railway which was later taken over by the Toronto and York Radial Railway Company. By 1909 its cars travelled up Yonge Street from Birch Avenue in the south to Sutton on Lake Simcoe in the north. Stops at North Toronto were made at Davisville, Eglinton, Glen Grove, Bedford Park and Melrose Park. As the population of North Toronto increased, so did complaints about the Railway's poor service and general maintenance. The suburban line was not directly connected to the tracks of the city's trains: not only did passengers have to transfer cars, they also had to pay two fares to get downtown. (Or three fares if they lived north of Lawrence Park). The single track operation made for lengthy delays. The situation could only be improved by double-tracking Yonge Street and by directly linking the two lines. However, the Toronto and York Radial Railway Company only had a franchise for a single track and could be ordered to double track only by its sponsor, the Town of North Toronto. In turn, the Town believed that such excavations and construction necessary for double track would be financially impossible for it to support. A plebiscite in which the Railway would double track for its length in North Toronto, in return for annual rental of \$1,200 for the right-of-way and ten-tickets-for-a-quarter fare during rush hour, with five minutes service, was soundly defeated in June 1912. Most townsfolk thought the terms too generous to the Railway.

Annexation seemed the only possible solution to all these problems. It was not a completely popular

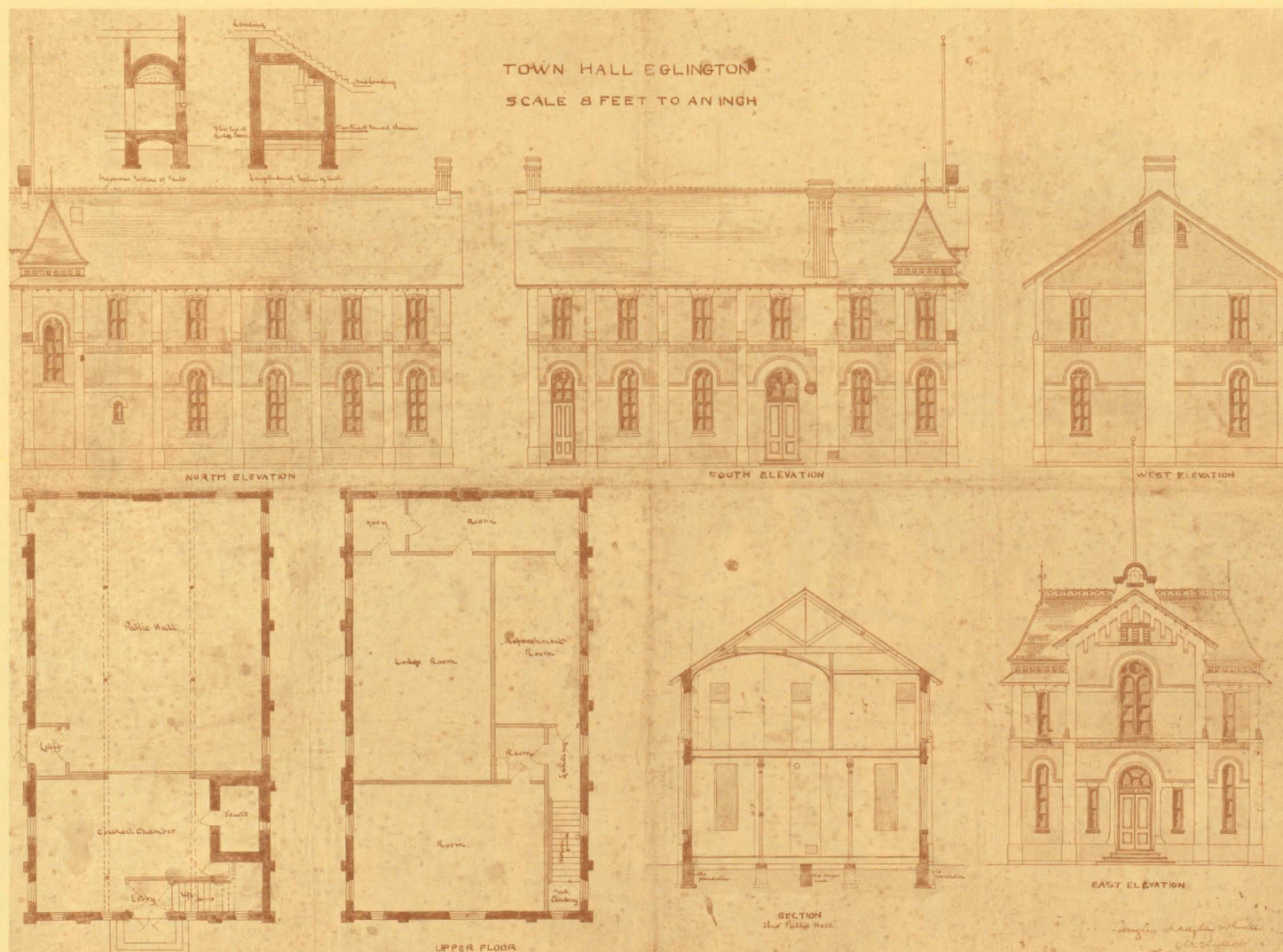
decision for residents of either the Town or the City. The Town had many reasons for staying independent: a population over 6,000 people; a brand new sewer system, 32 miles of water mains; 35 miles of electric light lines, 3 public schools and a high school, eleven churches and an assessment of \$5,860,304.00. However Toronto had equally good reasons for being wary about taking in the town: North Toronto had 55 miles of unpaved roads, the pipes in its sewer system were smaller than the city's and would have to be replaced; the municipal debt was \$634,000; the town needed a proper lighting system and an adequate water supply. But both sides realized that there were overriding advantages to such a union: Toronto's burgeoning population was expanding northward and needed additional land; North Toronto, lacking any major local source of employment, needed a dependable transportation system. The growth of Toronto was the death knell for the Town of North Toronto and annexation went through on December 15, 1912.





## NORTH TORONTO TOWN HALL

Architects original blueprint 1882  
Courtesy Mr. W. Ramsay



In 1882, the York Township Council engaged the prominent Toronto architectural firm of Langley, Langley and Burke, designers of building such as McMaster College on Bloor Street, to prepare plans for a brick town hall. Carpentry was to be done by

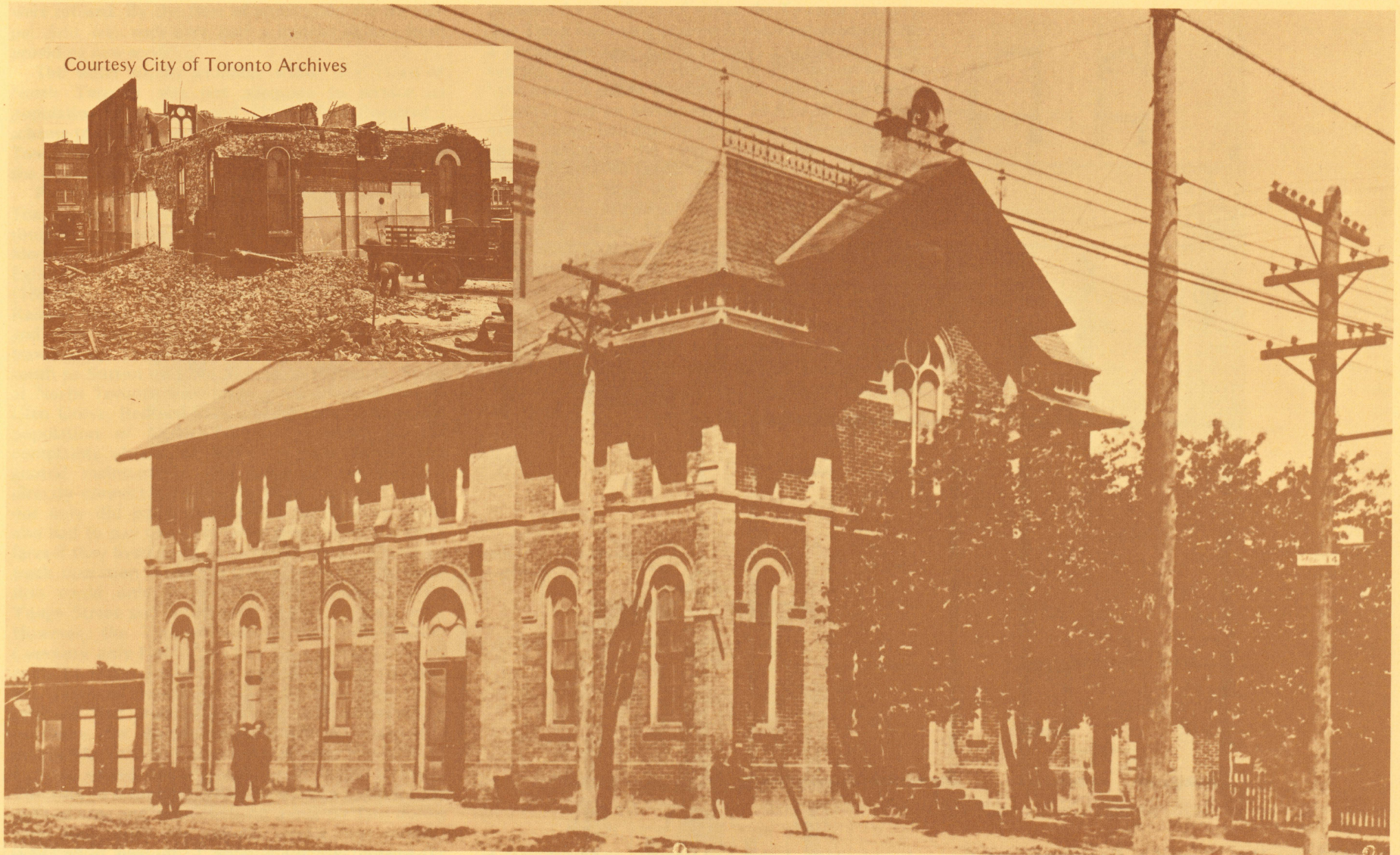
local builders, Fisher and Ramsay, and brickwork by Livingstone and Wright. Two years later, the two-storey structure was opened at the final cost of \$7,049.99, including the lot and furniture. After North Toronto became a separate town in 1889, the

Township sold the building to the new town (1891) for \$4,000 plus free use of the hall for another five years.



## NORTH TORONTO TOWN HALL

Courtesy Mike Filey Collection



The Town Hall contained North Toronto's municipal offices, police station, fire hall, and a Masonic meeting room. After the Masons vacated the second floor in 1909, this was used for classes by North

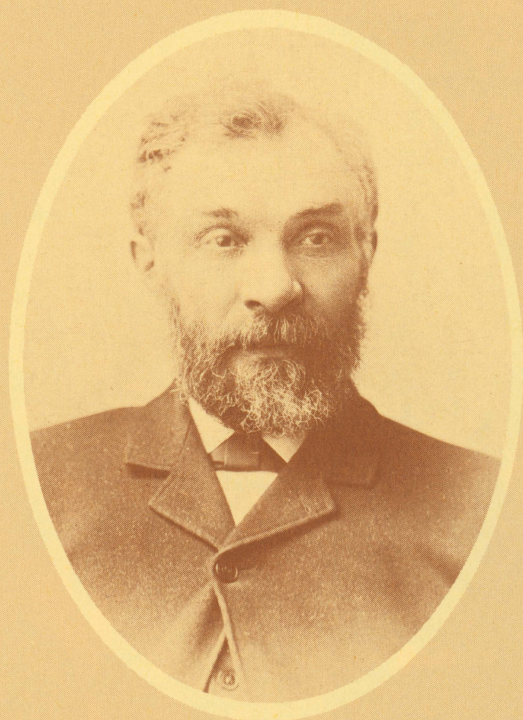
Toronto Collegiate Institute, until a separate five-room school was completed on Broadway Avenue (1912). After annexation, Toronto Police substation occupied the building. When the Town Hall was

demolished in 1931, Police Station number 53 was built on the site, but the old cornerstone still remains in the new structure.



JOHN FISHER, 1836-1911

Courtesy Mr. W. Ramsay



1893. ~ Municipal Election. ~ 1893.

TOWN OF NORTH TORONTO

YOUR VOTE AND INFLUENCE

Are Respectfully Solicited for the Re-election of

**JOHN FISHER**

— AS —  
MAYOR FOR THE YEAR 1893.

— Election day, Monday, January 2nd, 1893. —



TOWN OF  
**NORTH  
TORONTO**

1 9 0 8

Your Vote and Influence are  
respectfully solicited for the

RE-ELECTION OF

**John Fisher**

**AS MAYOR**

Of NORTH TORONTO for 1908

Election, New Year's Day

John Fisher came from Scotland as a boy and showed an early interest in carpentry. He apprenticed in Eglinton under Nicholas Maughan and later went into partnership with Mr. James Ramsay under the firm

name 'Fisher and Ramsay'. As well as serving as the first mayor of North Toronto for thirteen years, Fisher sat for two years on the York County Council. A Conservative and Presbyterian, he was a member of

numerous organizations including the York Masonic Lodge. John Fisher Public School on Erskine Avenue was named after this respected citizen.



## NORTH TORONTO FIRE DEPARTMENT



At the side of the North Toronto Town Hall, north-west corner of Yonge Street and Montgomery Avenue, ca 1907. Courtesy Toronto Fire Department.

The North Toronto Fire Department, headed by Mr. Wamsley, was formed in 1907 and served the area until 1915, when firemen were transferred to the city force. The main fire station was a metal shed at the rear of the Town Hall and it housed the fire engine, a two-wheeled rig pulled by one horse. Rigs, but not

horses, were also kept at substations at Davisville and Bedford Park. Any passerby could have his horse commandeered for fire fighting, but was remunerated for it. There were very few regular firemen, mostly volunteers.

A highlight of summers in North Toronto was the

Volunteer Fire Brigade's annual picnic, where there were races, refreshments, a band and a sideshow. The main event was the extinguishing of a fire in the shack built especially to demonstrate the skill of the Brigade.



## YORK MASONIC LODGE, 1896

Courtesy Mr. W. Ramsay



The York Lodge was founded on April 30, 1863 but it was not until 1874 that a Masonic Hall was built on the north-west corner of Yonge and Montgomery Avenue, across the road from the Prospect House.

The first floor was rented to the Township of York and the Masons used the second floor for their meetings. Fire destroyed the uninsured building in 1881 and the Masons sold the "lot and ruins" to the

Township in 1882. After the new Town Hall was completed, the Masons rented space in it for their meetings, but finally in 1909 a separate Masonic Hall was opened on Yonge Street below Eglinton.



Yonge Street, east side, between Davisville Avenue  
and Millwood Road  
Courtesy Miss L. Davis.



### DAVISVILLE POTTERY, ca 1900

John Davis came to Canada in 1840 and soon settled in the Davisville area, named in his honour. There he began one of the most successful pottery operations in Ontario, running about 85 years. The main products were utilitarian: sewer pipes, flower pots, crocks, cream pots, hanging baskets, etc., but for a time a specialty of the firm was a green glazed ware from which rose jars and jardiniers were fashioned. The clay was mined locally from deposits on Eglinton Avenue near the Don Valley and from a hollow on Millwood Road near Yonge Street on the Davis property. This was mixed at the pottery in a great open air tank with a large wooden paddle suspended over it. The paddle was turned by a horse which walked around it. To the rear of the property were

three large kilns. Eventually all of Davis' four sons entered the family business, with the youngest, Joseph Stanley, becoming manager at his father's death in 1891. Under Joseph's direction the firm modernized and broadened its operations. By the 1910's the offices remained on Yonge Street but the pottery moved to larger quarters at 601 Merton Street. The pottery business ceased around 1931.

### DAVISVILLE POST OFFICE, ca 1900

The first post office in Davisville opened in the 1870's at T. G. Crown's grocery, flour and feed store, on the north-west corner of Imperial and Yonge Streets. John Davis was the first postmaster, a

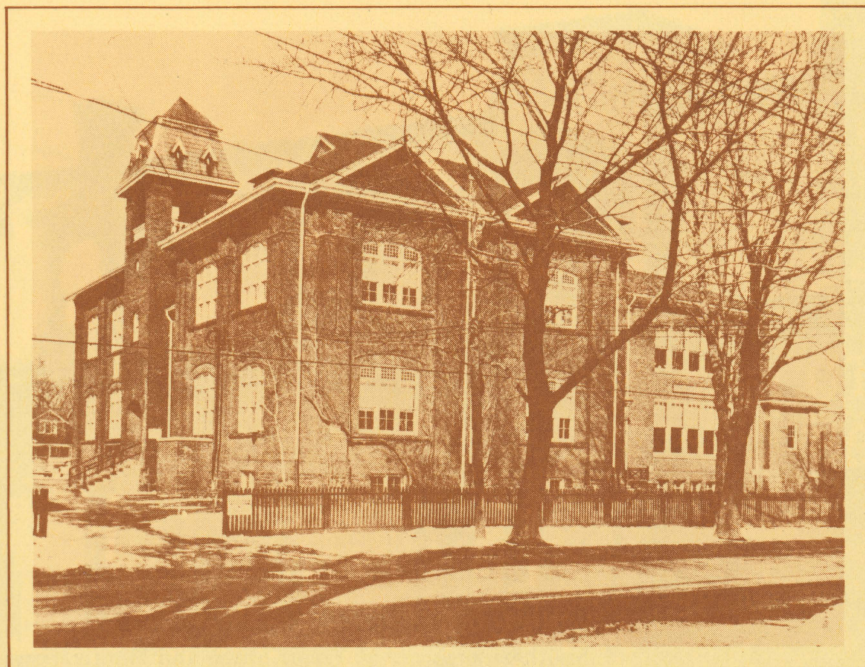
North-east corner of Yonge Street and Davisville  
Avenue  
Courtesy Curiosity Shop.



position he held for many years along with that of "proprietor of pottery". He was succeeded in both capacities by his son, Joseph Stanley Davis. The latter held the postmastership for ten years when he was replaced by J. J. (Jack) Davis, a grandson of the founding father. After 1894, the post office was removed to Jack Davis' general store at Davisville and Yonge. The people of Davisville called for their mail at this location until 1913 when regular mail delivery was started. The general store was originally red brick and had a verandah at the front and side. Adjoining the building was a flour and feed store. Today it stands as an antique store, "Curiosity Shop": the brick is painted and the verandah enclosed for window display.



Davisville Avenue  
Courtesy Toronto Board of Education



#### DAVISVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL, ca. 1962

The original red brick school house, S.S. #1, York Township, had two rooms, but it had expanded to eleven rooms and three offices by the time of its demolition in 1962. It served children from ages five to sixteen, or to the equivalent of grade ten. They came from as far east as Bayview Avenue, from west of Yonge Street, and as far north as Lawrence Avenue until schools were built at Deer Park, Eglinton, and Bedford Park. It was founded by trustees John Davis, Benjamin Hammond and Donald Mathieson and was the first proper school building in North Toronto. The school bell which hung in the belfry of the original school now rests at the entrance of the new school on Millwood Road.

Yonge Street, west side, north of Imperial Street  
Courtesy Metropolitan Toronto Library Board



#### DAVISVILLE METHODIST CHURCH, 1887

Methodism was a force in Davisville from the 1850's but worship was conducted outdoors or in private homes since only the Anglican Church had building rights on the village's large Clergy Reserves. However John Davis, the area's pioneer, was a zealous supporter of the Methodist faith and eventually donated a quarter of an acre of his property on the west side of Yonge Street, above the post office, so a church could be built. At first Davisville Methodist Church was a frame structure but in 1887 it was encased in red brick and a Sunday School was attached to the back. The congregation prided themselves on having "the handsomest church of its size in the Conference" — with its attractive belfry, white frescoed

interior, dark timbered ceiling, its frosted windows, shining gasoline lamps and bright red upholstered seats. It was equally proud of its ministers and members, Lester B. Pearson being the most famous son of the manse. The original appearance has changed as the two porches in the front were cut off to permit the widening of Yonge Street. By 1925 a more modern building with better accommodation for Sunday School work was needed and the church moved to Glebe Road. The old building was used by Hope Gospel Church until 1970 and then as a store, appropriately called "Pottery Corner". The building was demolished in 1974.





EGLINTON AVENUE EAST AT  
DUNFIELD AVENUE, ca 1900



VIEW FROM EGLINTON AVENUE EAST  
LOOKING NORTH TO ROEHAMPTON  
AVENUE, ca 1900

Courtesy J. B. Blake

### OULCOTT'S HOTEL *opposite page*

South-west corner of Yonge Street and Montgomery Avenue

Courtesy Mike Filey Collection

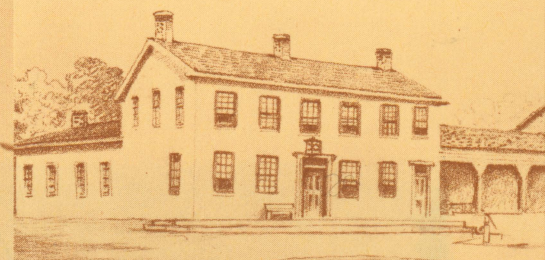
Prospect House was the second hotel built on this site by John Montgomery, the first being burnt during the 1837 Rebellion. Eventually the family sold it to Charles McBride of Willowdale, who reopened it as the Prospect House in 1858. The York Township Council, probably from the 1850's, and the York Masonic Lodge from 1863, held their meetings in the Prospect House until 1874 and 1871 respectively. A fire, November 20, 1881, destroyed the tavern and the Masonic Hall to the north.

John Oulcott bought the site after the fire and built the Oulcott Hotel, a three storey brick building with extensive driving sheds and stables. He opened it in 1883 and ran it for twenty-nine years although it became a temperance house when "local option" was passed in North Toronto in 1908. By 1923, it was no longer a hotel, but was used as the North Toronto Post Office. The building was demolished in the 1930's when Postal Station "K" was constructed.





OULCOTT'S  
HOTEL



PROSPECT HOUSE  
Courtesy Metropolitan Toronto Library Board





### RAMSAY HOMESTEAD, 1892

129 Blythwood Road

Courtesy Mr. W. Ramsay

This charming house was built in about 1885 James Ramsay and is still inhabited by the Ramsay family. James Ramsay and John Fisher owned a carpentry firm, Fisher and Ramsay, and they built many "high class residences, substantial barns" and public buildings, including the North Toronto Town Hall (1884) and Eglinton Public School (now John Fisher Public School). Blythwood was the first street in North Toronto aside from the concessions. In 1857 a plan to subdivide part of the Jesse Ketchum estate was registered. It created lots for five existing houses on Yonge and several larger lots on either side of Blythwood. This was North Toronto's first subdivision. Blythwood was initially called Victoria Avenue, but the name was changed when North Toronto was annexed to the city in 1912 to avoid confusion with the downtown street.





ANSLEY CASTLE, ca 1909

### YONGE STREET AT GLENGROVE AVENUE, 1898

Courtesy Toronto Transit Commission

The line of pine trees on the left led into "Pilgrim's Farm", which was settled around the time of the War of 1812. It was subsequently inhabited, in succession, by two families who migrated from the West Indies — the Murrays and the Nantons. James Beaty, a later owner, made it "an occasional summer retreat" and renamed it "Glen Grove". Glen Grove Park was a popular place for Sunday School picnics and church garden parties during the 1890's. The open fields near Yonge Street were used as a racecourse, a baseball diamond, and a cricket field. The park was also the site for the annual fall fair. The last owners of the northern property, the Ansleys, built a substantial house of Portland cement at Heather Street in 1909. When demolished in the early 1920's, the neighbours took pieces of it as souvenirs and used it for rockery in their gardens. Glengrove was the northern limit for the five cent local fare on the Metropolitan Street Railway of the Toronto line; through cars to Richmond Hill continued north from this point. The small building on the left is the passenger's shelter.

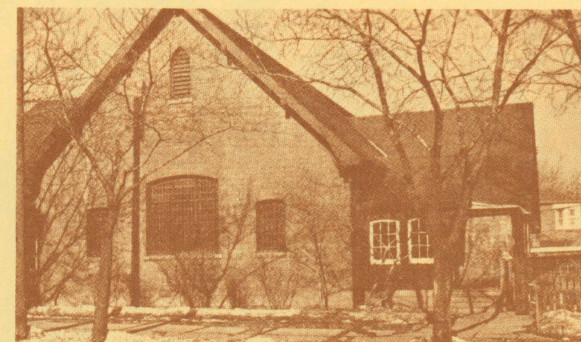


### EGLINTON METHODIST CHURCH, 1922

South-east corner of Yonge Street and Glengrove Avenue

Courtesy Eglinton United Church

This red brick building was built in 1834 on a half-acre lot donated by philanthropist Jesse Ketchum on October 16, 1830. Before completion a fire broke out and so blackened the building that a coat of plaster had to be added to make it presentable. The original structure was 35 feet by 50 feet but it was enlarged several times. This was the first and remained the only church in North Toronto until the 1890's. Due to overcrowding a new building was opened in 1924 on Sheldrake Boulevard and the original church closed. The Hydro substation, erected in the late 1920's stands on the site today.



### EGLINTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

North-west corner of Yonge Street and St. Clement's Avenue.

This church which had its beginnings as a mission of Deer Park Presbyterian Church became a separate congregation in 1890. For some years service were held in the Y.M.C.A. (now the Orange Hall) but in March 1909, the church opened its own building at 14 St. Clement's Avenue. The congregation grew quickly – by 1912 it was sponsoring a mission at Bedford Park and by 1915 it was outgrowing the still new church. A wing for a Sunday School was added in 1919 (now the St. Clement's children's library) but this eased overcrowding only temporarily. Part of the money to construct a larger church was raised when the Yonge Street building was sold to the Toronto Public Library Board in 1922. It reopened as the Northern Branch of the Library in 1923, to be later renamed St. Clement's Branch. Present plans for the building and site include the setting up of a day care centre when the Northern District Library opens in 1975. The church now known as St. George's United Church, is at Duplex Avenue and Lytton Boulevard.





# **GIRL GUIDE TROOP, ca 1915**

Courtesy Mrs. F. C. Nivin

In 1883 Nicholas Garland acquired an 100 acre farm running from Blythwood Road to Glengrove Avenue and Yonge Street to Bayview Avenue. Previous owners included Jesse Ketchum and the banker, J. R. Strathy after whom Strathgowan Avenue was named.

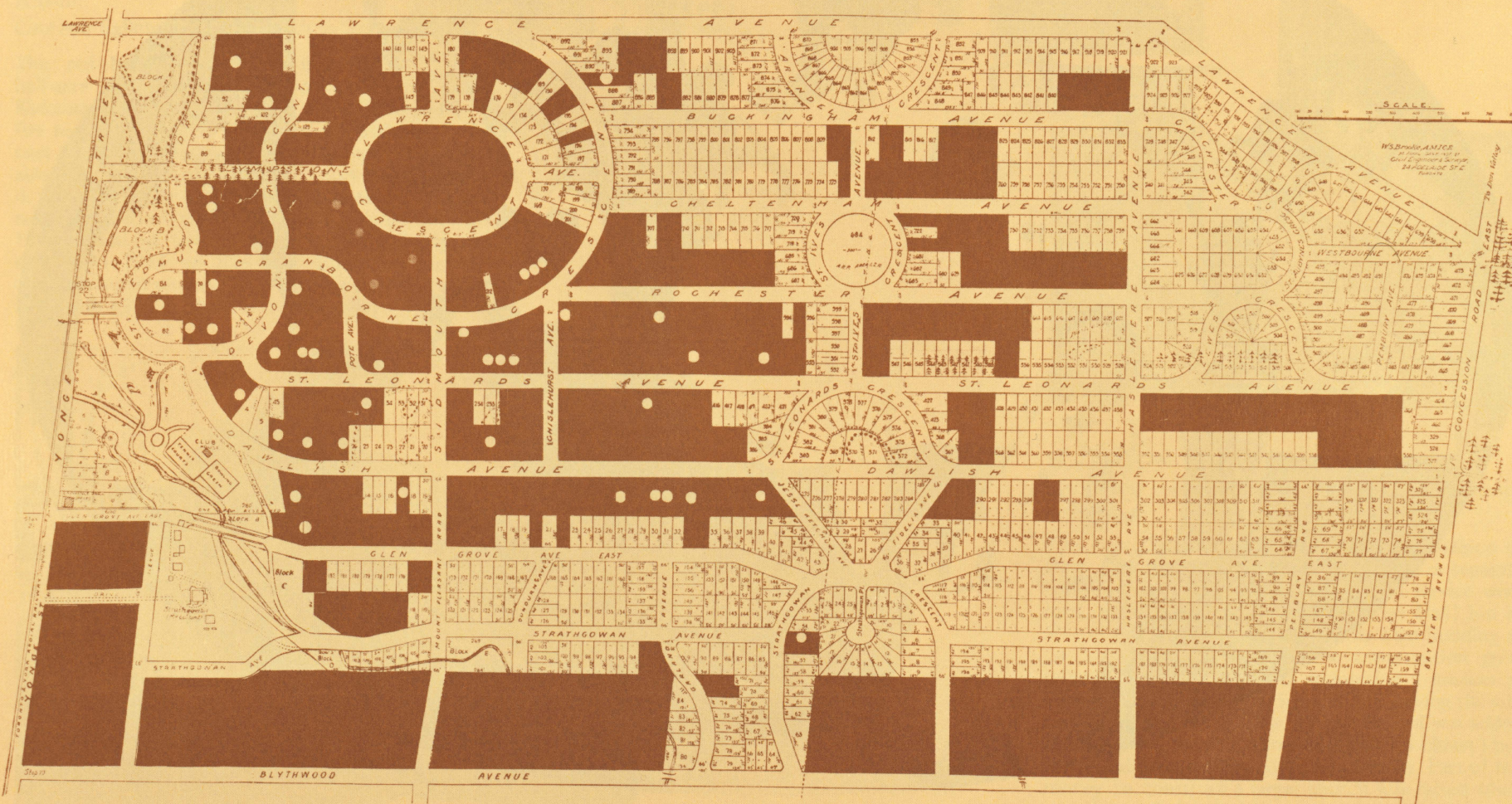
Mr. Garland (holding the baby in the picture) converted a barn into a camp building for a Girl Guide troop. One of the Guides later wrote a novel, ca. 1918, entitled *Joan of Glen Garland*, about her experiences at the camp.



# LAWRENCE PARK ESTATES

And Southern Addition STRATHGOWAN

The only highly developed suburban residential property in Toronto. Handsome homes surrounded by beautiful gardens, ranging in value from \$5,000.00 to \$30,000.00, adorn the property. Toronto's most prominent citizens are building on the Lawrence Park Estates. \$150,000.00 has been spent by the Company in developing and improving the property. No other property on this continent has had, and is receiving, such skillful and expert care and attention. \$12,000.00 is being spent yearly in maintaining the high standard of excellence. 500 acres, all in one property, under one splendid scheme of comprehensive and artistic landscape development. (The White Circles indicate residences already built.)



## Advantages of Lawrence Park

- 400 feet above Lake Ontario
- Pure Air
- Cool in Summer
- Free from the Lake Winds in Winter
- Beautiful Landscape
- Quarter-Mile Park Frontage
- Aristocratic Neighborhood
- Winding Roads
- Architectural Harmony
- 150,000 young Trees and Shrubs

Established 1885

# DOVERCOURT LAND BUILDING & SAVINGS

W. S. Dinnick  
President.

COMPANY LIMITED

82 to 88 King St. East  
Toronto

## LARGEST OWNERS & DEVELOPERS OF REAL ESTATE IN CANADA

## Advantages of Lawrence Park

- High-class Building Restrictions
- Sewers, Gas
- Electricity, Water
- Cement Walks
- Beautiful Private Gardens
- Wide Boulevards
- Quick Car Service
- Bowling Greens
- Tennis Court
- Playgrounds



## LAWRENCE PARK ESTATES

Both plan and picture

Courtesy Public Archives of Ontario

Around 1908, the Dovercourt Land Building and Savings Co. Ltd. purchased for \$90,000 the 300 acre Lawrence farm which ran from Yonge Street to Bayview Avenue, south of Lawrence Avenue. A plan was registered on the property in 1909, dividing it into 50 by 150 foot lots to be sold at twenty dollars a foot and up. Lawrence Park was designed by English engineer Walter S. Brooke to be a "high class suburban site" and the layout departed from the traditional grid system using a plan of winding and crescent shaped avenues attractively suited to the landscape. The Dovercourt Company's holdings were extended when it acquired 125 acres of the Anderson homestead to the west in 1911 and 85 acres of the Garland farm to the south in 1912. By the beginning of the war, land sales had been heavy, but only a few houses were built. After the war, a recession and a revised tax law, which taxed land instead of buildings on it, placed the company in financial difficulties. An auction for unsold properties was held in a tent in Lawrence Park, May 1919 — lots available "at any price the public will pay".









**YONGE STREET NORTH OF  
LAWRENCE AVENUE, ca 1900** *opposite page*

Courtesy Mike Filey Collection

The Lawrence family from Yorkshire had a market garden and tannery on Yonge Street and Lawrence Avenue. Henry Scadding in *Toronto of Old* described the farm in 1873: "In the hollow on the left, close to the Tannery, and overlooked from the road, was a cream-coloured respectable frame-house, the domicile of Mr. Lawrence himself. In his yard or garden, some hives of bees, when such things were rarities, used always to be looked at with curiosity in passing".

**LAWRENCE FARM, ca 1895** *top right*

North-west corner of Yonge Street and Lawrence Avenue

Both pictures courtesy Atkinson Family.

Agriculture was the main source of income for North Torontonians before 1890. Even after that time it was an important occupation since there were few other local industries aside from the pottery at Davisville and the brickyard at Eglinton. Farmers could take their produce to the Toronto Poultry and Garden Produce Company on the south side of Eglinton Avenue or downtown to the St. Lawrence Market. Animals could be slaughtered at several locations in town. Two slaughter houses were in Davisville: Moxon's on the north-east corner of Yonge Street and Glenwood Avenue (now Hillside Avenue) and Cook Brothers on Davisville Avenue at Mount Pleasant Road. A third was in Bedford Park at Cook's farm on the south-east side of Yonge Street and Lawrence Avenue.

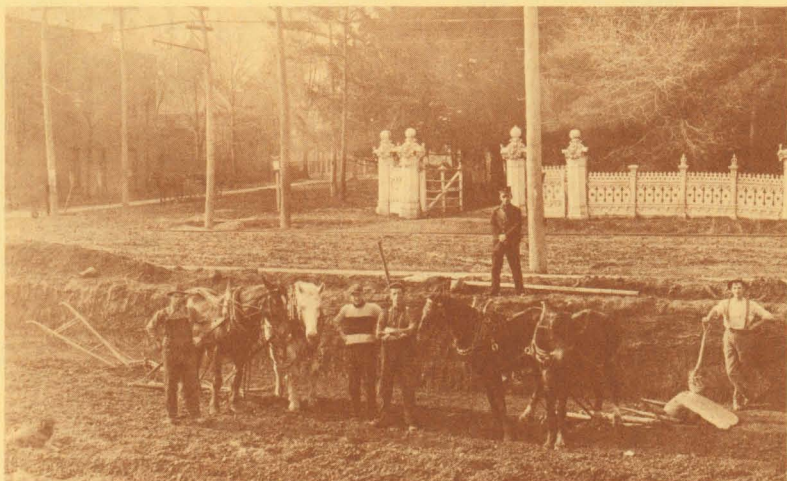
**JOHN ATKINSON'S STORE, 1894** *bottom right*

North-west corner of Yonge Street and Lawrence Avenue

John Atkinson tended store at this location from 1885 until 1898, when he moved up Yonge Street to Bedford Park Avenue. At this time he worked on a farm during the daytime while his wife minded the store, but he was always on hand at night when the farmers came in and the heaviest trading was done.







**ELLIS ESTATE GATES, ca 1912**

Courtesy Mr. W. Birch



**ELLIS ESTATE, ca 1909**

Yonge Street between Bedford Park Avenue and Woburn Avenue

Courtesy Atkinson Family

William Gordon Ellis, a prominent Toronto wholesale jeweller, envisaged a company town behind his stately Bedford Park home, and divided the estate into some 1,500 small lots. Roads were laid out and trees planted, but the plan had to be modified when the Town Council vetoed the building of Ellis' factory there in 1898. Ten years later brochures publicizing the subdivision were being distributed in Toronto and by 1912 stores were built on the east side of Yonge Street at Ranleigh Avenue. Workmen digging the cellars for these stores are shown in the picture above. The Ellis family papers in the Public Archives of Ontario contain items relating to the Bedford Park Real Estate Company and the North Toronto Rate-Payers' Association. The latter, led by Ellis, campaigned for improved transportation, better roads and services, and was a strong force behind the unsuccessful secession movement (1915-1920).



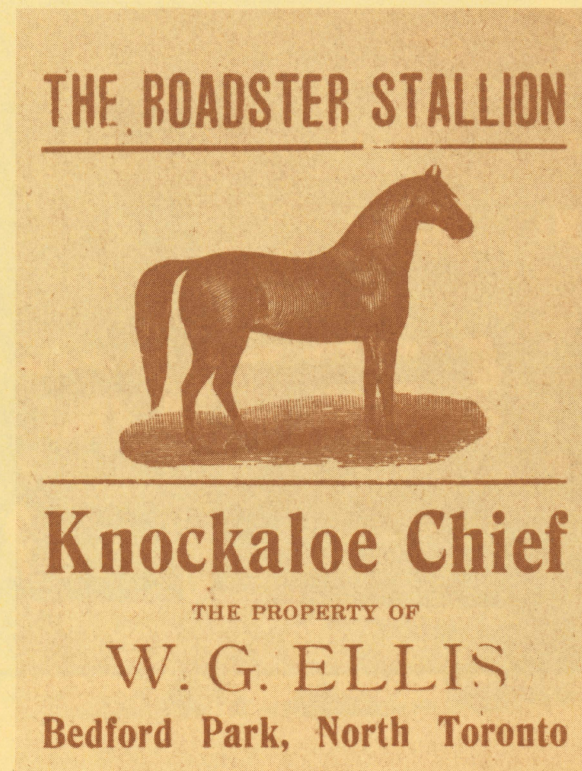


## ELLIS HORSE STABLES, ca 1905

Courtesy Mr. W. Birch

Knockaloe Chief was one of W. G. Ellis' prize thoroughbred horses. In the grand tradition of the gentleman farmer, Ellis maintained extensive stables on his beautiful grounds. Ellis sold his house and a

parcel of land surrounding it in 1926 to the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto for \$27,500. Two years later, these were turned over to the Toronto and Suburban Separate School Board, who converted



Courtesy Public Archives of Ontario

the old house into a four-room school. Blessed Sacrament School temporarily vacated the building from 1944 to 1945 at which time it was demolished and a larger, more modern facility constructed on the site.





### J. ATKINSON & SONS STORE, ca 1920

South-west corner of Yonge Street and Bedford Park Avenue

Courtesy Atkinson Family

John Atkinson first moved to this location in 1898 from Lawrence and Yonge. Atkinson's was a general store selling clothing and food, as well as hardware, and was also location of the Bedford Park Post Office. A barn at the rear housed delivery horses and the family cows. The little shed attached to the back of the store was a summer kitchen and a place to keep fresh milk. Before the building was sold in 1956 it was run by John Atkinson's sons, Harry and Gordon. Today the building houses a dry cleaners, a beauty salon and a book shop.







## SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNIC, 1914

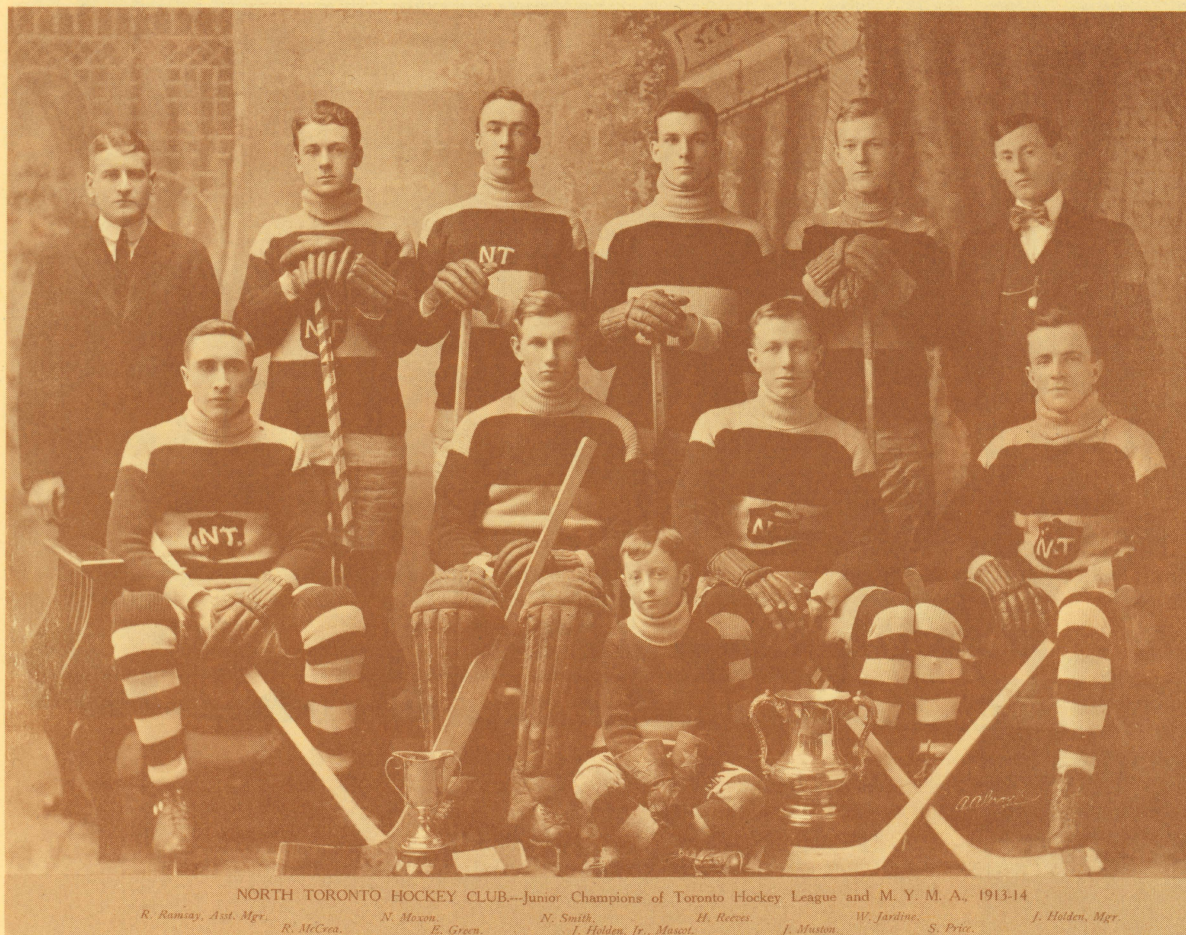
Courtesy Miss R. Robins

The Metropolitan Railway created a 200 acre park at Bond Lake, about 4 miles north of Richmond Hill, where they provided company-operated boats, a

merry-go-round and refreshment stands. For over 25 years this site could be reached easily by radial car and was a popular site for picnics. This was a group

from St. Clement's Mission Church which is now St. Leonard's Church on Wanless Avenue.





## NORTH TORONTO HOCKEY CLUB, 1913-14

Courtesy Mr. W. Ramsay

North Toronto home games were played at Montgomery rink behind the Town Hall at Montgomery Avenue and Yonge Street. The hockey cushion was outdoors with a pleasure rink around it. Music was provided by a twelve-piece band. While skating and tobogganing were the favourite winter sports, during the summer months North Toronto youth gravitated to the Don. The river and its branches which ran through the ravines and bushes of the town were ideal for swimming, fishing and exploring.



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RAN

THE RECORDER

The Recorder Courtesy Borough of York Archives

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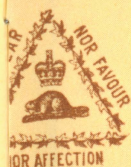
NORTH TORONTO, THURSDAY, OCT. 22, 1891

VOL. 3, No. 9.—Whole No. 113.

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MISSION, 25ct

Elections 1891



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W. J. D.

to, Dec. 20, 1890.

## "BEDFORD PARK" POST OFFICE

Will be OPEN on and after

**MONDAY NEXT, February 2nd.**

Private boxes rented at 25 cents per annum in advance.

**A. J. BARR**

BEDFORD PARK POST OFFICE STORE,

YONGE STREET, Corner of Bedford

N.B.—A Choice and complete

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Provisions.

## OULCOTT HOTEL.

EGLINTON, NORTH TORONTO

BRUNSKILL & MUNSHAW, Proprietors.

Driving parties requiring suppers should  
call up TELEPHONE 3245,

**BOOTS AND SHOES**

TO CLOSE OUT OUR STOCK

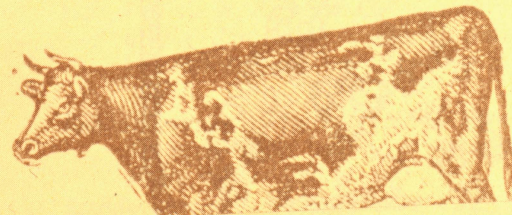
ORIGINAL COST.

Anton Presbyterian Church.  
Anniversary Services.  
SUNDAY, JUNE 20TH, 1891.

REV. G. E. FREEMAN, of Deer Park, will  
11-15 a.m., and REV. G. M. MILLI-  
Church, Toronto, a

TOWN OF NORTH TORONTO.

**DAVISVILLE POTTERY**



NORTH TORONTO

# Hygienic Dairy

SUPPLIES

## PURE MILK



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Seal of the Town of  
North Toronto



Courtesy City of Toronto Archives and International  
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#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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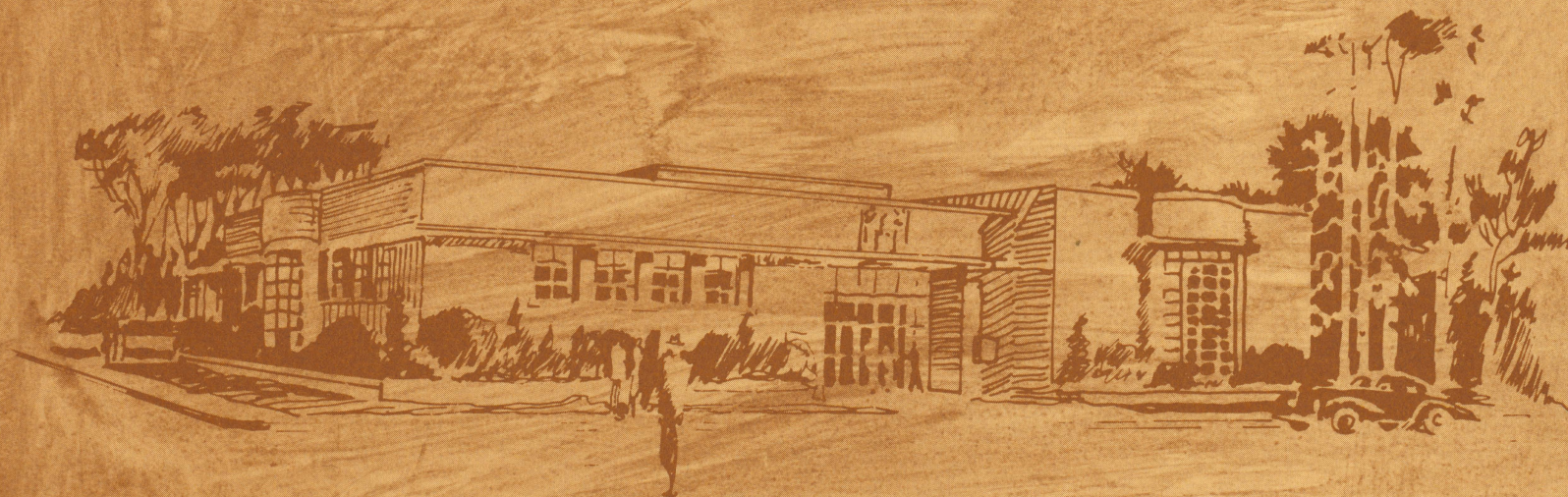
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In addition, there is "A Bibliography of North Toronto, 1889-1912", compiled by Barbara Myrvold for the Faculty of Library Science, University of Toronto, 1973. This is available at George H. Locke Memorial Branch, Toronto Public Libraries.





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