

# Historical Walking Tour of Kensington Market & College Street

Barbara Myrvold



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**Cover Illustration**

Kensington Market, Kensington Avenue, 1924.  
MTL T 11552

A half-tone block taken from this photograph appeared in the *Toronto Globe*, 18 July 1924 (p. 9), with the caption: "Old World scenes of Kensington Avenue, in the heart of Toronto's Jewish section, where every Thursday a market is held, with every variety of fruit and vegetables dear to the hearts of its patrons on sale from shop and wagon."

**Title Page Illustration**

Spadina Avenue  
Appliqué wallhanging by Linda Goldman, 1987  
Courtesy of Baycrest Hospital for Geriatric Care

**Key to Abbreviations in Picture Credits**

AO	Archives of Ontario
CTA	City of Toronto Archives
MTRL	Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library
TPL-SLHC	Toronto Public Library Sanderson Branch, Local History Collection
TPLA	Toronto Public Library Archives

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## Preface

This walking tour is part of the Toronto 200 celebrations, which commemorate the founding of York, now Toronto. It covers the Kensington Market area, and College Street between Major Street and Palmerston Boulevard. It does not include Spadina Avenue; those interested in learning more about that fascinating street should consult Rosemary Donegan's excellent book, *Spadina Avenue*.

Information for the walking tour was derived from many sources. I am grateful to the staff at the following institutions who kindly shared information and images with me: Christine Niarchos-Bourliotis, Archives of Ontario; Elizabeth Cuthbertson and Steve MacKinnon, City of Toronto Archives; Stephen Speisman, Ontario Jewish Congress Archives; Alan Walker, Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library; Kristin Kidd, The Toronto Hospital; Betty Gibb, Toronto Public Library Archives; Diane Gilday, The Hospital for Sick Children Archives; France Jutras, Bell Canada Telephone Historical Collection; Sister Thelma Anne, Sisters of St. John the Divine; Fiona McGoldrick, Doctors Hospital; Captain Flo. Curzon, Salvation Army Heritage Centre; Metropolitan Toronto Archives; Ted Wickson, Toronto Transit Commission Archives; Jeff Therrien, Toronto Fire Department; Matt Szybalski, Bank of Nova Scotia Archives; Rev. Ralph Spence, College Street United Church; the staff at Latvian House and Latvian Canadian Cultural Centre; Judith Colwell, Baptist Church Archives; and Scott James, Richard Stomberg and Marianne Beamish of Toronto Historical Board. I also appreciate the time given to me by Margaret Machell, who provided information on her grandfather, Dr. H. T. Machell; by Alfred Holden, who shared his extensive knowledge of street lighting; and by Robert Fulton, who helped with the subdivisions and surveys.

Staff at Toronto Public Library were instrumental in organizing the walking tour and producing the booklet. Thanks to Linda Goldman, Senior Staff Artist, for designing the book; Karen Fleming and Jeffrey Canton, Programme Coordinators for their planning and promotion; Lillian Salmon, Publicity Assistant, for editing the text and promoting the walk; Jim Montgomery and Barry Gray, Sanderson Library, for locating pictures and information in the branch's local history collection and sharing their knowledge of the community; and Margaret Henry, Community Information Coordinator, for interpreting the architecture. Herta Ziemann, a cooperative education student from Western Technical School, is congratulated for her excellent photographs, and for her tireless research and running around.

I am grateful to Margaret Visser, local resident and food history expert, who led the inaugural walk on 16 May 1993. Appreciative acknowledgement is given to the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Communications who provided Toronto Public Library with a Reflections '92 grant for this project.

Barbara Myrvold  
Toronto, May 1993

# The Kensington and College Street Area: An Historical Overview

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## Early owners and subdivisions, 1793-1860

The Kensington - College Street area was originally part of a string of 100-acre "park lots." Thirty of these 1/8 mile-wide parcels were laid out from today's Queen Street, north 1 1/4 miles to the present Bloor Street. John Graves Simcoe, first lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada, granted the park lots to his official and personal entourage, as compensation for having to move to the new capital at York, established in 1793. Simcoe envisioned that the park lots would be developed as English-style country estates, setting the stage for a landed aristocracy. Few of the lots, though, were developed in this way. Most of the enterprising owners divided and sold the properties, especially after York grew into the city of Toronto in 1834.

Park lot 14, between today's Beverley and Huron streets, was granted to Peter Russell. He had been appointed receiver-general of the province in 1792 and, after Simcoe's departure, was its administrator (or chief executive officer to use today's terminology) from 1796 until 1799. Russell quickly established a farm, Petersfield, on his park lot. In 1798 he built a comfortable house a little north of the modern Soho Street, and by the next year had cleared about 30 acres. John Denison, a friend of Russell's from Yorkshire, England, managed Petersfield and lived on the property; under his care it became a profitable farm operation. Russell expanded his holdings in the early 1800s with the purchase of the adjoining two park lots to the west. In 1822 all three park lots (14, 15, and 16), stretching between the present Beverley and Augusta streets, were inherited by Russell's cousins, Maria and Phoebe, the Willcocks sisters. The sole executor of the vast estate was Phoebe's husband, Dr. William Warren Baldwin.

In the 1820s, Dr. Baldwin, who practised law as well as medicine and, occasionally architecture, began carving up the park lots for a residential district south of Bloor Street. Spadina Avenue was laid out as the central thoroughfare with a double width of 132 ft. (later extended to 160 ft.) and an ornamental garden crescent above College Street. The proposed tree-lined avenue also would give a pleasant view from the Baldwin estate, Spadina, perched on the top of Davenport Hill. Historian Austin Seton Thompson described the scheme as, "an imaginative piece of planning in those days and lent attraction to the district for purposes of subdivision and sale." Patricia McHugh observed in *Toronto Architecture*: "The side streets, though at right angles to one another, broke with the even grid of most city streets and stopped dead-end or jogged, forming interesting blocks of unequal size." Baldwin named the streets for family members: Robert, Phoebe, Sullivan, and Willcocks.

In 1815, park lot 17 and the east half of no. 18 were purchased by George Taylor Denison, the eldest son of John Denison, Peter Russell's

estate manager. The 156-acre parcel adjoined Petersfield, and extended from the modern streets of Queen to Bloor between Major and Lippincott. Denison immediately constructed "a large white, cheery-looking abode" in the middle of the property. Belle Vue was situated, Scadding recalled, "lying far back but pleasantly visible from Lot [Queen] Street through a long vista of over-hanging trees." His heir, Col. Robert Denison donated land and building funds for St. Stephen-in-the-Fields; when it opened in 1858, it was the first Toronto church west of Spadina Avenue. At mid-century, the Denisons began to subdivide their holdings into building lots. Like the Baldwins, they named the streets for family associations: Denison, Bellevue, Lippincott, Borden, and Major.

The last three park lots in this area, the west half of 18, 19 and 20, belonged to George Crookshank, a member of a Loyalist family from New York, who had come to York in 1796. Crookshank established a farm on his park lots, and sometime before the War of 1812 built a farmhouse in the middle of the property. Crookshank's Lane, the present Bathurst Street, was a semi-private thoroughfare connecting the farm with York. The property was sold in 1851 and began to be subdivided shortly thereafter. Casimir Gzowski, a Polish nobleman, purchased a seven-acre parcel fronting Bathurst Street at the southeast corner of the present Dundas Street, where he constructed a magnificent buffbrick mansion, The Hall, in 1858. His neighbour to the north was James MacDonell whose fine house, Willows, was built in 1853 on large grounds. A subdivision called Seaton Square was laid out in 1854 on part of the old Crookshank farm. Plan 93 laid out 328 building lots and several new streets from College Street to the north city limits (Bloor Street) between Lippincott and Hope (now Manning).

## Growth and Development, 1860-1900

It was some years later, though, before these early subdivisions were built upon and occupied. John Ross Robertson recalled in his *Landmarks* that in the early 1870s, "Spadina avenue had not more than two dozen houses upon its length north of Queen street, while College street, west of Spadina, was thickly interspersed with gardens, corn patches and vacant land." (College Street had been laid out in part during the 1840s as a generous boulevard for mansions of the city's elite. It was extended in the 1870s as a narrower, more typically Toronto street.) Apparently Robert Brittain Denison had so few offers for his estate lots at \$350 a piece, that he split each of them into three smaller lots, setting the precedent for the area's high density development. During the 1870s, "mechanics and labouring people," many of them immigrants from the British Isles, began to settle in the north-west suburbs. Mansfield Street, near College and Grace streets, was a receiving centre for many of the destitute Irish of the 1870s and 1880s. These new residents established churches (e.g. College Street Presby-

terian and College Street Baptist), and began to be provided with city services. Bathurst Street School (renamed King Edward in 1902) opened at the northeast corner of College and Bathurst in 1872 with 300 pupils. The fire hall at College and Bellevue was built in 1878.

The 1880s saw a building boom in the area. By its peak in 1889, most of the residential districts on either side of College to Bathurst were built up or were under construction. "The houses were stylistically eclectic, progressing through and mixing the panoply of Victorian designs," observed architectural historian Patricia McHugh. Prosperous middle-class families moved on to local streets such as Bellevue where they lived in large, architect-designed homes. Working class families lived close by. Though varied in economic level, the area, like most of Toronto, was solidly British in character. College Street was almost completely surveyed, subdivided and paved during the decade. Although many of the blocks fronting on College were vacant, several three-storey commercial/residential buildings were constructed along the thoroughfare.

Local services also grew during the 1880s. The Toronto Street Railway started horse-drawn streetcar service up Spadina Avenue, and along College to Bathurst in 1880. The route was extended to Seaton Village at Bloor and Bathurst in 1885, and electrified in 1893. St. John's Hospital for Women opened in 1885 on Euclid Street and moved to a larger building on Major Street four years later. Lansdowne (now Lord Lansdowne) School opened on Spadina Crescent in March 1888. It was intensely crowded with 945 students in 12 rooms. Building and new services almost ceased in the 1890s when the country was thrown into a deep economic depression.

## **Immigrant Reception Area, 1900 - present**

At the beginning of the 1900s, the area changed dramatically and swiftly. Many who could afford it began moving away, mostly to the suburbs north of Bloor, or to the new, predominately Anglo-Saxon enclaves of Euclid Avenue and Palmerston Boulevard. The grand old estates disappeared. Belle Vue was torn down in 1889. Willows became Toronto Western Hospital in 1899. The Hall was sold to the city of Toronto in 1904; Alexandra Park was created and Lady Gzowski moved to Rosedale. College Street became lined with commercial buildings during a second boom that peaked in 1912.

The district became an immigrant reception area. In the 1890s and early 1900s, the city's Italian population began moving out of the Ward, the area bounded by Queen, Yonge, College and University, to the neighbourhood around College and Grace streets. By 1916, Toronto's second Little Italy boasted its own Catholic church (St. Agnes on Grace Street), a Methodist meeting place, a steamship agency, a real estate office, as well as several small grocery stores.

Toronto's Eastern European Jewish community also began to re-settle westward from the Ward in the early 1900s. The more affluent moved east of Spadina; the less prosperous to the streets west of Spadina. Stephen Speisman notes, "By the end of the First World War, an outdoor market had begun to develop on the western streets - Kensington, Augusta, Baldwin, Nassau - and a *shtetl* atmosphere . . . had been created." About 80 percent of the city's Jewish population of 35,000 lived in and around Kensington by the 1920s, worshipping at over 30 local synagogues.

Several settlement houses were established to assist and acculturate newcomers. St. Christopher House was opened in 1912 on Bellevue (now Wales) Avenue by the Presbyterian Church. The Nathanael Institute, a mission of the Anglican Church, moved into 91 Bellevue Avenue in 1916 to "work among the Jews" in the city.

The process of change accelerated after the Second World War. Postwar immigration brought large numbers of Ukrainians, Hungarians, Italians and Portuguese to the neighbourhood. In the 1960s many of the area's residents moved north and west, leaving Portuguese from the Azores the neighbourhood's dominant ethnic group. They, in turn, were joined by the Chinese in the 1970s, as Chinatown expanded westward. Kensington's role as Toronto's immigrant reception area continued throughout the '70s and '80s as successive waves of East and West Indians, Koreans, Vietnamese, Filipinos, and Spanish-speaking Latin Americans moved into the neighbourhood.

## **Community Planning, 1960 - Present**

During the 1960s, various levels of government became interested in the area, and at the same time local residents became much more community minded. Alexandra Park underwent a massive "urban renewal" program in 1967-9, meant to wipe out downtown decay and provide needed low-income housing. The 18-acre, 430 unit development covered the area from Queen to Dundas between Augusta and Cameron. Urban planners consider the project a success, with its moderate-scale buildings, winding "Main Street" and landscaping. Another urban renewal plan was proposed for the Kensington area, but community opposition to the wholesale demolitions and expropriations forced the federal government to cancel the project in September 1969. Toronto Western Hospital had to modify its expansion plans in response to local opposition in the 1970s. The Sussex-Ulster community was less successful in curbing Doctors Hospital's redevelopment proposals a decade later. The proposed Spadina Expressway, which would have extended Spadina Road from Bloor Street to Wilson Avenue, also caused local concern, until the provincial government cancelled the project in June 1971. A light rapid transit system for Spadina Avenue was recommended instead; it is yet to be completed.

# 1. Belle Vue, home of George Taylor Denison

Denison Square, northeast corner of Bellevue Avenue. Stood ca. 1815-1890/1.

George Taylor Denison (1783-1853) was a leading member of one of the city's most powerful and affluent early families. From his Belle Vue estate he devoted himself to the traditional Denison activities of military service (his regiment drilled on what is now Bellevue Square), the Anglican Church, local politics, and horse breeding. And "from old Belle Vue," Toronto historian Henry Scadding observed, the Denisons "spread populous colonies at Dovercourt, Rusholme, and elsewhere."

The Denisons had little money, though, when they were persuaded to emigrate to Upper Canada from Yorkshire in 1792 by their friend Peter Russell, successor to John Graves Simcoe as administrator of the province. But their fortunes began to rise after they came to York (Toronto) in 1796 where John Denison, George's father, successfully managed Russell's farm, Petersfield. For this he was rewarded not only with social connections, but also with land grants which he augmented with large properties purchased in west Toronto and Weston.

George Taylor Denison inherited the bulk of his father's estate in 1824. He combined this with another huge inheritance, from his first father-in-law, Captain Richard Lippincott (1745-1826), the dowries of four wives, and good management to become one of the wealthiest landowners in Upper Canada. At his death, his estate was probated in excess of £200,000, a substantial fortune even by present standards.

George Taylor Denison had been married for nine years to his first wife Esther Borden Lippincott, when in 1815 he purchased park lot 17 and half of 18. The 156-acre parcel adjoined Petersfield, and extended from the modern streets

of Queen to Bloor between Major and Lippincott. Denison immediately constructed "a large white, cheery-looking abode" to house his growing family - he eventually had 13 children of whom eight survived infancy. The house was situated, Scadding recalled, "lying far back but pleasantly visible from Lot [Queen] Street through a long vista of over-hanging trees." Today's Denison/Bellevue Avenue was originally a carriage drive up to the house. Lucy Booth Martyn described Belle Vue in detail in *Toronto 100 Years of Grandeur*:

Belle Vue was typical of the Loyalist Georgian style of architecture popular in Upper Canada at this time. A rectangle with a narrow cornice, its wide front displayed a balanced symmetry - five windows of twenty small panes each in the second storey, and two longer windows of twenty-four panes each on each side of the front door in the lower storey. All windows had dark green shutters, a pleasant contrast to the white roughcast of the walls.

Belle Vue's four sides faced squarely to the points of the compass, said to be the only house in Toronto so built. The front door of the house faced due south and the back due north.

Even before his death, George Denison began to subdivide and sell the Belle Vue property. Parts remained in the family until 1889, just before the house itself was demolished.



Belle



Geor



MTRL T11190

Belle Vue, ca. 1885.



MTRL T15096

George Taylor Denison (1783-1853)

## 2. Kiever Synagogue (Rodfei Sholom Anshei Kiev)

28 Denison Square, northeast corner of Bellevue Avenue. B. Swartz, 1926.

Perhaps nothing better symbolizes the changing nature of the Kensington area than this site. Once the location of Belle Vue, the grand manor of the pioneer Denison family, the view up Bellevue Avenue now is dominated by the exotic synagogue of the First Russian Congregation Rodfei Sholom Anshei Kiev ("Pursuers of Peace, Men of Kiev"). The congregation was established in 1913 by Ukrainian Jews who had escaped from Czarist Russia. At this time, Toronto's Jewish community was moving out of the Ward into the streets around Spadina Avenue. Eventually as many as 30 synagogues were located in the area, each used by a group from a particular part of Europe. Several were built in the 1920s and early 1930s. Anshei Minsk, a Russian Romanesque structure at 10 St. Andrews Street, was finished in 1930; regular services are still held there.

The Kiever Synagogue not only is one of the few synagogues still operating in the neighbourhood, but also remains virtually in its original condition, thanks to a restoration project by the Ontario Jewish Archives Foundation. The Kiever congregation followed the path blazed in 1922 at the Beth Jacob synagogue on Henry Street where, historian Stephen Speisman noted in *The Jews of Toronto*, "the congregation had enough confidence in Jewish professional and scientific ability to employ a Jewish architect to design the building."

Architect B. Swartz designed Kiever Synagogue with a middle eastern character. He incorporated many dramatic features on the red-brick exterior including twin Byzantine-style domes, pastel and white trim colours, a decora-



Photo by Herta Ziemann

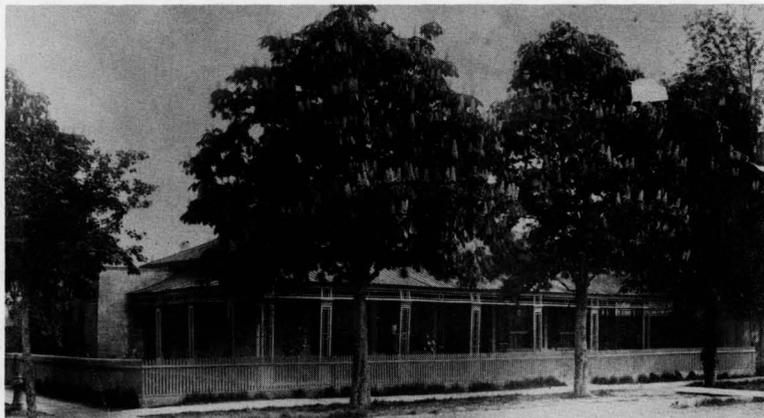
### Kiever Synagogue, 3 March 1993.

tive extended parapet, and four different styles of arched windows. Although the double entrances to the building are located on the south facade, the hall of worship faces east as tradition demands. (The Minsker synagogue uses a similar arrangement.) The interior is dominated by a monumental handcarved Holy Ark. It also exhibits features of a typical Orthodox synagogue of the period: a central *bimah* (reader's platform) with frame for a *huppa* (wedding canopy), and a woman's gallery. It is decorated with numerous brass ornaments as well as handpaintings depicting the signs of the zodiac and biblical animals.

The Kiever Synagogue was designated by Toronto City Council under the Ontario Heritage Act on 14 May 1979. It was the first building of Jewish significance in the province to be so designated.

### 3. Charles R. Peterkin House

29 Wales Avenue, southwest corner of Denison Avenue. 1884.



MTRL 970-1-3

**Charles R. Peterkin's first house on Bellevue Place (now Wales Avenue), ca. 1880.**



Photo by Herta Ziemann

**Charles R. Peterkin's second house, 29 Wales Avenue, 20 February 1993.**

Wales Avenue, or Bellevue Place as it was called until 1931, began to be developed in the 1870s. Charles R. Peterkin, a fledging lumber dealer, moved into a bungalow on the south side of the street ca. 1876. Eight years later he built a handsome house of his own, which still stands at the southwest corner of Wales and Denison avenues. The intricate

wooden turnings of the porch illustrate the skills of his trade. Peterkin lived in the house until ca. 1910. By the early 1920s, it was owned by a member of the Kiever congregation, and sometimes services were held in the house while the synagogue was being built across the park.

## 4. St. Christopher House

67 Wales Avenue, opposite Leonard Avenue. Stood 1912-73.



CTA Health 334

Well-baby clinic at St. Christopher House, 14 September 1914.

Opened on this site in 1912, St. Christopher House was the model for a series of settlement houses established by the Presbyterian Church across Canada in the early 1900s. The centre was founded to alleviate some of the urban ills posed by rapid industrialization and rising immigration at a time before municipalities were active in such matters. Programmes included literacy courses, social clubs, well-baby clinics and ath-

letic games. Over the years many social workers trained here have gone on to assume national prominence in their profession. Now located nearby, St. Christopher House continues its leading role as an innovator of community services and advocate for recent immigrants and minority groups.

Text from Toronto Historical Board plaque, 1988.

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## 5. The Toronto Hospital. Western Division

399 Bathurst Street, northeast corner of Dundas Street.



TPL-SLHC

**Toronto Western Hospital, ca. 1920.**

Toronto Western Hospital (now called The Toronto Hospital, Western Division) had its beginnings in 1894 when several west-end doctors met to find a way to establish a hospital for that part of the city. They were all on the staff of The Western Free Dispensary, an outpatient clinic for needy patients located first on Bathurst, then on Euclid Street. In December 1895, 12 of the doctors signed a prescription sheet pledging \$100 each "for the maintenance of the Western Hospital \$10 down and \$5 per month (as required)." A double house at 393 and 395 Manning Avenue was rented, and made into wards for 30 patients. Toronto Western Hospital opened on 1 January 1896; by May a training program for nurses was underway. Dr. Augusta Stowe Gullen, wife of one of the founding doctors and daughter of Canada's first woman doctor, was appointed to the consulting staff in 1899.

The hospital was an immediate success, and in 1899 a large private home was acquired on the east side of Bathurst Street just south of Nassau Street. Built in 1853 by James MacDonell, collector of inland revenue, Willows had been in its day one of the finest houses in Toronto. It was so named because the

large grounds surrounding it were covered with willow trees. The old brick house was renovated for patients, but before long more space was needed. A long tent with a concrete floor was set up on the front lawn. Women patients were placed at one end, and men at the other. The tent was made of two walls of canvas and heated in the winter with steam pipes. It was so popular that smaller tents were added in the summer.

Under the leadership of Dr. John Ferguson (1850-1939) - one of the original 12 doctors - and through the generosity of David Fasken, a wealthy insurance executive who was the hospital's honorary president from 1908 to 1929, a proper hospital opened in November 1911. (Willows continued to be used for the care of patients until ca. 1918 when the structure was demolished.)

Over the years the hospital has grown enormously. Numerous buildings and wings have been added to make the huge complex that stands today at 399 Bathurst Street. The 660-bed Toronto Western Hospital merged with the 1,000-bed Toronto General Hospital on 30 October 1986 to become The Toronto Hospital.

## 6. Charles R. Sanderson Branch Toronto Public Library

327 Bathurst Street, southeast corner of Dundas Street. 1968, Pentland, Baker & Polson, architects. Addition of Scadding Court Community Centre, 1978; Casey and Dunker Architects.



TPLA

### Sanderson Library, 1968.

Toronto Public Library's service to this community began in 1917 when Lillian H. Smith, head of children's services, visited St. Christopher House and arranged an indefinite loan of several dozen new books. In 1920, Miss Smith planned a children's library room for the House, and a librarian was sent one afternoon a week for a story-hour. TPL reported in 1926, "The circulation of 25,000 at St. Christopher's challenges that of three of our smaller branches. The children crowd to these Settlement libraries, which are in the heart of the foreign districts, and no advertisement is needed." Eventually TPL also opened children's libraries in local schools, such as Niagara Street and St. Marys.

In 1959, TPL amalgamated these services in a boys and girls library called Manning Avenue, opened that September in a two-storey building located on the grounds of the Charles G. Fraser School. When Alexandra Park was redeveloped in a massive tri-govern-

ment urban renewal project in the 1960s, TPL leased a site at the Bathurst, Dundas and Scadding Court triangle for a new boys and girls library. Charles R. Sanderson Memorial Branch was officially opened on 27 September 1968 by Mayor William Dennison. It was named in honour of Dr. Charles R. Sanderson (1887-1956), TPL's chief librarian from 1937 to 1956. The new library included books, records, paperbacks, and even a colour TV, and featured floor to ceiling windows looking out onto a patio and a sculpture, "Fort for Children" by Peter Sager.

In 1978, Sanderson Branch was enlarged so that adult collections and services could be provided. The expansion was part of the Scadding Court Centre project, the first cooperative effort between the Toronto Department of Parks and Recreation, the Board of Education, and the Library Board to provide integrated community facilities.

## 7. Kensington Market

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Kensington Market is a vibrant, multi-cultural shopping area packed into several streets west of Spadina and south of College: Augusta, Baldwin, Kensington, St. Andrews and Nassau. The Market owes its existence to successive waves of immigrant populations demanding specialty goods at reasonable prices. It has always been dominated by the small, independent storekeeper.

Kensington Market was started as an outdoor market in the early 1900s by Jewish merchants who were moving into the area from the Ward. Excluded from the Anglo-Saxon business community, these newcomers initially sold goods to each other from handcarts pushed through the working-class streets. Gradually they set up stalls on the small lawns in front of their homes, letting the customers come to them. This nucleus acted as a magnet for other merchants, and for Kosher meat processing and chicken slaughter houses. By the end of the First World War, the area was known as the Jewish market. It served both the Jewish residents in the area and the workers in the garment industry along Spadina Avenue. By the 1930s the Market had become permanently established. Many of the merchants converted the ground floor of their houses to stores but continued to display goods outside, to attract customers and to compete with street vendors. Even today, nearly every shopkeeper offers goods outside the store as well as in.

In the 1940s and 1950s Toronto's Jewish community began its slow migration to more expensive neighbourhoods north and west, and the Jewish presence in the Market gradually diminished. Postwar immigration

brought large numbers of Portuguese, Ukrainians, Hungarians, and Italians to the neighbourhood, adding to the market's international flavour. In the 1960s, Portuguese from the Azores became the area's dominant ethnic group. They, in turn, were joined by the Chinese in the 1970s, as Chinatown expanded westward. Kensington's role as Toronto's immigrant reception area continued throughout the '70s and '80s as successive waves of East and West Indians, Koreans, Vietnamese, Filipinos, and Spanish-speaking Latin Americans moved into the area, and opened stores and restaurants in the Market. In the 1980s, young merchants selling crafts and new wave clothing set up shop beside the food vendors.

Many attempts have been made to control the chaos of Kensington Market over the years. All three levels of government supported an extensive "urban renewal" project for the whole area, but community opposition forced the project to be cancelled in September 1969. A pedestrian mall to solve traffic problems in the Market was proposed in the 1960s and the 1990s. (Two parking lots were created on Bellevue Avenue and St. Andrews Street in the 1970s as a first step to controlling the car-clogging.) In 1976, City Council approved a Market by-law to limit expansion of the Market, and to downzone the retail density from 2 to 1 times the area of the lot. Local merchants usually have fought any attempts they perceive will change the vital character of the Market, sometimes with success (the canopies over the sidewalks stayed), and sometimes with failure (the live chickens went).



TPL-SLHC

Kensington Market, ca. 1980.



Photo by Herta Ziemann

Kensington Market, 20 February 1993.

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## 8. Bell Telephone College/Trinity Exchange now Precision Vacuum Products Ltd.

91 Oxford Street, southeast corner of Bellevue Avenue. 1906-7.



Bell Canada Telephone Historical Collection

**Bell Telephone Company's Trinity Exchange, 1927.**

The Bell Telephone Company of Canada purchased land at the southeast corner of Oxford Street and Bellevue Avenue on 15 January 1906. The following year, on 14 December 1907, it opened a telephone exchange there known as the College central office. Cost of the site and of the three-storey, 6,754 square-ft. building was over \$50,000. In those days before automatic dial telephones, operators connected all calls manually by switchboard from such offices, beginning each request with the expression "Number." ("Please" was not added until 1925.) The College central office served an area of Toronto bounded roughly by Crawford and Christie streets on the west, Queen Street on the south, Barton and Lowther on the north, and University Avenue/Avenue Road on the east, according to a 1920 Bell plan. It also was used to train Toronto operators, at the Bell Telephone School for Operators.

On 23 August 1922, a Bell representative told the Toronto *Telegram* that its next directory would "embody some radical changes in exchange names,"

and that College would be changed to Trinity. The name changes were likely in anticipation of the automatic dial service, which the company introduced in 1924 at the Grover exchange in east Toronto. The advent of dial telephones made redundant many of the old manual central office buildings. On 27 August 1932, the Trinity manual office was eliminated. The majority of Trinity subscribers were transferred to the Waverley dial central office located in downtown Toronto 76 Adelaide Street West. (The name TRinity was reintroduced as a dial central office in 1938.)

In 1937 Bell sold the Oxford Street building for \$12,500 to William Harold Firstbrook, the manager of a Toronto steel company. It continued to be vacant for several years after the sale. In the 1940s Dominion Milton Co., a printer, publisher and folding paper box manufacturer, took over the first two floors. Since 1954, Precision Vacuum Products has occupied the building; they manufacture blister seals and vacuum packaging.

## 9. 87 Bellevue Avenue

ca. 1885. Addition, Symons and Rae, 1906. Alterations, S. L. Langmead Architect, 1992.



Photo by Herta Ziemann

### 87 Bellevue Avenue, 28 February 1993.

This building was constructed as a private home around the large homestead of James Pepler, a Bellevue Avenue resident since the early 1870s and the owner of a wholesale leather and bindings business on Front Street East. By 1890, Dr. J. Algernon Temple, a physician and surgeon with offices and a home on Simcoe Street, had acquired the property. He was issued a building permit on 7 October 1890 "for the erection of Brick additions and alterations to dwelling N. E. Cor Bellevue Ave & Oxford St. Cost \$6000." Dr. Temple converted the house into a private hospital called Bellevue House Hospital.

In 1906 the (Anglican) Sisters of St. John the Divine purchased the property and converted the building into a residence for 40 active seniors, known as the Church Home for the Aged. At first both men and women lived at the home; later there were female residents only. In 1906/7 the Sisters acquired the adjacent property at 78 Oxford Street, and a wing was added by Sir Edmund and Lady Osler. In 1978 the order relocated the Home to a new seniors residence,

Canara Place, in Scarborough. The following year the Anglican Diocese sold the building to the Unification Church (Moonies).

Homes First Society, an organization dedicated to providing long-term housing for street people, bought the property in 1992. It converted the building into 29 one-room apartments which were opened on 1 February 1993.

87 Bellevue Avenue was listed on the Toronto Historical Board's *Inventory of Heritage Properties* in 1979 when it was noted:

Although it has been basically institutional since 1890, the building, even with its addition, has retained a house form design that is compatible with other buildings on Bellevue Avenue. Built of red brick with a slate mansard roof, the house now features a three-storey bay window, stained glass, and a large three-storey open porch with pyramidal roof at the commanding corner location.

## 10. House of Reverend Alexander Gilray now St. Stephen's Community House

91 Bellevue Avenue. W. R. Gregg, 1887. Addition and alterations, Molesworth, Savage & Secord, 1932. Alterations, 1952-3. Alterations, Armstrong and Molesworth, 1979.

This house was built in 1887 by Joseph Gibson of Deer Park, a brick manufacturer, and his architect, William Rufus Gregg. The first occupant was Reverend Alexander Gilray, appointed in 1875 as the first minister of College Street Presbyterian Church, a position he held until his death in 1915. The large handsome house was reflective of the congregation's prosperity at the time. According to a church history, Gilray was paid \$1,500 a year in 1882, a considerable salary for the period. *Robertson's Landmarks* describes Gilray as "very genial and kindly in manner, of social disposition and of undoubted sincerity and devotion." Gilray moved out of 91 Bellevue in the mid-1890s. It continued to be a private residence for another twenty years.

In 1916 the Nathanael Institute moved into the house. It was a mission operated by the Anglican Diocese of Toronto to "work among the Jews" in the city; its major goal was to convert Jews to Christianity. According to historian Stephen Speisman, "The Church of England hierarchy considered the issue of conversion of immigrants an urgent one; they equated it with acculturation and considered it essential to the defence of Anglo-Saxon society." The missionaries were taught Yiddish, and offered the usual mission activities: a night school with English classes, a dispensary, home and hospital visits, mothers' meetings, Sunday school, sewing classes and occasional open-air meetings. It also cooperated with a similar mission operated by the Presbyterian Church in the area in providing relief and finding employment. During the Second World War, the Nathanael Institute was one of the first Canadian



91 Bellevue, 20 February 1993.

groups to organize assistance for Jews in Europe.

In 1962 the Institute left the building, and the Toronto Diocese established St. Stephen's Community House as a Christian-based settlement house. Twelve years later it was incorporated as an independent non-profit charity, and in 1975 St. Stephen's became a member agency of the United Way. Today it offers programs, especially to immigrants and refugees, in six different locations in and around the Kensington area. Over 15,000 people use its services annually and there are over 100 employees.

The Toronto Historical Board listed 91 Bellevue on its *Inventory of Heritage Properties* in 1980. The brick-work, terra cotta panel inserts, decorative wood bargeboards and the rubble stone base were noted as features of special interest.

## 11. House of Dr. Henry Machell, now Bellevue Child Care Centre

95 Bellevue Avenue. D. B. Dick. 1887.

This house was built for Dr. Henry Thomas Machell and his wife, Emily Mary Broughall. (Her father, Reverend A. J. Broughall of St. Stephen's Church, lived in the rectory one door north.) Dr. Machell was a prominent Toronto physician specializing in the birth and care of babies, and on staff at the Hospital for Sick Children from its founding in 1875 until his death at age 80 on 9 November 1930. 95 Bellevue was designed by David Brash Dick (1846-1925), for many years principal architect to the Consumers Gas Company and commissioned by many wealthy Torontonians in the 1880s to plan their homes. The house - the original plans are preserved in the Horwood Collection at the Archives of Ontario - is characteristic of his work. Important features are the front entrance with a fanlight and sidelights, the pink sandstone base, the decorative brickwork, and the woodwork embellishments around the dormer window. The building was listed on the Toronto Historical Board's *Inventory of Heritage Properties* in 1980.

Dr. Machell lived and practiced medicine in the house until 1914; it continued to serve as a private home for another six years. In 1920 the Salvation Army purchased the building, and established the Catherine Booth Rescue Home there. Adjunct Mrs. Adams was the matron and she had a staff of five. The Salvation Army's first rescue homes had been started in Canada in the 1880s to rehabilitate and reform "fallen women" - alcoholics, prostitutes and the like. Eventually working women and unwed mothers were helped as well. The Bellevue house was intended to accommodate 50 women and 30 infants. By 1924, a more realistic number of residents were living there, 23 women and 23 infants. The Salvation Army

continued to provide services at 95 Bellevue until ca. 1941 - sometimes the operation there was referred to as a girls industrial home.

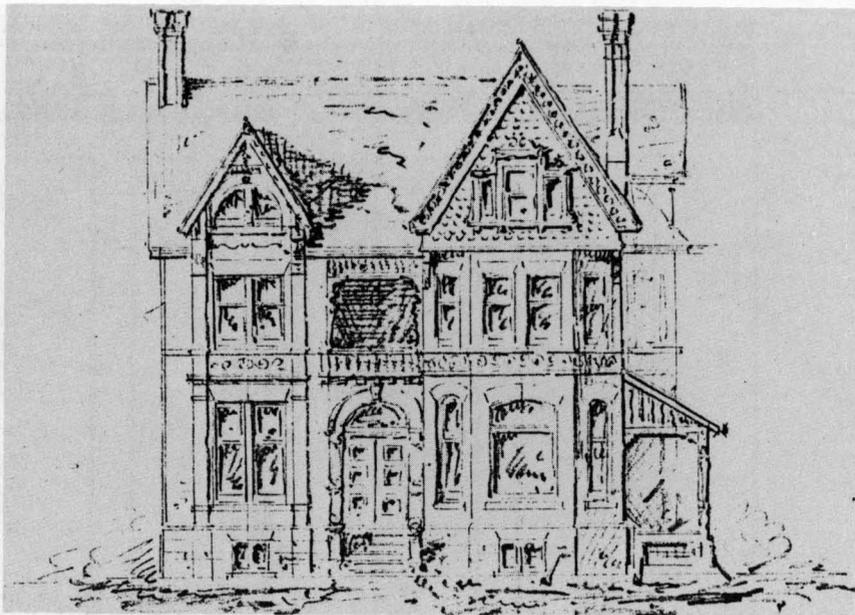
On 6 October 1942, a day nursery opened at the house, the first to be financed under public auspices during the Second World War. Initially a provincial project, it was later operated on the basis of the Dominion-Provincial Wartime Day Nurseries Agreement, a 1942 Order-in-Council authorizing the federal Minister of Labour to enter into agreements with any of the provinces to establish day-care facilities for children of mothers employed in war industries. The Bellevue Avenue centre became a model, with staff giving demonstrations in the practical administration of a day nursery to those who would later take charge of other units. The nurseries were open Monday through Friday, from 7:00 or 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 or 7:00 p.m., and Saturdays until noon. Children were given two full meals a day, dinner at noon and supper at five, plus a morning snack.

After the war, the federal government and some provinces ceased to support daycare facilities - they had done so only in the context of a war emergency measure. The Bellevue Avenue daycare was taken over by the City of Toronto. In 1967, it was transferred to the Social Services (now Community Services) Department of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto with spaces for over 60 children. Extensive interior renovations were done in 1992-3. The second and third floors were converted into offices for the Children's Services Division of Metro; the first floor was redesigned for a day nursery for 16 infants and toddlers. It officially reopened on 22 April 1993.

Prop



95 B



AO, Horwood Collection

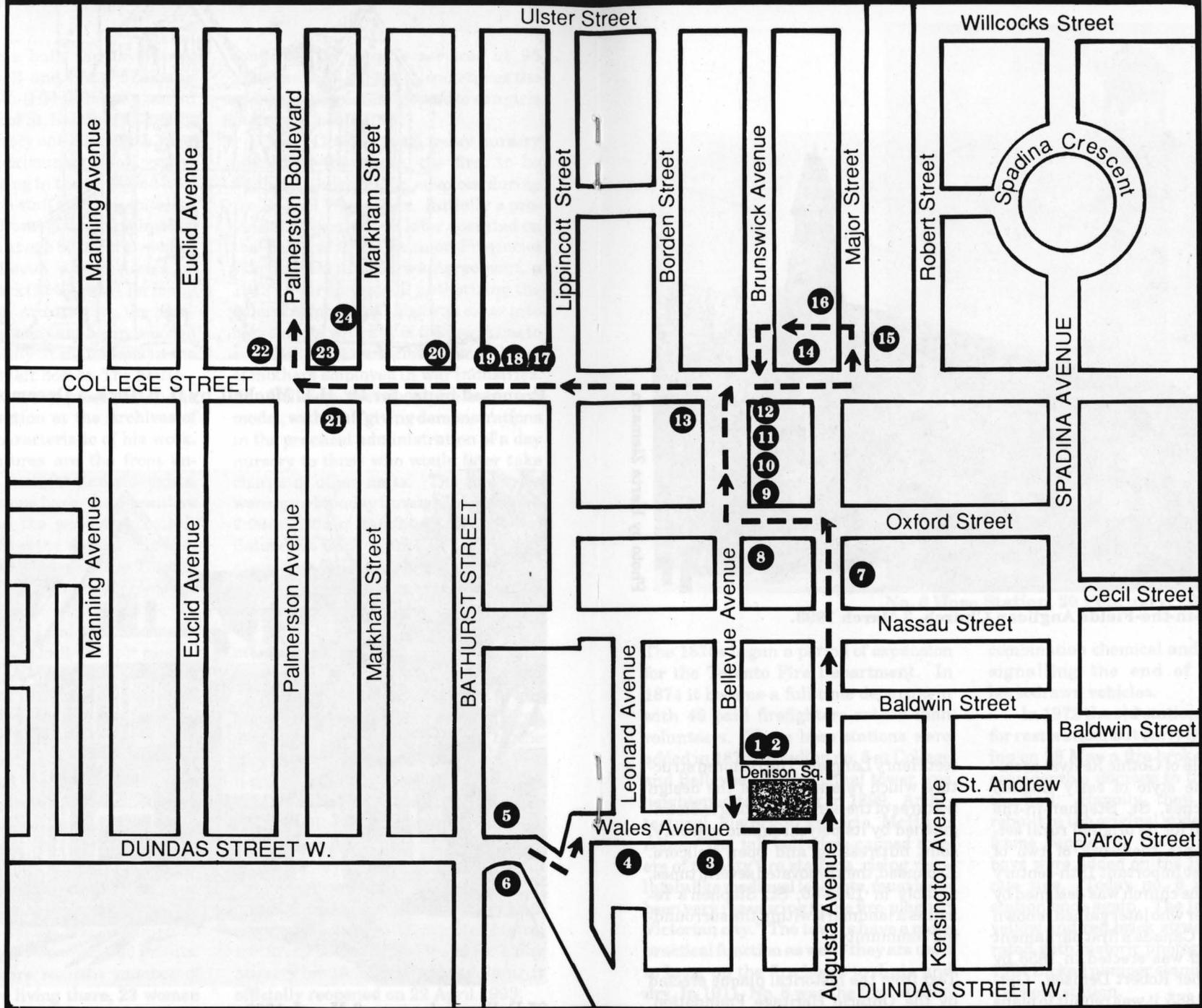
**Proposed house for Dr. H.T. Machell, by D. B. Dick, 1 December, 1886.**



Photo by Herta Ziemann

**95 Bellevue Avenue, 3 March 1993.**

# Historical Walking Tour of Kensington Market and College Street



## 12. St. Stephen-in-the-Fields Anglican Church

103 Bellevue Avenue, southeast corner of College Street. 1858, Thomas Fuller. Rebuilt 1865, Gundry & Langley. Addition 1872, R. C. Wintermeyer.



Photo by Herta Ziemann

St. Stephen-in-the-Fields Anglican Church, 3 March 1993.

A fine example of Gothic Revival architecture in the style of early English parish churches, St. Stephen-in-the-Fields, named for its original rural setting, represents the work of two of Ontario's most important 19th-century architects. The church was designed by Thomas Fuller who later gained renown in fashioning Canada's first parliament buildings and was erected in 1858 by local landowner Robert Denison. Gutted by fire in 1865, it was rebuilt to plans submitted by prominent church archi-

tect Henry Langley. The restored structure which retains most of the design features of the earlier building is distinguished by its polychromatic masonry, solid buttressing and open bellcore. Expanded, then renovated several times, notably in 1985-86, St. Stephen's remains a landmark within the surrounding community.

Text from the historical plaque erected by the Ontario Heritage Foundation, Ministry of Citizenship and Culture.

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### 13. No. 8 Hose Station

132 Bellevue Avenue, southwest corner of College Street. City Architects, 1877-8. Tower 1899. Additions 1899, 1907, 1921. Rebuilt after fire, 1973-4.



No. 8 Hose Station, 20 February, 1993.

Photo by Herta Ziemann

Photo by Herta Ziemann

The 1870s began a period of expansion for the Toronto Fire Department. In 1874 it became a full-time department with 46 paid firefighters rather than volunteers. Three hose stations were added in 1878 including no. 8 at College and Bellevue. The original tower was heightened to 110 feet in 1899. Architectural historian Patricia McHugh notes, "The tall belvedere-capped towers of the city fire stations, rising resolutely like medieval lookouts, must have been very reassuring to the fire-plagued Victorian city." The towers have a more practical function as well - they are used to hang up the fire hoses to drain and dry. In 1911, No. 8 was the first station to get a new motorized fire engine (a

combination chemical and hose truck), signalling the end of the era of horsedrawn vehicles.

In 1972 the old station was vacated for restoration, but early Sunday morning on 28 May a fire broke out causing considerable damage to the tower and the hall. Happily, they were totally rebuilt in the original style, with a steel frame supporting the brickwork; new bays were added on the Bellevue Avenue side. Today no. 8 is a working station once again. The interior of the yellow and red brick structure is decorated with historic photographs, and a 1924 Bickell pumper stands in the original hose station.

## 14. Doctors Hospital

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45 Brunswick Avenue, northeast corner of College Street.

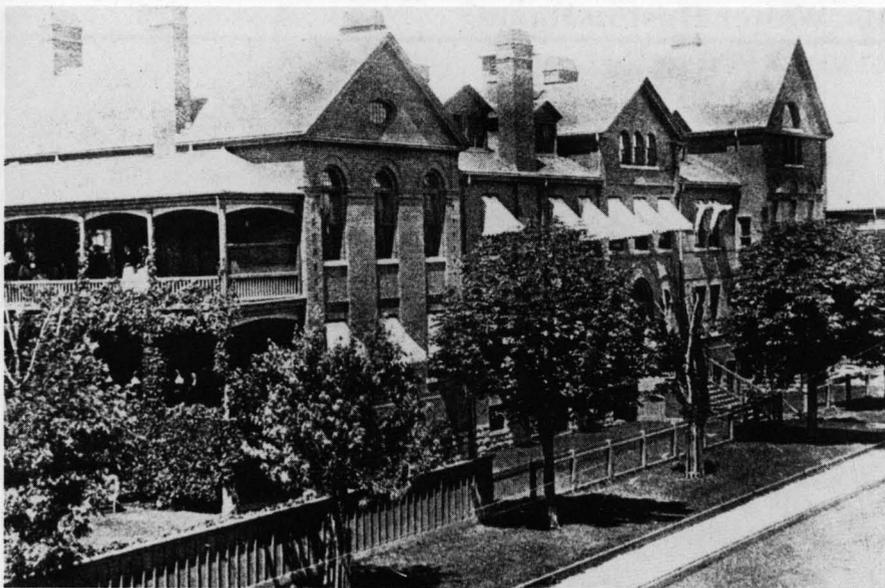
For over a century a hospital has been located on the site where Doctors Hospital now stands. The first hospital was the St. John's Hospital for Women, a 25-bed facility on Major Street just north of College, opened in 1889. "It is a handsome building of red brick, of two storeys, with good basement and attic, Messrs. Darling and Curry being architects," enthused a contemporary newspaper account. The (Anglican) Sisters of St. John the Divine had established the hospital in 1885, beginning with ten beds in a small house on the corner of Euclid Avenue and Robinson Street. Their mission was "the relief of women suffering from diseases peculiar to their sex," and "charitable treatment of the poor." This mandate made St. John's the first surgical hospital for women in Toronto. It continued to expand and flourish for more than 60 years.

In 1953, the hospital was sold to four doctors, the Raxlen brothers, and was renamed Doctors Hospital. A north wing with 62 new beds was built in 1955, and a 10-storey tower was added in 1958. At this time, Doctors Hospital reached a capacity of 300 beds, making it the largest privately-owned acute care hospital in Canada. It focused on catering to patients in the neighbourhood, and meeting the health care needs of Toronto's growing multicultural population.

In 1969, the Ontario Hospital Services Commission purchased Doctors Hospital and it became a public general hospital. The new volunteer board of governors commissioned a role study, completed in 1971. It recommended Doctors Hospital continue to serve culturally

diverse communities, and also redevelop the overcrowded facilities, expand the site, and provide a broader spectrum of health care. From 1969 to 1975, the hospital assembled 3.5 acres of land on the north side of College between Brunswick and Major, in preparation for redevelopment. These plans were abruptly stalled in 1976, when the Ontario Ministry of Health, as part of a cost cutting program, announced its intention to close a number of hospitals, including Doctors Hospital. The hospital and the community mounted a successful campaign to reverse the Ministry's decision.

The hospital made a second role study in 1981. It recommended the development of a community health campus, integrating the hospital with social agencies serving the community at one central location. It also suggested reviving the redevelopment and expansion plans in three phases: a clinical and community services centre, an acute care facility, and a chronic care facility. The rebuilding proposals were approved in 1986, but met with considerable opposition from local residents, who felt the proposed 480-bed hospital was "too big" and would overwhelm their neighbourhood. The heritage community also objected to the destruction of several historic buildings, including the 1889 hospital. Nevertheless, the first phase of the plan, a Clinical and Community Services Centre on College Street, was completed in 1991. The lobby incorporates the cornerstone from the original hospital on Major Street, "laid by the Lord Bishop of Toronto, June 1st 1888."



Doctors Hospital

**St. John's Hospital for Women, 1889. Demolished ca. 1989.**



Photo by Herta Ziemann

**Row housing on Major Street, to be demolished for an acute care facility at Doctors Hospital, 17 February 1993.**

## 15. Walter Huston Home

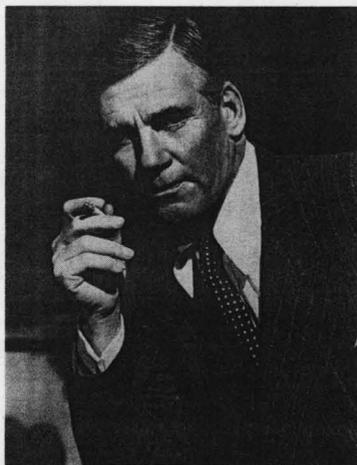
11 Major Street.



Photo by Herta Ziemann

**Walter Huston's boyhood home,  
11 Major Street, 17 February 1993.**

Walter Huston, star of Broadway and Hollywood, was born in Toronto, 6 April 1884, and raised near here at 11 Major Street. At the age of sixteen, he made his first stage appearance in a minstrel show at Massey Hall, joined a local repertory group and later, in vaudeville, toured Canada and the United States. In the 1920s Huston came into prominence on Broadway as a dramatic actor



**Walter Huston (1884 - 1950)**

and became famous for his rendition of "September Song". He worked in a number of films with his son, screen writer and director, John Huston. In 1948 both won Academy Awards for the film "The Treasure of Sierra Madre."

Text from Toronto Historical Board plaque, unveiled 3 June 1984.

## 16. Row housing on Major Street

10-12 Major Street. 1888. James Hartney, builder.

14-18 Major Street. 1892. David Richards, builder.

20-24 Major Street. 1892. David Richards, builder.

These eight houses at 10 to 24 Major Street are "unusual and distinctive, and contribute greatly to the character of our neighbourhood," according to one local resident. The THB listed the houses on its *Inventory of Heritage Properties* in 1982 because of their architectural and contextual importance. But today the three rows stand vacant and forlorn, awaiting demolition. Doctors Hospital, which owns the houses, plans to raze them by 1994 to make way for a new surgical wing. As a concession to community and heritage groups who wanted the buildings retained, the hospital agreed in 1984 to reuse some of the "significant architectural details" from the Major Street houses within its redevelopment. A fireplace and mantle, stained glass panels, and French doors already have been removed from the houses and reused on the fifth and sixth floor of the hospital's new building at 340 College Street. Other parts from the houses are to be incorporated in phases II and III of Doctor Hospital's redevelopment plans.

The 2 1/2 storey semi-detached house at 10-12 Major Street was constructed in 1888, and is the oldest of the rows. Builder James Hartney displayed his craftsmanship by using decorative bargeboard (gingerbread) trim above the windows and gables, and fancy brickwork in the facade. Unfortunately, the central pedimented porch with bracketed columns and elaborate trellis-work has been removed.

The next two rows of three houses each were constructed in the same year (1892) and by the same builder, David Richards. Both of the 2 1/2 storey rows are built of brick and stone, and both are attributed to the prestigious Toronto architectural firm of Dick and Wickson. Frank W. Wickson, architect, was the

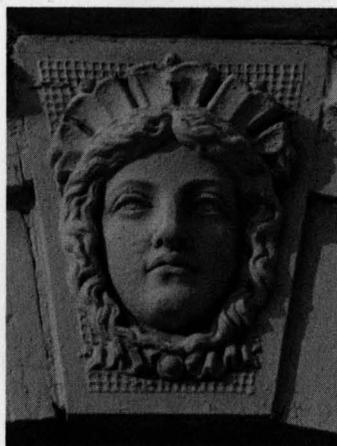


Photo by Herta Ziemann

### Figurative keystone, 24 Major Street, 20 February 1993.

first occupant of 24 Major Street.

14 to 18 Major Street is "an unusual row house" according to the Toronto Historical Board. None of the three units match, except for a unifying verandah common to all. This asymmetrical design "is unusual for the time of construction" and such row houses are "in short supply in Toronto," a THB representative noted in 1988. The south unit (no. 14) possesses a rare shingled oriel tower with an octagonal pointed roof and ball finial. The central unit (no. 16) includes arched second floor windows and a hip-roofed dormer with three facets. The north unit (no. 18) features a distinctive second floor bay window, surmounted by a projecting gable on brackets and faced in terra cotta tiles. The Romanesque-style doorways resemble those at Old City Hall.

20-24 Major Street features a unified, balanced design. The ground floor windows are arched, and trimmed with brick-drip moulds, band courses, and figurative keystones. This level also possesses elaborate basket-weave brickwork patterns. The hipped roof has gabled end dormers and an unusual central wall dormer rising from a central section that is flanked by recessed porches at the second floor.

## 17. College Street Row of Shops and Residences

422-426 College Street. 1892.



Photo by Herta Ziemann

### 422-426 College Street, 18 February 1993.

College Street was built up between the 1880s and the 1920s in three major building booms. This building dates from the first boom period, which peaked in 1889 and was over by 1893. It is illustrative of a mixed-use building of the day, accommodating under one roof commercial and residential uses. The first floor has been substantially altered by changing fashions in store layout, lighting and signage and by changing uses, but it still exhibits a fine, well-preserved facade. By looking at the upper floors, one can still see the many decorative details the unknown architect lavished on the brick and stone row. Brick pilasters with brackets at the cornice divide the facade into three units,

each with two windows. The second floor windows are topped with flat stone lintels, while the windows on the third floor are semi-circular arches with key-stones. The arched central parapet has a graceful shell pattern panel surmounted by a raised pediment. Electrical wiring obstructs the beauty of the upper section of the building.

The building's first owner was Dr. Eli Barrack. Early tenants included J. D. Hawthorne's grocery at no. 422 and John. W. Houston's relocated drug store at no. 426. The building has been listed on the Toronto Historical Board's *Inventory of Heritage Properties* since 1981.

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## 18. College Street Row of Shops and Residences

430-432 College Street. 1887-8.



Photo by Herta Ziemann

Photo by Herta Ziemann

430-432 College Street, 18 February 1993.

This is another attractive attached row of shops with residences above, dating from the first building boom along College Street. Once again one must look up, beyond the altered ground floor, to find important architectural features. At the corbelled brick cornice are pilasters with prominent decorative console brackets. The central arch has a keystone with spectacular sun-burst panels. The windows at the side sections have larger central units flanked with

narrow windows and decorative terra cotta spandrels. The three-storey building is constructed of brick, stone and pressed metal mouldings.

The first owner was Charles S. Williams, a real estate broker. In the early 1890's John W. Houston had a drug store and home at no. 430. Francis Spear sold stationery at no. 432. The building has been listed on the Toronto Historical Board's *Inventory of Heritage Properties* since 1984.

## 19. Metropolitan Bank, now Bank of Nova Scotia

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400 College Street, northeast corner of Bathurst Street. Darling and Pearson, 1913. Renovation and addition, Sankey Partnership, 1977-9.

The Metropolitan Bank was established in Toronto on 17 November 1902, and before amalgamating with the Bank of Nova Scotia in 1914, had 38 branches in southern Ontario. In 1913 it commissioned the prominent Toronto architectural firm of Darling and Pearson to build a branch at College and Bathurst streets. Frank Darling (1850-1923) and John Pearson (1867-1940) were the major bank architects of the day, and also designed many other important buildings throughout Canada during their illustrious careers. Banking was very competitive at that time, and banks were designed to be imposing, sober, impregnable even intimidating structures that would appear solid and respectable.

The College Street branch is a notable example of the developing Classicism of the first quarter of the twentieth century, of which the large Canadian banks were the chief patrons. It is also important in the context of the history of technology as an example of the use of glazed terra cotta in architecture - the exterior is almost entirely constructed of this material. (It was manufactured by the Federal Terra Cotta Co. of New York.) The bank also was important in the local streetscape as a foil in colour, scale and style to the Gothic Revival College Street Presbyterian Church, which then stood on the northwest corner of the intersection. The building was considered to be of such architectural significance that Toronto City Council passed a bylaw (no. 463-75) on

12 November 1975 designating it under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Nevertheless, in the mid-1970s the Bank of Nova Scotia purchased the adjacent lot on College Street and requested permission on 9 September 1976 to demolish the 1913 building; it wanted to construct a new, enlarged bank on the combined sites. City Council turned the request down, and appointed a committee composed of the local alderman, the Planning Board, and the Toronto Historical Board to meet with the bank officials to find a way to retain the historic structure.

In the compromise design solution the existing west and south facades were retained, and a 2,823 square-ft. addition was built to the east. The addition was constructed of precast concrete similar in finish and colouring to the old terra cotta. The old and new sections were connected by a transparent wall topped by a glazed canopy. The original high tile roof was removed; the architects argued this would draw greater attention to the terra cotta facade. The interior was totally changed. The second floor professional offices were eliminated - to open up the banking hall and give a more contemporary image. The expanded and renovated branch officially reopened on 27 June 1979. Sankey Partnership Architects received the 1977 Award of Excellence from *Canadian Architect Yearbook* for the project and the Toronto Historical Board's Award of Merit in 1980.



Bank



Bank



Bank of Nova Scotia Archives

**Bank of Nova Scotia, 1952.**



Photo by Herta Ziemann

**Bank of Nova Scotia, 18 February 1993.**

## 20. College Street Presbyterian Church, now College Street United Church

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454 College Street, northwest corner of Bathurst Street. Smith & Gemmell, 1884-5. Addition, Smith & Gemmell, 1892. Addition, H. Ferris Secord, 1924. Chanel Club Condominium (now called 456 College Condominium), Carson Woods Architects, 1988-9.

The Presbyterian Church began to conduct services in the northwestern part of Toronto in 1873, and the following year erected a small, roughcast church at the northwest corner of College and Bathurst streets. The congregation grew rapidly, and in 1884 the prominent Toronto architectural firm of Smith and Gemmell was commissioned to design a larger church; it opened in March 1885. *Robertson's Landmarks* described the new building as "a very handsome church, red brick with stone dressing [with] a tower 90 feet high. . . . It is a distinguishing feature of that portion of the city and a credit to the beautiful avenue on which it is built." The interior could seat 1,200 people on the main floor and gallery, and was renowned for its columns, arches and polished oak.

One hundred years later, though, the congregation found, as did many other Protestant churches downtown, its numbers and revenues had dwindled as members moved away; and that it could no longer afford to maintain the cavernous (37,000 square ft.) old deteriorating church, nor to ignore the high real estate value of the property. The minister, Dr. Ralph Spence, and the congregation explored several development options to meet its twin goals - to continue as a traditional, Sunday service ministry and to finance a new, smaller building on the site. The Toronto Historical Board wanted the old church to be retained, though, and on 20 May 1986 Toronto City Council passed a bylaw designating it under the Ontario Heritage Act. However, on 8 July 1987

a heritage easement agreement was made between the city and the church: the tower was to be saved, and the density was to be transferred and the property rezoned. In that year College Street United transferred its density rights to a developer, CJS Investments Ltd., in return for a building constructed to the congregation's specifications. Most of the old church was demolished in 1988. A seven-storey multi-use building was constructed around the original church tower in 1988-9. Part was reserved for a new College Street United Church, and part for an 89-unit condominium, with the two parts having separate owners.

The project had its problems both financially and architecturally. The developers went into receivership before completion. Critic Christopher Hume assessed the results in the *Toronto Star* in 1989:

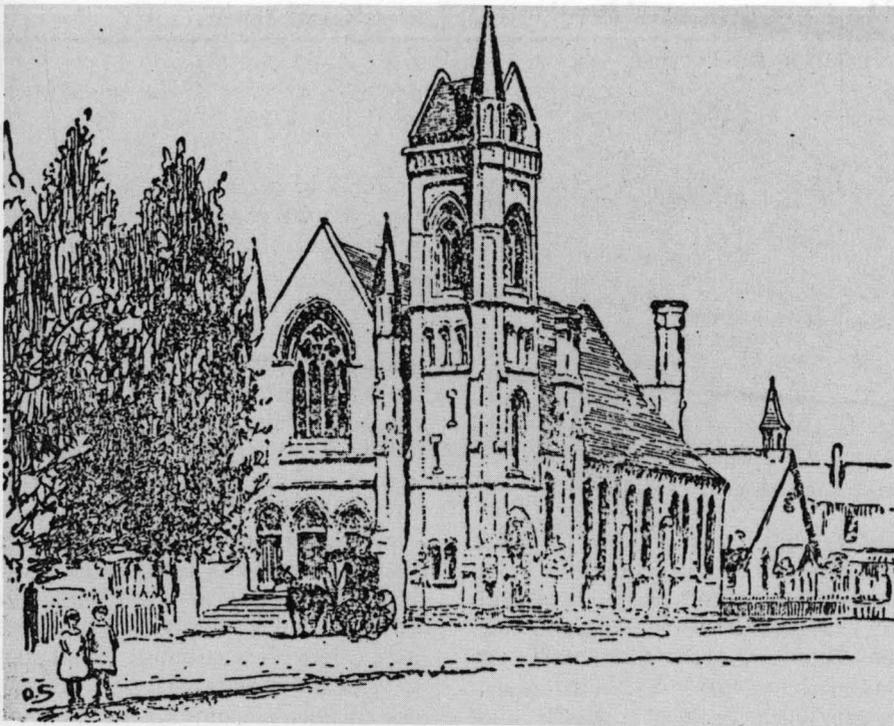
The condo has been designed carefully - but ultimately unsuccessfully - to blend in with exquisite 19th century architecture. Retaining the tower was a compromise, an ironic one as it turns out. Ironic because it now serves as a dramatic reminder of how much the new addition lacks. . . . situated so closely to a remnant of something infinitely finer, the condo becomes not only banal but poignant. It is a measure of how much has been lost, not gained.



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**College Street Presbyterian Church, ca. 1900.**

From Robertson's Landmarks of Toronto, 4:265



**College Street United Church and 456 College Condominium,  
20 February 1993.**

Photo by Herta Ziemann

## 21. Freemasons' Hall, now Latvian House

491 College Street. 1910. Edwards & Saunders



Photo by Herta Ziemann

### Pediment detail of Freemasons' Hall, 18 February 1993.

The Masonic Order was a very popular and powerful fraternal organization in Canada when it constructed this building as a central meeting place for several Toronto lodges. Architect Frank Saunders was a Mason, and incorporated Masonic symbols in the Classical exterior. The massive white sandstone facade typified "the long heritage of Mason builder traditions from which the Order sprang," a 1911 *Construction* magazine noted. An illuminated medallion bearing the symbolic letter G (for God) was placed in the gable above the keystone. The four 33-ft. high Corinthian columns, the bronze lamps on them, and the three stars set in a circle in the pediment were also symbolic of Masonic allegory and ritual.

The interior of the 46.5 x 110 ft. building contained three floors and a full basement. Each of the bottom three levels had one large room - a supper room for 400 in the basement, an auditorium on the first floor, and a lodge room on the second - and several smaller rooms. The lodge room featured mahogany woodwork and a pipe organ. The building was listed on the Toronto Historical Board's *Inventory of Heritage Properties* in 1976.

In 1964/5, the building became Latvian Hall, a cultural home to Toronto's Latvian community. Latvia was an in-

dependent Baltic state from 1918 to 1940 when it was annexed by the Soviet Union. It declared its independence on 21 August 1991. The first Latvian settlers in Canada were farmers who arrived in the 1890s and settled in western Canada, gradually moving east to find jobs in the cities. During the Second World War, more than 110,000 Latvians fled their occupied homeland. Of this group, some 15,000 emigrated to Canada. In Toronto, the early community was scattered throughout the city, with higher concentrations in the High Park area, along Broadview Avenue, and in the suburbs of Weston and Willowdale. The 1991 Canadian census indicates there are approximately 8,000 Canadians of Latvian origins living in Metropolitan Toronto, the largest concentration in the country.

Today Latvian House quarters a library, a credit union, and a fraternity. It offers weekly seniors programs and evening classes for teenagers where the Latvian language and culture are taught. Depictions of scenes and symbols from the homeland are displayed in the entrance way and the three large banquet halls. The Latvian Canadian Cultural Centre, 4 Credit Union Drive, has largely replaced Latvian House as the centre of the city's Latvian activities.

## 22. College Street Baptist Church, now Portuguese Seventh-Day Adventist Church

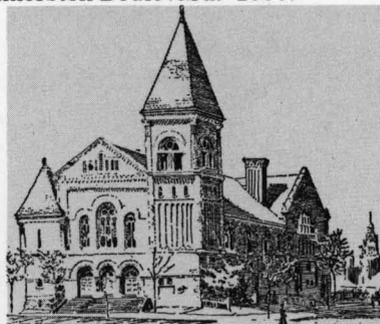
506 College Street, northwest corner of Palmerston Boulevard. 1888.  
Langley & Burke.

### College Street Baptist Church, ca. 1900

The Portuguese are predominately Roman Catholic - St. Mary's Church at Bathurst and Adelaide is a Portuguese parish - but belong to other Christian denominations, such as Pentecostal, Baptist and Seventh Day Adventist churches. The Portuguese Seventh Day Adventist Church located at this site about 20 years ago.

The building began as College Street Baptist Church, established in 1872. At first, the congregation met in a modest roughcast church at the northeast corner of College and Lippincott. Remarkably, the 1872 building stands today at 410 College Street, and still is used for a church, St. George Lutheran. In 1888, College Street Baptist Church acquired a property a few blocks west along College, and commissioned the Toronto architectural firm of Langley & Burke to design a larger church. It officially opened in September 1889. The Toronto Historical Board listed the building on its *Inventory of Heritage Properties* in 1973.

Portuguese immigrants began to arrive in Canada in substantial numbers during the 1950s. The first contingent consisting of 85 Portuguese men landed in Halifax aboard the *Saturnia* on 13 May 1953. They had been recruited by the Canadian government to work as farm labourers. After the initial contracts were completed, many resettled in larger Canadian cities where they found jobs in construction or in indus-



From Robertson's Landmarks  
of Toronto (4: 453)

try. This pattern repeated itself many times as thousands of Portuguese gladly embraced the opportunity to escape from conditions of poverty, unemployment and political oppression in their homeland.

The growth of the Portuguese population in Toronto was rapid. In 1955, there were fewer than 100 in the city; by 1962, the number had grown to 10,000; by 1971 there were almost 50,000. The 1991 Canadian census lists 140,910 people of Portuguese origins residing in the Metropolitan Toronto, the largest concentration in the country. Most of them originate from mainland Portugal, the Azores Islands, and Madeira.

The Portuguese first settled in the Kensington Market and Alexandra Park areas of Toronto. They were welcomed at Sousa's Restaurant at the corner of Nassau and Bellevue - owner Antonio Sousa had arrived on the *Saturnia* - and at the First Portuguese Canadian Club, founded in 1956 above a store on Augusta Avenue and relocated to larger quarters on College Street in the 1970s. Gradually the Toronto community pushed westward as the Portuguese opened businesses along Dundas Street, Ossington Avenue, and College Street. Later the community grew to Lansdowne Avenue and northward to Dupont Street. In the 1970s, a Canadian-trained second generation emerged, producing a wide variety of professionals of Portuguese descent.

## 23. Gates to Palmerston Boulevard at College Street

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ca. 1910

Palmerston Boulevard was built up at the turn of the 20th century; most building was done between 1903 and 1910. It was developed as an upper-middle-class street, composed of houses, mostly detached, that were skilfully conceived and constructed to reflect the wealth and social status of the new owners. Early residents included such important Torontonians as Mayor Horatio Hocken at no. 340, Mayor Sam McBride at no. 351, and Professor John Squair at no. 368. George Weston, whose bread factory was close-by, had the largest and grandest house on the boulevard, a central hall plan on two lots at no. 469.

Palmerston Boulevard still has many features which distinguish it from other local streets. Stone and iron gate posts, topped with double-fixture globe light standards, are located at its two entrances. One pair is at College Street and the other at Bloor Street. Together with pairs of trees which line the boulevard, they give the impression of an approach to a large estate. Palmerston Boulevard has remained faithful, despite conversions of many single-family residences to apartments and offices, to the concept of one house on one lot.

Palmerston Boulevard was originally part of a subdivision called Seaton Square, laid out in 1854 by James M. Strachan, a son of Toronto's first Anglican bishop John Strachan, and his partner W. J. Fitzgerald. The subdivision was created from part of the old Crookshank farm, and it extended from College Street to the north city limits (Bloor Street) between Lippincott and Hope (now Manning). Plan 93 laid out 328

building lots, and included within it the north-south streets of Bathurst, Markham, Ontario (now Palmerston Blvd.), and Lumley (now Euclid); and the east-west streets of Buller (now Ulster), Harbord, Herrick, and Lennox. The plan, as it extended northward, contained diminishing lengths of blocks. The lots on the longest two blocks, from College north to Harbord, were also the largest (132 ft. to 145 ft. wide). They were more than double the width of the lots on the three equally-sized blocks from Harbord to Bloor (53.3 ft.). Lot depths throughout were more uniform - from 125 to 135 ft.

It would be many years, though, before this subdivision was developed, and only Palmerston Boulevard would evolve more or less as planned originally. By 1884, there were already signs of future trends - the west side of Lippincott was lined with buildings crammed onto much smaller lots. Eventually only Palmerston retained wider (and more expensive) lots, ensuring the construction of higher quality, larger houses. It also had more controlled development than surrounding streets, according to a study on Palmerston Boulevard by architects E. K. Storey and James K. Brown. Building on Palmerston took place simultaneously on both sides of the street, rather than randomly. The sale of lots and construction of houses moved north, block by block. The architects also note that Palmerston Boulevard is 24 meters wide, significantly wider than Euclid and Markham streets, which are the standard street width of 20 meters or 66 ft.



Photo by Herta Ziemann

**Gates at the College Street entrance to Palmerston Boulevard, 18 February 1993.**



Photo by Herta Ziemann

**Palmerston Boulevard between College and Ulster streets, 18 February 1993.**

## 24. Streetlamps on Palmerston Boulevard from College Street to Bloor Street.

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Attributed to S. Hamilton Townsend, ca. 1905-10.

Take an evening stroll along Palmerston Boulevard, and experience an intact turn-of-the-century residential street environment. The rows of houses with common setbacks, the lines of trees running in pairs down the boulevard's length, and the original street lamps are all important ingredients in creating this distinctive, well-coordinated atmosphere.

Alfred Holden, an historic preservationist who has studied street lighting extensively, describes Palmerston Boulevard as "an authentic street lighting installation . . . an electrical time capsule." The street lamps on Palmerston date from 1905 to 1910, about the same time the street was developed. Known as single pole-top lamps or light pillars, they consist of single upright standards made of decorative cast iron, and smooth glass "Haskins" globes. By the late 1910s, these lamps were commonplace in North American cities for general use, parks and boulevard lighting. Business districts usually were illuminated with two fixtures on an ornamental pole, while prestigious downtown streets often featured three lamps per pole.

Palmerston Boulevard is one of only two places in Toronto to have preserved single pole-top lamps. Similar lamps also still exist on Chestnut Park in Rosedale. Both these examples of the city's lighting heritage were placed on the Toronto Historical Board *Inventory of Heritage Properties* in 1973. They are attributed to S. Hamilton Townsend, the Ontario-born architect of a distinctive body of Neo-Tudor suburban houses in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Street lighting at that time was heavily influenced by the City Beautiful movement

and by the electric lights shown at world's fairs and expositions being held in the United States. Beauty and effect were the prime considerations.

The lamps on Palmerston Boulevard pre-date the common use of the automobile, and were designed to illuminate the way for pedestrians, not motorists. Ontario Hydro engineers reported in 1912 that each lamp on Palmerston Boulevard was 9 ft. 6 in. high. This is shorter than most modern street lamps, but perfectly adequate to light the sidewalk, and also not too high to interfere with the new trees growing on the boulevard. Each lamp was 100 watts and approximately 80 lumens (a measuring unit for brightness); the average street illumination was .023 foot candles - all much lower levels than modern standards. The lamps were placed on the lawn side of the sidewalk, rather than on the street side: to light the sidewalk rather than the street. The lights were spaced every 95 in. approximately - closer together than today.

The automobile altered the scale of municipal lighting fixtures and the intensity and character of the light they were required to provide. Beginning in the 1920s, lighting for automobile drivers became increasingly important. Pole-top lamps became higher, and moved closer to the street. Gradually bracket-type standards were introduced to hold the lamp over the street rather than the sidewalk. This was to enable drivers to see farther, and to make pedestrians appear as silhouettes. Illumination levels also increased with traffic, and in many cities, soft incandescent lights were replaced with brighter but harsher sodium-vapour lamps.

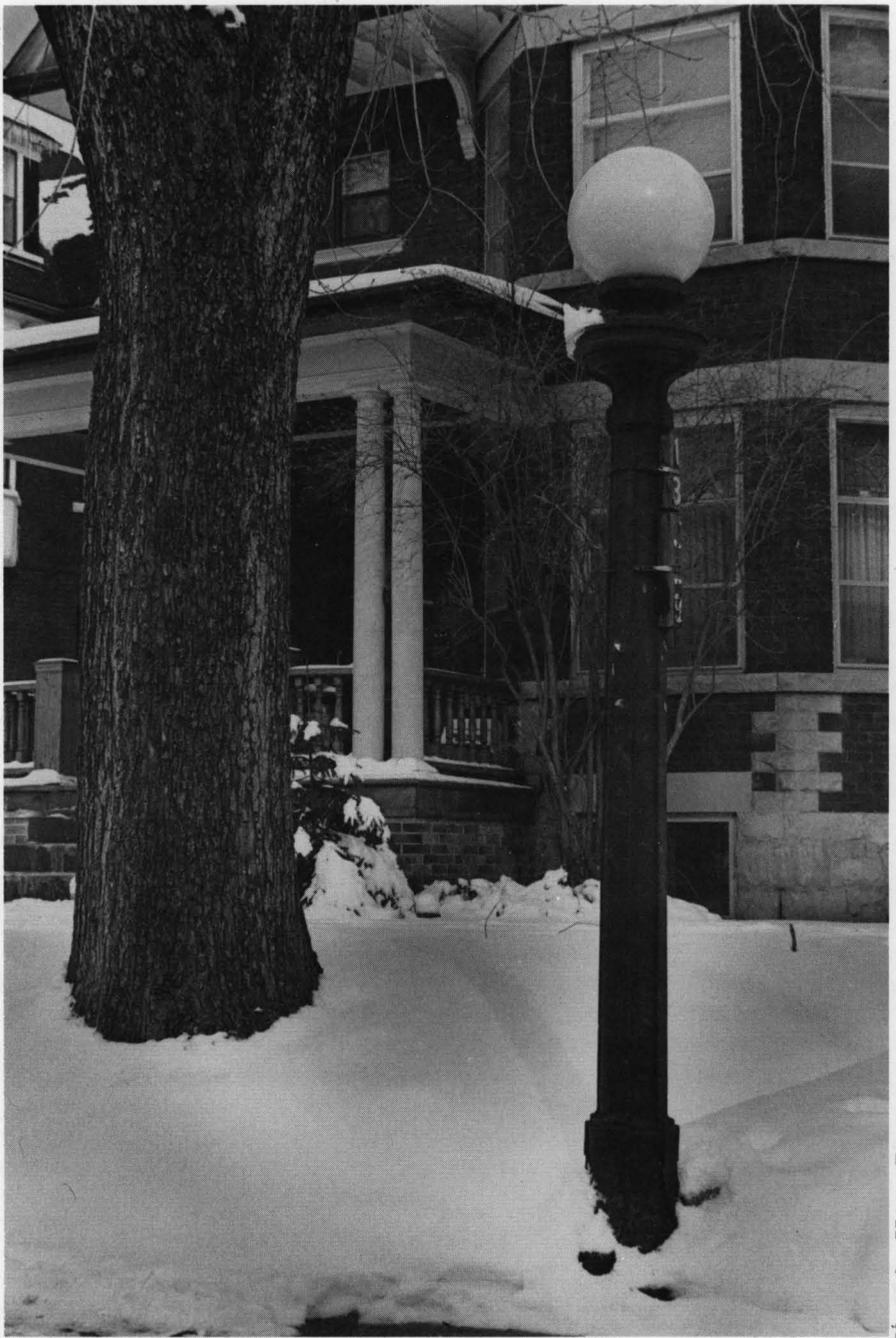


Photo by Herta Ziemann

**Streetlamp on Palmerston Boulevard, 17 February 1993.**

## Origins of Local Street Names

**Augusta:** Augusta Elizabeth (Eliza) Sullivan (1810-36), the wife of Robert Baldwin. The couple married in 1827, had two sons and two daughters, and were blissfully happy during their nine years together. Baldwin became obsessed with his lost wife in his later years. His will dictated that certain of Eliza's possessions and letters be buried with him and their coffins be chained together. Most important, he asked that his body be operated on with a similar incision to the Caesarian section that Eliza had suffered. See Robert, Baldwin.

**Baldwin:** Dr. William Warren Baldwin (1775-1844), a doctor, militia officer, JP, lawyer, office holder, judge, businessman, politician, and the owner of a country house on Davenport Hill called Spadina. He was born in County Cork, Ireland, studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh and came to Upper Canada with his family in 1798. In 1803, he married Phoebe Willcocks, and was called to the bar. He was appointed master in chancery in 1806, and district court judge in 1809. He was judge of the surrogate court, Home District from 1812 to 1836. From 1821 to 1830 he was a member of the House of Assembly. He and his son, Robert, originated the concept of responsible colonial government. Baldwin Street was called Clyde Street until 1896. See Augusta, Phoebe, Robert, Spadina, Willcocks.

**Bathurst:** Henry, third earl Bathurst, secretary for War and the Colonies, 1812-27. This name applied to the present street south of Queen (then Lot) when given in 1837. The northern section was known as Crookshank's Lane, after George Crookshank, who owned a 300-acre farm (the west half of park lots 18, 19 and 20) from today's Queen Street to Bloor Street, between Lippincott and Manning. Crookshank's Lane was a semi-private thoroughfare connecting the farm with York. The upper portion of it was not officially changed from

Crookshank's Lane to Bathurst Street until 1870. George Crookshank (1773-1859) was born in New York City. After the Revolution, the family moved to St. John, N.B. In 1796, George Crookshank came to York and entered the Commissary Department. During the War of 1812, he was promoted to assistant commissary general, serving from 1814 until his retirement in 1816. He was a member of the Legislative Council of Upper Canada, 1821-41. Crookshank made a fortune in business and land speculations.

**Bellevue:** For Belle Vue, the home of George Taylor Denison (1783-1853). Built in 1815, Belle Vue stood at the northeast corner of the modern streets of Denison Square and Bellevue Avenue, roughly in the middle of Denison's 156-acre estate (park lots 17 and east half of 18). Belle Vue's four sides faced squarely to the points of the compass, said to be the only house in Toronto so built. See Borden, Denison, Lippincott, Major.

**Borden:** Esther Borden Lippincott (1791-1823), daughter of Captain Richard Lippincott. She married George Taylor Denison in 1806 at age 15, and brought to the marriage the United Empire Loyalist (U.E.) designation, and her father's land holdings. The couple had eight children. Two boys and a daughter died in infancy, but Sophia, Eliza, George, Mary, and Robert survived. See Bellevue, Denison, Lippincott, and Major.

**Casimir:** Sir Casimir Stanislaus Gzowski (1813-98), a civil engineer, businessman, and militia officer, whose home, The Hall (now Alexandra Park near Bathurst and Dundas), was built in the vicinity in 1858. He was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, the eldest son of a Polish count. He studied engineering in Russia, and entered the Russian army but joined his compatriots in an 1830 uprising in Warsaw. He was exiled to the United States where he lived until

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coming to Canada West in 1842. He worked as an engineer for the Canadian department of public works, but left in 1848 for private practice. His contracts included building the Grand Trunk Railway from Sarnia to Toronto (1850s), and the international bridge over Niagara (1871-3). He was knighted in 1890. Casimir Street was changed from Bear Street in 1893.

**Clinton:** Probably Henry Clinton (1811-64), secretary for the Colonies 1852-4. He visited Canada in 1860.

**College:** Its original use (1829) was a private avenue of approach to King's College, but it was leased by the University of Toronto, along with the University Avenue, as public streets, ca. 1888. College Avenue was renamed College Street in 1888.

**Denison:** Denison Avenue was originally a half-mile carriage drive up from Queen Street to Belle Vue, the residence at Denison Square built by George Taylor Denison (1783-1853) and, after his decease, owned by his son Lt.-Col. Robert Brittain Denison. George Taylor Denison was the eldest son of John Denison (1757-1824) and Sophia Taylor, who came to Canada from Yorkshire in 1792, settling at York in 1796. G. T. Denison served as a militia officer in the War of 1812, and during the defence of York in 1813 was captured and held prisoner for six months. He played an important role in the organization of the volunteer militia of Canada. In 1822 he organized a troop of volunteer cavalry, the York Dragoons, which he commanded in the Rebellion of 1837. Known as "Denison's Horse", it became the Governor General's Body Guards in 1866. See Bellevue, Borden, Lippincott, Major.

**Dundas:** Sir Henry Dundas, first Viscount Melville, Home Secretary 1791-4. Like Yonge Street, Dundas Street was laid out by Lt.-Gov. Simcoe, who intended that it join the provincial capital at York with the Thames River on the west and the mouth of the River Trent on Lake Ontario on the east. Within

Toronto's boundaries, Dundas Street today is formed from a series of earlier streets, including St. Patrick, Anderson, Agnes and Arthur west of Yonge; and Crookshank, Wilton and Beech between Yonge Street and the Don River.

**Euclid:** The Greek mathematician (fl.300 B.C.), whose *Elements* became the basis of future geometry. The original 1854 subdivision plan named the street Lumley. It was changed to Euclid Avenue in 1896.

**Gore:** Likely Francis Gore (1769-1852), lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada, 1806-17.

**Grace:** the daughter of E. O. Bickford, a later owner of Gore Vale, built ca. 1820 by Duncan Cameron and named for Francis Gore. See Gore.

**Lippincott:** Esther Borden Lippincott, wife of George Taylor Denison, or her father, Captain Richard Lippincott. Richard Lippincott (1745-1826), a native of Shrewsbury, New Jersey, served as an officer with the New Jersey Volunteers during the American Revolutionary War, and was implicated in the hanging of a prisoner of war. After the Revolution, he immigrated to New Brunswick, and about 1793 moved to Upper Canada where he was granted 3,000 acres of land in Vaughan Township near the present Richmond Hill. Lippincott's land became the basis of George Denison's fortune; he lived with his son-in-law until his death in 1826. See Bellevue, Borden, Denison, Major.

**Major:** Major Robert Brittain Denison (1821-1900), the third son of George Taylor Denison and Esther Borden Lippincott, and inheritor of his father's home, Belle Vue. He divided his energies between the militia and church building. He personally underwrote the cost of St. Stephen-in-the-Fields in 1858, and after it burned, its 1865 replacement. He joined his father's troop in 1843 as coronet, and in 1857 became a major, commanding the Toronto Field Battery. In 1862 he became brigade-major of the 10th Military District, and was commander of a provisional battal-

ion at Clifton during the Fenian Rail in 1866. He was deputy adjutant-general of the Canadian militia, 1881-6. He also served as alderman for St. Patrick's Ward. See Bellevue, Borden, Denison, Lippincott.

**Manning:** Alexander Manning (1819-1903), mayor of Toronto, 1873 and 1885. Born in Dublin, Ireland, he emigrated to Toronto in 1834. He was a building contractor whose projects included railways, canals, and the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa. He was also a major developer and owner of property. Manning served for many years on Toronto City Council, beginning in 1856. When he died, he had the largest individual property taxes in Toronto. The street was called Hope Street in the original 1854 subdivision plan, and changed to Manning Avenue in 1888.

**Nassau:** Possibly for the eldest son of Ogle R. Gowan (1803-76), first grand master of the Grand Orange Lodge of British North America and M.P. for Leeds County intermittently from 1836-61. He later moved to Toronto and lived at the corner of Augusta Avenue. His son was named in honour of William of Orange, a member of the house of Nassau. Nassau Street was called Cambridge Street until 1876. See Oxford.

**Oxford:** After the English university. Next to it used to be Cambridge Street (now Nassau). For a time ca. 1870 Oxford Street was called Augustus.

**Palmerston:** Lord Palmerston, prime minister of England, 1855-8. In the original subdivision plans, the street from Queen to College was called Muter, and from College to Bloor, Ontario. Both were changed to Palmerston Avenue in 1888. The section from College to Bloor became Palmerston Boulevard in 1950.

**Phoebe:** Phoebe Willcocks, the second daughter of William Willcocks, and the wife of William Warren Baldwin. Born in Ireland, she came to Upper Canada with her family ca. 1801 and married in 1803. Phoebe had five sons, including

Robert, who described her as "the master mind of our family." She and her sister, Maria, inherited the huge Russell estate in 1822, including the property on both sides of today's Spadina Avenue. See Baldwin, Robert, Willcocks.

**Robert:** Robert Baldwin (1804-58), a lawyer and politician, the eldest son of Dr. W. W. Baldwin and Phoebe Willcocks. His many accomplishments include "the genius of responsible government and the centrally important heritage of a bicultural nation." He was born and educated at York, and called to the bar in 1825. He was a member of the Legislative Assembly in 1929-30, and of the Executive Council in 1836. He was solicitor-general, 1840-1, and with Louis LaFontaine formed two ministries in 1842-3 and 1848-51. See Augusta, Baldwin. Phoebe, Willcocks.

**St. Andrew:** After the patron saint of Scotland.

**Spadina:** For Spadina, the home built in 1818 on the brow of Davenport Hill by Dr. William Warren Baldwin: "a very commodious house in the Country - I have called the place Spadina, the Indian word for Hill - or Mont." Dr. Baldwin took the name from the Ojibway word "Ishapedenah." It was always pronounced "Spa-deena" by the Baldwin family, the only possible pronunciation because there is no hard "i" in the Ojibway language. Baldwin "cut out an avenue through the woods all the way so that we can see the vessels passing up and down the bay." See Baldwin.

**Willcocks:** William Willcocks (1736-1813), a native of County Cork, who in 1793 was granted park lot 15, the property from today's Queen to Bloor between Huron Street and Spadina Avenue. He was an early merchant at York and its first postmaster. He sold the park lot to first cousin, Peter Russell, in 1802. His two daughters, Phoebe and Maria, inherited the property with the Russell estate in 1822. See Baldwin, Phoebe.