

# THE BEACH IN PICTURES

## 1793-1932

By

Mary Campbell and Barbara Myrvold



Front Cover  
**Kew Beach**, 17 July 1915  
CTA Salmon 538

Title Page ▷  
**Kew Beach Lifesaving Station**, 3 August 1920  
THC PC1/1/5465

# The Beach in Pictures 1793-1932

by  
Mary Campbell and Barbara Myrvold



Published with the assistance of the Ontario Heritage  
Foundation, Ontario Ministry of Culture and Communications



**Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data**

Campbell, Mary, 1940-  
The Beach in pictures, 1793-1932

(Toronto Public Library Board local history  
handbook; no. 6)  
ISBN 0-920601-08-1

1. Beach, The (Toronto, Ont.) - History. 2. Toronto  
(Ont.) - History. 3. Beach, The (Toronto, Ont.) -  
History - Pictorial works. 4. Toronto (Ont.) History -  
Pictorial works. I. Myrvold, Barbara. II. Toronto  
Public Library. III. Title. IV. Series: Toronto Public  
Library Board local history handbooks; no. 6.  
FC3097.52.C35 1988 971.3'541 C88-094054-9  
F1059.5.T686B42 1988

Copyright© 1988 Toronto Public Library Board  
ISBN 0-920601-08-1

Designed by Joe Trimmeliti,  
Publicity and Publications Department  
Toronto Public Library

Typeset and Printed by  
Howarth & Smith Ltd.

Key to Abbreviations

AO: Archives of Ontario  
CTA: City of Toronto Archives  
ETBHS: East Toronto and Beaches Historical Society  
MTLB: Metropolitan Toronto Library Board  
THC: Toronto Harbour Commission  
TTC: Toronto Transit Commission

# Contents

Preface	4
Introduction	4
<b>Part I: Development of the Beach Area, 1793 - 1932</b>	
Early History	5
Development of the Kingston Road	6
Early Settlers	6
Summer Resort	7
Transition	9
Permanent Community	11
After Annexation	13
Waterfront Development	14
<b>Part II: Highlights</b>	
Small's Estate	18
Woodbine Beach	20
Woodbine Park	23
Kew Beach School	24
Fire Protection	24
Kew Gardens	26
Scarboro' Beach Amusement Park	27
Glen Stewart	30
Balmy Beach Park	32
Munro Park	34
Victoria Park	36
Beaches Library	44
<b>Appendix A: Beach Area Subdivision Plans</b>	39
<b>Appendix B: Origin of Beach Street Names</b>	42
Notes	43
Bibliography	44

## Preface

*The Beach in Pictures* was initiated by the East Toronto and Beaches Historical Society and Beaches Branch of Toronto Public Library in response to many requests over the years for historical information on the district. Wherever possible, original documents have been consulted, and in this regard we wish to thank the staff at City of Toronto Archives, Archives of Ontario, Metropolitan Toronto Library, Ontario Land Registry Office, and the archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto, Anglican Diocese of Toronto, United Church of Canada, Toronto Harbour Commission, Toronto Board of Education, and Toronto Public Library.

Some research was conducted by university students hired under the federal government's Summer Canada employment programme in 1983, 1984, and 1987. The students were Pauline Head, Thomas Rahn, Catherine Keenan, Paul Drum, Nye Thomas, Kerry Morton, Grant van Iderstine, Joanne Badali, Hugh Garrett, Margo Teasdale, and Chris Petridis.

Valuable assistance was supplied by Ray Corley who read the manuscript and suggested improvements, Dawson Lang who provided a family history, and other members of the historical society. A special thanks goes to June Coles, Christine Bond, and Ellen Rogosin who typed the manuscript into the computer, to Peter Richardson and Keith Pituley who got it back out, to Robert Fraser who edited the text, to Joe Trimmeliti who designed the book, and to Cathy Hatanaka who assisted with the graphics. The Ontario Heritage Foundation provided editorial and publication grants. We are grateful to all who have made this publication possible.

Mary Campbell and  
Barbara Myrvold  
Toronto, 1988

## Introduction

*The Beach in Pictures* is divided into two sections. Part I traces the chronological development of the Beach from 1793 to 1932, during which period the area's essential character was established: a residential lakeside neighbourhood with a commercial strip along Queen Street. Part II contains detailed articles, arranged geographically from west to east, highlighting important Beach personalities, institutions, and landmarks.

Throughout its history, from forest to farmland, from resort area to permanent community to city neighbourhood, the Beach area of Toronto has been influenced by its geographical location. Bounded by Ashbridge's Bay on the west, Scarborough Bluffs on the east, Lake Ontario on the south, and the Kingston Road ridge on the north, it has always been both isolated from and connected to the mainstream of urban development. This situation has contributed to the Beach's pattern of growth and its unique character.

The lake made the area attractive to its earliest landowners, giving them access by boat, an abundant water supply, and a pleasing view; yet the location was far enough away from York (now Toronto) to be a retreat from the bustle of town life. The first main highway along the natural ridge to the north brought land travellers near, but not into, the area, focussing early settlement along the Kingston Road rather than at the Beach. In the 1870s, street railways and steamboats began to bring daily visitors to waterfront recreational parks, and more and more of them stayed for the summer to enjoy lakeside living. Soon a resort community developed, and this led to permanent settlement, as many came to appreciate the benefits of country living close to the city. However, Beach residents also wanted the advantages of city services, but because the area was geographically distant from its governing bodies, it was often

neglected, and civic amenities came long after residents asked for them. Even after the whole area became part of Toronto, the Beach retained its separate identity, partly because of the residents' consistent opposition to any development which might detract from the quality of life at the Beach. This made the neighbourhood all the more desirable and residents became all the more vigilant in their efforts to safeguard it from the effects of overdevelopment. Their determination led to the establishment of the Beach's most distinctive feature - a public park stretching along most of the waterfront. The park ensured that the lakeshore would remain in a relatively natural state and integrated with the community.

The name and the boundaries of this neighbourhood have long been the source of some confusion and controversy. Prior to 1925-26, the communities along Toronto's eastern beaches were usually known by their separate names, i.e. Woodbine Beach, Kew Beach, and Balmy Beach. Then, with the residential development of the Scarborough Beach Amusement Park property between the two latter areas, a unified neighbourhood began to emerge. Most residents from that era refer to their district as "The Beach," but local organizations and services have used both Beach and Beaches in their names. The matter of an official name attracted city-wide attention in 1985, when a group of Queen Street merchants had street signs erected designating the area as "The Beaches." A spirited opposition movement was begun by community residents, resulting in the removal of the controversial signs and the reinstallation of the old-style signs, leaving the issue unresolved. At times, the Beach has been considered to include only the area south of Queen Street between Woodbine and Victoria Park avenues but over the years the name has been used for a much larger geographical area.

# Part I: Development of the Beach Area, 1793 - 1932

## Early History

The Beach and its environs were divided into lots by Alexander Aitken's 1793 "Plan of York Harbour", prepared for Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe. The 1st Concession from the Bay ran north from the base line (now Queen Street) a mile and a quarter to what is now Danforth Avenue. Two hundred acre lots, running north and south, were laid out and numbered from east to west, beginning at the boundary of Scarborough. These lots were extended south of the base line to the lake shore, forming the smaller, irregular lots known as the broken front. The Beach area is contained in lots 1 to 7.

Joseph Bouchette, who surveyed York Harbour in 1793, later wrote that "the bay and neighbouring marshes were the hitherto uninhabited haunts of immense coveys of wild fowl".<sup>1</sup> These marshes are shown on Aitken's map as a swampy bay stretching from lot 4 (east of present-day Woodbine Avenue) to the mouth of the Don River, separated from Lake Ontario by a narrow neck of land angling southwestward to meet what are today the Toronto Islands. The Ashbridge family from Pennsylvania settled on the bay in 1793 and it soon became known as Ashbridge's Bay. Part of that grant (originally lots 7, 8, and 9) still belongs to the family.

A road east of the Town of York was sufficiently developed by 1796 for Mrs. Simcoe to drive the three miles to the Ashbridge property on an outing. In 1797, John Ashbridge was named overseer of the highway for the Bay, but it was not until 1799-1800 that an American contractor, Asa Danforth, built the first major road connecting York to the Bay of Quinte. This road followed the base line east of the Don, branching northeast after about two miles, and later became known as the Kingston Road.



from Goad's Atlas of the City of Toronto and Vicinity, 1884 showing lot numbers

## Development of the Kingston Road

Although there was a stagecoach service to Kingston by 1817, the major York roads were in such deplorable condition by 1833 that the *Canadian Correspondent* claimed it was "almost physically impossible for the farmers to bring their produce to town."<sup>2</sup> Complaints stirred the legislature to action, and on 8 Feb. 1833, a bill passed providing for £10,000 to macadamize the three roads into York: Yonge Street from the north, Dundas Street from the west, and Kingston Road from the east. The latter received £2,000 and the money was to be repaid by tolls. The five trustees for the Kingston Road, one of whom was Charles Coxwell Small who owned a farm on lots 6 and 7, decided to reduce costs by planking instead.

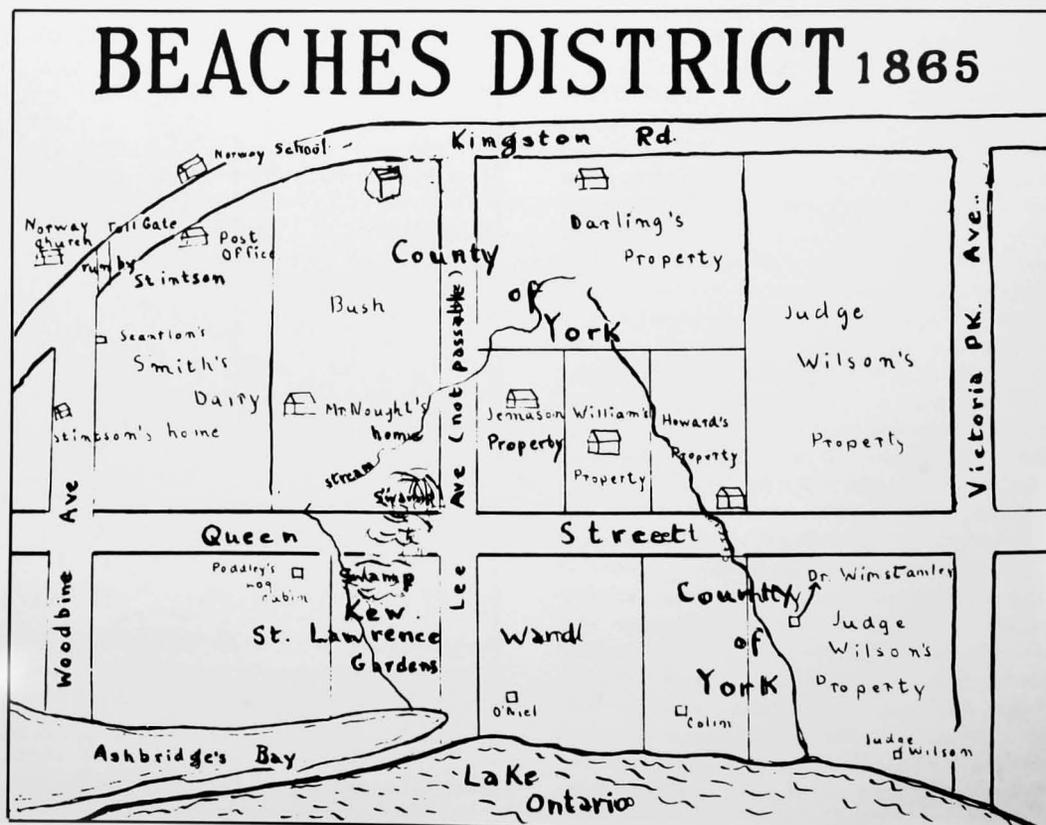
With this improvement in the road, stagecoach service became much more efficient, and goods could be brought to Toronto by wagon or sleigh all year round. Settlement grew along this route, and by 1851, Browne's map of the Township of York shows many structures along the Kingston Road. There were clusters of buildings, including three taverns, a school, and a steam saw-mill, in the areas where Kingston Road now intersects with Queen Street and Woodbine Avenue. The latter settlement was in the vicinity of the Norway Steam Saw Mill, which started in 1835 and supplied white pine, hemlock, oak, and "particularly the valuable and scarce article, the Norway Pine."<sup>3</sup> By 1855, the Church of St. John the Baptist (Anglican) and its cemetery were established there, and the 1857/58 *Canada Directory* lists Norway as a small village with a daily mail service and a population of about one hundred.

Beaches District Map, 1865  
Drawn 1938?

## Early Settlers

However, the Kingston Road bypassed the Beach area and it developed more slowly. Nevertheless, part of it was included in the incorporation of the City of Toronto in 1834. The area south of the present Queen Street and eastward to the far side of lot 3 (today's MacLean Avenue) was set aside as part of the "liberties" (areas left for the growth of the ward or the creation of new wards) of St. Lawrence Ward. When the liberties were abolished in 1859, this section of the Beach became part of St. Lawrence Ward.

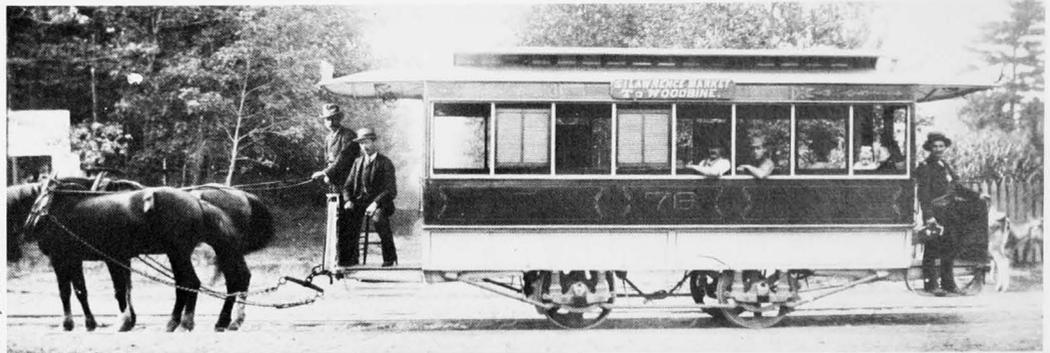
There are indications that several local landowners farmed in this area before 1853 when Joseph Williams began his Kew Farms. Certainly the Ashbridges had farmed as soon as they acquired land, and their neighbour, John Small, a high-ranking government official, had a farm on lot 7 as early as 1802. Small was also the first prominent citizen to establish a country estate here. This tradition eventually included former Toronto mayor George Monro (1847), distinguished judge Sir Adam Wilson (1853), court official Allan McLean Howard Sr. (1876), and wealthy stockbroker A. E. Ames (1900).



AO S11565

Horse-Drawn Streetcar to Woodbine Park, c. 1890

CTA James 1356



The first registered subdivision was laid out in 1853 in lot 4, forming 12 large lots south of the Kingston Road and including a road allowance which would later become Lee Avenue. However, two of Joseph Williams' sons later recalled that in about 1865, Queen Street was "a country trail with stumps of trees scattered in its midst,"<sup>4</sup> and there were only 12 houses at the Beach. Their assessment is borne out by a military sketch map of 1868, which shows that most of the settlement was still along the Kingston Road, with concentrations at Small's Corner (now Kingston Road and Queen) and at Norway. The area to the east is labelled "thickly wooded" and shows only a few buildings, one of which was a broom manufactory (probably the Bryce Broom Company).<sup>5</sup> Although not shown on this map, by the 1860s there were commercial fishermen living on Woodbine Beach, the sand spit formed when the lake broke through the narrow neck of land separating Ashbridge's Bay from Lake Ontario.

Invitation to Opening Day at Scarborough Heights Hotel, 1 July 1879

Stood near Kingston Road, south side, west of Beech Avenue

MTLB Broadside 46575

**The Scarborough Heights Hotel Co.**

DIRECTORS:  
 PETER PATTERSON, Esq., Pres.  
 J. LAMOND SMITH, Esq., Man. Director.  
 JAMES BEATY, Jr., Q.C.  
 A. McLEAN HOWARD, Esq.  
 GEORGE LESSLIE, Esq.

*Intend Opening the Hotel on the Heights  
 4 miles east of Toronto and just east of  
 Norway, on "Balmy Beach" property*

**ON DOMINION DAY**  
 1st JULY, 1879.

*Invitation to you and family and friends  
 to visit Hotel on that day, and enjoy the beautiful  
 scenery and grounds attached.*

*Lunch, from 3 to 5 o'clock p. m. Speeches  
 at 4 o'clock.*

*Kingston Road Tramway passes near the  
 Hotel.*

**Kingston Road Tramway Summer Time-Table.**

GOING WEST.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Satur- day only.
(HOTEL)	a. m.	p. m.											
Ben Lamond...Lv	6 00	8 30	9 10	10 00	11 30	1 00	1 40	2 00	4 30	5 00	6 40	8 20	10 30
Woodbine.....Ar	6 10	8 40	9 20	10 10	11 40	1 10	1 50	2 10	4 40	5 10	6 50	8 30	10 40
Don Bridge.....Ar	6 30	9 00	9 40	10 30	12 00	1 30	2 10	3 30	5 00	6 30	7 10	8 20	11 00
GOING EAST.													
Don Bridge...Lv	6 45	9 00	9 50	10 30	12 00	1 30	2 10	3 30	5 00	6 30	7 10	8 20	11 30
Woodbine.....Ar	7 05	9 20	10 10	11 50	12 30	1 50	2 30	3 50	5 20	6 50	7 30	8 40	11 50
Ben Lamond...Ar	7 20	9 40	10 30	11 10	12 40	2 10	2 50	4 10	5 40	7 10	7 50	10 00	12 00
(HOTEL)													

FARE.—Don Bridge to Woodbine, 5 cents; to Ben Lamond, 10 cents; Ben Lamond to Don Bridge, 10 cents.

*Please preserve this Table for reference.*

Summer Resort

In the 1870s the district began to be served by streetcar and steamer and to be developed as a summer retreat for the general population of Toronto. In 1874, York County allowed the Toronto Gravel Road and Concrete Company to construct a tramway along the south side of the Kingston Road, from its gravel pits in Scarborough to Toronto. The agreement provided for passengers to be carried between the Don Bridge and Norway. The rails were laid down in 1875 and the horse-drawn trams served Woodbine Park (now Greenwood Race Track) which opened that same year. In 1876, Adam Wilson subdivided his property in lots 1 and 2, setting aside a "private promenade" (Balmy Beach Park) for those who would live there. This plan included Balsam, Beech, Birch (now Silver Birch), Pine, and Maple avenues (the last later becoming part of Queen Street). By 1878, there were at least 15 residents living along the future Lee Avenue. Victoria Park opened in 1878 and excursion steamers made several trips a day there from pickup points in downtown Toronto. Kew Gardens opened the next year, and one of the area's first summer hotels, the Scarborough Heights Hotel near Beech Avenue and Kingston Road, also opened about this time.

The next decade saw changes in the political makeup of the area and the introduction of many services and improvements. In 1880,

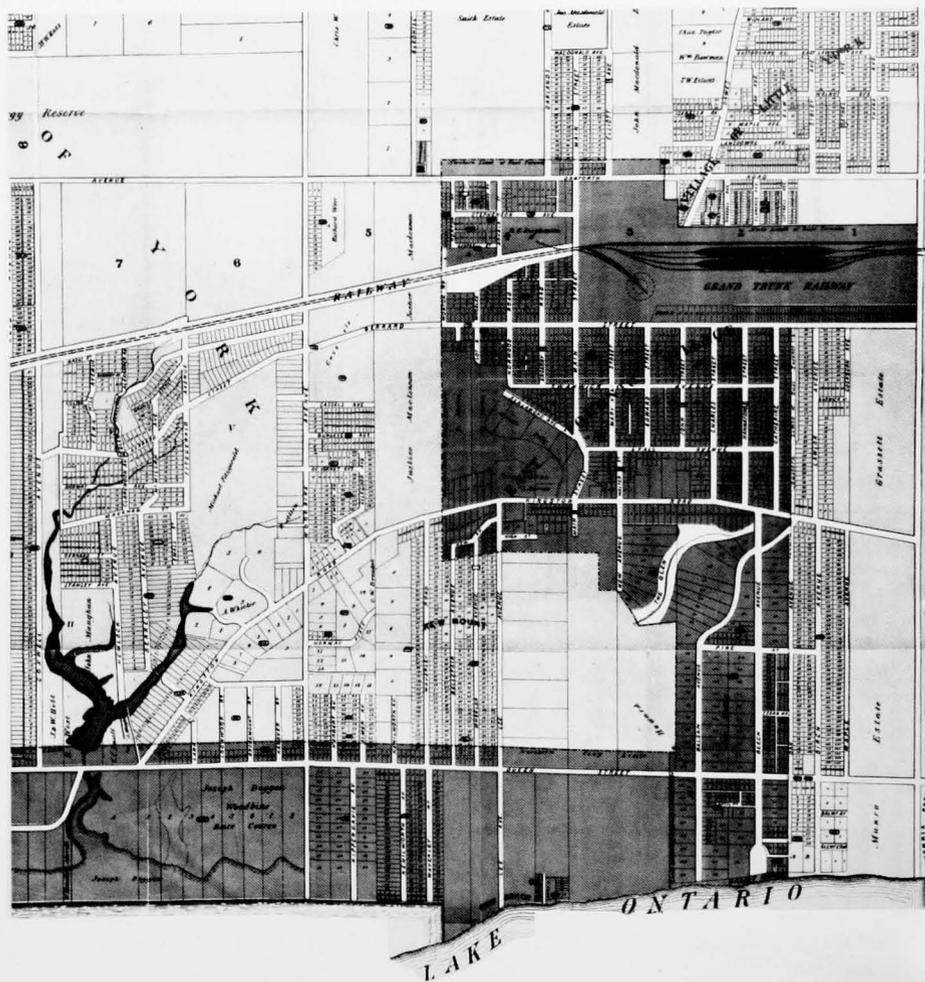
York County, in response to a petition from local landowners, agreed to survey Queen Street east from the Woodbine Race Course to the township line (Scarborough), and to plant stone monuments at regular intervals. In the next few years, York Township opened up Woodbine Avenue (originally set out as a road allowance in the 1793 plan), and made improvements to Queen Street. After the 1887 annexation of a strip of land moved the boundary of Toronto two hundred feet to the north side of Queen Street, the City took over the improvement of the street to the City limits (the far side of lot 3) and began to extend other services such as wooden sidewalks and water mains into the district. By the end of the decade, these improvements reached as far as Lee Avenue. In 1887, the Toronto Street Railway Company (TSR) began to lay its tracks east from the Don River, and opened to the Woodbine that same year. By 1889 service went to Lee Avenue.

Many people were attracted to the area and now came to spend the day in one of the parks, or a longer period of the summer in a tent or cottage. Perhaps in anticipation of those who might want to settle here, many subdivision plans were registered in the late 1880s creating potential building lots. New streets were laid out, such as Kippendavie, Balmy, Glen Fern, Cedar, Elmer, Herbert, Hazel, Bellefair, Wheeler, Waverley, and Kenilworth (south of Queen). However, most of lots 1 and 3 south of Kingston Road were still large estates. There were enough people at the Beach in 1882 to establish an interdenominational Union Church on the north side of Queen where Wineva Ave. now is, but in 1889, when Miss E. A. Wray started a public school at Kew Beach, she had difficulty in recruiting the requisite 20 pupils.

The situation was obviously different north of Kingston Road, where a census of the Village of East Toronto had reported a population of over 750, allowing it to be incorporated in 1888. (This community had grown up around the Grand Trunk Railway's York Station, at Main

Street south of Danforth.) Although most of the village was north of Kingston Road, it did include part of lots 3 and 4 south of that, and virtually all of lot 2 to the edge of the lake<sup>6</sup>. This took in Balsam and Beech avenues, and part of Queen Street. This section may have been included to provide access to the beach and a

larger water supply for the future. Initially, the village's water was obtained through the Grand Trunk Railway's system, from springs near the village. The Beach area was now under three different local jurisdictions (Toronto, East Toronto, and York Township), a situation which would later cause problems.



From *Map of Toronto and Suburbs, East of the Don, Including East Toronto Village*, by Abrey & Tyrrell, 1892

## Transition

In the last decade of the 19th century, there were many indications of growing development and settlement south of the Kingston Road. More subdivision plans were registered and a few new streets were laid out: Oak (now Willow) Avenue, a second Maple Avenue (now Scarborough Road), Spruce Avenue (now Spruce Hill Road), Howard (now MacLean) Avenue, and Hammersmith Avenue. In 1891, a volunteer fire brigade was organized at Kew Beach. Several churches were established. In 1891, the Baptists met in the Kew Beach fire hall, and a few years later built a church on the southeast corner of Kenilworth Avenue and Queen. Also in 1891, the Church of England started a summer tent church for all denominations (the beginnings of St. Aidan's Anglican) on the south side of Queen near Balsam Avenue. *Robertson's Landmarks* gives this evocative description:

a unique structure in dimensions, about 45 x 25 feet. It may be described as a church with roof and foundations, but no walls. The former is supported on tall cedar pillars, stripped of their bark, and there are none other than canvas walls. The chancel consists of a platform slightly raised, where, though, is the communion table, prayer desk and lectern. The back of the chancel is boarded up. There is no boarded floor; simply coarse tanbark on the ground, and, it is needless to say, there are no furnaces. Handsome oil lamps are suspended from the open roof, and these during August and September have always to be lighted for at least a portion of the service.<sup>7</sup>

In 1892, the Methodist Conference took over the old Union Church on Queen Street to hold in trust. Two years later, the Presbyterians bought the building and in 1895 Kew Beach Presbyterian Church was organized.

Increasing numbers of people were spending their summers at Balmy Beach, Kew Beach, and Woodbine Beach in tents and cottages. In 1896, there were two new parks for day visitors: Munro Park, just to the west of Victoria Park and run in conjunction with it, and Small's Park, located at Small's Pond, north of the Woodbine race track.

The city was becoming more aware of the area, and the *Toronto World* began to run almost daily articles about events at Kew Beach and/or Balmy Beach. (The two areas were separated by the Thomas O'Connor farm in lot 3.) The articles indicated a concerned population, who began to think of all-year residence, and to agitate for better services. Residents especially wanted drainage of swamps, good road maintenance, adequate street lighting, and year-round streetcar service.

The inherent difficulties of multiple local jurisdictions were now felt. For example, while York Township lit the Kingston Road with piped-in gas, the City lit Kew Beach streets with electricity (although only in the summer). Balmy Beach asked for electric street lighting, but East Toronto provided oil lamps, lit only on moonless nights.

Another source of dissatisfaction at Balmy Beach was streetcar service. In 1893, the Toronto Railway Company (TRC), having taken over the franchise of the TSR in 1891, extended

its tracks along Queen Street to Balsam Avenue, just beyond the City limits (no winter service), but there was no service between Balsam and Victoria Park. (In 1894, the Toronto and Scarborough Electric Railway Light and Power Company constructed an extension of its Kingston Road line down Blantyre Avenue to Victoria Park. The electric streetcars were so popular that in July 1895 the steamboat service to the Park was discontinued for lack of use.) In 1896, the TRC tried to extend its route to Munro Park, but East Toronto refused to allow the tracks across its territory. The dispute was not settled until 1898 when service was opened to a loop in Munro Park and the Blantyre route was discontinued. Meanwhile, in 1897, a petition was circulated at Balmy Beach, requesting Queen Street ratepayers to appeal to the legislature for separation from East Toronto since tax money was not being spent on the Beach area, and the Village was obstructing the extension of the street railway.



Open Streetcar at Munro Park,  
c. 1898

TTC11469

Nevertheless, at the turn of the century, the Beach area was enjoying great popularity and remarkable growth. Kew Beach had its own post office, for which it had petitioned in 1896, claiming a population of 250 families; and in 1899, the residents at Balmy Beach sought their own post office, claiming 150 families. Several boarding houses were opened for summer visitors, but there were indications of more permanent settlement too. In 1899, Kew Beach School opened its new four-room brick building on the southeast corner of Queen and Kippendavie.

That same year, Allan McLean Howard Jr. advertised building lots for sale at Balmy Beach, "the most beautiful annex of Toronto, and the coming suburban residential part of the city," offering the advantages of "city water and gas" and "no city taxes."<sup>8</sup> The *Toronto World* observed "A Building Boom on at the Beach":

The workman's hammer, the carpenter's saw and the merry voices of a hundred builders echo through the groves of Balmy Beach. Everywhere the air is redolent with burning pitch and the smell of newly-cut pine, for a small boom in the building line is in progress and many houses are under construction.

The article noted a similar flurry of activity on Waverley Road and Kew Beach Avenue, and ended hopefully: "building has not been so brisk for years, and mechanics are looking forward to better times."<sup>9</sup>

**Alexandra Hotel**, 24 August 1931  
326 Lake Front at Fernwood Park Avenue  
Stood 1902-c. 1931.



CTA DPW 1-1036

## Permanent Community

The first decade of the twentieth century was a time of further growth and change. The three local jurisdictions became one (the City of Toronto), and the population shifted from predominantly summer residency to permanent settlement. In the summer of 1900, a reporter from the *Toronto World* counted 91 tents and 287 houses east of Woodbine Avenue near the lakefront (Queen Street and Pine Avenue were included). Of the 287 houses, 65 were facing the lakefront and 92 were reported to be "occupied all the year round." (By comparison, Toronto Island had 225 cottages and 66 tents, and a Muskoka guidebook that year claimed 275 to 300 cottages.)<sup>10</sup>

As the number of permanent dwellings increased, it became more difficult to find a cottage or a tenting site for the summer. New

streets were opened up, sidewalks were constructed (some four foot plank and some five foot cement), water mains and drains were laid, electrical wires were strung, and lights installed (both incandescent and arc lamps). Balmy Beach had a new permanent fire hall on Spruce Avenue in 1902. The next year the Bell Telephone Company opened the Beach exchange on the northeast corner of Queen and Lee. Methodist congregations were established at Kew Beach in 1904 (today's Bellefair United Church) and at Balmy Beach in 1907 (Beech Avenue Methodist Church, now Kingston Road United). East Toronto completed its waterworks on Balmy Beach in 1905. The following year the City finished Fire Hall No. 17 at Queen and Herbert and Kew Beach Presbyterians were building a new church on Wineva Avenue.

Summer and permanent residents alike enjoyed such outdoor activities as sailing, paddling, rowing, swimming, lawn bowling, lawn tennis, baseball, bicycling, bonfires, and fireworks. Winter residents indulged in skating, hockey, and curling. Indoors, there were card games, dances, and concerts, at which participants sang, danced, and gave recitations. Social gatherings and sporting competitions were a big part of life at Balmy and Kew Beach, and many organizations were formed. Each area had a lawn bowling club, a hockey club, a baseball team, and a clubhouse on the beach for aquatic sports and social activities. Kew Beach had a tennis club and Balmy Beach had a skating and curling club, a gun club, and a Bachelors' Club. A friendly rivalry in sporting events was enjoyed, but men from both areas belonged to the Balmy Beach Masonic Lodge formed in 1905. Starting in 1903, many of the social and sporting events at Balmy centered around the Balmy Beach Club which still functions today.

The Kew Beach Association concerned itself with both recreation and politics, but the Balmy Beach Property Owners' Association was purely political. Some concerns were common to both areas, such as inadequate drains and street lighting. There were many complaints about the sand and dust of the unpaved streets, which were hard on the horses, and made worse by the increasing number of automobiles. Both areas felt neglected by their respective governing bodies.

The Kew Beach Association was anxious to prevent future houses from being built too closely together, and to find a way to discourage land speculation. As early as 1903, there

**Kenilworth Crescent (Now Avenue), 24 February 1908**  
North of Queen Street East



were urgent requests for a City fire hall to protect some 350 area buildings, most of them frame. The residents claimed that “of six policemen detailed for duty over the Don, only two ever get as far as the Woodbine, and the populous beach section is neglected altogether.” They also felt that the postal service was inadequate, as “at present a letter posted in the morning is not delivered in the City until well on in the afternoon or next morning”!<sup>11</sup>

The Balmy Beach Property Owners’ Association was formed in 1900 largely because of the unfair treatment the Balmy Beachers felt they were receiving from the East Toronto Village Council. They claimed that they were contributing more than half the taxes while receiving practically nothing in return, and that they would be better to be annexed to the City rather than to remain part of East Toronto. In 1901, they were still asking for a year-round streetcar service, and two years later they petitioned for a public school. It was felt that Mary Street School (near Gerrard Street) and Kew Beach School (at Kippendavie) were too far away for the more than fifty local children.

In January 1903, East Toronto became a town,<sup>12</sup> with three wards, the area south of Kingston Road being Ward 1. Whereas the village had had only four councillors in all, each new ward had three representatives to the town council, but Balmy Beachers continued their agitation for annexation to the City.

1907 was a particularly eventful year. The new Masonic temple, on the east side of Balsam Avenue just south of Queen, was dedicated. East Toronto’s Pine Avenue School (now Balmy Beach School) was officially opened. The Reverend Andrew Courtice and his wife Ada Mary (the founder of the Home and School movement in 1916) opened Balmy Beach College, a private school where the arts were taught as well as regular courses. (From 1908 to c. 1917, this school was located on the east side of Beech Avenue north of Queen at “The Pines,” which had been built in 1902 as a boarding house.)



### First Tamblyn Drug Store

Queen Street East, southeast corner, Lee Avenue

From J.E. Middleton, *Toronto's 100 Years* (Toronto: City of Toronto Centennial Committee, 1934), 217

Several new stores, including a hardware and two groceries, were built near Queen and Lee. This shopping district already included, among others, Howard’s Butcher Shop, established in 1898, and Gordon Tamblyn’s 1904 drug store, the first of a chain of 95 which was bought out by Boots in 1977. The Bell Telephone Company’s new, larger building (now apartments) opened on the east side of Lee Avenue just north of Queen. The City bought Kew Gardens for a public park, having previously refused opportunities to buy Munro Park, Victoria Park, and the House of Providence Farm (formerly Thomas O’Connor’s) in lot 3. Neither Munro nor Victoria parks reopened in 1907 but Scarborough Beach Amusement Park began operations on the farm property.

Perhaps the most exciting months of 1907 concerned the railroad scare. On 23 May 1906, a sketch had appeared in the *Toronto World* showing a “proposed Grand Trunk [GTR] line” just offshore all along the beach and out to Port Union;<sup>13</sup> and on 21 December that same year, the *World* carried a report of surveying parties,

allegedly representing the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) and the Canadian Northern Railway (CNoR), marking out routes along the beach and 200 yards north of Queen Street, respectively. Local residents, fearing that their property values and the character of their district would be destroyed, rallied to oppose the “railway invasion.”<sup>14</sup> Public meetings were held, a petition was circulated, funds were raised by public subscription, and a delegation was sent to the railway commission in Ottawa. These efforts were not in vain. The CPR and CNoR stayed north of the Danforth, and the GTR retained its old route north of Gerrard.

The annexation of East Toronto to the City of Toronto had been discussed for years. Those in favor, including most Balmy Beachers, saw many possible advantages: paved streets, a more reliable water and electric light system, a good sewage system, better police and fire protection, a free postal delivery service, and (of particular interest to those in the north) extended streetcar service with a single fare to the City. Some even thought that the City could supply these services at a lower tax rate. Those opposed, mostly in the north of the town, feared tax increases. They believed it would be better to supply their own services rather than to become an outlying section of Toronto’s Ward 1, and suffer the same apathy towards their concerns that Kew Beach had experienced. They also doubted that the City could force the TRC to extend its routes or implement a one-fare system. The area between East Toronto and the City would have to be annexed before a unified streetcar service could be expected.

When East Toronto and the City finally agreed to join forces on 15 Dec. 1908, one of the terms was that the area south of Kingston Road would be “set aside as a residential district free from factories and hotels.”<sup>15</sup> The annexation of “Balmy Beach” (the part between East Toronto and Scarborough Township)<sup>16</sup> and “Midway” (the area between East Toronto and the City) followed on 15 Dec. 1909.<sup>17</sup>

## After Annexation

The shortcomings of the local systems were not remedied overnight, and the newspapers continued to register residents' dissatisfaction for some time to come. At first the City used some of East Toronto's services until its own could be implemented. The City agreed to "maintaining the present electric light and water works systems [of East Toronto] until adequate substitution therefore is made."<sup>18</sup> After annexation the East Toronto water main running up Beech Avenue was connected with the City main on Queen Street. The town's two policemen and three fire brigades were kept on. The old town hall on Main Street housed both police and No.2 Fire Brigade as before, until new facilities were built, one on either side, in 1910 and 1911.

The City also extended some of its existing services to the east. In 1908 plans were made to macadamize Queen Street east of Woodbine Avenue. Side streets, however, were still being paved in the 1920s. The many streams, swampy areas, and hills had always made road building difficult. The steeper hills were eventually paved with "brick block" to improve traction. Paving was sometimes opposed by the property owners themselves because the cost was assessed against the adjacent properties over the projected life of the pavement.

The Main Drainage Pumping Station was built on Eastern Avenue west of the Woodbine race track in 1911, but not without opposition from the Beach residents about its effect on their property values and the lakefront. Sewer construction also went on for many years. Free postal delivery had begun at Balmy Beach in 1907, once the houses were numbered and signs were placed on the street corners. Some confusion existed with city streets of identical name until several local names were changed.

Streetcar service remained unsatisfactory for years. After Munro Park closed, service was often cut back to Scarboro' Beach Park. Some-

times a "stub car" (with a motor at each end) went east of Scarboro' Beach Park. In 1913, the Toronto and York Radial Railway Company operated an extra-fare service over this part of the route, but in 1914, the Ontario Railway Board ordered that the TRC resume through service to Neville Park.

New residential development sites were opening up. A large farm north and east of Queen and Lee had been sold in 1905, leading to the establishment of Hambly and Wineva avenues, and Williamson Road. The Munro estate in lot 1 was subdivided into streets and building lots, creating Lynwood Avenue (Kingswood Road) and Munro Park Avenue. A. E. Ames began to subdivide his estate in lots 3 and 4 in

1910. The 1910 city directory devoted over two columns to Queen Street between Woodbine and the east city limits. About 65 stores were listed, more than half in the Bellefair to Leuty area. Only 11 appeared in the Beech Avenue area, and the rest were west of Kenilworth. Although Queen Street was developing as the shopping district, many blocks still had no stores, and some had vacant lots or unfinished houses. The Kenilworth Avenue Baptists had built their present church on Waverley Road, and the Anglicans had built St. Aidan's at Silver Birch and Queen. Balmy Beach School had been overcrowded almost as soon as it was opened, and a six-room addition was begun in 1910.



Queen Street East at Kenilworth Avenue,  
30 September 1910

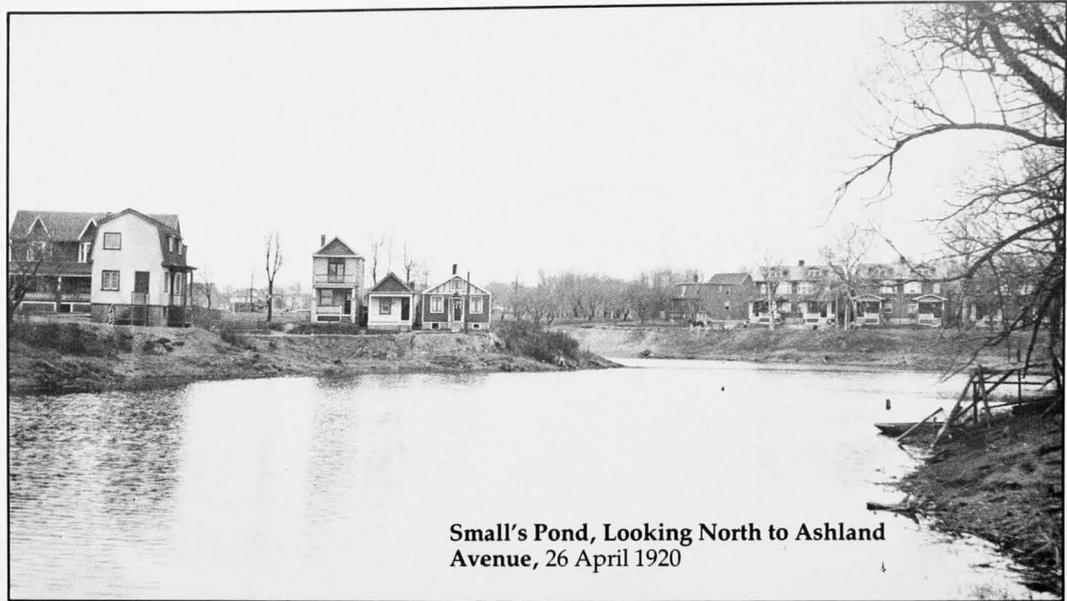
CTA Salmon 2056

## Waterfront Development

In 1912, the recently reorganized Toronto Harbour Commissioners (THC) published their plan for Toronto's waterfront for the next eight years. It called for filling much of Ashbridge's Bay, using the reclaimed land for industry and quiet recreation. There were to be parks, lagoons, beaches, and cottage sites. East of Woodbine, a seawall was planned to extend to Victoria Park, creating a protected waterway about 500 hundred feet wide.<sup>19</sup> A by-law was passed in 1912 allowing the city to expropriate the privately-owned water lots to the eastern city limits.

By 1916, Beach residents were concerned because the southeasterly storms on the lake continued to erode the beach and damage the plank walk along the waterfront. A citizens' meeting was called for 13 July 1916 in the pavilion on the beach at Kippendavie Avenue. The mayor, controllers, and aldermen had been invited, and the big question was: "What is the reason that the Western Section of the Harbour Improvements are being done first, while your property in the East is being destroyed?"<sup>20</sup> By 1920, however, there was still no sign of action except for another plan for the beaches east of Woodbine. This plan recommended widening the beach with fill, and developing a recreational park which would include a boardwalk, facilities for bathing and boating, and possibly a boulevard drive, restaurants, and dancing pavilions. The beach was to be protected by groynes and a breakwater. The cost was estimated at about two million dollars, and again the plans languished for many years.

**Kew Beach Bathing Pavilion, 17 July 1915**  
Lake Ontario between Waverly Road and Lee Avenue  
Stood 1913/14 - 195?



**Small's Pond, Looking North to Ashland Avenue, 26 April 1920**

CTA Salmon 345



CTA Salmon 539

Meanwhile, other local improvements were being made. A two-storey stone-and-wood shelter had been built at the south end of Kew Gardens in 1913/14, with facilities for bathers in the summer and skaters in the winter. In 1914 a public school was built on Williamson Road, and a larger Kew Beach Presbyterian (now United) Church was completed on Wineva Avenue. The Toronto Public Library opened its Beaches Branch in a storefront on the northeast corner of Queen and Hambly Avenue in 1914, and built its present structure, modelled after a Shakespearean grammar school, in Kew Gardens in 1916. The now-familiar Kew Beach life-saving station was constructed at the foot of Leuty Avenue in 1920. The Beth Jacob congregation took over the old Kenilworth Baptist church and added a suitable new facade to create the Beach Hebrew Institute. The Roman Catholics established their own Corpus Christi parish school on Edgewood Avenue in 1920/21 and had a temporary church at Queen and Lockwood Road. In 1921, plans were being made for the construction of 150 moderately-priced homes north of Small's Pond. The next year the City agreed to drain and fill the 11-acre pond (concern about it as a health hazard dated back to 1892) but by 1935 it was still being filled.

In December 1920, the *Toronto Globe* mourned the passing of the last remaining portion of the McLean Howard estate at MacLean Avenue and Queen Street, which was to be subdivided for residences. (Although the family name was spelled McLean, the street name has appeared as McLean, MacLean and Maclean.) It was recalled that the original large estate had included a hill "which was the particular domain of Mr. Howard's beautiful English and Indian pheasants, and a valley for his celebrated

Manchurian ducks. . . The beautiful artificial lake to the west of the property" was reportedly to be preserved, and the writer hoped that the city would incorporate it into the park system.<sup>21</sup> (This hope was eventually fulfilled although "Howard's Pond" was subsequently drained.)

By 1922, the city directory devoted almost five columns to Queen Street between Woodbine and the eastern city limits. Almost all of today's intersecting streets were listed, except for those in the Scarborough Beach Park area. Among

the listings were 21 grocery stores, 12 butchers, 15 confectioners, 11 physicians and 7 dentists, 9 shoe stores, 7 Chinese laundries, 6 hardware stores, 5 banks, 5 barbershops, and 3 movie theatres: Allen's Beach Theatre (replacing the Peter Pan) east of Kenilworth, the Family Theatre east of Lee, and the Prince Edward Theatre (now the Fox) east of Beech. (The Coliseum near Leuty was not listed after 1919.) The only restaurant listed was the Devonshire Dining Hall, just east of MacLean Avenue.



**Queen Street, Looking West Towards Leuty Avenue, 28 May 1915**

CTA RDY 467

In 1923, the Stewart Manor (80 acres of the Ames estate extending from Queen Street to Kingston Road) was being laid out around Glen Manor Drive. It promised to compare favourably with the "older and most noted residential districts of Toronto."<sup>22</sup> Scarboro' Beach Park, the last of the Beach amusement grounds, was closed in 1925, and the next year a subdivision of moderately-priced homes was built around these new streets: lower Wineva, Hammersmith and Glen Manor, and Hubbard and Scarboro Beach boulevards. For the first time, Kew

Beach and Balmy Beach were not separated by an undivided block of land, and the Beach began to evolve as a united community rather than as a number of separate neighbourhoods.

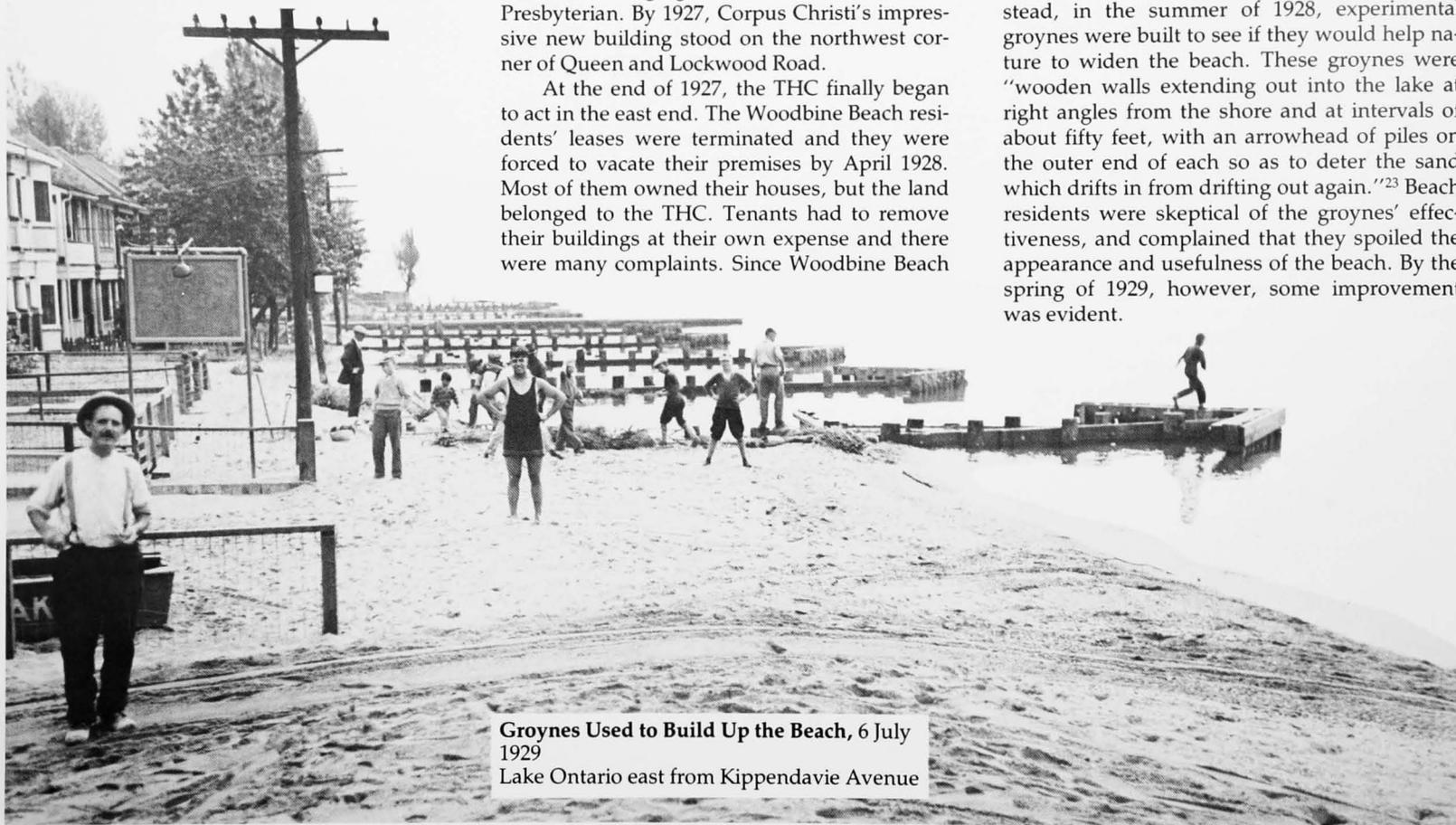
The Methodists' new church at Bellefair and Queen was finally finished in 1923. Begun in 1914, its completion had been delayed by the First World War. When Methodists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists joined to form the United Church of Canada in 1925, Kew Beach Presbyterian joined, while dissenters formed their own congregation, now called Beaches Presbyterian. By 1927, Corpus Christi's impressive new building stood on the northwest corner of Queen and Lockwood Road.

At the end of 1927, the THC finally began to act in the east end. The Woodbine Beach residents' leases were terminated and they were forced to vacate their premises by April 1928. Most of them owned their houses, but the land belonged to the THC. Tenants had to remove their buildings at their own expense and there were many complaints. Since Woodbine Beach

was never included in the THC's industrial plans, and the 1912 park and lagoon plans were never implemented, resentment seemed justified. Nevertheless the beach was cleared.

Meanwhile, neighbours to the east were impatient with the lack of action to protect their beach. On 28 Sept. 1928, the *Telegram* reported that 57 water lots between Woodbine and the eastern city limits had not yet been acquired by the city.

The Ward Eight Ratepayers wanted a sand dredge to build up the beach quickly, but instead, in the summer of 1928, experimental groynes were built to see if they would help nature to widen the beach. These groynes were "wooden walls extending out into the lake at right angles from the shore and at intervals of about fifty feet, with an arrowhead of piles on the outer end of each so as to deter the sand which drifts in from drifting out again."<sup>23</sup> Beach residents were skeptical of the groynes' effectiveness, and complained that they spoiled the appearance and usefulness of the beach. By the spring of 1929, however, some improvement was evident.



Groynes Used to Build Up the Beach, 6 July 1929  
Lake Ontario east from Kippendavie Avenue

CTA DPW-7-25

Prior to this improvement, a new plan had been proposed: to expropriate all privately-owned lands facing the lake between Woodbine and Silver Birch avenues, to demolish the houses thereon, and to develop parkland behind the beach. There was not unanimous approval. Those with homes fronting the new park would benefit, whereas displaced lakefront residents were concerned about finding comparable housing. Accused of asking too much for their properties, they claimed that rents and prices had increased throughout the district as soon as the city's plans had become known. Some fears were also expressed about the possibility of another Sunnyside, with its commercial amusements.

Plans went ahead, and eventually all the Lake Front addresses west of Silver Birch Avenue disappeared, as well as the houses, boat-houses, and streets south of Kew Beach Avenue, Alfresco Lawn, and Hubbard Boulevard. The only buildings left on the lakefront were those from Wineva to Hammersmith. At the east end of the park development, the city property went a little farther north, necessitating the removal of several boarding houses, as well as private homes.

The community to the north of this park rated almost 11 columns in the 1932 city directory for its Queen Street listings, including more stores and services than ever before. The outstanding addition to the Queen Street scene was the number of apartments, mostly small buildings (6 to 29 units) east of Scarboro Beach Boulevard. The City had acquired the 11-acre Stewart Manor (Glen Stewart) ravine in 1931, and the next year made a start on the water filtration plant at Victoria Park. All the large properties at the Beach had been subdivided, except for the Woodbine Race Track, Kew Gardens, and the waterworks site. The biggest natural park in the district had been created along the

**162 Lake Front at Leuty Avenue, 12 June 1913**  
Demolished c. 1931

water's edge, and was officially opened in 1932.

Victoria Day (24 May 1932) was chosen as the great day for celebrating the opening of the waterfront park, the boardwalk, and the athletic field (Pantry Park). The gala began with a huge parade led by a party of Toronto's Mounted Police, followed by the Mayor and the members of the Board of Control in an open horse-drawn carriage. After these came floats, bands, war veterans, cadets, Scouts, and costumed children. The opening ceremony was brief, followed by a long programme of sporting events, band concerts, community dancing, open air motion pictures, and a gigantic sing-song around a shore bonfire. Estimates of the crowd varied from 50 to 60 thousand.

For the Beach community, having a public park along the waterfront had both positive and negative implications. It guaranteed that the natural beauty of the waterfront would be preserved and not be threatened by development, and ensured unrestricted access to the beach

and the lake. However, these features also attracted increasing numbers of outsiders to the area. Many Beachers resented the influx of summer visitors and the accompanying litter, but the celebration of 1932 gave no hint of the troubles which marred the summer of 1933. At that time, tensions arose at the Beach with the appearance of the so-called Swastika Club and its attempts to exclude Jews from the beach. Fortunately the club's activities were short-lived and the beach remained open to all.

Beach residents still jealously guard the quality of life that they have come to enjoy, even though it attracts unwelcome crowds of outsiders. So far, Beachers have managed to withstand many of the pressures of a growing city, and to keep railroads, industries, expressways, and tall buildings from cutting them off from the water. As a result, they live in a neighbourhood which is unique in Toronto - a community still connected with its waterfront.



CTA DFW 1-1003

## Part II: Highlights

### Small's Estate

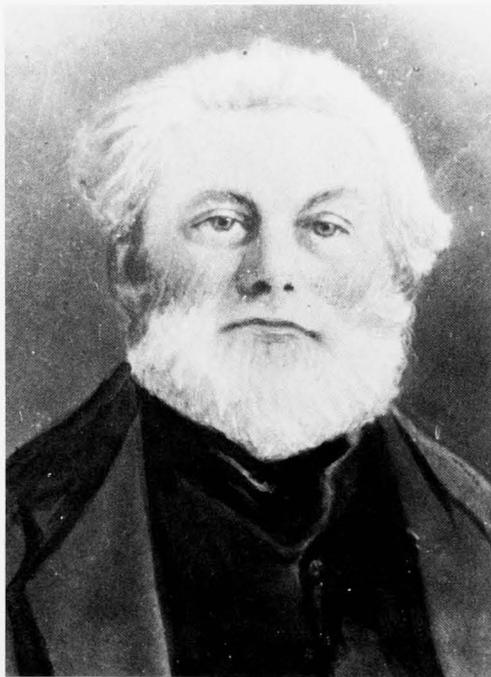
Major John Small (1746-1831) was a powerful official in the government of Upper Canada. He is best remembered for killing Attorney-General John White in a duel in 1800 over his wife's honour. In 1801-2 Small acquired lot 7 in Concession I from the Bay including the broken front.<sup>1</sup> With the purchase of the adjoining lot 6 in 1812-13, Small's estate encompassed some 472 acres bounded by Lake Ontario and today's Danforth, Coxwell and Woodbine avenues. A wide creek, eventually known as the Serpentine, branched through Small's farm and emptied into Ashbridge's Bay. The estate, like his house at York, was named "Berkeley", after Small's patron, the Earl of Berkeley.

Small's youngest son, Charles Coxwell (1800-64), took over the property in 1829, and developed it further. The 1834 *Toronto Directory* lists his farm and saw mills three miles from the Don bridge. It was probably in connection with the operation of the mills, that the Serpentine was dammed and Small's Pond created. In 1844, Small agreed to erect, furnish, and lease a tannery and other buildings to Samuel Hill. The tannery was to include "a building 85 feet long 30 feet wide with two floors, leather house, bark room," and "an addition to the present Mill House." Small allowed Hill to use the water power of the pond for his tannery operation.<sup>2</sup>

Charles' success in developing his property is documented in an 1868 sketch map drawn four years after his death. About 30 buildings are shown at Small's Corner (the present intersection of Kingston Road and Queen Street East). Directly north, on Small's Pond, are a vinegar factory, mill dam, grist mill, and ice house.<sup>3</sup> The latter may have been run by Samuel Hill, who after giving up the tanning business, became the proprietor of the Ontario Ice

Company. Charles had added to his property and showed some interest in subdividing it. Some time before he died, he had a range of lots laid out along the present Woodbine and Danforth avenues.<sup>4</sup>

Small was also a prosperous gentleman farmer. The farmhouse itself was on Kingston Road behind the present George H. Creber Monuments Inc. His farm was noted for its fine



Charles Coxwell Small, 1800-64

cattle, and its produce took many prizes.<sup>5</sup> In 1853, Small gave three acres on today's Woodbine Avenue for the erection of a church and churchyard, "to be denominated St. John's Church, Berkeley"<sup>6</sup> (now called the Church of St. John the Baptist Norway).

In 1867, after Charles' death, E. Goldsmith, J. Small and other heirs registered plan 282 which subdivided lots 6 and 7 north of Kingston Road to the Grand Trunk Railway track into six parcels. Two of Charles' sons took special interest in the country property and in local affairs. John Small III (1831-1909) was an alderman for St. Lawrence Ward in 1877-79, and Member of Parliament for East Toronto from 1882 to 1891. On 11 March 1882, he registered a plan creating building lots on Berkeley Avenue (now Edgewood Avenue), Small Street (now Eastwood Road), and Kingston Road.

Charles Coxwell Small II (1834-99) became a Toronto alderman for St. Lawrence Ward (later Ward 1) from 1889 to 1893 and again in 1896. In May 1896, he opened the pond and the surrounding grounds to the public. Small's Park featured special attractions on Wednesdays, Saturdays, and public holidays. Cyclists were provided with a large stable for wheels and were admitted free at all times, while others had to pay on attraction days. In December 1896, the *Toronto World* announced that George Decker, a Pickering shipper, had acquired the park and planned to spend "several thousand dollars . . . in making the spot a first-class pleasure resort."<sup>7</sup>

These plans were never realized and Small's Park was used in succeeding years for more informal recreation: skating and hockey, boating, fishing, bicycling, and "the delight of nature students as they rambled over its lovely space."<sup>8</sup>

Small's Pond, Toronto : Winter



**Small's Pond, 190?**  
Stood north of Kingston Road and Queen Street East

MTLB PC951

## Woodbine Beach

Woodbine Beach was the name of the sandy peninsula separating the east end of Ashbridge's Bay from Lake Ontario. People were camping, fishing and even living here before 1860. By the early 1900s, a string of more than fifty cottages stretched along the north shore of this spit, some used by summer people and others lived in year round. Some of the permanent residents were commercial fishermen, such as George Lang (also spelled Laing), who had come there to live with the Morley family in 1860 after his own father had died. Although only 7 at the time, he helped Mr. Morley in his fishing business. When Morley left Woodbine Beach to take over his father's brickyard (c. 1870), George bought his house and fishing

business. In 1878 he married and built a new house, where he and his wife Laura raised a family of six daughters and two sons. From an early age, both boys helped their father with his fishing business.

Lang's holdings included more than 350 feet of beach, which he improved by planting many trees and bushes over the years. However, the City considered him a squatter and in 1882 tried to get him to pay rent on the property. Lang refused and the city did not pursue the matter at that time. Around 1898, he rented out parts of the property to campers, and in 1905, sold some of it for cottage lots. Others also saw the resort potential of the spit. In 1894, a writer from the *Toronto World* had observed:

towards its east end the water of Ashbridge's Bay is now as pure as, if not purer than, the water of Toronto Bay. The part of the strip towards the east is excelled by no part of the Island as a healthy spot, to which the citizens of Toronto may take themselves and their families during the summer months.<sup>9</sup>

In 1908, the City again tried to collect rent from Lang, and commenced legal proceedings. He was forbidden to go on the premises and was unable to attend to his nets for six days, by which time "the nets were destroyed by exposure in the warm water. . . . Besides losing nearly all of his equipment, he lost all of his customers."<sup>10</sup>

In 1912, the Toronto Harbour Commissioners published their plan for the development of Toronto's waterfront which included land reclamation in Ashbridge's Bay for industrial pur-

Woodbine Beach, 21 June 1916



THC PC1/1148

George Lang's Cottage, Cottage 64, Woodbine Beach, 31 May 1916



poses. However, a park 1,000 feet wide fronting directly on the lake was to be reserved. There were to be a lakefront boulevard drive, walkways and lagoons through the parklands, beaches, access to the lake for small boats, and bridges for traffic to cross the lagoons to the lakefront. There were to be sites for aquatic clubs and summer homes, too.

The THC had to pay Lang \$5,000 in settlement of his "squatter's claim." From 1917 to 1923, it paid another \$8,550 to buy the properties which he had previously sold. The Commission rented these lots and others along the beach as cottage or tent sites, on yearly leases. Most buildings on these lands were privately owned, some being built up by the residents

from what were originally tent platforms. Many of these cottages had evocative names, like "Hazel Dell," "Chateau de Banff," and "Willowbank." Some of the names were whimsical, like "Stay-a-While," "Forty Winks," "Bunkum Squintum," and "Nufsed". Some dwellings were substantial one and two storey homes with fancy trimming, and others were little better than shacks. A few were even made from old streetcars!

In 1923, Toronto's Medical Officer of Health asked the THC to cancel the occupants' leases, as their premises were "unfit for human habitation." At the end of 1927, many residents were surprised to discover they were all being evicted. Perhaps they had not fully understood

the seven-page lease with its thirty-day notice clause, or had counted on relocating on the cottage strip of the 1912 plan. Nonetheless, they were required to remove their buildings at their own expense by the end of April 1928. There was much hard feeling.

Ultimately, the development of the area took quite a different form from that planned in 1912. Ashbridge's Bay was almost completely filled in, causing the peninsula to become merely a beach. The lakeshore road was extended to connect with Woodbine Avenue, but the scenic "lakefront boulevard drive," which was to have come all the way from the Humber River via the Toronto Islands, remained just a dream.

"Nufsed", Cottage 19, Woodbine Beach, 31  
May 1916



THC PCI/1/1017



THC PCI/1/1109

**Woodbine Park, 1907**  
Queen Street East, south side, between Coxwell  
and Woodbine avenues  
CTA James 263



## Woodbine Park

In 1870, Joseph Duggan bought 95 acres in lots 6 and 7 south of the Kingston Road, from the Smalls. Four years later, Duggan had a hotel just north of the broken front on the east side of the Kingston Road. That year he sold the broken front to William J. Howell of Toronto and Dennis S. Pardee, a stock breeder from New York. These men apparently laid out a trotting and running track on the property, and on 19 Oct. 1875 the Woodbine Riding and Driving Club opened with a four-day race meeting, which featured trotting, thoroughbred, and hurdle races. (Howell owned the Woodbine Saloon on Yonge Street, which may account for the name given to the track.) It seems that the partners' enterprise was not too successful, as in a matter of a few years, Duggan had reacquired the property, and proceeded to improve the facilities.

By 1885, he had "erected on the grounds a magnificent club house and stabling for a large number of horses."<sup>11</sup> An 1885 publication carried this description of the Woodbine Hotel (Joseph Braun, proprietor):

The hotel is beautifully situated, and commands a fine view of Toronto and Lake Ontario, and comfortably accommodates upwards of thirty guests. A tram car passes every half-hour, by means of which passengers may reach the city in twenty minutes.<sup>12</sup>

In 1888, Duggan leased the race course to the Ontario Jockey Club (OJC), which held its annual race meetings there; and, in 1907 (after Duggan's death) the OJC bought the track from his daughter, Annie Dixon. The Queen's/King's Plate was held there in 1876, 1881 and from 1883 to 1955. The occasion, graced by the monarch's representative, was an important society event, as this 1905 account demonstrates:

youth and beauty, wealth and fashion contributed to the gayety [sic] and brilliancy of the picture and the presence of the Earl and Countess of Grey added that touch of supreme social import that has become an inseparable feature of the meetings of the Ontario Jockey Club.<sup>13</sup>

In 1939, King George VI, accompanied by Queen Elizabeth, presented the traditional 50 guineas to the winner.

In its long history, Woodbine Park has hosted a great variety of events, including steeplechases, greyhound racing, bicycle racing, the Grand Trunk Railway employees' games, polo matches, horse auctions, and even a pigeon shoot, but never anything more flamboyant than Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show in 1885, with Chief Sitting Bull, Annie Oakley, and even a herd of buffalo.

In the early days, events sometimes had to be postponed because of marshy ground on the south side of the track, bordering Ashbridge's Bay. This part of Lake Ontario has since been filled in, and Lake Shore Boulevard East runs over it. The track has been moved south to make more room for race patrons on the north, and many structures have been raised and demolished. Major renovations occurred in 1907-8, 1914, 1927-8, and 1956-9. The oldest building still standing is the 1927 paddock building. Designed by architect John M. Lyle, it is noted for its distinctive clock cupola and weathervane. In 1956, the New Woodbine, near Malton (now Lester B. Pearson) airport, took over the Queen's Plate. The original track was known as the Old Woodbine until 1963, when the name was changed to Greenwood to avoid confusion with the new track.

### Advertisement for Buffalo Bill at Woodbine Park, 1885

From *Toronto Globe*, 22 August 1885, 3

AMUSEMENTS.

**BUFFALO BILL!**

"He is king of them all."—Gen. E. A. CARR.  
AT

**WOODBINE PARK**

Commencing This Afternoon.

**3 Days, August 22, 24 and 25**

**Afternoons Only. Performance**  
**Given Rain or Shine.**

**Carriages Admitted Free.**

**Buffalo Bill's**



**Wild West**

**FIRST AND LAST TIME IN CANADA.**

Giving an Exact Exhibition of Western  
Border Life.

## Kew Beach School

The first public school at the Beach was started by the Toronto Board of Education in 1889, when Miss E. A. Wray began teaching a class of 18 pupils in rented quarters at the Union Church on Queen Street where Wineva now meets it. Miss Wray is regarded as the founder of the school, for apparently she took the initiative in seeking a school site and rounding up the requisite number of pupils. Children came mostly from the neighbouring streets, but some came from "Ashbridge's Island" (actually Woodbine Beach).

Summer people also sent their children for part of the school year causing attendance figures to fluctuate seasonally. Growing numbers, however, soon forced the school to seek new accommodation. The fire hall at Lee Avenue and Queen Street was rented from 1891 to 1894, and an extra room had to be rented in Kenilworth Avenue Baptist Church in 1895. Finally in 1899, a new brick four-room school was opened on the southeast corner of Queen Street and Kippendavie Avenue and officially named Kew Beach. There was a move to replace Miss Wray with a male principal, because of the size of the school (97 pupils), but a petition from the local ratepayers prevailed, and she was allowed to continue as principal.

In 1902 and 1903, prospective pupils were turned away because of overcrowding. A temporary classroom was set up in the hallway early in 1903, and the fire hall in Kew Gardens was rented for 58 pupils for the school year 1903-4. A classroom was set up in the basement of the school in 1906, and the excavations completed for the first of several additions to the building.

### Kew Beach School, c. 1906

Looking southeast from Kew Beach Firehall  
Queen Street East, southeast corner, Kippendavie Avenue  
Stood 1899 - 1962

In 1918, the *Star Weekly* noted that the school had only 12 rooms, but "makes up in quality what it lacks in size."<sup>14</sup> By this time, Balmy Beach School (1906) and Williamson Road School (1914) were taking the pupils to the east, and Duke of Connaught (1911) those to the west (Norway had been to the north all along). Kew Beach School's original building was replaced in 1962 by the present school.

## Fire Protection

In 1891, a group of Kew Beach residents formed a volunteer fire brigade, leased a piece of ground, and erected a fire hall (near Queen Street East and Lee Avenue). The city supplied hose and other apparatus. In 1896, the Kew Beach Volunteer Fire Company took a 10-year lease on a 50 x 125 foot part of Joseph Williams' property (on the south side of Queen Street,

west of Lee Avenue) to build a new fire hall there. Toronto City Council granted the volunteers eight dollars a month for expenses, as they were paid no salary by the city, and were themselves paying ground rent, taxes, and interest on their building. This grant was raised to \$150 yearly in 1898.

The company of approximately 20 volunteers practiced regularly and was considered very efficient, earning praise for its prompt response to Toronto's great fire of 19-20 April 1904. However, local residents appealed to City Council for a permanent branch of the fire department, and in 1905-6 the present handsome brick fire hall was built. The city supplied a two-horse hose wagon and a regular force of a captain, lieutenant, driver, and firemen. Space was left in the tower for an illuminated clock, which was installed some years later.



The fire hall at Balmy Beach was officially Fire Hall No.1 of the Village of East Toronto. While the village had had a regular hall on Main Street since 1889, in 1901 the Balmy Beach company was operating out of a temporary hall on Beech Avenue. Fire Chief William G. Lyon and the area residents requested the Village Council to supply a new fire hall and in 1902 a piece of property was purchased on Spruce Avenue

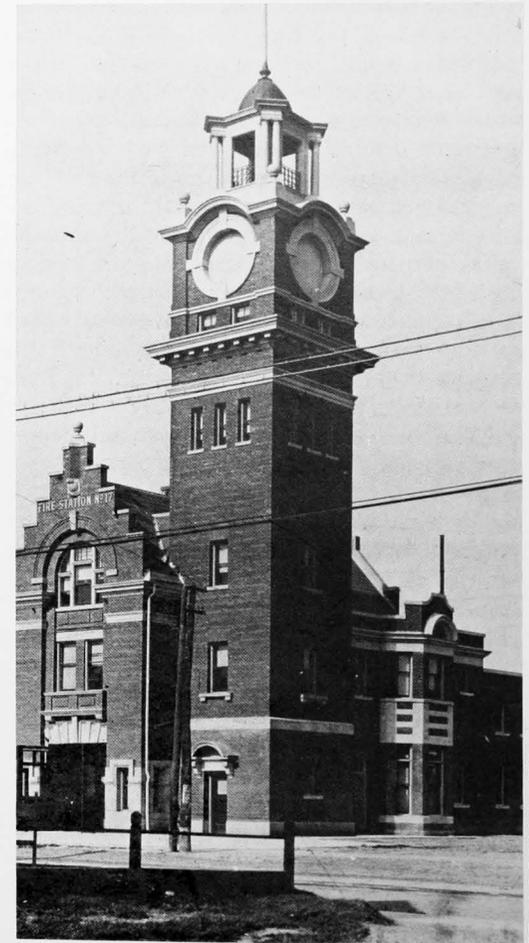
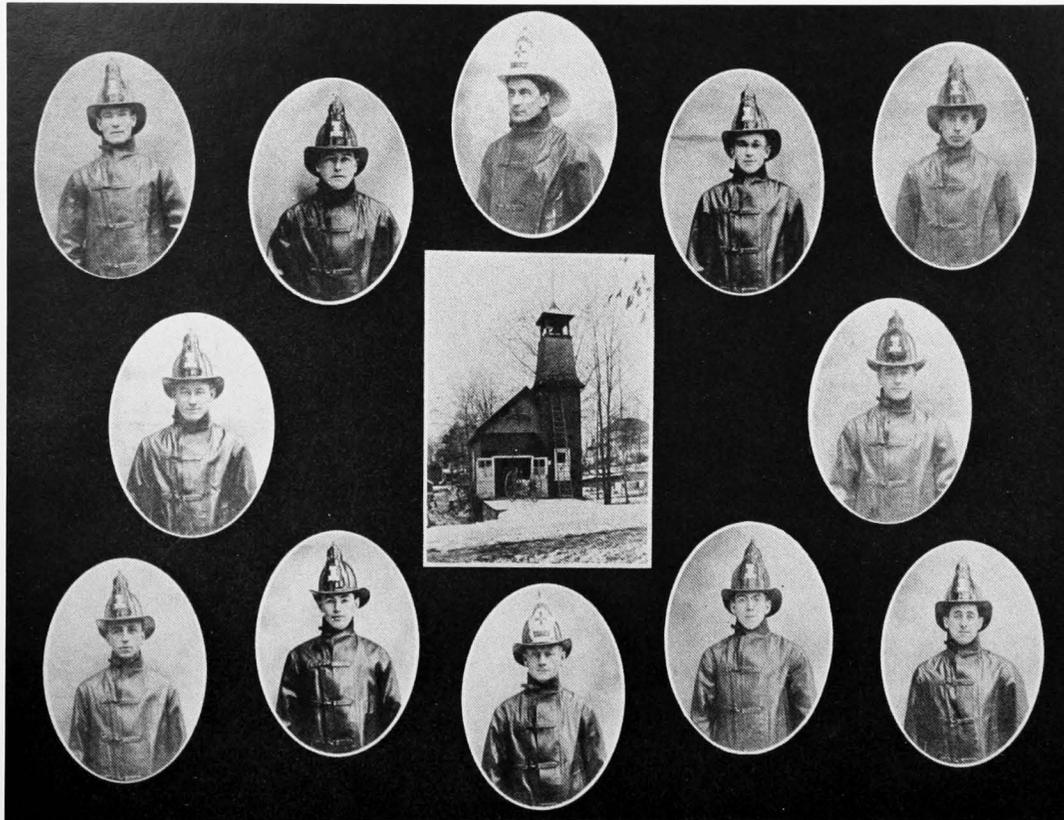
(now Spruce Hill Road) and a new fire hall built. There were 12 volunteers in this brigade and Captain Lyon served them until 1907. East Toronto became part of Toronto in 1908, but the fire brigade at Balmy Beach was kept on until November 1911. The old Spruce Avenue hall, which had been used as a court and a polling station in its time, later became a shed for the City's Department of Works and was eventually demolished.

**East Toronto Firehall No. 1 c. 1905**

Spruce Avenue (now Spruce Hill Road), west side, north of Queen Street East  
 Stood 1902-1911?

**Kew Beach Firehall No.17, 1905**

Queen Street East, northwest corner, Herbert Avenue  
 Built 1905-6



## Kew Gardens

Joseph Williams, a former soldier from London, England, came to the Beach area in 1853 with his wife Jane looking for farmland. They bought four acres in lot 4 and by 1854 they were sending produce to the market with "Kew Farms" labels. Eventually Joseph owned property in lots 3 and 4. In May 1879, he opened "The Canadian Kew Gardens," in lot 4, "a pretty pleasure ground of twenty acres, fifteen in bush, fronting on the open lake." A leaflet advertised "innocent amusements in great variety, including dancing" and stated that "All temperate drinks, but no Spirituous Liquors will be sold." There was accommodation for summer boarders, and small camping houses and tents to rent. Meals were available for 25 cents, featuring "new milk and buttermilk on ice, and fresh fruit from the farms."<sup>15</sup> Kew Gardens was a popular picnic ground for many years, and in 1898, 1,500 people were said to have celebrated Dominion Day there with baseball, a Punch and Judy show, band music, and a huge evening bonfire, while enjoying "pop-corn, peanuts, and pure lake water."<sup>16</sup>

In 1907, the City paid Joseph Williams \$43,200 for his Kew Gardens property<sup>17</sup> and gradually bought up other properties on Queen Street, Lee Avenue, and the lakefront to form a city park, still known as Kew Gardens. All the buildings were either moved or demolished, except for Kew Williams' 1901/2 stone house on Lee Avenue (now the parkkeeper's residence). The park has continued to provide many pleasures for Beach residents: skating, swimming, boating, lawn bowling, tennis, band concerts, baseball games, and refreshment booths. The elaborate drinking fountain on the Lee Avenue side was built in 1920 in memory of devoted local doctor William D. Young by his patients.

**Playing Tennis at Kew Gardens, 2 August 1914**  
Queen Street East, south side, between Lee Avenue and Waverley Road

Today, one of Joseph and Jane Williams's granddaughters still lives nearby in the house the family moved to when Kew Gardens was

sold; and the names of Kew Gardens, and Hammersmith and Isleworth avenues remind us of Joseph's London roots.



**Kew Williams House, 1988** Lee Avenue, west side, between Queen Street East and Lake Ontario

Mary Campbell



CTA DPW 52-369

## Scarboro' Beach Amusement Park

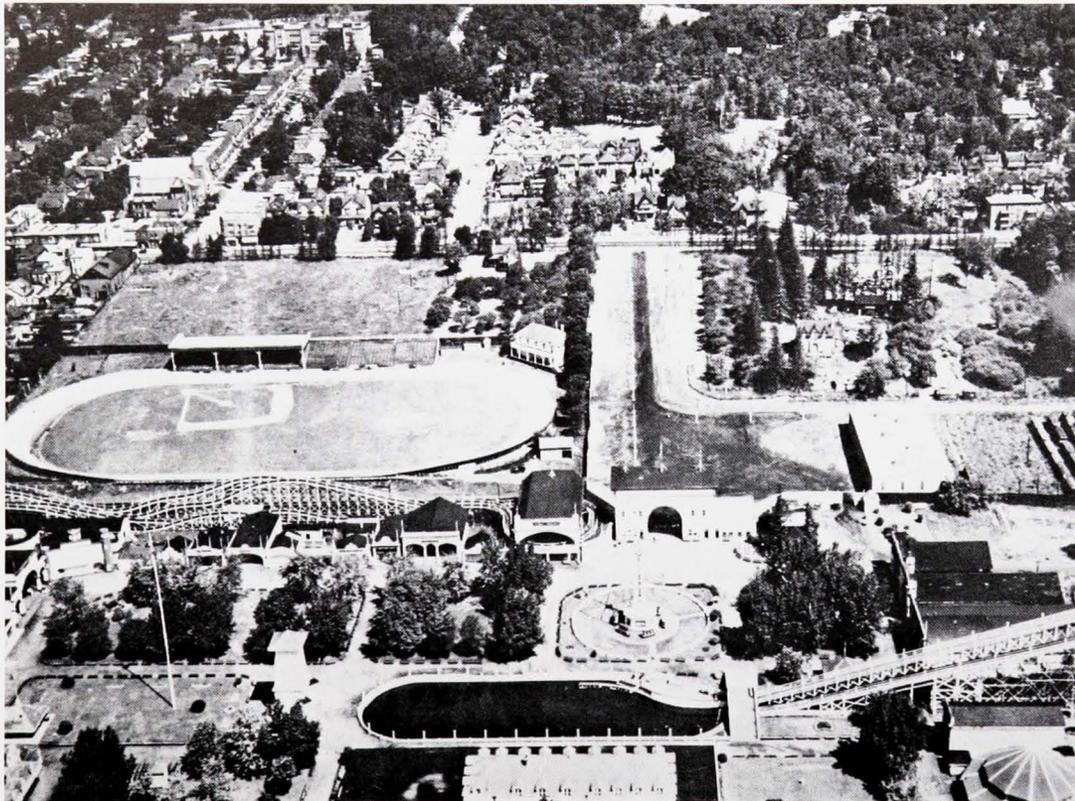
Scarboro' Beach was the last and most elaborate of the area's lakeside amusement parks. On 1 Nov. 1906, Harry A. Dorsey, president of the Toronto Park Co., and his wife Mabell paid the Sisters of St. Joseph \$165,000 for the site (bounded by the lake, Queen Street East, Leuty, and MacLean avenues). The order had operated the House of Providence farm there since inheriting it from Thomas O'Connor in 1895-6. The site, which included 40 acres of land and 24 acres of water lots, had been offered to the City but it declined as the price was too high. The Toronto Railway Company owned and operated the park from 1913 to 1925.

Scarboro' Beach Amusement Park was formally opened on Saturday 1 June 1907. (A contest had been held in March 1907 to give the park its name.) The \$600,000 resort, modelled after Dreamland and Luna Park at Coney Island, offered a hundred attractions: rides, freak shows, funhouses, refreshment stands, bathing and dance pavilions, band concerts, and amusements of almost every description.

The Scenic Railway was a quarter-mile long roller coaster ride which started off from on high and then plunged down, went over hills and valleys, through a cavern and a series of tunnels painted in scenes from tropical jungles

to icebergs. Just inside the park's covered entrance were the air ship tours or aerial swings. Each gondola-shaped swing had four wicker benches and an awning roof, and was suspended by cables to a central mechanism. As it revolved, the swings would lift up and out until passengers had the sensation of being on an airplane ride. At the Cascades (often called Tunnel of Love), riders sat in wooden boats and passed through a dark underground water maze. At intervals, there were surprising and frightening occurrences. A glowing red devil armed with a pitchfork would appear from behind a red curtain. A replica of a mule's hind end would kick out of the blackness to the raucous accompaniment of a clanging cowbell.

Bump the Bumps was the only free ride in the park (the others cost ten cents) making it popular with children and their parents. A participant climbed steps at the side of the structure to reach a wide slope of polished hardwood with raised mounds of various sizes. One then sat and slid down the incline going over or around the irregularly placed bumps, like moguls on a ski hill. Sometimes the bumps would throw the slider sideways, backwards, or up in the air, amusing both spectators and the helpless victim. Shoot the Chutes was probably the most famous ride. Small boats were hauled up an incline to a platform with a turntable which turned the boats around. While waiting for the path to clear below, riders could, if they dared, look out and see for miles. Soon an attendant would release the boat which would quickly slide down and splash into the waters of a man-made lagoon.



Ray Corley

**Scarboro' Beach Amusement Park, Aerial View, September 1925**  
Operated 1907-1925  
Lake Ontario between Leuty and Maclean avenues

Shoot the Chutes at Scarboro' Beach  
Amusement Park, 1907



CTA James 162

The park had the usual collection of refreshment booths and games of chance. J. D. Conklin managed the park's concessions during the 1910 season. One of the most popular shows at the park recreated real disasters, such as the 1906 earthquake at San Francisco and the 1889 flood at Johnstown, Pennsylvania. A miniature city was set up on the stage of the darkened hall and a lecturer told of the events leading up to the catastrophe. Then the stage lights dimmed, various sound and light effects were produced, and, when the lights came on, the buildings were on their sides. Scarboro' Beach's Infant Incubator Institute was featured in the park's early advertisements. Spielers encouraged customers to pay and "see these tiny mitely humanities being reared in glass cases."<sup>18</sup> The show was discontinued after a few years.

There were also free open-air stage shows continuously every afternoon and evening. The attractions, which changed weekly, included circus acts such as the Ernesto sisters "remarkable lady acrobats;" the Breakaway Barlows "sensational Novelty Gymnasts;" Oscar V. Babcock in his "thrilling Bicycle Ride Looping the Loop and Flying the Flume;" and other assortments of aerialists, trapeze performers, high wire artists, clowns, and jugglers. Animal acts such as trick ponies, trained cats and dogs, waltzing horses, comic bears, and "the first genuine monkey circus. . . ever in Toronto" were also featured.

Performers frequently used the park's 125-foot-high tower, located at the base of the chutes' lagoon, for daredevil acts. In August 1908, over 7,000 watched Lotto jump "25 times his own height" from the four-sided tower into a net. Mlle Oneida's slide from the top of the tower to the top of the chutes shared the bill in September 1909 with Charles Willard's flying demonstration in his *Golden Flyer* Curtiss airplane, apparently the first airplane flight done for public exhibition in Canada.

The park used its lakeside location to good advantage. In various advertisements it boasted having a "sandy beach and shallow water for bathing and boating," "accommodation for 250 bathers," "splendid bath houses for ladies and gentlemen," and "a cool breeze." At the Scarborough Inn (a 240 x 60 foot restaurant operated by the park) tables were set on the wide verandahs "permitting visitors to dine and enjoy the beautiful view of the lake."<sup>19</sup> Dances were regularly held in this building, often called the Pavilion. Near the lake was the loading platform for a miniature steam railway. It circled around the wooded picnic grove which extended from the east side of the amusements over to MacLean Avenue. At night thousands of lights decorated the buildings, walkways, and tower. Music from the bandshell drifted over the park and the lake where hundreds of canoes "gathered just off shore, forming a flotilla, each holding on to the next boat, and listening to the band."<sup>20</sup>

In 1912, R. J. Fleming, general manager of the Toronto Railway Company, bought a professional lacrosse team, the Toronto's, who played their home games at Scarborough Beach's Athletic Grounds. The late Ted Reeve, athlete, reporter, and life-long Beacher, recalled the thrill of those games:

Thus it was we first watched bug-eyed one summer day on that wide green field when the flags were flying over the white grandstand; the band played from the awninged clubhouse, and 17,000 fans poured in by the old open streetcars.<sup>21</sup>

Local baseball, football, and lacrosse teams also played there. Bicycle and foot races were run on the track surrounding the field and athletes such as the 1912 Olympic walking champ, George Goulding, competed there. A wood velodrome was also constructed.

On 12 Sept. 1925, at the end of its nineteenth season, Scarborough Beach Amusement

**Midway at Scarborough Beach Amusement Park, 1907**

Park closed for the last time. A week before, the Provident Investment Company had advertised the tender for the removal of amusement devices and equipment at the park, and on 24 October tenders were called "for the demolition and removal of buildings."<sup>22</sup> Only the boathouse and wooden bicycle track were excluded at that time. The Investment Company had acquired the property and planned to build houses on the site. The original subdivision

plan went south of Hubbard Boulevard almost to the lake but, in 1925, Toronto's Board of Control approved buying the southerly 2.875 acres to include in its proposed waterfront park. The next year an advertisement in the *Telegram* announced, "Now, all this area is laid out with wide streets and attractive but moderately priced homes. . . . Great Choice of Designs \$5,400 to \$7,500."<sup>23</sup>



CTA James 149

## Glen Stewart

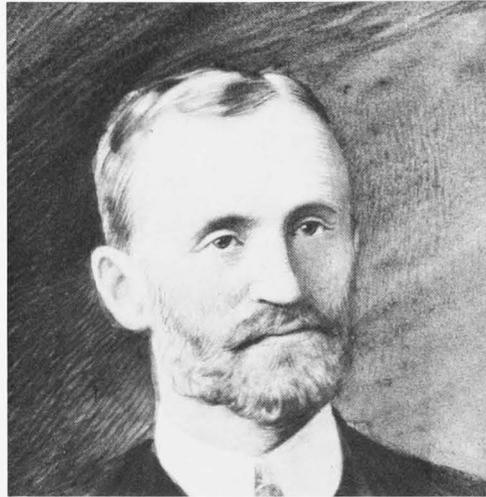


MTLB T30797

Reverend William Stewart Darling, 1818-88

In 1872, Reverend William Stewart Darling (1818-86) and his wife Jane bought 28.5 acres south of Kingston Road on lot 3, concession I from the bay for \$1852.50. Darling was an Anglican minister placed in charge of the Parish of Scarborough in 1843. From 1853 until 1882 he was associated with the Church of the Holy Trinity in Toronto. He soon added to his property and built near Kingston Road "the home-stead known as Glen Stewart."<sup>24</sup> The house may have been designed by Darling's son Frank, who was in 1873 at the beginning of an illustrious career as an architect. After W. S. Darling's death in 1886 the house was rented out to various people including Joseph Flavelle, the wealthy meat packer and financier. In 1900 the house and grounds were leased to a private school.

Later that year, Frank Darling sold the property to Alfred Ernest Ames (1866-1934), a stockbroker. During his financial career, Ames was associated with many well-known busi-



MTLB T30796

Alfred Ernest Ames, 1866-1934

nessmen including his father-in-law Senator George A. Cox, Flavelle, and the Masseys. His far-flung business interests and directorships included Canada Life Assurance Company, Moore Corporation, Robert Simpson Company, the Temiskaming & Northern Railway Commission, and his own brokerage firm, A. E. Ames & Company. In 1902 he formed the Metropolitan Bank which eventually merged with the Bank of Nova Scotia. He was president of the Toronto Stock Exchange in 1897-8 and of the Board of Trade in 1901-2.<sup>25</sup>

At first Ames used Glen Stewart as a summer home only, but later he lived there year round. In the early 1900s he made many improvements to the estate including a trout pond, a large wooden fence along Kingston Road, rustic bridges, a lodge on Lee Avenue, landscaping, and installation of electric lights. The house and grounds looked their best when Earl Grey, then governor-general of Canada, made Glen Stewart his official residence in May

1905 and 1906. In 1966 local resident E. M. Johnston recalled:

Every Spring there was Queen's Plate Week, when the Governor-General and family were in residence at "Glen Stewart." . . . As children we sat on the corner of Woodbine and Kingston Road, where the Village Blacksmith Shop was, and watched the Vice-Regal party ride to the Woodbine every day at 1 o'clock accompanied by the Household Cavalry in their white breeks and plumed helmets, on beautiful horses. One remembers most distinctly Lord Grey when he was Governor, perhaps because of his two lovely daughters, Lady Sybil and Lady Dorothy. We children met them frequently gathering violets and cowslips in the woods where Waverley Road, Wheeler Avenue and Lee now are. After we had seen the Royal entourage safely launched at Woodbine we scampered to the top of the Hill where Columbine Avenue now is, where we saw the horses running and jumping, exercising on the Duggan Farm.<sup>26</sup>

## Glen Stewart, September 1912



CTA Parks Dept. Films #40

Ames was equally generous in letting local residents use his property for skating, sleighing, picnics, and hiking. An avid golfer, he laid out a nine-hole course which he opened to the public. Ames was an active and generous supporter of Beech Avenue Methodist Church. When the congregation relocated to Kingston Road (now Kingston Road United Church), Ames was a member of the building committee.

He added to his property at various times so that by about 1909 the north end stretched from Lee to Beech Avenue along Kingston Road, and the southern part extended to Howard's Pond at today's Glen Manor and Queen.

Where Glen Manor runs north from Queen, large iron gates opened to a 12-foot wide private road which climbed through ravines and over ponds and streams to the main house. Other carriage drives were from Lee and the present Southwood Drive.

Beginning in 1909, Ames and his father-in-law subdivided the property. Plans were registered in 1910, 1923, and 1946. In 1912, over four acres were sold to the Toronto Board of Education which two years later opened Williamson Road School on the site. By 1923, the Provident Investment Company's development of the

Ames estate was well underway. One historian described it as follows:

Probably the most important development that has been worked out by the company is the Stewart Manor, a property of eighty acres, extending from Queen street to Kingston road, rising gradually all of this distance, and overlooking Lake Ontario. The tract is well wooded, and full advantage has been taken of the topography in the building of fine crescent-shaped roads, the location, in a ravine of three artificial Lakes fed from fresh water springs, and the addition of the landscape engineer's art to the prodigious gifts of nature. No pains or expense in the adaptation of this beautiful spot to home purposes have been spared by the company, which has graded all roads, built all sidewalks, laid out attractive drives and foot paths through a charming park, and, in general, has done everything within human artistic ability and ingenuity to make the manor ideal.<sup>27</sup>

**Glen Stewart, 1910?**

45 Glen Stewart Crescent, south side, west of Southwood Drive



Private Collection

Some restrictions were placed on the development which was to be strictly residential and could not include apartments. Except for the lots on Kingston Road, each house was to be detached, constructed of brick, stone, or cement, designed by "some architect in good standing," cost no less than \$5,500 and have a 30-foot frontage. No trees could be cut; telephone and electric poles were to run behind properties.

Ames died at Glen Stewart on 20 Sept. 1934. Many features of the estate have since disappeared. Ponds have been drained and streams diverted into the sewer system. The gatekeeper's lodge on Lee Avenue was demolished in 1972 by the Toronto Board of Education to provide access to the school parking lot. However, significant parts remain. The Glen Stewart Ravine, given to the City of Toronto in 1931 by the Provident Investment Company, has been preserved.<sup>28</sup> The main house stands on Glen Stewart Crescent, divided into apartments. The backyard, with its arbours and stone pathways, retains features of a formally landscaped garden. It overlooks Long Crescent where Ames' coach-house stands renovated beyond recognition.

### Balmy Beach Park

Balmy Beach Club, which was formed in 1903, has long been a centre of sporting and social life at the Beach. Its paddlers have competed in seven Olympics since Roy Nurse won two firsts and four seconds at the 1924 Paris games. Its football team won the Grey Cup in 1927 and 1930, and for decades Balmy Beach lawn bowlers, rigger, hockey, and volleyball players have represented the club in international competitions. In the late 1940s, "clubbers" even originated a distinctive style of dancing, known throughout the city as "the Balmy."



Adam Wilson, 1814-91  
CTA 9.2.4.G49

The club claims Sir Adam Wilson (1814-91) as its spiritual founder. During his lifetime a prominent lawyer and distinguished judge, a Toronto alderman and mayor from 1859 to 1860 (the first to be popularly elected), and in 1862 a provincial cabinet minister, Wilson bought part of lots 1 and 2, including the broken fronts in 1853. By 1865, he was one of only twelve householders at the Beach. After he retired in 1887, he divided his time between his home on Spadina Crescent and "his Balmy Beach Cottage."

In 1876, Wilson subdivided his property and laid out a private promenade adjoining the beach at the south end of Beech Avenue, "for the common use and enjoyment"<sup>29</sup> of those living in the subdivision. There were problems with this arrangement. A few cottagers erected boathouses on the lakefront and in July 1902 some local residents wanted to open a street through the promenade to the lake. In February 1903, East Toronto Council was asked by the Balmy Beach Residents' Association to obtain the necessary legislation from the province to take over and preserve the park.

The 1903 act designated it "Balmy Beach Park" and declared East Toronto was to hold the park as a "place of recreation" for owners, residents, and visitors of the subdivision and the Town. Management was vested in a board of control which had the power to demolish boat houses and other buildings in the park, lay out and enclose the park, erect buildings and breakwaters, make improvements, set and collect fees, make rules and regulations for entrances and hours, to pass by-laws restricting use, preventing unseemly conduct and protecting property, and to borrow money with the consent of council.<sup>30</sup> The first board was appointed on 22 July 1903. By December the Balmy Beach Park Commission had cleared away many trees and formulated its plans. It presented estimates to East Toronto Council on 25 April 1904 and received approval to raise a \$4,500 loan. The park opened on 20 June 1904 and the Commission spent most of the spring and summer of 1904 and 1905 on improvements. It laid out bowling greens and lawn tennis courts, removed an existing boathouse (amidst protests), and erected "a splendid boat house, combining recreation rooms and all the modern facilities."<sup>31</sup>

With financial assistance from the Balmy Beach Club, the Commission officially opened the clubhouse on Friday 17 Aug. 1905. The close

relationship between the Balmy Beach Park Commission and the Club was soon formalized. In December the local press reported that for \$600 a year, Balmy Beach Club had leased the clubhouse from the Commission. Another report in June 1907 stated that the two bodies had signed an agreement to run the park jointly.

From its beginning the Commission has jealously safeguarded its powers and the park from external threats. When East Toronto con-

structed its waterworks system between 1904 and 1906, it "appropriated a small portion of the park for the building of its pumping station."<sup>32</sup> The Commission demanded compensation and did not come to terms with East Toronto until 17 Nov. 1908, charging the town \$600 for three years rent of the site. After East Toronto was annexed to Toronto, Balmy Beach residents successfully fought having the "promenade, beach, and water lot . . . held, controlled and

managed by the Corporation of the City of Toronto as one of [its] public parks."<sup>33</sup> To this day Balmy Beach Park, unlike any other public park in Toronto, continues to be administered by a separate board of management.

**Balmy Beach Club, c. 1905**  
Lake Ontario, foot of Beech Avenue  
Stood 1905-1936



Balmy Beach Club

## Munro Park

George Monro (1800?-78), a successful Toronto businessman, former Toronto alderman and mayor, and one-time member of the provincial legislature, bought the eastern 60.5 acres of lot 1 south of the Kingston Road, including the broken front, in 1847. This property was known as the Painted Post Farm. Before he died in 1878, he had built a cottage and barn on the broken front (about 16 acres), and a cottage and barn near the Kingston Road. These he leased to farmers. On the latter property he planted more than 400 fruit trees and about three acres of strawberries. In 1896, his heirs leased the broken front to the TRC, which wished to operate an amusement park there.

On 22 May 1896, the *Toronto World* announced that Munro Park would be run jointly with Victoria Park to the east, by James and Thomas Gardiner. (Although the family name was Monro, the Park's name was consistently spelled Munro.) Soon work had begun on a dance pavilion and 100 seats and 50 benches for picnickers. By August, there was also a bandstand. In succeeding years, many attractions were added, such as a mineral well (1897), a 150-foot ferris wheel (1898), a water merry-go-round (1899), and moving pictures (1900). (In 1899, Lundy's Ostrich Farm was housed temporarily in the park.) On 26 April 1899, the *Toronto World* reported on park improvements:

Two broad sidewalks, each 300 feet in length, have been laid from the entrance of the park to the pavilion. These are arched every fifteen feet by a string of ten incandescent electric lights, which will give a fairy-like appearance to the rustic scene after night, and light up a capital promenade. The convenience of being able to alight from a car and walk to the dancing pavilion without touching the grass will be much appreciated by terpsichorians [dancers] who know the discomfiture of damp soles, or, worse still, grating sand, as a result of walking on the soil.<sup>34</sup>

New sidewalks, a larger performance stage, and additional seating were added from



George Monro, 1800?-78

CTA 9.2.4.G31

time to time, until in 1901, Munro Park boasted seating for 5,000.

At the height of the season, there were two shows a day, rain or shine, featuring such performers as acrobats, comedians, cyclists, dancers, gymnasts, jugglers, magicians, mario-nettes, mimics, musicians, singers, trapeze artists, ventriloquists, and even trained animals. Entertainment "from the best houses in Britain and the States"<sup>35</sup> was offered. Attractions of note were the William Josh Daly Minstrel Show in 1903, the Grand Opera House Orchestra, "playing the very latest and best selections"<sup>36</sup> in 1904, and Dan Crimmins' vaudeville show in 1905. In September 1904, Adgie's Lions were featured twice a day, and there was a daily balloon ascension. The shows changed every week or so, and weather permitting, might continue well into September.

To maintain order in both parks, the owners consistently opposed the granting of liquor licences in the vicinity; and two or three constables were assigned to keep the premises free of "suspicious characters" and law-breakers. To avoid annoyance to pedestrians, a large shed was built where bicycles could be checked for a small fee.

In 1901, the TRC had a lease dispute with the Monro family, and rumours flew that the park might close, but these differences were settled and the park flourished until the TRC's lease expired in 1907. Some local residents had hopes that Munro Park would be maintained as a "public breathing place,"<sup>37</sup> however, these hopes were dashed when the park buildings were promptly removed, and the Monro family began to subdivide the property for development. Today, only the name of Munro Park Avenue remains to commemorate the heyday of the park.

Munro Park Ferris Wheel, early 1900s  
Lake Ontario near  
Munro Park Avenue



AO 515892

## Victoria Park

In 1878 Peter Paterson (1807-83), a Toronto merchant, leased over 14 acres of his country estate, Blantyre, to John H. Boyle and others for a period of ten years. Blantyre fronted Lake Ontario in southwest Scarborough (lot 35, con-

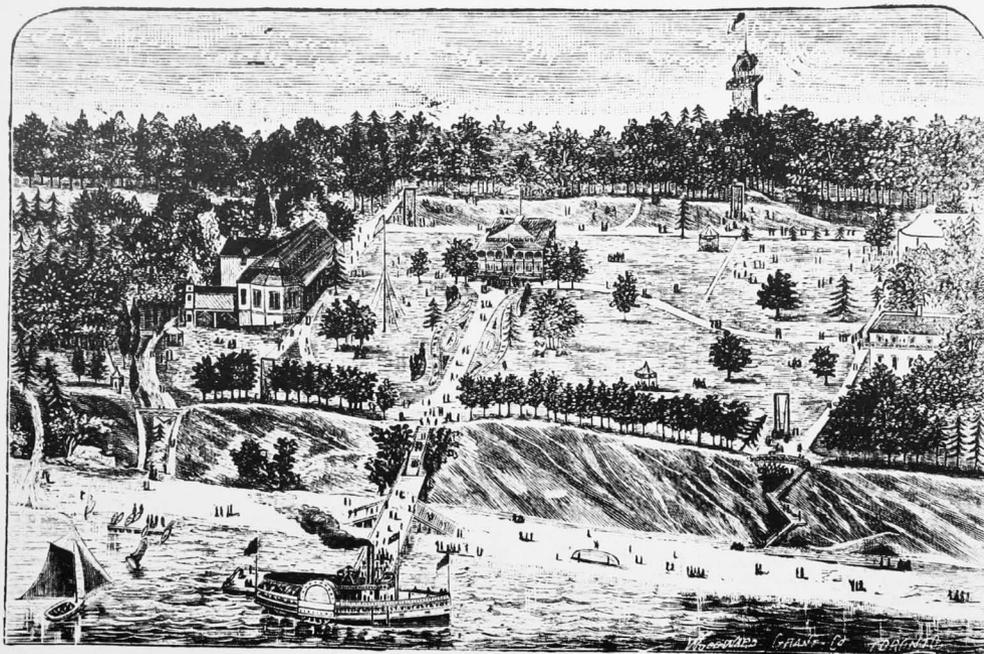
cession A) just beyond Toronto's limits. Boyle, Shields & Co. opened Victoria Park there on 1 June 1878. Named in all likelihood for Queen Victoria, the park usually opened on or near the Queen's birthday on 24 May.

Victoria Park was immediately a popular success. An 1884 publication described some of its features:

Half an hour's sail from the city, through the gap, passing Woodbine Park, Ashbridge's Bay, Kew Gardens and Balmy Beach, the passengers reach the landing and enjoy themselves quietly among the natural beauties of the park, or with the recreations usually provided in pleasure resorts. A large rustic pavilion furnishes shelter for the dancers, and an observatory tower gives one of the finest views to be had of the city and its environs.<sup>38</sup>

Over the years other attractions were added at Victoria Park, (which in 1892 advertised itself as the "Saratoga of Canada"): donkey riding, steam merry-go-rounds, swings, boating, fishing, bicycle rides, zoological gardens, a shooting gallery, and even the remains of the *Zebra*, a shipwrecked stonehooker blown ashore at the park's beach in 1897. At first orchestra and band concerts were the park's standard entertainment fare but eventually the variety included acts such as Messrs. Nims and Stewart, high wire aerialists (1895), the Africo-American Company's prize cake walk (1895), and Prof. C. L. Burnett, "world-renowned aeronaut" in a balloon ascension (1903). The park was also a site for sports such as cricket, quits, and races.

# VICTORIA PARK, SCARBORO HEIGHTS.



**Grand Opening, Saturday, June 1st, 1878.**

**THE NEW AND SWIFT A 1 STEAMER F. B. MAXWELL**

**Will leave NAIRN'S WHARF, FOOT OF CHURCH-ST.,**

at 11 a. m., 2 p. m., and 4 p. m., calling at the new wharf, foot of Simcoe-st., at 11:10 a. m., 2:10 p. m., and 4:10 p. m. Band of the Tenth Royals will accompany the first boat and remain at Victoria Park throughout the day. Fare for round trip and admission to the Park 25c, children 15c.

**BOYLE, SHIELDS & CO., Proprietors.**



Steamer Ticket to Victoria Park, 1887

**Advertisement for Victoria Park, 30 May 1878**  
Lake Ontario, foot of Victoria Park Avenue  
Operated 1878-1906

From *Toronto Telegram*, 30 May 1878, 4

To make the park safe and pleasant for families, Victoria Park claimed in 1879 to have "strict rules of order" and announced five years later that "the park will be run on strictly temperance principles, and no liquors allowed either on the grounds or the boats running thereto."<sup>39</sup>

Victoria Park provided accommodation for those wishing to stay longer than a day. The *Toronto World* described one type in 1895:

Thirteen of the cars [streetcars] in Victoria Park have been rented as habitation for the summer. The cooking being done outside, they are used simply in the way of sleeping tents, the windows which they have making them admirably cool for the purpose.<sup>40</sup>

In 1899, Thomas Davies, a Toronto alderman and brewer who had bought the park from the Paterson estate in 1886, decided to close it and subdivide the property into "avenues and villa lots."<sup>41</sup> The ravine known as "Lover's Walk" was to be filled to make a street down to the beach. The mineral spring was to be kept accessible to all resident lot owners.

Evidently these plans were never realized for, in 1900, the *Toronto World* announced that the TRC had secured a lease and planned to operate the park in conjunction with its Munro Park. The TRC intended to clear out the old cars and other campers' accommodations and turn Victoria Park into a picnic grounds for "a quiet holiday."<sup>42</sup> Police supervision was to be strict and dancing prohibited. For the next six years the park remained open while Davies tried various schemes to sell the land. He offered it to Toronto twice, but, at a mortgage sale held on 9 June 1906, Henry P. Eckardt, a wholesale grocer and local property owner, outbid the City and paid \$29,500 for the site. Victoria Park did not reopen after the 1906 season.

**Lessons at Victoria Park Forest School, 29 July 1913**

Beginning in 1912, Eckardt gave the Toronto Board of Education free use of 15 acres, including part of Victoria Park, for its first forest school. The Board believed, as did many European and American educators at that time, that serious health problems could be prevented and that a child's mental, physical and moral development would be improved if most of the day was spent outdoors with wholesome food, and proper rest. The Board's medical inspector reported in 1914 that the forest schools were for "anaemic, delicate and poorly developed children. . . for the purposes of regaining health and strength."<sup>43</sup>

The children usually arrived at the grounds about 8:30 a.m. and left for home about 6:30 p.m. In fair weather, pupils spent most of the ten-hour school day outside. They did their lessons on the grass, napped on cots under the

trees, and washed by the lake. Nature talks were given as the children rambled through the woods or along the beach. Instruction in hygiene, deportment, and nutrition was an integral part of the programme. Three full meals and a snack were provided. Each child was required to have a tooth brush and at the end of each meal, the school's nurse put the students through a thorough brushing drill. There were also nose blowing drills and lessons on nose breathing. Washing up was required before meals and a tub bath was given at least once a week. Decayed teeth were filled and adenoids removed. Weight gains and losses were regularly recorded.

In its first year, Victoria Park Forest School opened six days a week for three months from 20 June to 20 September. The staff consisted of a teacher, a nurse, and a man who looked after



CTA Salmon 1010

supplies. Seventy children were registered although the average daily attendance fell below fifty. By 1930 the school could accommodate about 220 pupils, had seven teachers, and was in session for six months from 1 May to 31 October. The Board continued to operate its forest school at Victoria Park until September 1932 when, because of waterworks construction, the school moved and finished the season at Eckardt's property immediately to the east.

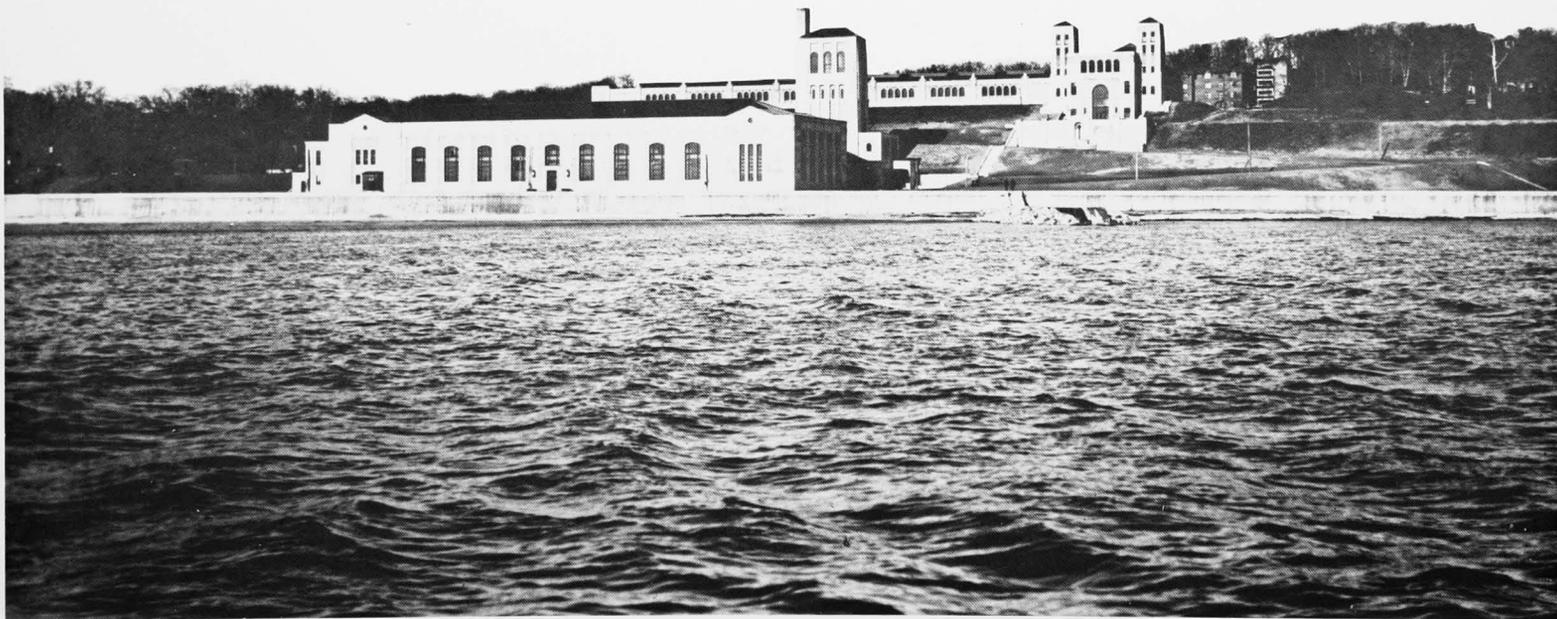
From 1917 to 1927, the T. Eaton Co. was allotted a portion of the park where it ran a camp for its male employees for two-week periods after work and on weekends. Eaton Boys' Camp offered activities such as swimming (in a

pool), canoeing, quoits, baseball, hikes in the woods and along the beach, and treasure hunts. Every second week the men elected a mayor and board of control, plus police force and judge to enforce the camp's ten o'clock curfew. (Guilty offenders were sentenced to peel potatoes or chop wood.) On Friday evening, outsiders were allowed to join the campers for a dance held in the pavilion.

In 1923, the City of Toronto passed a by-law to expropriate Victoria Park for waterworks purposes and four years later agreed to pay Eckardt \$370,000 for the site. Construction of the water purification plant began on 30 Aug. 1932 and the west wing was completed three

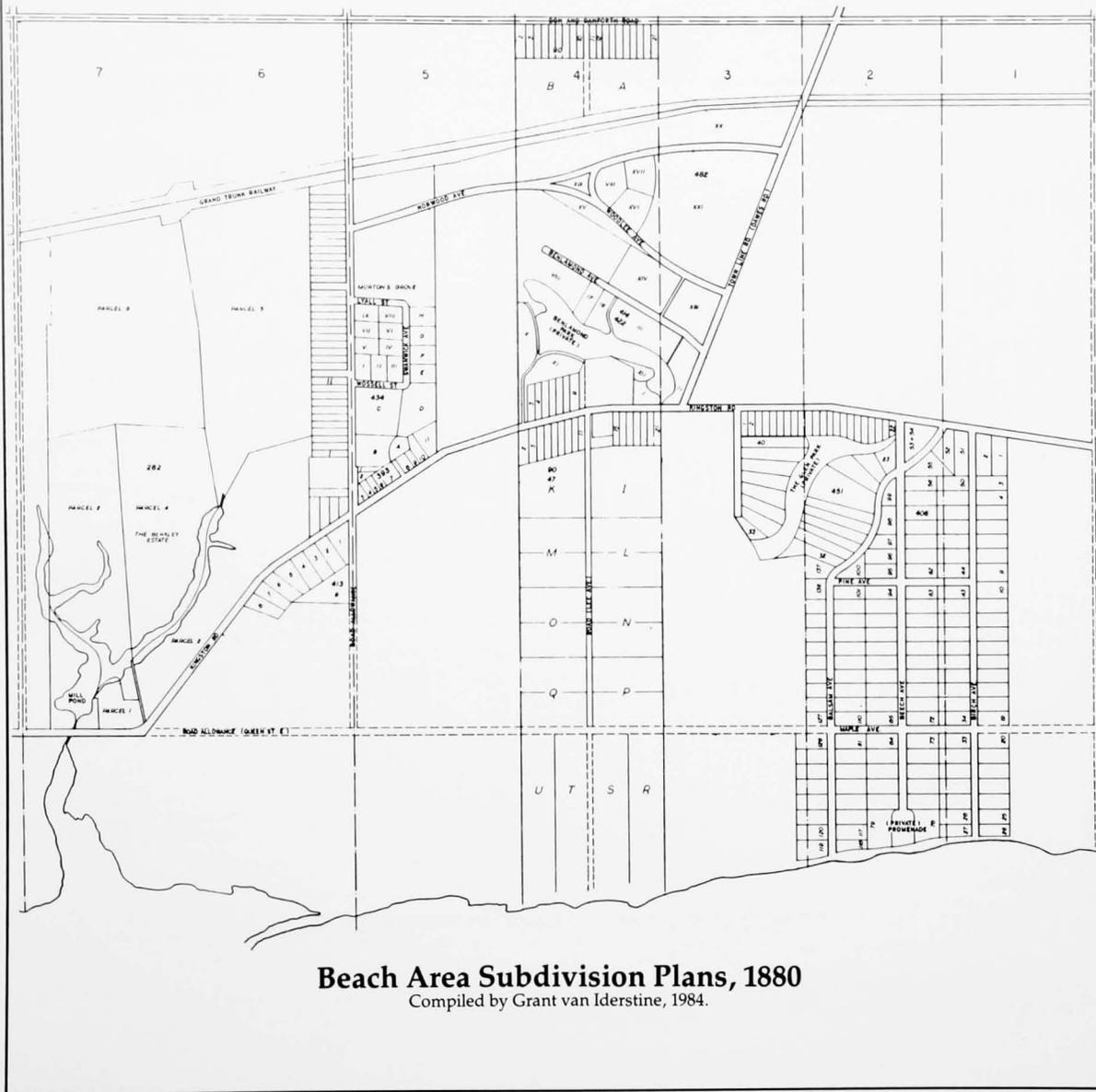
years later. The symmetrical east wing was not added until the mid 1950s. As well as providing one of the finest water purifications in North America, the filtration plant was noted for its beautiful interiors finished in brass and marble which earned it the nickname "Palace of Purity." In 1946 the plant was named for Roland Caldwell Harris, Toronto's Commissioner of Works from 1912 to 1945, and a Beach resident.

**Victoria Park Pumping Station, 17 December 1936**  
Built 1932-35



CTA Salmon 1984

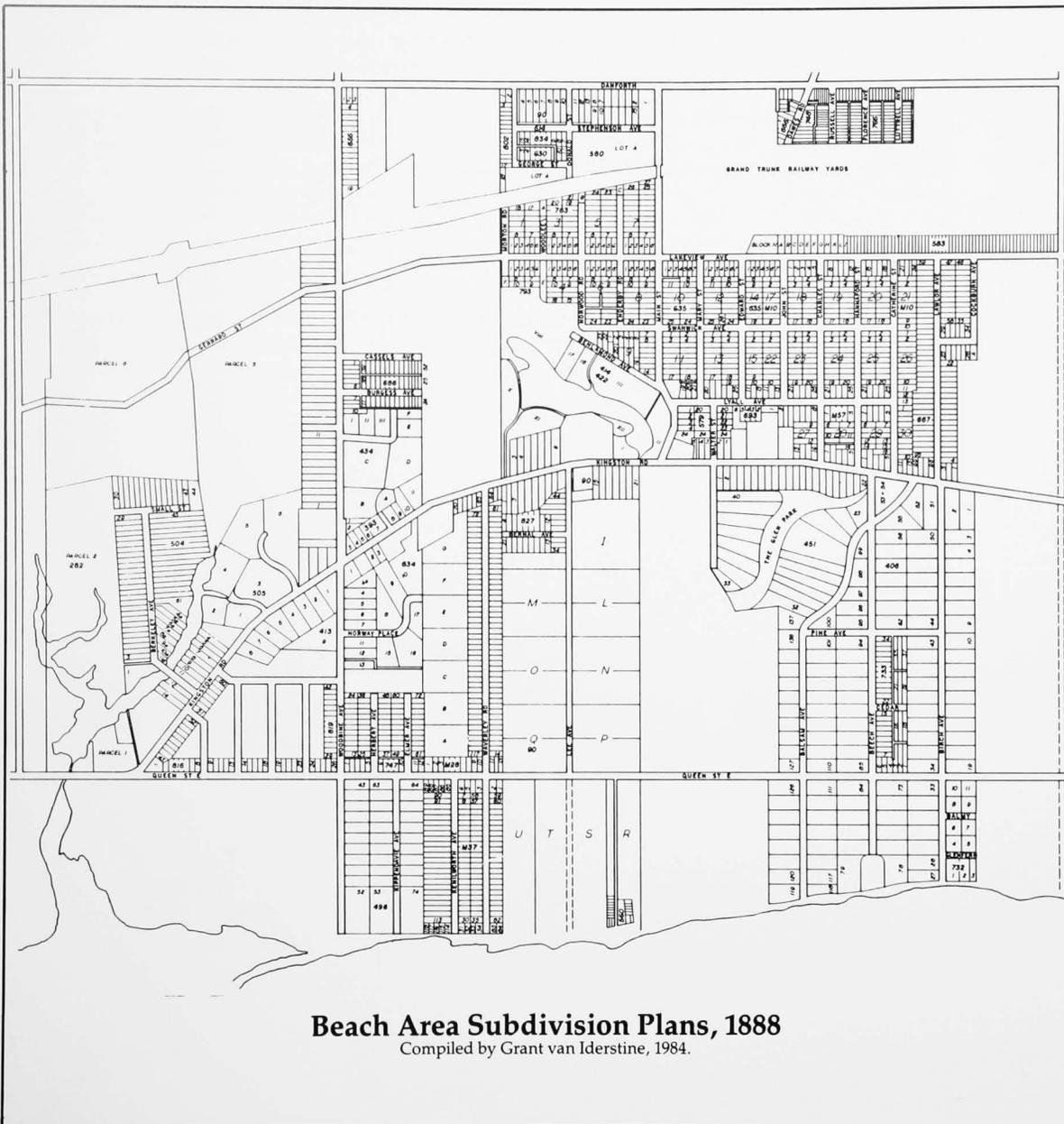
# Appendix A



Plan No.	Street Ref.	Date Filed	Owner's Name
47	Kingston Road	26 Jan 1853	James Browne
90	Kingston Road	27 Sept 1854	Martin P. Hayes
282	Woodbine Ave	24 Sept 1867	E. Goldsmith, J. Small et al
393	Kingston Road	9 Dec 1873	Richard Smith
406	Queen St E	19 Jan 1876	Adam Wilson
413	Woodbine Ave	2 May 1876	Joseph Duggan
414	Benlamond Ave	1 June 1876	B. Morton, J. Lamond Smith
422	Benlamond Ave	25 Oct 1876	Morton Smith, Darling
434	Woodbine Ave	29 Dec 1877	Benjamin Morton
451	Balsam Ave	10 Jan 1879	J. Lamond Smith et al
482	Dawes Road	1 Oct 1880	B. Morton et al

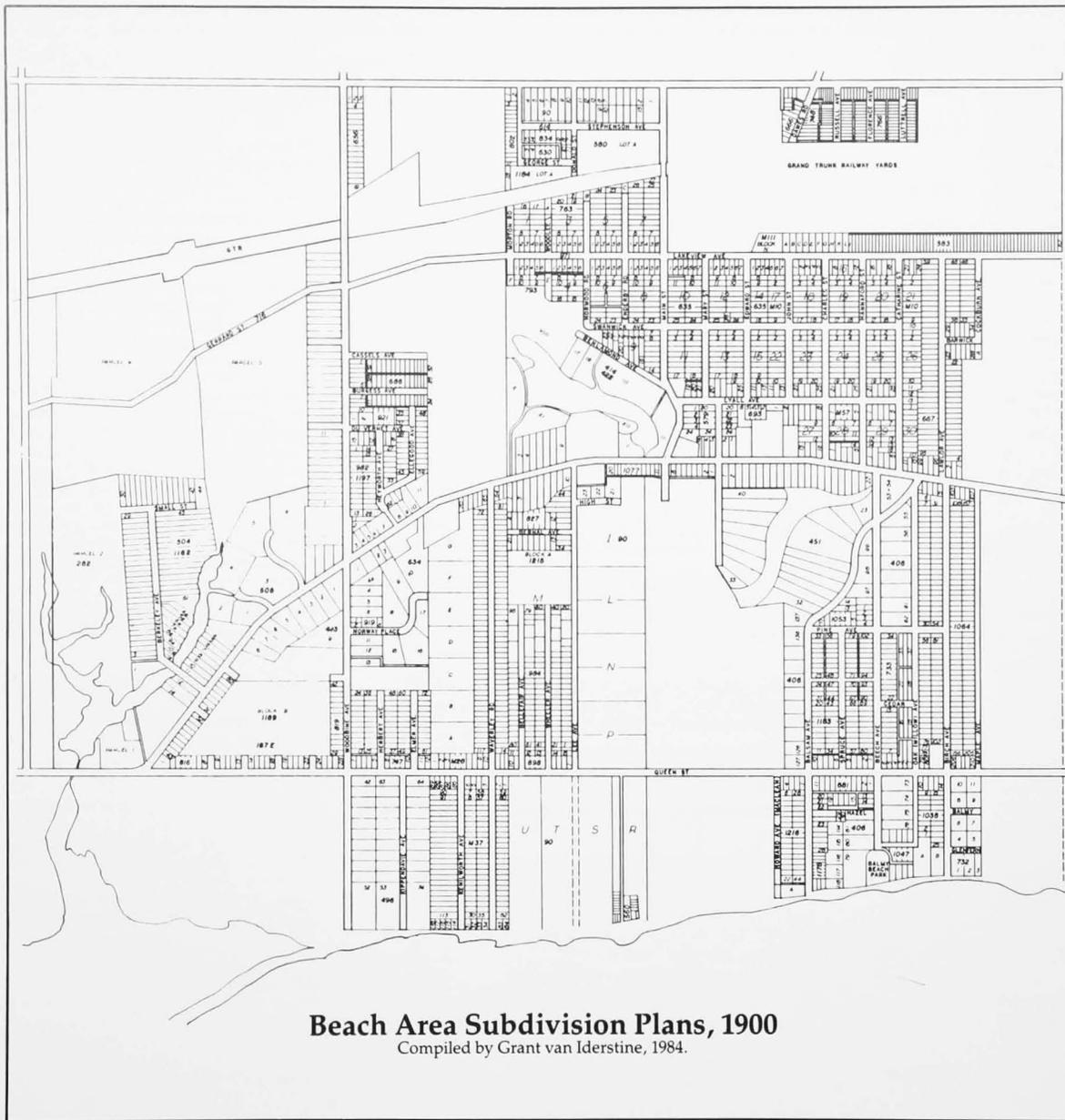
**Beach Area Subdivision Plans, 1880**  
 Compiled by Grant van Iderstine, 1984.

ETBHS



Plan No.	Street Ref.	Date Filed	Owner's Name
492	Leuty Ave		
496	Kippendavie Ave	14 Jul 1885	Scottish Ont., Man. Land Co.
504	Edgewood Ave	11 Mar 1882	John Small
505	Kingston Road	20 Mar 1882	Heirs of L.E. Goldsmith
559	Kingston Road	1 Oct 1883	Mary S. Morton, B. Morton
560	Leuty Ave	24 Apr 1884	Justus Hunn
580	Stephenson	19 Jul 1884	M.S. Morton et al
581	Gerrard St E	19 Apr 1884	M.S. Morton et al
582	Walter St	16 Jul 1884	M.S. Morton
583	Gerrard St E	2 Oct 1884	B. Morton
614	Stephenson	11 Apr 1885	M.S. Morton
620	Beech Ave	18 Jun 1885	O.S. Winstanley et al
630	Stephenson	11 Jul 1885	M.S. Morton
634	Woodbine Ave	5 Apr 1886	Scottish Ont., Man. Land Co.
635	Main Street	31 Aug 1885	M.S. Morton
644	Beech Ave	12 Jan 1886	Robert Beaty
656	Woodbine Ave	5 Apr 1886	Richard West
666	Daves Road	26 Jun 1886	G. Empringham et al
667	Lawlor Ave	9 Jul 1886	Wm. A. Lee
674	Kelvin Ave	8 Sept 1886	John Lucas
686	Burgess Ave	2 Nov 1886	John A. Burgess et al
693	Kingston Road	10 Dec 1886	M.S. Morton
716	Gerrard St E	29 Mar 1887	M.S. Morton et al
732	Silver Birch	4 May 1887	Robt. J. Fleming et al
733	Cedar Ave	4 May 1887	Robt. J. Fleming et al
739	Elmer Ave	30 May 1887	A. Smith et al
747	Herbert Ave	8 Nov 1887	A. Smith, D.E. Smith, G.W. Smith
748	Daves Road	22 Jun 1887	Seling A. Coleman
763	Enderby Road	12 Sept 1887	B. Morton
766	Kelvin Ave	13 Oct 1887	John Lucas
778	Norwood Road	20 Nov 1887	B. Morton
793	Woodlee Road	8 Feb 1888	B. Morton
802	Morton Road	3 Apr 1888	B. Morton et al
816	Queen St E	2 Jun 1888	Joseph Duggan
819	Woodbine Ave	2 Jun 1888	Joseph Duggan
827	Kingston Road	18 Jun 1888	James B. Morrison
834	Stephenson	28 Jul 1888	Holbrook Morton Gibson
M10	Swanwick Ave	20 Oct 1886	D.W. Clendenan, B. Morton
M28	Kenilworth Ave	13 Sept 1887	Illegible
M37	Kenilworth Ave	14 Feb 1888	Illegible
M57	Lyall Ave	16 Oct 1888	B. Morton, D.G. Stephenson

**Beach Area Subdivision Plans, 1888**  
 Compiled by Grant van Iderstine, 1984.



### Beach Area Subdivision Plans, 1900

Compiled by Grant van Iderstine, 1984.

Plan No.	Street Ref.	Date Filed	Owner's Name
881	Balsam Ave	21 Mar 1889	James L. Hughes
898	Wheeler Ave	24 Apr 1889	Alex Wheeler et al
919	Norway Ave	12 Jun 1889	M.L. Cherry, I.E. Preston
921	Duvernay Ave	19 June 1889	Lily Monahan
971	Norwood Rd	30 Nov 1889	B. Morton
982	Woodbine Ave	7 Jan 1890	Lily Monahan
984	Wheeler Ave	15 Jun 1890	James Beaty
993	Lyall Ave	13 Feb 1890	B. Morton
994	Gerrard St E	13 Feb 1890	Mary S. Morton
1038	Silver Birch	6 Jun 1890	C.H. Barnett, A. Wilson
1047	Park Ave	18 Jun 1890	C.H. Barnett
1053	Balsam Ave	31 Jul 1890	Geo. Hogarth
1064	Silver Birch	9 Oct 1890	W. Burk
1077	Lee Ave	16 Jan 1891	Walter Darling et al
1084	Kingston Rd	27 Feb 1891	East Toronto Village
1162	Edgewood Grove	24 Sept 1894	A. Clendenen, E. C. Shaw
1178	Balsam Ave	8 Jun 1895	Fanny Beaty
1183	Spruce Hill Rd	18 Feb 1896	Robt. Beaty et al
1184	Morton Rd	10 Mar 1896	B. Morton, M. Heyworth
1186	Kingston Rd		
1189	Woodbine Ave	2 Mar 1897	Joseph Duggan
1197	Heyworth Ave	21 Oct 1897	Wallace Maclean et al
1215	Kingston Rd	6 Jul 1900	F.T. Watson
1216	Maclean Ave	10 Sep 1900	A.M. Howard et al
M111	Gerrard St E	27 Mar 1889	Hickson Morton Grassett
M156	Swanwick Ave	11 Feb 1891	A. Taylor et al
5E	Wheeler Ave	24 Apr 1889	O'Connor, Wheeler, Carlyle
167E	Queen St E	13 Feb 1897	Joseph Duggan

# Appendix B

## Origin of Beach Street Names

\* Indicates additional information elsewhere in text.

Beach street names reveal a good deal about the area's history. Names like Kew and Coxwell go back to the area's pioneering families, Norway commemorates an early village, and Glen Stewart was a country estate. Some names such as Victoria Park, Munro Park, and Scarborough Beach are reminders of recreational spots that disappeared as the city expanded eastward and land was needed for other purposes. As the area was subdivided into building lots, some developers like Hambly and Wheeler incorporated their personal names into the new streets. The Beach's British connection was not ignored when it came to naming streets, e.g., Cavendish and Victoria are either English nobility or royalty, and Hammersmith, Isleworth, and Kew are areas in London. The reason why so many streets (e.g. Pine, Balsam, Beech, Silver Birch, Fir, Cedar, Spruce Hill) in the Balmy Beach area were named for trees remains a mystery but it is a way of distinguishing the area, or as long time Beach resident Olga Marie Commins remarked "if you're not on a street with a "tree name", you're not in Balmy Beach."

<b>Cavendish</b>	Probably Victor Christian William Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire (1868-1938), Canada's governor-general, 1916-21.
<b>Coxwell*</b>	Charles Coxwell Small (1800-64), Clerk of the Crown in Pleas, owner of property in lots 6, 7, and 8.
<b>Dixon</b>	Annie Dixon inherited Woodbine Park race course and the adjacent property from her father Joseph Duggan. See also Woodbine.
<b>Glen Ames*</b>	Alfred Ernest Ames (1866-1934), stock broker and investment banker, who from 1900 owned a large estate known as Glen Stewart. Formerly Joan Avenue, renamed in 1949. See also Glen Stewart.
<b>Glen Manor</b>	Probably combination of Glen Stewart and Stewart Manor, the latter being the name the Provident Investment Company gave c. 1923 to its housing development of the Glen Stewart estate. See also Glen Stewart.
<b>Glen Stewart*</b>	Homestead from 1872 of Reverend William Stewart Darling (1818-86), associated with the Church of the Holy Trinity, Toronto from 1853 to 1882. The estate was south of Kingston Road, east of Lee Avenue, and its name was

retained after the property was sold to A. E. Ames. See also Glen Ames.

<b>Hambly</b>	William James Hambly (1845-1939) was a printer, newspaper man, member of the public school board and an alderman for Ward 2 in 1910. In 1905 he was President of the Canadian Savings and Loan Building Association which apparently developed Hambly Avenue, a street where he lived at no.62.
<b>Hammersmith</b>	A district of London, England commemorated by Joseph Williams, who bought property in the Beach district in 1853. See also Isleworth, Kew.
<b>Hubbard</b>	Frederick Langdon Hubbard (1878-1953), general manager of Scarborough Beach Amusement Park. His father was William Peyton Hubbard, Toronto's first black alderman and a member of the Board of Control. Hubbard Boulevard is said to be on the exact location of the old boardwalk at Scarborough Beach Amusement Park. See also Scarborough Beach.
<b>Isleworth</b>	A district of London, England commemorated by Joseph Williams, who bought property in the Beach district in 1853. See also Hammersmith, Kew.
<b>Kenilworth</b>	Possibly the English castle made famous by the novel of the same name written by Sir Walter Scott in 1821. See also Waverley.
<b>Kew Beach*</b>	Kew Gardens in London, England commemorated by Joseph Williams, who bought property in the Beach district in 1853. See also Hammersmith, Isleworth.
<b>Kingston</b>	Highway connecting York (Toronto) and Kingston which was built in 1799-1800. Until 1884, Queen Street east of the Don River was called Kingston Road. See also Queen.
<b>Lee</b>	Walter Sutherland Lee (1837-1902), a prominent Toronto businessman who served on many civic boards. In the 1880s, Lee owned property on the east side of Lee Avenue between Queen Street and the lake. This section of Lee Avenue was called Kew Avenue until 1883. See also Leuty.
<b>Leuty</b>	Emma Mary Leuty, wife of Walter Sutherland Lee. See also Lee.
<b>MacLean</b>	Allan McLean Howard, Sr. (1825-1908) bought property in the district in 1876 which he sold to his son Allan McLean

Howard, Jr. (1852-?) in 1888. The family home still stands, though modified, at the northwest corner of Queen and MacLean. Both father and son were clerks for the first divisional court of the County of York. When originally laid out in 1900, MacLean Avenue was called Howard Avenue. Signatures and correspondence in the family's papers at the Archives of Ontario indicate that the family name is "MacLean." According to the City of Toronto's assessment records, "MacLean" is the official spelling of the street name.

<b>Maughan</b>	"John Maughan's premises [were] north of Queen Street at the junction of the Kingston Road." (Toronto Council Minutes, 16 January 1905, no.82.)
<b>Munro Park*</b>	George Munro, (1800?-78), Toronto businessman, alderman, mayor, and one-time member of the provincial legislature, bought the eastern 60.5 acres of Lot 1 in 1847. In 1896 his heirs leased the portion south of Queen Street to the Toronto Railway Company who operated an amusement park known as Munro Park there until 1906. While the family name was Munro, the Park's name was consistently spelled Munro. See also Neville.
<b>Neville</b>	Frances Jane Neville, daughter of George Munro and wife of Brent Neville. See also Munro Park.
<b>Norway</b>	Village of Norway which centred at Kingston Road and Woodbine Avenue. The Norway Steam Saw Mills were established there in 1835 to mill the large stands of trees, including the Norway pine.
<b>Nursewood</b>	Nurse family who lived in the district. Roy Nurse (c.1903-84), and his brother Jerry, who trained out of Balmy Beach Club, were championship paddlers in the 1920s and 1930s.
<b>Queen</b>	Queen Victoria (1819-1901). So named west of the Don River in 1844 (formerly Lot Street). East of the Don River, Queen Street was called Kingston Road until 1884. The section between Balsam and Silver Birch (then Birch) avenues was called Maple Avenue when it was created by an 1876 subdivision. Maple Avenue was re-aligned and became part of Queen Street in the mid-1880s. See also Kingston.

Scarboro Beach*	Scarboro' Beach Amusement Park operated on the site from 1907 to 1925.
Victoria Park*	Victoria Park was an amusement park which operated from 1878 to 1906. Probably named for Queen Victoria. See also Queen.
Waverley	Possibly for the first of Sir Walter Scott's historical novels, written in 1814. See also Kenilworth.
Wheeler	Alex Wheeler and others registered a subdivision plan in 1889 which laid out lots on Wheeler and Bellefair avenues.
Williamson	"William Williamson, 1857-1949, manufacturer, builder, Alderman and Justice of the Peace who contributed much to the life of this city." (Plaque in Williamson Park). Williamson operated a lumber yard and planing mill at the northeast corner of Woodbine Avenue and Queen Street East from c. 1890. He built many houses in the east end as well as part of Woodbine race track.
Woodbine	Woodbine Riding and Driving Club opened on 19 October 1875 by William J. Howell of Toronto and Dennis S. Pardee, a stock breeder from New York. Howell owned the Woodbine Saloon on Yonge Street, which may account for the name given to the track.

## Notes

### Development of the Beach Area, 1793-1932

<sup>1</sup>Joseph Bouchette, *The British Dominions in North America*, 2 vols. (London: Longman, Rees, Orne, Brown, and Longman, 1832), 1:89.

<sup>2</sup>quoted by Michael S. Cross, "The Stormy History of the York Roads, 1833-1865," *Ontario History* 54 (March 1962): 1.

<sup>3</sup>"Norway Steam Saw Mill, City of Toronto," *Toronto Patriot*, 2 June 1835.

<sup>4</sup>Beaches Library Local History Collection (hereafter cited as BLLHC), Marjorie Howard, "The History of the Beaches District," 1938, 2.

<sup>5</sup>University of Toronto Map Library, "Sketch Sheets of a Winter Reconnaissance of the Country East of Toronto between the Don River, and the Township of Scarboro, on the E: and the Don and Danforth on the N: to the Lake Shore," 1868.

<sup>6</sup>York County Council, *By-laws* (1887), no. 508, p. 182., also: Ontario, Laws, Statutes, etc., *An Act Respecting the Incorporation of the Village of East Toronto*, 51 Vic., ch. 47.

<sup>7</sup>John Ross Robertson, *Robertson's Landmarks of Toronto*, 6 vols. (Toronto: J. Ross Robertson, 1894-1914), 4:119.

<sup>8</sup>"Balmy Beach," *Toronto World*, 1 April 1899, 9.

<sup>9</sup>"Munro Park, Balmy Beach - A Building Boom on at the Beach," *Toronto World*, 26 April 1899, 10.

<sup>10</sup>"Toronto, A Summer Resort," *Toronto World*, 14 July 1900, 7.

<sup>11</sup>"Kew Beach Residents to Make Some Demands," *Toronto World*, 2 Dec. 1903, 4.

<sup>12</sup>Ontario, Legislative Assembly, *Ontario Gazette*, 1902, 1293.

<sup>13</sup>"How Toronto's Railways Enter and Leave the City," *Toronto World*, 23 May 1906, 4.

<sup>14</sup>"Beach District Aroused Over Railway Invasion," *Toronto World*, 21 Dec. 1906, 1.

<sup>15</sup>City of Toronto Council, *Minutes*, 1908, Appendix C, 20 Sept. 1908, 127-8.

<sup>16</sup>City of Toronto Council, *Minutes*, 1909, Appendix C, 12 Nov. 1909, 77-8.

<sup>17</sup>City of Toronto Council, *Minutes*, 1909, Appendix C, 11 March 1909, 51-52.

<sup>18</sup>City of Toronto Council, *Minutes*, 1908, Appendix C, 29 Sept. 1908, 128.

<sup>19</sup>"Toronto's Comprehensive Harbour Scheme," *Contract Record*, 20 Nov. 1912, 53-56.

<sup>20</sup>"A Mass Meeting," Toronto Harbour Commission file No. 580 G-1, Vol. 1, 13 July 1916.

<sup>21</sup>"Howard Estate Is No More," *Toronto Globe*, 30 Dec. 1920.

<sup>22</sup>J. Edgar Middleton, *The Municipality of Toronto: A History*, 3 vols. (Toronto and New York: Dominion Publishing Co., 1923), 3:325.

<sup>23</sup>"The Eastern Beaches," *Toronto Star*, 25 Sept. 1929.

## Highlights

<sup>1</sup>Archives of Ontario (hereafter cited as AO), Home District Quarter Session Minutes, 14 July 1802, 81 (ms 251, reel 1, vol. 1).

<sup>2</sup>AO, Draft of Agreement between Charles Coxwell Small & Samuel Hill, both of Toronto, re the leasing of a tannery, 1884 (MU 2109, MSS, Misc. Coll., 1884, #2).

<sup>3</sup>"Sketch Sheets of a Winter Reconnaissance of the Country East of Toronto. . . ." 1868

<sup>4</sup>AO, Surrogate Court Records, County of York, Will and Inventory of Charles Coxwell Small, no.311/1864.

<sup>5</sup>"John Small," *Commemorative Biographical Record of the County of York* (Toronto: J. H. Beers, 1907), 31-2.

<sup>6</sup>*The Celebration Book 130 Years . . . at the Church of St. John the Baptist Norway* (Toronto, 1980), 5-6.

<sup>7</sup>"East of the City Limits," *Toronto World*, 18 Dec. 1896, 2.

<sup>8</sup>J. MacPherson Ross, "Old-Timers of Norway," *Toronto Evening Telegram*, 12 Oct. 1920.

<sup>9</sup>"The Ashbridge Bay District," *Toronto World*, 3 Nov. 1894, 4.

<sup>10</sup>The East Toronto and Beaches Historical Society Archives, Dawson Lang, "George Lang," 1984?

<sup>11</sup>C. Pelham Mulvany, *Toronto: Past and Present; A Handbook of the City* (Toronto: W. E. Caiser, 1884), 102.

<sup>12</sup>*History of Toronto and County of York, Ontario*, 2 vols. (Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, 1885), 2:182.

<sup>13</sup>"The Pictorial Slide," *Toronto World*, 28 May 1905, 1.

<sup>14</sup>W.A. Craick, "Beach School Makes Up in Quality What It Lacks in Size," *Toronto Star Weekly*, 25 May 1918, 23.

<sup>15</sup>BLLHC, "Kew Gardens," 1879. (Brochure.)

<sup>16</sup>"Kew Beach," *Toronto World*, 4 July 1898, 4.

<sup>17</sup>City of Toronto Council, *Minutes*, 1907, Volume 2, Appendix B, By-law No. 4896, 25 March 1907, 292-3.

<sup>18</sup>BLLHC, Interview with Reg Worth, Toronto, Ontario, 3 June 1975. (Transcript).

<sup>19</sup>"Where To Go In Summer," *Toronto Globe*, 29 April 1907, 3.

<sup>20</sup>Cathy Commins and Olga Marie Commins, "A History of Balmy Beach," *Ward 9 Community News*, 22 April 1980, 13.

<sup>21</sup>Ted Reeve quoted in S. F. Wise and Douglas Fisher, *Canada's Sporting Heroes* (Don Mills, Ont.: General, 1974), 310.

<sup>22</sup>"To Building Wreckers," *Toronto Globe*, 24 Oct. 1925, 26.

<sup>23</sup>[Advertisement], *Toronto Telegram*, 24 Sept. 1926, 25.

<sup>24</sup>AO, Surrogate Court Records, County of York, Will and Inventory of William Stewart Darling, no. 5914, 1886.

<sup>25</sup>C.G.D. Roberts and A.L. Tunnell, eds, *A Standard Dictionary of Canadian Biography. Canadian Who Was Who*. 2 vols. (Toronto, 1934-8), 2:10-12.

<sup>26</sup>E.M. Johnston, "The Beach District," *St. John's Norway Courier*, 10 April 1966, n.p.

<sup>27</sup>Middleton, *The Municipality of Toronto: A History*, 3:325.

<sup>28</sup>City of Toronto Council, *Minutes*, 1931, Appendix A, Committee on Parks and Exhibitions, 26 Jan. 1931, 133.

<sup>29</sup>*Statutes of the Province of Ontario*, 1903, 3 Edw. VII, ch. 50.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>"Balmy Beach," *Toronto World*, 2 Aug. 1904, 2.

<sup>32</sup>"East Toronto," *Toronto World*, 27 March 1906, 10.

<sup>33</sup>AO, RG 18, Series F-1 Standing Committees on Private Bills, Box 7, 1910.

<sup>34</sup>"Munro Park, Balmy Beach," *Toronto World*, 26 April 1899, 10.

<sup>35</sup>[Advertisement], *Toronto World*, 1 Aug. 1903, 2.

<sup>36</sup>[Advertisement], *Toronto World*, 20 June 1904, 12.

<sup>37</sup>"Balmy Beach," *Toronto World*, 27 May 1907, 12.

<sup>38</sup>Mulvany, *Toronto: Past and Present; A Handbook of the City*, 102.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>"Victoria Park," *Toronto World*, 27 May 1895, 4.

<sup>41</sup>"Will Cut Up Victoria Park," *Toronto World*, 2 Aug. 1899, 8.

<sup>42</sup>"Victoria and Munro Park," *Toronto World*, 23 May 1900, 4.

<sup>43</sup>Medical Inspectors Report in Toronto Board of Education, *Annual Report*, 1914, 4.

<sup>44</sup>"Toronto Branch Library," *Construction*, 10 (1917): 390.

<sup>45</sup>Carnegie Corporation of New York, Library Correspondence, Reel no.32, Toronto; also quoted by Margaret Beckman, Stephen Langmead, and John Black, *The Best Gift; A Record of the Carnegie Libraries in Ontario* (Toronto and London: Dundurn Press, 1984), 100.

<sup>46</sup>BLLHC, "Beaches Library Scrapbook," 32.

## Bibliography

Ashbridge, W. T. *The Ashbridge Book*. Toronto: 1912.

Armstrong, Frederick H. "Family Compact Placemen As Respectable Squires: the Later Smalls of Berkeley House." *York Pioneer* 77 (Spring 1982): 1-10.

*A Backward Glance; The Church of St. Aidan 1907-1957*. Toronto, 1957.

Beaches Library Local History Collection.

Beckman, Margaret, Langmead, Stephen, and Black, John. *The Best Gift; A Record of the Carnegie Libraries in Ontario*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1984.

Betcherman, Lita Rose. *The Swastika and the Maple Leaf; Fascist Movements in Canada in the Thirties*. Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1975.

East Toronto and Beaches Historical Society Archives.

Filey, Mike. *I Remember Sunnyside*. Toronto: Brownstone Press, 1981.

Frayne, Trent. *The Queen's Plate*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1959.

*Kew Beach United Church 1882-1957, 75th Anniversary*. Toronto: 1957.

Levitt, Cyril and Shaffir, William. *The Riot at Christie Pits*. Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1987.

Pursley, Louis H. *Street Railways of Toronto, 1861-1921*. Los Angeles: Interurbans, 1958.

The Toronto Trolley Car Story, 1921-1961. Los Angeles: Interurbans, 1961.

Robertson, John Ross. *Landmarks of Toronto, A Collection of Historical Sketches of the Old Town of York from 1792 to 1833 and of Toronto from 1834 to 1895*. 6 vols. Toronto: J. R. Robertson, 1894-1914.

Russell, Victor. *The Mayors of Toronto 1834-1899*. Boston Mills Press, 1982.

Teasdale, Margo. "Beaches Bibliography: Sources on Toronto's Eastern Beaches Neighbourhood." Unpublished paper prepared for Toronto Public Library Preserving Our Past Project Sponsored by Summer Canada, 1984.

*Ward 9 Community News*. Toronto, 1972-88. Name changed April 1988 to *Beach Metro Community News*.

## Beaches Library

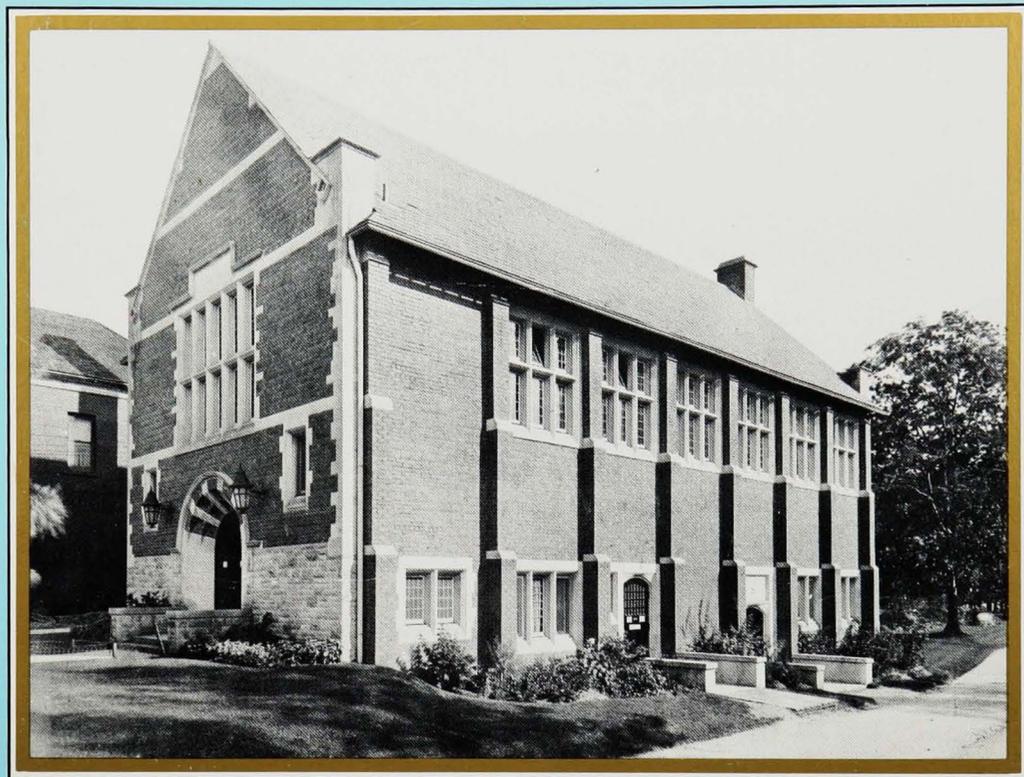
As early as 1910, local residents and politicians were asking the Toronto Public Library Board to establish a library at the Beach. Four years later, Beaches Library opened in a store on the northeast corner of Queen Street and Hambly Avenue with Miss Jessie Nelson in charge. Mayor Tommy Church laid the cornerstone for a permanent library on 29 Oct. 1915 and slightly more than a year later, on 13 Dec. 1916, it opened in Kew Gardens. The site was provided by the City, despite local and Parks Committee opposition to building on park property. The Carnegie Corporation of New York contributed \$50,000 for building this library and two others at Wychwood and High Park. The three identical structures, designed by architect Eden Smith, represented "a departure from the traditional library, both in style and arrangement, being designed after the fashion of the Collegiate Grammar School of the seventeenth century in England."<sup>44</sup> In a 1914 letter to the Carnegie Corporation, Chief librarian George Locke had explained the intention of using this architectural style:

May I say that the sketch accompanying this letter has been made to bring to the minds of the people of the outlying districts, some recollections of their Scottish and English village type of architecture. These Suburbs are largely working classes from the countries mentioned.<sup>45</sup>

Beaches Library soon became an important part of the cultural life of the community providing innovative programming such as art exhibits, concerts, book lovers' evenings, and plays. The Beaches Library Drama League, formed in 1924, was, according to a 1939 report, "one of the first Little Theatre groups in Toronto and has brought considerable distinction to the Beach for its outstanding work in the Dominion Drama Festival."<sup>46</sup>

Beaches Library was renovated and enlarged in 1979-80 by Stinson, Montgomery, Sisam Architects.





MTLB X71-53

**Beaches Library, c. 1916**  
Queen Street East, south side, between  
Waverley Road and Lee Avenue  
Built 1916