

CABBAGETOWN IN PICTURES

by Colleen Kelly



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INTRODUCTION

Ask Torontonians if they have heard of Cabbagetown, and the answer will most certainly be yes. But ask them to define it, and the answers will be as varied as the people themselves. It is neither a city ward nor a provincial or federal riding. Yet, while lacking definition, the area still possesses a spirit seldom found in the surrounding neighbourhoods. It is, at once, a community, a way of life, and a unique tradition.

In recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in the area. Lured by its proximity to the downtown core, its easy access to public transit, and its beautiful old homes, people of all descriptions have eagerly been buying up the real estate in Cabbagetown. While many residents welcome this new interest in their community, others feel threatened by the rapid change. They fear that developers might try to cash in on the popularity of the area. Consequently, numerous disputes have arisen over Cabbagetown's precise location.

Perhaps the most commonly accepted boundaries are those established by Hugh Garner in his novel *Cabbagetown*. Garner described Cabbagetown as the area bounded by "Parliament Street on the west, Gerrard Street on the north, the Don River on the east and Queen Street on the south". For purposes of this book, these boundaries have been extended to include many of the places frequented by Cabbagetowners. Whether they be places of employment, favourite recreational spots, or merely areas perceived by many to be part of the neighbourhood, few would deny the importance of these places in Cabbagetown's history.

Cabbagetown has had a very long and exciting history. From its initial settlement in the 1840s to its emergence as a unique neighbourhood in the later part of the nineteenth century; from the construction of the Regent Park development in the 1950s through to the socially mixed community of today, the Cabbagetown story is fascinating. To add to this attrac-

tion, the neighbourhood also has some of the most interesting architecture in Toronto. With such a wealth of material, this book has chosen to present a social history of the community, with particular emphasis on the period from 1900 to 1940. This period has been selected because luckily, some of the colourful people who experienced Cabbagetown in the early 1900s are still around to discuss the many characteristics that made the neighbourhood unique. Their happy reminiscences provide much of the resource material used, which may help to explain why this history of Cabbagetown is displayed in such a positive manner. Talking with them, one uncovers a treasure trove of Canadian history and gains a revealing picture of Cabbagetown from 1900 to 1940. The oral tradition they offer gives an enlightening portrayal of daily life in Cabbagetown at the turn of the century.

EARLY HISTORY

Two hundred years ago, the Cabbagetown area consisted of acres of forest and marsh. Although York received its first permanent settlers with the arrival of the English in 1793, easterly expansion into what would someday become Cabbagetown was very slow in coming. One significant factor contributing to this delay was that the land surrounding the Town of York had been divided into one hundred acre Park Lots. York was a government town, so the majority of the thirty-four lots were set aside as estates for government officials. Two of the eastern lots, however, were reserved for other purposes. John Graves Simcoe, the first lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada, was determined to establish a naval base in the York region. The town's lakefront location and sheltered harbour provided the perfect site for such a fort. In addition, the two Park Lots extending from Parliament Street to the Don River were covered with enormous pine trees, which were ideal for shipbuilding. It was assumed that once these lots had been cleared, the reserved land could be used for the building of public institutions. Government buildings were in fact constructed at the foot of Berkeley Street in 1794, yet few other advances were made into the area. These considerations, among others, greatly delayed settlement in this region until well into the 1840s.

There were a few prominent settlers who quickly noted the value of the area. Occasionally travelling up the Don River on sightseeing tours, Simcoe and his wife, Elizabeth, enthusiastically attested to the Don Valley's picturesque nature. It was as a result of such a journey that Simcoe decided to build a summer residence on the shores of the Don River near the present-day Prince Edward Viaduct. The residence was called Castle Frank, after Simcoe's youngest son, Francis. Although this site is located just outside the Cabbagetown boundaries, Castle Frank played an important role in the history of the region, for it drew popular attention to the often-neglected area.

The population of York grew steadily, but still there was no residential expansion to the area east

of the town. There appeared to be little or no interest in establishing a community near the Don Valley. People were reluctant to live too close to the marshy Don, for such lands were considered a breeding ground for disease. Since outbreaks of cholera and typhus were common, early Torontonians were not willing to take any chances. Despite Simcoe's example, the lands surrounding the Don River remained virtually uninhabited until well into the 1800s.

Entrepreneurs began to note the value of the area in the 1830s when they established various in-

dustries in the York region. The Don River itself was the influencing factor, providing both transportation and power for new factories. The appearance of factories near the mouth of the Don River, such as the Gooderham & Worts grist mill (1832) and distillery (1837), was soon followed by the building of homes and boarding houses for the workers. What had once been considered an unhealthy living environment was now considered an essential working environment. With no means of transportation, the workers had little choice but to live within walking distance of their jobs. The region began to develop.



CASTLE FRANK, 1794?

West side of Don River, south of Bloor Street East.
Courtesy Metropolitan Toronto Library T11502.

The new industries needed workers, but since York had been designated the capital of Upper Canada, the majority of its citizens worked for the government. This predominantly middle-class population did not provide the necessary workers required for the rapidly expanding industries. A new source of labour became an urgent and important factor in the 1840s. As it happened, this demand coincided with a surge of immigration from the British Isles and, in particular, Ireland. Driven from their homes by the potato famines of 1847-48, thousands of Irish immigrants came to North America. Large numbers landed in the Toronto vicinity, and many found their new homes in this area. They were attracted by the region's need for unskilled labour and the availability of cheap and unsettled land. Drawn together by their common suffering, they were a community before they even arrived. On the long, hard voyage across the Atlantic, they had lived together in close quarters and shared everything. A loyalty grew amongst them, a community spirit and a willingness to help each other. These virtues continued as a way of life in Cabbagetown and contributed to its tradition as a caring community.

The city's reaction to Cabbagetown, however, was not as favourable. Newcomers are rarely made welcome, and the response to the Irish was no different. Possibly because of the impoverished circumstances in which they arrived or merely as a result of class distinctions, the first Cabbagetowners were regarded with pity and scorn. The name "Cabbagetown" was originally considered a derogatory nickname for their neighbourhood. It has two possible origins. It might have referred to the fact that these settlers grew cabbages in their front gardens to supplement their food supply. As cabbages were one of the principal staples grown in Ireland, the new settlers wasted little time in planting them in Canada. It might also, however, have been a reference to the "skunk cabbages" that grew wild in the marshy lands surrounding the Don River. Whatever the name's origin, few would deny its negative connotation, for both "skunk cabbage" and cooking cabbage give off a pungent odour. Yet, over the years, the nickname "Cabbagetown" has



CABBAGES GROWING IN A CABBAGETOWN GARDEN, 22 June 1936.
273 Sackville Street; east side between Dundas St. E. and Oak St.
Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. Housing Dept. No. 9

gained a respect few original settlers could have imagined.

By 1860 Cabbagetown was a sizeable community. Toronto's population had more than tripled since 1841, with a considerable number of these immigrants settling in the Cabbagetown area. The neighbourhood experienced changes with the arrival of more settlers in the 1870s and 1880s. Many of them were from the British Isles, but a scattered number had come from various other European countries. Cabbagetown acquired a few Italian,

Jewish, Macedonian, Russian, and Bulgarian families, as well as a small French Canadian sector. New cultures were assimilated into the closely knit community. The neighbourhood, however, remained overwhelmingly British.

A more affluent type of resident also moved into the community. Despite Cabbagetown's impoverished areas, such as the region south of Gerrard Street and west of Parliament Street to the Don River, the neighbourhood did in fact possess a thriving middle class. Living in beautiful homes located

in the Don Vale area, in the northern section of Cabbagetown, this middle class was made up predominantly of self-employed businessmen. Operating businesses ranging in size from small corner stores to large factories, this group played an essential role in Cabbagetown's history. In addition, many streets in the Sherbourne and Carlton area housed upper-middle class residents, leaving Cabbagetown with a very economically diverse population.

GATHERING FOR THE WEDDING OF EDITH LAMB AND DR. GAVIN BROWN, 1914.

156 Winchester Street, north side, west of Sumach Street. Built 183-?, altered 1867; 1877.

Courtesy Dora Lamb. In the centre, front row are Daniel Lamb, (with child on knee). Annie Millen and Eliza Lamb.



HOMES

The home played a very important role in Cabbagetown. The most familiar houses in the neighbourhood were those rented or owned by the community's working class residents. While some Cabbagetowners were able to purchase professionally built homes, many others were able to afford only a small plot of land. Those with vacant lots would initially build one or two rooms, depending on the availability of money. With the passing of years, they would gradually build onto their homes, modernizing with each addition. Most did the

building themselves, for few could afford such additions otherwise. It was not purely out of financial necessity, however, that these hardworking people built their own homes. Many also gained great personal satisfaction from constructing their own homes. Such a contribution also had a lasting effect on the neighbourhood, for, as noted in J.V. McAree's *Cabbagetown Store*, "they built up the city in a personal sense, in a way that has hardly been built since, for they did their own building".

TYPICAL CABBAGETOWN HOUSES, 195 ?

Reed Street, south side.

Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. Toronto Housing Authority RG136 No. 29.



Since the residents participated so intimately in the development of their own surroundings, certain streets in Cabbagetown have inherited a very personal character. The slight variations in the homes, the subtle differences in their appearance, have contributed to the neighbourhood's distinctiveness.

Not all Cabbagetowners could afford a home of their own. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, very few Cabbagetown families owned their own houses. Most rented. Often two or more families lived under the same roof. Their wages were poor, and many remained tenants all of their lives, moving from one house to another, but always remaining in Cabbagetown. They stayed in the neighbourhood not only because of the affordable rents it offered, but also because of Cabbagetown's communal spirit.

Several families lived in housing developments, known as workers' rows, which were originally built by industrialists to house their own workers. Located close to the industrial areas often in the southern sections of the community, these cottages were rarely maintained by the factory owners and as a result they quickly deteriorated. The rows usually consisted of five or six attached cottages, with a communal laneway in the back and a yard in the front. The small, crowded lodgings were poorly built, and with no insulation they offered little resistance against the cold winters. Most of the row houses were torn down for the Regent Park development; however, there are still some standing. Of the remaining few, the best known are the Wellesley Cottages. Located north of Wellesley Street East, west of Sackville Street, these seven cottages were built in 1886/87.

For the less affluent Cabbagetown family, the typical house consisted of three or four rooms. On the main floor was the kitchen and family room. These rooms were the heart of the home, for here family members would eat, talk, and spend much of their leisure time. Upstairs there would be one or two bedrooms and possibly a washroom. As many as eight people would often share these rooms, with an additional pull-out couch in the living room.

LIVING AND DINING ROOMS IN A TYPICAL CABBAGETOWN HOUSE, 195 ?

247 Sumach Street, east side between Oak Street and Sumach Place.

Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. Toronto Housing Authority RG136 No. 53.



The homes were generally heated by coal or wood fires. Even after central heating became available, few families could afford such a luxury. One of the most common recollections of the Cabbagetown old-timers was the unending search for coal or wood to heat their homes. Consumers' Gas, located at the bottom of Parliament Street, was a handy source. After the gas had been extracted from the coal, the children would be allowed to pick the coke from the ashes. As an alternative, the children could always go rummaging through the debris at the St. Lawrence Market in the hope of finding discarded wooden crates. At the turn of the century, the city began to replace the cedar blocks used for the old neighbourhood roads with permanent paving. For children fortunate enough to be around, the workers let them take the cedar blocks home for firewood. Regardless of where they went, however, Cabbagetowners do not have fond memories of picking coke or hunting for wood.

Often the residents were unable to collect enough coal to heat their homes. Particularly during the Depression, many Cabbagetowners were forced to live in homes with little or no heat. When such a situation occurred, which it often did, those on welfare or relief could work for the city for a couple of days in return for vouchers. These could be exchanged for necessities such as food or clothing. Coal could also be purchased with these coupons, and as a result it became known as "pogey" coke. Many Cabbagetowners can recall James Harris, a coal merchant, arriving at a neighbour's home to deliver the "pogey" coke. Everyone knew who he was, and although some recipients were embarrassed, their embarrassment was short-lived, for they were just some of the many who needed the fuel.

CHERRY STREET SHOWING CEDAR BLOCK ROAD CONSTRUCTION, 1907.

Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. James Collection No. 5032.



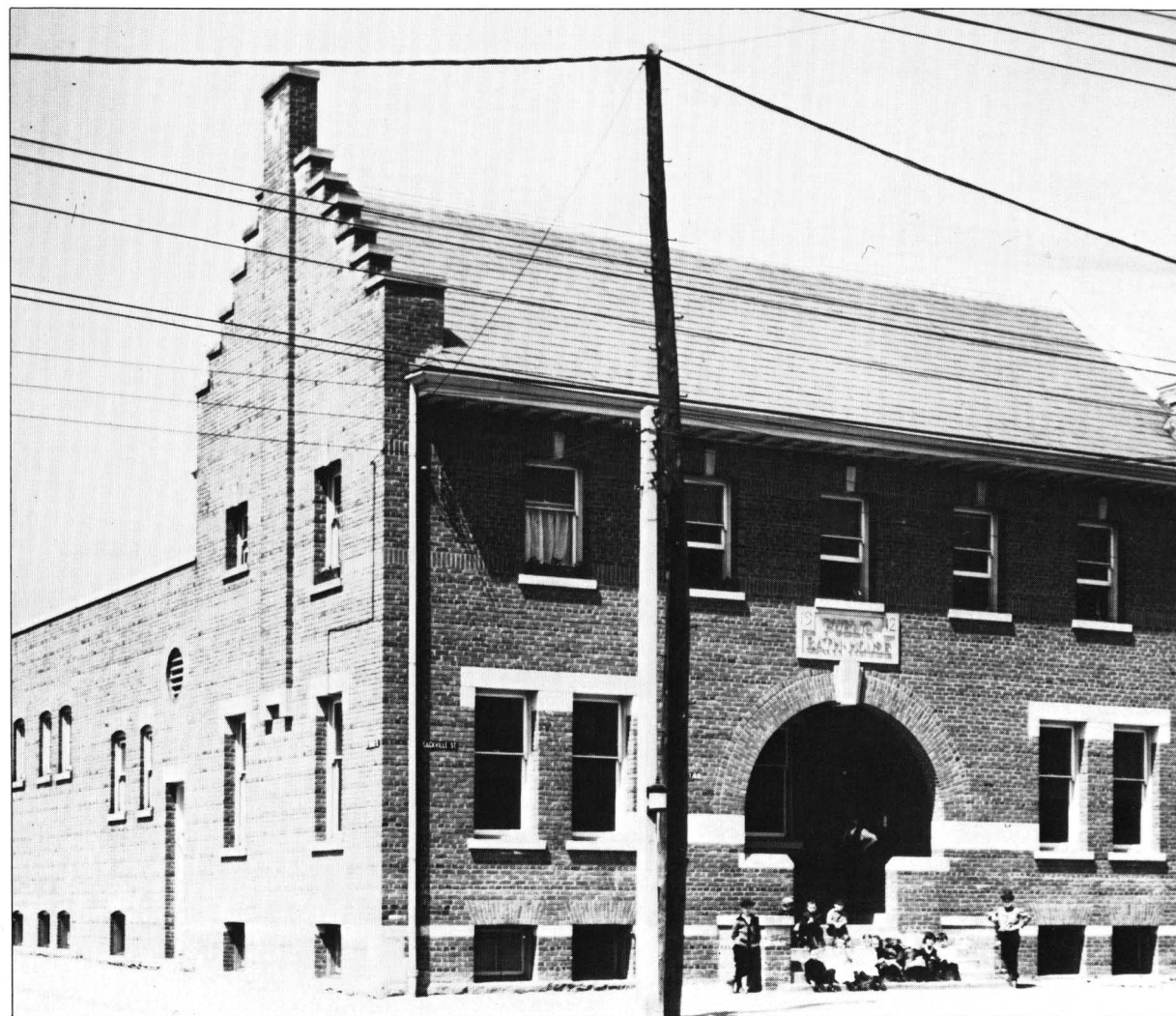
A similar situation existed with electricity. Well into the 1930s, when this service was readily available, relatively few families had it. In a neighbourhood where many were fortunate to afford food, there was simply not enough money to purchase such a service. Electricity was not considered a necessity, since most households managed quite well with gas lamps.

Weekly baths were held every Saturday in the kitchen washtub. The water was heated in huge pots on the stoves, and the children were paraded in and out of the same water. These communal baths were always given on Saturday night, so that the whole family would look their best for Sunday church. Those without tubs could always visit the public bath houses on Sackville or Parliament streets.

Proper toilet facilities were also rare. Most homes had either outhouses or crude water closets in the basement. With an inadequate sewage system and the houses built so closely together, the neighbourhood provided ideal conditions for the spread of disease. The city's sewage system was so primitive that until 1911 untreated sewage was dumped into Toronto Bay, very close to the area's main water supply. With this lack of basic sanitary measures, it is little wonder that the Cabbagetown area experienced a number of epidemics.

Such unhygienic conditions did not imply that the residents themselves were unclean. Regardless of whether or not they owned their own homes, early Cabbagetowners took great pride in what they had. As a result, their dwellings were always impeccably clean. Their possessions may have been old and worn, but they were tidied and mended regularly. The residents were so meticulous about their housekeeping that the neighbourhood bugs and rodents had a difficult time keeping out of their reach. Mary McKeown, a life-long Cabbagetown resident, recalls that her mother kept the house so neat that the bugs were constantly moving from one house to another through the connecting heat registers. A result, evidently, of a good cleaning!

O'NEILL PUBLIC BATHS, 23 May 1916.
Sackville and St. David streets, northwest corner.
Stood 1912-c1958.
Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. Salmon Collection No. 767.



HEALTH

Despite efforts to keep the community clean, however, Cabbagetown was still regarded as an unhealthy neighbourhood in which to live. The sewage problem, the closeness and overcrowding of the homes, as well as the keeping of livestock in yards all contributed to this problem. These prevailing conditions partially explained the community's susceptibility to disease. There was no health insurance, and few families could afford to pay a doctor, so sickness was a common element at the turn of the century. Some precautionary measures were taken, however. As was the case everywhere, when a member of a family contracted a contagious illness, such as smallpox, measles, or whooping cough, the entire household was quarantined. A quarantined house was easily identified by the large coloured sign that marked its door as a warning to neighbours.

When a death occurred in the family, there were two cemeteries located in the Cabbagetown neighbourhood; the Toronto Necropolis on Winchester and St. James' Cemetery at 635 Parliament Street, both of which are still in use.



NECROPOLIS CEMETERY, 1875/1880.
Courtesy Ontario Archives ST133.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

Ironically, many of the best medical facilities in the city existed in the midst of these conditions. In 1856, Toronto's second general hospital was completed in Cabbagetown. Located on the corner of Gerrard and Sackville streets, the hospital was built after months of controversy concerning the chosen location. Because of the proximity of the Don River, which for years was blamed for the outbreaks of agues and plagues, many felt it unwise to open a hospital in the Cabbagetown community. It was finally decided, however, that the real problem at hand was to ensure the purity of the drinking water. Since the site of the new hospital was eighty feet above Lake Ontario (a higher altitude was thought

to provide a clean water supply, but still ignored the problem of the dumping of sewage), as well as being somewhat removed from the busy city, the Gerrard Street location was finally agreed on.

When it opened, Toronto General Hospital provided space for 250 patients and boasted a medical staff of eight. The building itself was considered ahead of its time, possessing an advanced ventilating system and several fire hydrants on every floor. Toronto General quickly distinguished itself as a fine medical and educational institution. Over the years its staff was responsible for the training of students at three medical colleges - the Ontario Medical College for Women, Trinity College Medical School, and the Toronto School of Medicine - as well as Canada's second school of nursing, which opened on the premises in 1881.

With the exception of one year, 1867, when the hospital was forced to close because of financial difficulties, the Gerrard Street hospital was in operation until 1914. At that time, a new general hospital was opened on College Street near University Avenue. The vacated hospital building was used once again at the conclusion of the First World War, when it became the training barracks for regiments of the 48th Highlanders. Needless to say, it took the neighbourhood residents some time before they became accustomed to being awakened by military bugles. In 1922, the building was torn down and houses were built on this site.

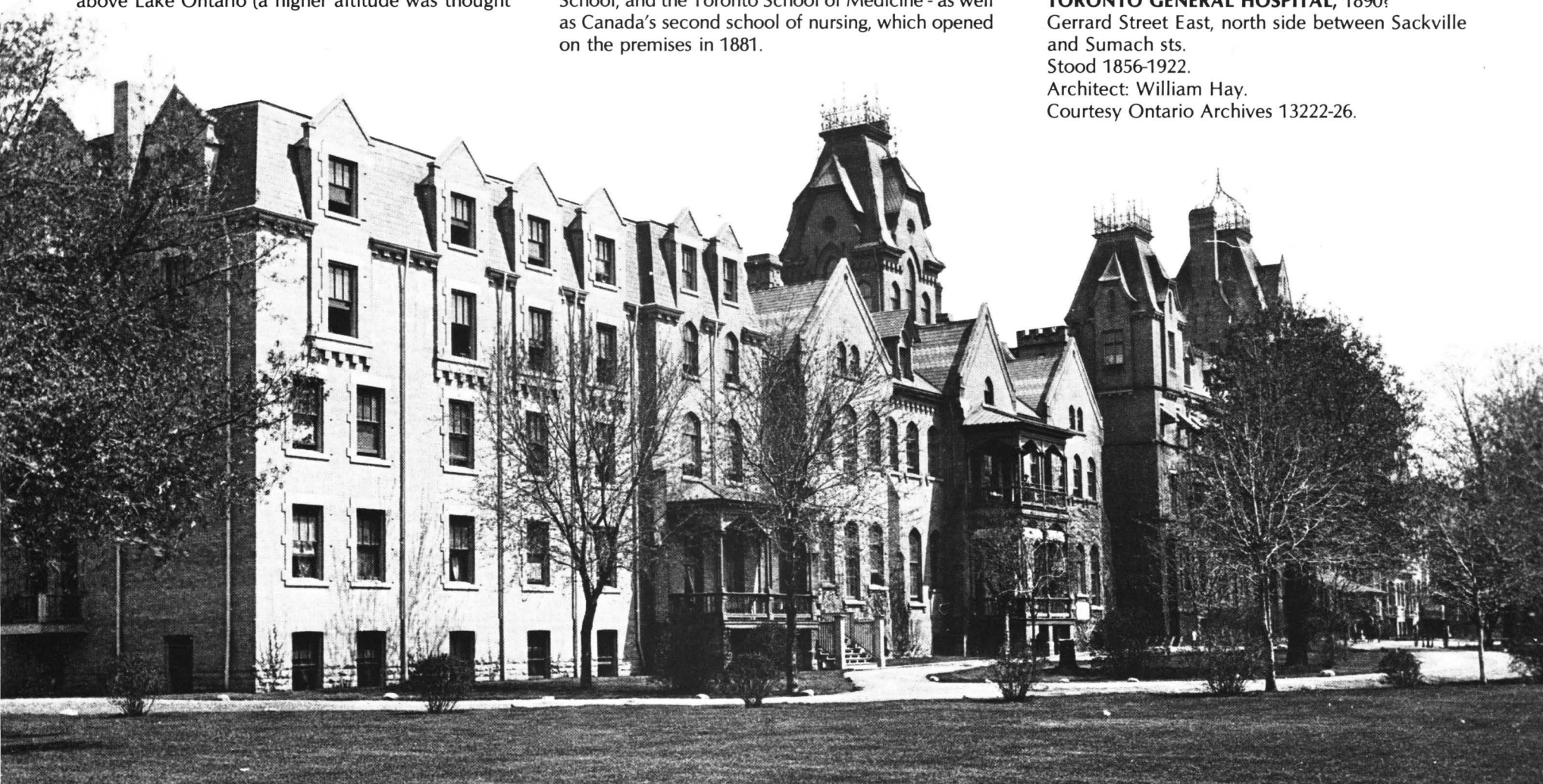
TORONTO GENERAL HOSPITAL, 1890?

Gerrard Street East, north side between Sackville and Sumach sts.

Stood 1856-1922.

Architect: William Hay.

Courtesy Ontario Archives 13222-26.



Other medical institutions were also located in the area. In 1883, Cabbagetown witnessed an unprecedented event with the opening of the first Ontario Medical College for Women, the forerunner of Women's College Hospital. Prior to its establishment, no Toronto medical school would admit female students. The school was originally housed in the Toronto General Hospital, but a separate building was erected in 1890 at 289 Sumach Street. Although subsequently used for a variety of commercial purposes, the building is standing.

Associated with the college was the Woman's Dispensary. Established in a private home on St. David Street in 1896, the dispensary offered female patients and their children the opportunity to seek medical attention from female doctors. During an era when, according to a long-standing Cabbagetowner, Max Walker, women "were too shy or sensitive to describe their ills to male doctors", this clinic proved very successful. Because of its popularity, it outgrew several locations. From the St. David Street site, it was moved to Parliament and

Queen streets (1903), then to 18 Seaton Street (1910), and later right out of the Cabbagetown district, when the dispensary settled at 125 Rusholme Road.

WOMAN'S DISPENSARY, 16 September 1914.
18 Seaton Street, west side, north of Queen Street East.
Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. Health Dept. No. 339.



Cabbagetown boasted two other medical schools: Trinity College Medical School (1871-1903), located at 41 Spruce Street, and the Toronto School of Medicine, situated on the southwest corner of Sackville and Gerrard streets until it became the medical faculty of Victoria College. With these facilities located right in the neighbourhood, Cabbagetown offered quite an impressive selection of medical expertise.

Although inoculations against childhood diseases were administered at some of the local clinics, illness was still a problem that families were constantly forced to contend with. The Evangelia Settlement (1904 to 1926) on Queen Street at River Street offered inoculations against the more common childhood illnesses. Prenatal care was also offered in this medical centre, and small operations were often performed.

Harry Easton, who spent much of his youth in Cabbagetown, recalls having his tonsils out at the Evangelia Settlement and leaving shortly afterwards. Because he came from a poor family, he could not afford to stay overnight. There were other such clinics in the Cabbagetown area. Catering to the medical problems of needy residents, the clinics offered a great service to the neighbourhood by charging low fees or no fees at all.

TORONTO SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, 1890?
Sackville and Gerrard streets, southwest corner.
Courtesy Ontario Archives 13222-138.



EVANGELIA SETTLEMENT, 15 September 1914.
Queen Street East and River Street, northeast corner.
Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. D.P.W. 32-336





SOCIAL SERVICES

In addition to the medical institutions, there were also several other non-profit organizations in the area. Such establishments have a long history of working towards the proper care and welfare of Cabbagetown's impoverished residents. Opened in 1857 and operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph, the House of Providence was one of the earliest charitable organizations in Toronto. Affiliated with St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church, the House of Providence was located just south of Queen on Power Street. Its purpose was to provide a place for the sick and homeless, regardless of nationality or denomination. As Sam Johnston, a Cabbagetown police officer, recalls, "There were more Protestants in it than Roman Catholics and many people used to call it 'The House of Protestants'." As far as those who operated the home were concerned, the only qualification for assistance was need.

Also associated with St. Paul's Church was a soup kitchen, which operated in the area prior to The First World War. The church would serve anyone who was in the lineup, once again regardless of religious persuasion. In keeping with the true spirit of Cabbagetown, when the soup ran out, neighbours would often replenish the exhausted supply.

Located in the neighbourhood was one of the city's first day care centres. The East End Day Nursery, established in the early 1900s, was located at 28 River Street. For ten cents a day, the East End Day Nursery would take care of the neighbourhood children while their parents worked the typical ten hour shift.

EAST END DAY NURSERY, c1909.

River Street, west side, north of Queen Street East.

Courtesy Metropolitan Toronto Library T11853.

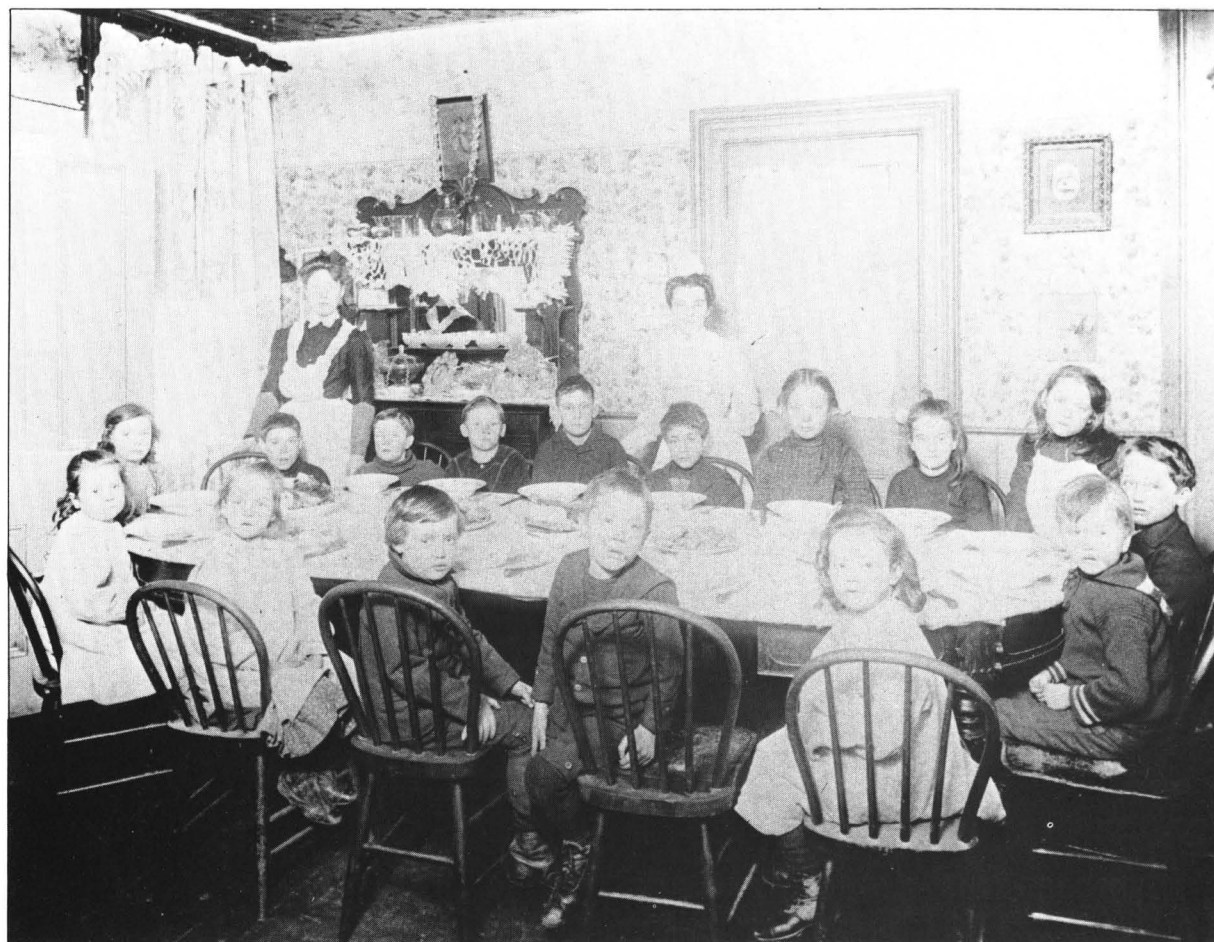


As a community centre, Dixon Hall (King and Sumach streets) was opened in 1929 under the direction of the Reverend William Edgar Wilson, a United Church minister. This centre represents an effort to bring members of the neighbourhood, with their problems, closer together on a social basis. James J. Ealey, a prominent Cabbagetown historian, considered its "outstanding work and benevolence among the city's east-end indigents and problem-people as monumental". How appropriate that the community known for its caring tradition should house some of the province's most noted charitable agencies.

INTERIOR EAST END DAY NURSERY, 1903?

Dundas Street East, north side between Sackville and Sumach streets.

Courtesy Metropolitan Toronto Library T11847.



DOMESTIC SCIENCE CLASS AT WINCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOL, 1905.

Winchester and Ontario streets, northwest corner. Courtesy Toronto Board of Education Records and Archives Centre. Lord Dufferin Public School Collection.

SCHOOLS

The Cabbagetown area boasted the first free school in Toronto. This free school was not a government-supported institution, but instead was privately sponsored by a wealthy Cabbagetown businessman, Enoch Turner. Opened in 1848, the school was built at 106 Trinity Street on property owned by the Anglican church. With room for up to

240 pupils, this long, narrow, one-room schoolhouse represented a major contribution to social reform. It offered the economically deprived the chance to improve their position in life, for only with an education could they possibly hope to better themselves.



Enoch Turner, fondly remembered as the brewmaster who gave his horses beer, personally financed the construction and upkeep of the school until the organization of the Toronto Public School Board in 1851. Although the building was almost demolished in 1971, it has since been taken over by the Enoch Turner Schoolhouse Foundation and is currently being used as a social and educational centre.

With the establishment of government-supported schools in 1851, a number of schools opened in the Cabbagetown community. Some of the better-known Cabbagetown schools include Park School - both the old (1853) and the new (1915/16), Palace School (1859-c1890), Parliament Street School (1872-1905), Winchester School (1874), the well known Dufferin School (founded in 1877; renamed Lord Dufferin School on 17 November 1949), Rose Avenue School (1884), and Sackville Street School (1887-1977).

Cabbagetown also housed several separate schools. Included among these were; St. Paul School (1842), Our Lady of Lourdes (1920), and St. Martin School (1922).

These early schools functioned under a very strict set of rules. The teacher was always unquestionably in control, and few dared to challenge his/her authority. The disciplinary methods at this time were often tough, and strapping was a common form of punishment. The students were occasionally marched into the school two by two, to military music. Segregated schoolyards for boys and girls were mandatory.

PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL, 1910?

St. David Street, south side between Sackville and Sumach streets. Architect: William Thomas.

Stood: 1853-1920.

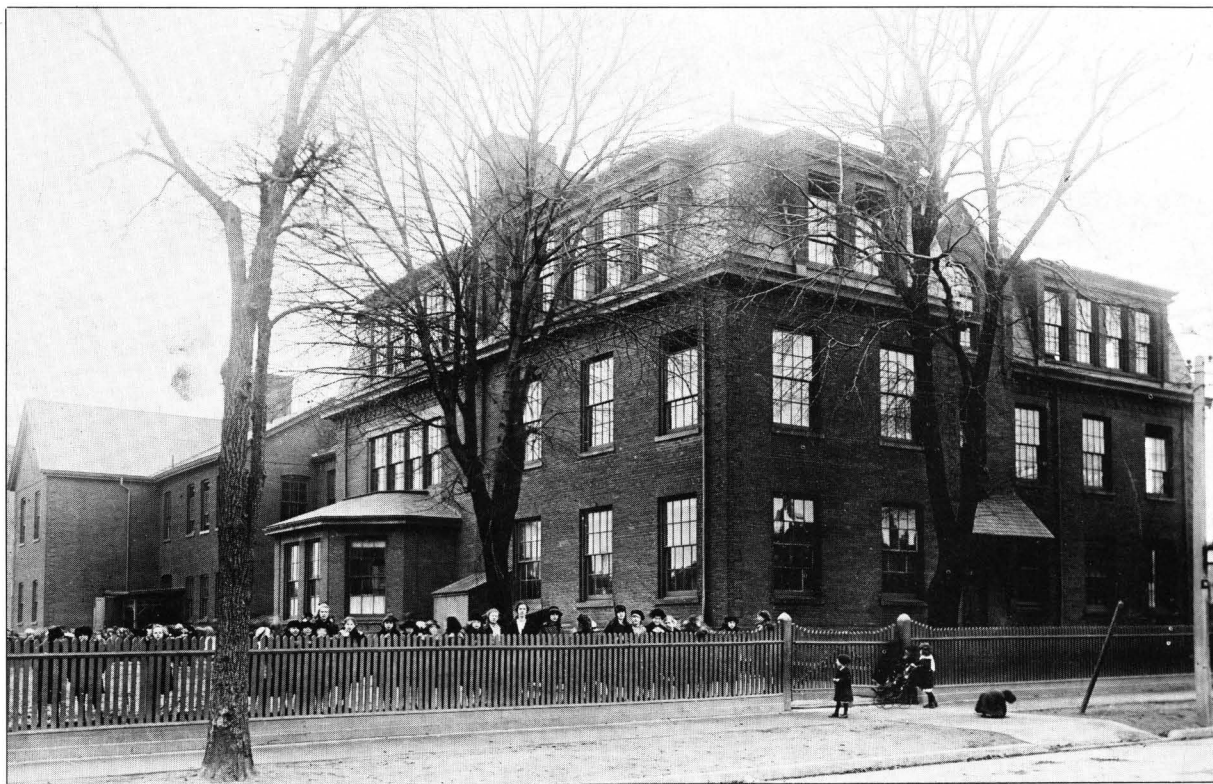
Courtesy Toronto Board of Education Records and Archives Centre.

Teaching the fundamentals was the educational system's primary objective. The emphasis was placed on the three "Rs" - reading, writing and arithmetic. Children were at school to learn their lessons, and, as Marion Lint, who lived in Cabbagetown from 1926 to 1929, remembers, "no one got through unless they knew their schoolwork".

Despite this strict discipline, Park School was known as the meanest, toughest school in Cabbagetown. Great rivalries existed between the neighbouring schools (fierce competition was apparent between Park and Dufferin schools) and at Park, this rivalry was often fought out on the streets. Marion Lint recalls that, "Park School was the toughest around. Whenever anyone had to go to

this school for manual training, they would wait until two minutes to nine and then run into the class. When they were through for the day, their teacher would let them out five minutes before the regular Park kids, so they could start running."

Rivalries were also common between the Roman Catholic schools and the public schools. If the children attending the public schools ventured into Roman Catholic territory, such as the area surrounding St. Paul's School on Power Street, a fist fight, or at least a good chase, was inevitable. The same was true for separate school students roaming the public schools' areas. They frequently made their allegiance to their schools very apparent.



ENTERTAINMENT - CHILDREN

Children enjoyed plenty of spare time. Much of this time was spent helping with the family chores; however, children always found extra time in which to play. Many of their happiest childhood memories involved playing in the neighbourhood, for the Cabbagetown of this time was ideal for children. It was close to the wide-open spaces of the Don Valley and the centre of the city, both of which provided exciting environments for children to explore.

HIKING AT CASTLE FRANK HILL, pre 1910.
Courtesy Ontario Archives SA14139.



Whether playing hide-and-seek in the crowded streets or bobsledding down the hillsides, the youths of Cabbagetown had plenty of resources with which to amuse themselves.

Anyone who has ever lived in Cabbagetown can recall many memorable hours spent in the Don Valley. The Don River and its surrounding ravine contained forest and wildlife close to the heart of the city. Even after major changes were made to

straighten the river's path in the 1880s to help alleviate a sewage problem and improve a transportation route, a healthy variety of animal species still roamed the valley. Most other city children had an opportunity to savour the spacious outdoors only during the summer months, but for those living in Cabbagetown, the nearby valley was a constant source of pleasure. A natural playground, it offered picnicking in the clearings, hiking in the wilderness, and fishing in the river.

SKATING ON THE DON RIVER, 1912?
Don River looking south to Gerrard Street.
Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. James Collection No. 461.



In the winter months the valley's hills were transformed into icy toboggan runs. The slopes were perfect - high enough to allow the toboggan to gather speed and long enough to make a ride worthwhile. Using either broken barrel slats for skis or makeshift sleds large enough to hold twenty people, Cabbagetowners made tobogganing a popular activity. One of the most frequented runs was a city-made bobsled run known as the "Three Sisters". This run, like many others, was sheer ice, and some claimed that it was a half-mile long. While Cabbagetowners spent many cold winter hours racing

down these hills, there was also a very unpopular aspect to this sport. Although as many as twenty people would enjoy the ride down, few remained to help pull the sleds back up the hill.

When the neighbourhood children tired of riding the slopes, they could always retreat to the "ice cushions" on the flats. Although some preferred to skate on the frozen river, enough accidents had occurred to discourage eager participants. For most, the various ice rinks on the flats provided more than enough space for pleasure skating and hockey

games. As store-bought ice skates were a luxury that few Cabbagetown families enjoyed, most managed with seventy-five cent blades screwed into their boots - a simple, but effective contraption. The assembling of hockey equipment also required some imagination. Old folded-up newspapers provided kneepads, broken broom handles were used as hockey sticks, and frozen apples made excellent pucks. What they lacked in possessions, Cabbagetowners made up for in ingenuity!



TOBOGGANING AT RIVERDALE PARK, 1912?
Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. James Collection No. 478.

In the summer months, the children would play in the Don River, usually at the swimming holes known as the Willow or Sandy Banks. These spots, located just south of Bloor Street, were very popular, especially with young boys, who enjoyed skinny-dipping there. The smart ones, however, always remembered to wear their belts in the water and hide their pants on the shore since they would be stolen if left in sight. Stan Wadlow, a native Cabagetowner, East York politician, and author of *Life's Precious Memories*, recalls the time he was skinny-dipping at the Willow, disobeying strict orders from his parents. During his forbidden swim,

his pants were stolen from behind the bushes and his mother, who was far from happy about the situation, had to bring a replacement.

Riverdale Park was a favourite place for many. Straddling the Don River, just south of Winchester Street, the land had initially been set aside by the city for a cemetery, but was later redesignated as a park. It was on this site that one of the city's first zoos was established. Assisted by Alderman Daniel Lamb, fondly remembered as the 'Father of Riverdale Zoo', the zoo obtained an impressive selection of animals for its opening in 1899. The grounds surrounding the zoo were cared for by the minimum-

security prisoners from the Don Jail, located directly across the river from the park. Eva Broomhall, who lived across the street from the zoo, suggests that the inmates working on the grounds "were men who had committed lesser crimes, mostly vagrants, etc.". These inmates often made friends with the neighbourhood children and were an accepted aspect of Riverdale Park. As Mrs. Broomhall further elaborates, "They always had a guard with them and he had buckets of barley water for them to drink. He would occasionally give us a drink and that was a highlight of our day."

SKINNY-DIPPING AT "SANDY BANKS", c1920.

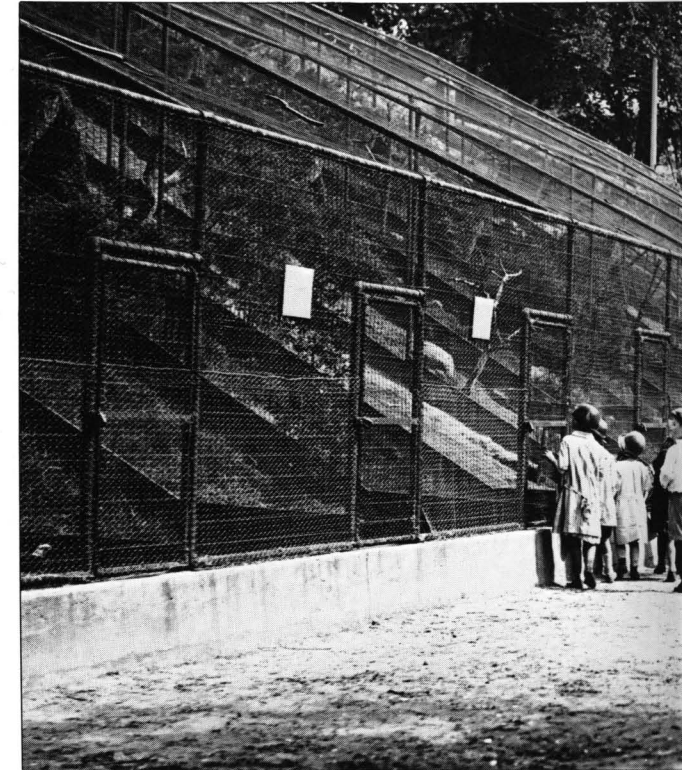
Don River near Bloor Street Viaduct.

Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. James Collection No. 7339.



RIVERDALE ZOO VISIT BY SACKVILLE SCHOOL CHILDREN, 28 June 1926.

Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. Parks Dept. No. 1277.



Stella, the baby elephant, was the biggest attraction at the Riverdale Zoo. Even with a wide selection of lions, bears, monkeys, and exotic birds, Stella remained the favourite feature. In the 1920s, yearly celebrations were held on her birthday, with the neighbourhood children being treated to free cake and balloons. To add to the fun of living so close to the zoo, the 1:00 p.m. whistle from General Steel Wares at River and Gerrard streets would alert the animals of their feeding time and start the monkeys clanging their cups. Max Walker suggests that "This whistle was the signal for the couple of hundred monkeys and apes to set up their deafening

cacophony." The Riverdale Park, and particularly its zoo, greatly contributed to making Cabbagetown a place for children.

The Don flats provided a perfect field for lacrosse, baseball, or football (soccer). If a game of football was in order, the boys could always go down to Davies' Packing House at the mouth of the Don. Constantly making faces at the workers, they would inevitably have a pig's bladder thrown at them. Then all they had to do was to sew it up, fill it with air, and the game was all set.

The Cabbagetown streets also provided a constant source of entertainment for the neighbourhood children. Of particular interest were the vendors, who sold their wares door-to-door. In the 1920s and 1930s, these merchants were a popular breed and included the milkman, iceman, baker, vegetable man, and fruit man. For Cabbagetown youths, the vendors provided infinite opportunities for trouble-making. Their mischief ranged from riding on the backs of the delivery wagons to scooping ice chips from the ice carts.

SANDLOT BASEBALL GAME IN RIVERDALE PARK, 1 August 1914.

Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. Parks Dept. No. 379.



With the exception of the ice-cream man, the children's favourite vendor was "Flypaper John". Selling his sheets of sticky flypaper during the hot summer months, Flypaper John was a common sight on the Cabbagetown streets. A heavy-set man, decked out in a worn grey duster and a "Charlie Chan" felt hat, he was continually chanting his familiar song;

Flypaper, flies, catch'em alive
all you bluebottles as well as flies
two for five, catch'em alive.

For the O'Donnell family, who lived on Sumach near Queen Street, just around the corner from the Ocean Blend Tea Company's stable, these strips were a necessity. As Lorne O'Donnell, suggests, "The manure piles of the stables were ideal places for the breeding of flies. Flypaper, one sheet on the kitchen table and the other, perhaps, in the parlour, was our only defence against the pesky creatures." Although his commodity was a necessity, the neighbourhood youngsters enjoyed following Flypaper John merely to listen to his haunting rhyme.

On especially hot days, children could hope that a friendly fireman would open a water hydrant or two to help them cool off. Another popular way to ward off the summer's heat was to take a ride on the trolley. One could board the old open trolleys for the bargain price of three cents for children or five cents for adults and travel through the city. On many of the civic holidays, the children rode the streetcars free, courtesy of the Toronto Street Railway, to various parks and amusement grounds. Many of the poorer residents welcomed this inexpensive way to spend a warm Sunday afternoon.

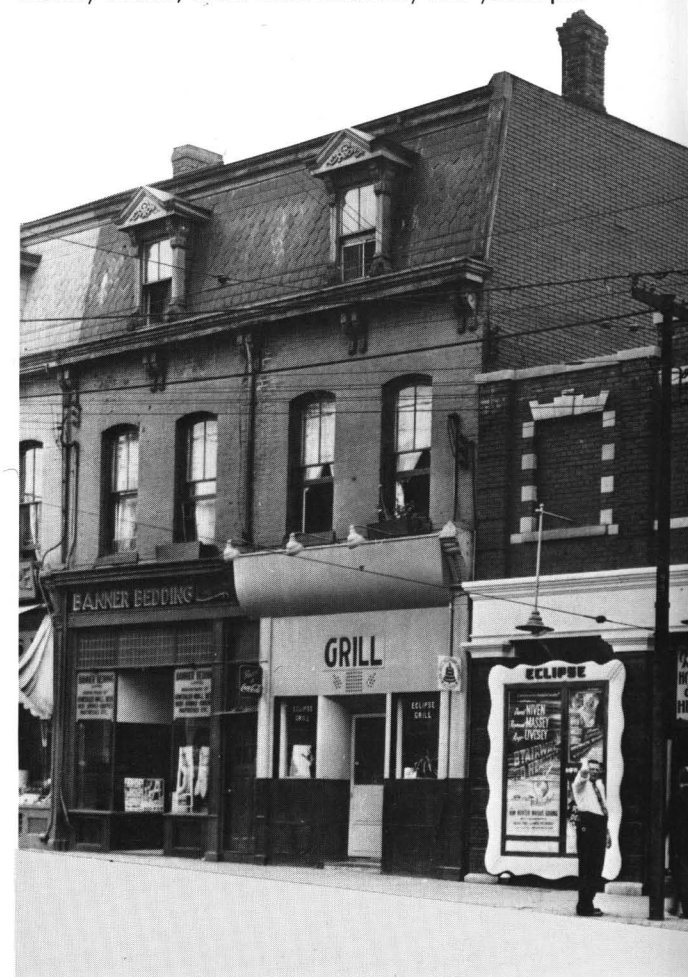
The neighbourhood children would rarely make plans for Friday night, preferring to sit on the streets and watch the men coming home drunk after work. They would wait outside local taverns such as the Rupert Hotel, in the hopes of catching one of the fights that frequently took place outside. The drinking establishments were the scenes of many amusing bouts; one night, for instance, a local rowdy handcuffed a police officer to a lamppost after the officer tried to arrest him.

Saturday afternoons were always reserved for the movies. The children's matinees at the Parliament, the Bluebell, the Eclipse, or the Carlton, were a weekly event. Six cents was all that was needed for an afternoon of movies and a bag of candy. The regular black-and-white serials, such as the Perils of Pauline or the Tom Mix westerns, included subtitles and were usually accompanied by a piano. For Roman Catholic children, the Imperial movie theatre on Queen Street east of Parliament provided the best deal around. Owned by St. Paul's Church, the Imperial let Catholic children in free on Fridays. For enterprising youths who were not of the Roman Catholic faith, merely standing in line would secure their free admittance. Quite a deal for an avid moviegoer!

Cabbagetown also witnessed many small circuses passing through its streets. These circuses, commonly referred to as "two-tenters", were a welcome alternative to the weekly matinees. So too were the medicine shows that often followed the carnivals. The speaker or "medicine quack" would wear a big hat and a long frock coat that hung past his knees. Selling medicine guaranteed to remove tapeworms, these men were a very strange group, but they offered an exciting diversion from everyday life.

There were some organized activities for the Cabbagetown youths. Every year the Star Fresh Air Fund would send several of the more needy Cabbagetown children to summer camp in Bolton. The Salvation Army sponsored a similar program. Other helpful institutions included the neighbourhood churches, which organized annual picnics to Centre Island and also housed weekly club meetings for

boys. The local schools sponsored some of the more interesting events, including annual amateur nights. On these occasions singers, bird call imitators, and Charleston dancers would all compete in the hopes of winning the big five-dollar prize. When the performer was really bad, and sometimes just for the fun of it, the audience would yell "get the hook". At this point a long staff would emerge from the wings and drag the entertainer off the stage. This rather abrupt ending was obviously enjoyed by all. The performers, however, were probably less than willing to return. With the exception of these few community events, there were relatively few youth pro-



ECLIPSE THEATRE, 27 July 1949.

387 Parliament Street, east side between Oak St. and Gerrard St. E.

Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. 9.2.3.6.
No. 795.

grams available. Activities for Cabbagetown children were primarily a product of their own imaginations.

What would a childhood be without holidays? In Cabbagetown holidays were the year's biggest events. Christmas was the most festive day of the year, with most families able to enjoy an extra special meal and perhaps an inexpensive gift or two. For those who could not afford these small luxuries, the Star Santa Claus Fund usually came through with a bushel of food and gifts for the children. Included among these presents were the easily recognized brown sweaters, black stockings, and



oversized boots. On Christmas morning all the kids in the neighbourhood would be wearing identical charity gear and clutching their bag of candy.

Because Cabbagetown was predominantly a British community, Victoria Day was a memorable occasion in the community. With the exception of Christmas, May 24 was Cabbagetown's most celebrated annual event. Not only were the children able to attend the various fireworks displays, parades, and neighbourhood parties, but they also participated in the city-wide festivities organized by the Toronto Board of Education. Carrying real or makeshift rifles, the boys marched down University Avenue. The girls carried commemorative banners that they had made themselves and also decorated the monuments in Queen's Park. A drum and bugle band from Dufferin School regularly participated in the parade. At night the fireworks would add the finishing touches to the day's events. Neighbourhood parties crowded the streets, and the dancing, singing, and general merrymaking lasted throughout the night. Cabbagetowners were British and proud of it. Victoria Day was their day to display and celebrate their patriotism.

On some of the quieter holidays, families might plan a trip to Centre Island to spend a day at the beach. The children enjoyed playing in the water or on the beaches; but it was the trip to the Island that seemed to make the most lasting impact on the children. While the family was on the streetcar, the baby's carriage would be hooked onto the back of the trolley. Sometimes there would be four or five carriages trailing behind the car. This evidently proved a rather amusing sight, for it was one of the more common recollections of the older Cabbagetowners.

**PRINCIPAL ROBERT W. DOAN AND FOUR
LORD DUFFERIN SCHOOL STUDENTS,**

24 May c1900.

Volunteers' Monument, Queen's Park, Toronto.
Courtesy Toronto Board of Education Records
and Archives Centre. Lord Dufferin Public School
Collection.



ENTERTAINMENT - ADULTS

Adults also found Cabbagetown a pleasant neighbourhood and, despite its reputation for being poor, a happy and friendly place to raise a family. Parents' lives revolved around their offspring, and they spent much of their leisure time with them. Whether personally participating in the children's day-to-day activities or contentedly watching them play from the front veranda, parents contributed a great deal of time and energy to raising their children.

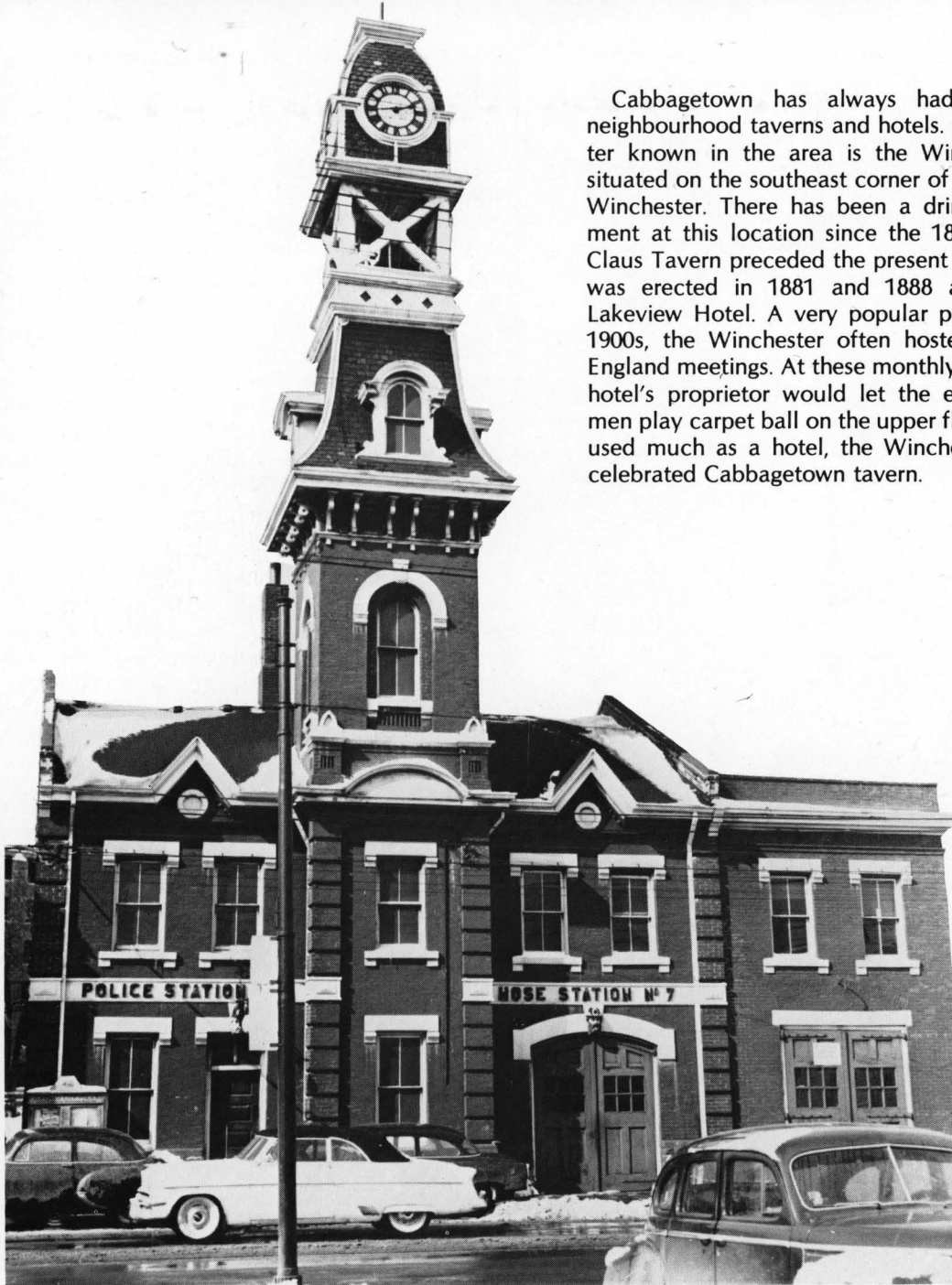
When not with their families, Cabbagetown men frequently visited the neighbourhood meeting

places. Money was usually scarce, so they did most of their socializing either in their homes or at these meeting places. The firehall on the north side of Wilton Avenue (now Dundas Street) near Parliament Street was a popular spot for those wishing to chat. Another was Harry's Barber Shop at the corner of Gerrard and Ontario. At Harry's, the men discussed everything from politics to neighbourhood scandals, occasionally solving major world problems. They attended these gatherings two or three times a week, establishing a close and lasting rapport with their neighbours.

When their finances allowed it, and even when they did not, the men visited the local pubs. Both before and after Prohibition, it was a familiar sight to see owners outside their taverns enticing tired workers into their establishments. Sometimes the lure of a cold beer after a long, hard day succeeded. Sometimes it did not. But whatever the result, the owners always tried, and they intensified their efforts on paydays, hoping to encourage a night of drinking. Anxious wives, waiting for late husbands, would send their children to the corner pub to fetch their fathers home.



PLAYING QUOITS IN RIVERDALE PARK,
1 August 1921.
Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. Parks Dept.
No. 944.



Cabbagetown has always had its share of neighbourhood taverns and hotels. One of the better known in the area is the Winchester Hotel, situated on the southeast corner of Parliament and Winchester. There has been a drinking establishment at this location since the 1860s. The Santa Claus Tavern preceded the present building, which was erected in 1881 and 1888 and called the Lakeview Hotel. A very popular pub in the early 1900s, the Winchester often hosted the Sons of England meetings. At these monthly gatherings, the hotel's proprietor would let the energetic young men play carpet ball on the upper floors. No longer used much as a hotel, the Winchester remains a celebrated Cabbagetown tavern.

Another much-frequented pub was the Rupert Hotel, located on the northwest corner of Queen and Parliament streets. Built in the late 1870s, it was considered one of the neighbourhood's better hotels. Known first as the Elephant and Castle, then the John O'Neil Hotel, and finally the Rupert Hotel in 1912, the building is no longer an inn, but the sign for the Rupert Hotel is still visible on the east side of the building.

For those Cabbagetowners living farther south, there was the Derby Tavern at King and Parliament streets. Possibly the oldest tavern in Toronto, the Derby was built in 1846. Alternately known as the Welcome Home, the Oriental, and the Derby since 1941, this tavern is still in operation today.

Other popular bars in the Cabbagetown area included the Dominion House at Queen and Sumach; the Shamrock Hotel, the "workingman's pub", at River and Gerrard; and the Avion Hotel at Gerrard and Sumach. Many other drinking establishments were located in the area, with one at almost every main intersection. Over the years these taverns have witnessed many rowdy nights, most of them ending with the arrival of the Black Marias, the police paddy wagons. The neighbourhood police, who at one time cruised the streets on bicycles instead of automobiles, had metal guard boxes on the street corners. These were often used to lock up the drunks until the paddy wagon arrived. Fortunately for some, the Cabbagetown police were generally considered to be an understanding lot. Evelyn Borrow, who spent most of her childhood years in Cabbagetown, can still remember the night a local officer walked her father home after he had had one too many.

**FIREHALL NO. 7 AND POLICE STATION NO. 4,
195 ?**

Dundas Street East and Parliament Street,
northeast corner.

Stood: 1878-195 ?

Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. Toronto Housing Authority RG136 No. 89.

Although a popular pastime, the legal drinking of alcoholic beverages came to a temporary halt on 22 March 1916, with the introduction of Prohibition. For the next eighteen years, Ontario was to experience an enforced dry spell. Many can recall the commotion outside of Haffey's Liquor Store (Dundas and Berkeley) the day before the start of Prohibition. Haffey's, which had been a neighbourhood fixture prior to the temperance movement, was forced to sell all of its stock before the set deadline. As a result D & W Special Whiskey sold for seventy-five cents a quart. All day long people bought this bargain whisky and sat on the steps outside of Haffey's drinking themselves silly.

During Prohibition many of the Cabbagetown taverns were forced to shut down. Some were able to survive these difficult years by offering other services. The Winchester Hotel opened a laundry as well as a butcher shop to help subsidize its failing business. Many operations were not as fortunate and were forced to close their doors for good. The temperance movement took its toll on the neighbourhood, closing not only the Cabbagetown pubs, but also the numerous distilleries and breweries in the area.

Along with Prohibition came a thriving bootlegging business. If alcohol could not be sold legally, someone was always willing to make extra money selling bootleg whisky. Alf Statham, a Cabbagetown resident, remembers the bootleggers who occupied the garages up near St. James Cemetery (on Wellesley Street) during Prohibition. In the late 1920s, the local distributor spent a great deal of time in those garages preparing his commodity. Alf recalls that "One day I saw one of the boys go up there and I happened to see a car pull up to wait for him. I went up casually and warned them that there was a reception committee down the street waiting for them. And he unloaded the car very nonchalantly and then drove down the street. And the police got a great shock when they had a dry run. A few days later there was an envelope left at the house for me. There was nice-sized bill in it — I figure it's what the fine would have been."

With the end of Prohibition in 1934, many of the neighbourhood taverns reopened. These establishments proved as popular and exclusive as ever. With few exceptions, the taverns were for men. Women were rarely permitted inside and were seldom made welcome in those they could visit. If a woman wanted to socialize, she usually had to do it elsewhere.

At that time, neighbourhood housewives were always busy. Lacking the modern conveniences of washers, dryers, refrigerators, and so on, they had little time for themselves. This did not mean, however, that they found no time for socializing. Despite the constant demands made on them, the Cabbagetown women always had time for a cup of tea with a neighbour or a bit of friendly gossip over the clothesline. Whether discussing their children's latest ailment or attempting to solve a mutual problem, the Cabbagetown women had a common bond. Theirs was a hard life, but they tried to make the best of it.

SHAMROCK HOTEL, 4 July 1922.

Gerrard Street East and River Street, southwest corner.

Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. Salmon Collection No. 1115.



STORES

Another social outlet for the women was the neighbourhood store. Located on almost every street corner, these stores were an important element, in the housewives' lives. Because of the lack of home refrigeration it was necessary for women to shop on a daily basis, and the local store came to serve as a social centre as well as a market. Here the neighbourhood housewives could meet and exchange stories and news, while taking very little time away from their busy schedules. Families would frequent the same store for years, establishing a close relationship with the storekeeper as well as with his other customers. Whether it was McCormick's Grocery at Wellesley and Sackville, Busy Bee Grocery at Gerrard and Sackville, Greenshield's Grocery at Berkeley and King, or one of the many others that crowded the Cabbagetown streets, the local shops were a neighbourhood institution - an essential aspect in the daily lives of the residents.

The corner store was generally located on the ground floor of a typical Cabbagetown house, the owner and his family living in the rooms above. These early stores were family businesses, with parents and children alike helping out whenever possible. The work was hard and the hours long (for competitive reasons many stores were open until late at night). However, the storekeeper never had to worry about feeding his family; money may not have been plentiful, but food certainly was. The shops, unlike those of today, carried everything from groceries to hardware to clothing. They tried to offer a little bit of everything to their clientele. With a store at every main intersection, competition was fierce, consequently, store owners could ill afford not to stock a particular item for a regular customer.

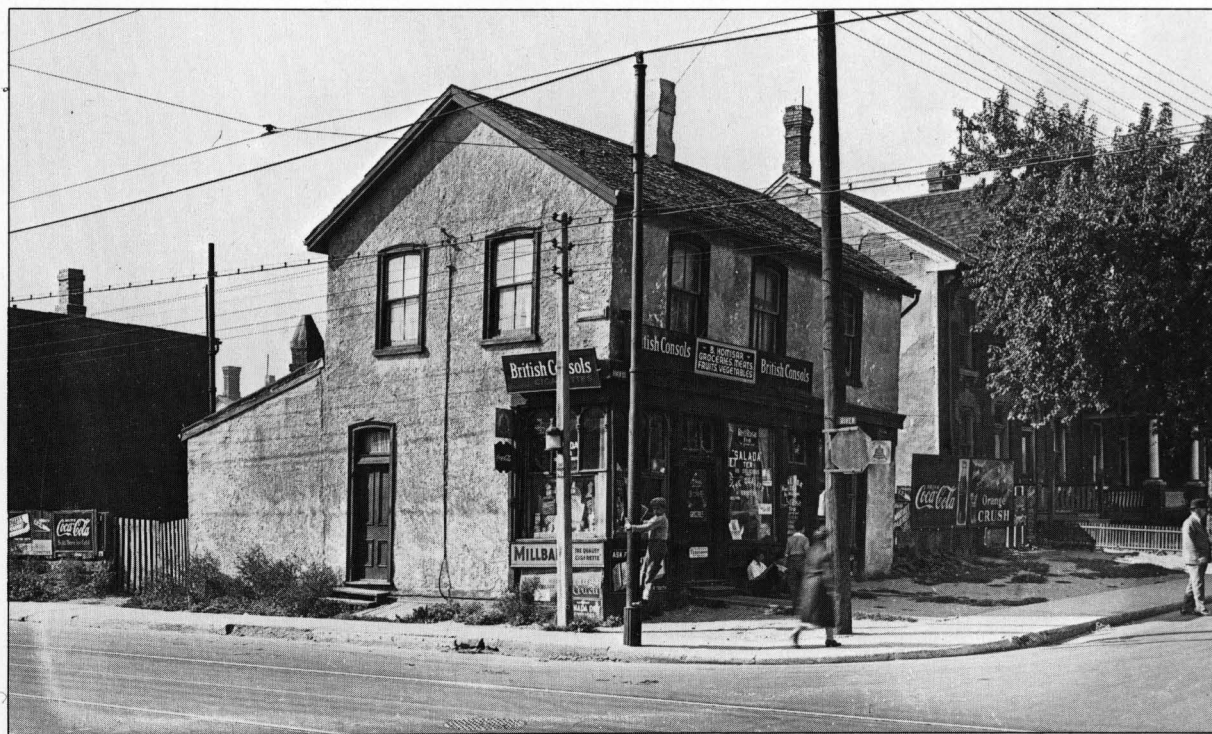
B. HOMISAR GROCERY STORE, 22 September 1937.

River and Dundas streets, northwest corner.
Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. Salmon Collection No. 2094.

Since their customers' earnings often did not last out the week, store owners would usually let them buy on credit until the following payday. In *Cabbagetown Store*, J.V. McAree described the numerous occasions on which his aunt and uncle - the Verners - who owned a corner store for several decades, wrote off a customer's debt during a difficult period. Aunt Polly, who was characterized in his memoirs as the tough, money-minded partner in the business, rarely turned away customers in need of food, even though she knew there was a good chance that they would never be able to pay for it. It was not that the Verners could personally afford to take over a neighbour's debt (they were eventually forced to close the store because of financial difficulties), but their generosity was just another example of the willingness of the members of the community to help each other out in times of need. Most of the early stores offered credit. Taking this factor into account, one can readily understand

why the corner store was considered such a basic part of the Cabbagetown tradition.

In addition to shopping at the corner store, Cabbagetown families made an occasional trip to Eaton's. These outings were special events, for most residents rarely ventured into the downtown sector. One season in the late 1910s, Eaton's had a huge sale on children's shoes - only ten cents for a pair of ultrablack, patent-leather slippers, with one strap and a small bow. Alice Elford and her sister, whose family lived in Cabbagetown, had been wearing button boots up to this time, so the new shoes were quite a cause for celebration. There was one big catch, however - all the shoes were made for the left foot! These "Mary Jane" shoes caused quite a stir the first time they were worn. The neighbourhood boys ended up betting each other a penny on which way the girls would turn at the corner, since all of the shoes leaned to the right.





ONE ONE ONE
GOD FAITH EMPIRE

BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES

Cabbagetown's large Irish sector established a little Ireland right in Toronto. The parallel was so precise that the Irish Protestants made their homes in the northern section of the community, while the Irish Catholics congregated to the south, the dividing line being Queen Street. The tensions of the long-standing religious war in their homeland were evident, but not prevalent. Instead of riots there were bouts of fisticuffs, and instead of war there was lively competition. An example of this was seen every twelfth of July, when Protestant bands would deliberately practise for the Orange Day parades in the Roman Catholic section of the community. On such occasions they would walk along Power Street trying to provoke a response from their Catholic counterparts. Generally, the anticipated responses were received in the form of harmless fights and block-long chases.

In spite of such differences, there was a willingness on the part of residents to help one another, regardless of religion. According to William Hambly, a prominent Cabbagetowner: "the Irish Protestants/Irish Catholics, they were just like one great big family the whole year round. It was only two days in the year when there was any difference of opinion and that was on the twelfth of July and the seventeenth of March." Otherwise, the Irish were good neighbours to one another. For instance, Mr. Hambly recalls that when Mrs. Murphy, who was Protestant, was having trouble delivering her baby, Mrs. Kelly, who was a Catholic, went immediately to her aid.

The Cabbagetown community was very loyal to Queen and Crown. Though most of the residents of Cabbagetown in the early 1900s had been born in Canada, Max Walker suggests that his generation

was "born, trained and educated to be British first and Canadians second". J.V. McAree suggested that either "God was a member of the Royal family or that the Queen was a member of the Divine family", but as far as his relatives were concerned, both were to be referred to with the same reverence. This loyalist nature was clearly evident during the two world wars. Some older Cabbagetowners believe that for its size their neighbourhood produced more volunteers for the armed forces than any other community in Canada. With the declaration of war on 4 August 1914, for instance, the patriotic residents of Cabbagetown rushed to enlist. The men went off to war, the

women went to work in the local factories, while the boys, too young to fight, signed up with any organization supporting the war effort. As far as they were concerned, when the motherland was called to arms, so was Canada. For them, Cabbagetown was a little bit of Britain in a foreign land.

DUFFERIN PUBLIC SCHOOL, c1890.

Berkeley Street, east side between Dundas and Gerrard streets. Stood: 1877-1925/26. Architects: Langley, Langley and Burke.

Renamed Lord Dufferin School on 17 November 1949.



ORANGE LODGE, BRANCH NO. 1,

12 July c.1910.

Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. James Collection No. 668.



RELIGION

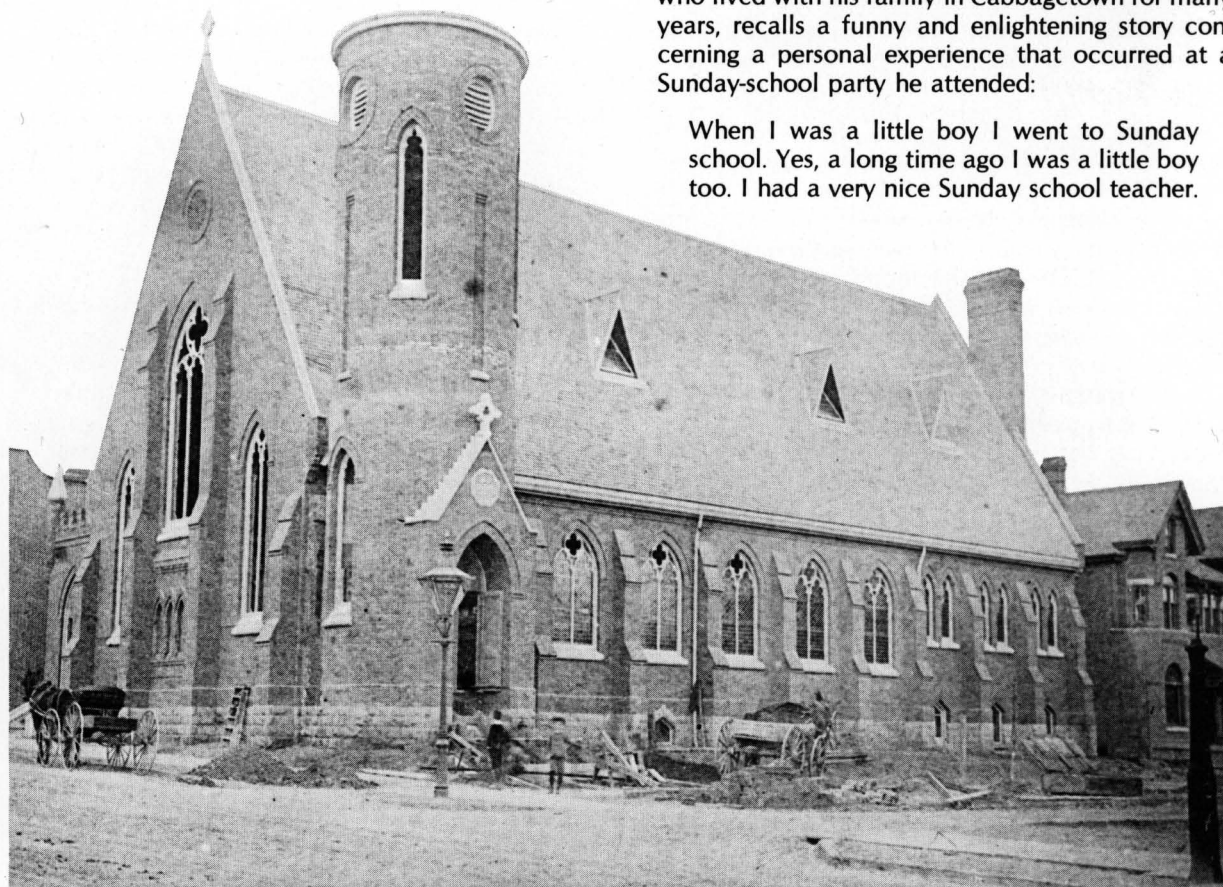
Despite their fun loving nature, there was one aspect of early Cabbagetown life that members of the community took very seriously, and that was their religion. The churches played an extremely important role, offering both moral and spiritual support to their parishioners. The God-fearing residents of Cabbagetown regarded Sundays with great reverence. The neighbourhood families would usually attend morning services and, depending on their religious denomination, might spend the better part of the day at church. Since Sunday was the "day of rest", few, if any, activities took place on that day. Many considered it to be a sacrilege to work on Sundays, with some households adhering so strictly to this idea that they would not even hitch up their horses. Mary McKeown recalls that her father's allowing his children to take short walks in Riverdale park was quite a concession on his part. Religion was not something to be taken lightly. In fact, it could be argued that the Cabbagetowners' religion was the most important aspect in their lives.

Another accepted and important role of the neighbourhood churches was as social institutions. Many community activities revolved around the churches. The annual Sunday school picnics, Christian youth groups and Boy Scouts activities, sports, dances, and many other events were frequently organized by the churches. They provided a welcoming "home away from home". Llewellyn Lewis, a long-time Cabbagetowner, fondly remembered Canon Plummer, who was the parish priest at St. Augustine Church (Parliament and Spruce streets) from 1902/03 to 1924. Plummer's parish door was open to *everyone*, and the canon, understanding the true nature of young boys, kept a

huge supply of English comics on hand. The neighbourhood boys would sit and read in the church for hours, quiet as mice, until Canon Plummer would announce, "Llewellyn, you're wanted at home." As Max Walker summarizes, "The Church in the early twentieth century was an integral part of society."

Many of the young people would begin their Sunday-school education at an early age. Weekly classes offered spiritual training, and, for older children, regular opportunities to mingle with members of the opposite sex. These classes often doubled as social occasions, with many a young man meeting his future wife there. Parties and outings were also frequent events. Wilfred Parkin, who lived with his family in Cabbagetown for many years, recalls a funny and enlightening story concerning a personal experience that occurred at a Sunday-school party he attended:

When I was a little boy I went to Sunday school. Yes, a long time ago I was a little boy too. I had a very nice Sunday school teacher.



ST. AUGUSTINE ANGLICAN CHURCH, 1889?
Parliament and Spruce streets, northeast corner.
Stood: 1888/89-1931.
Courtesy Metropolitan Toronto Library T10713.

INTERIOR OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH.

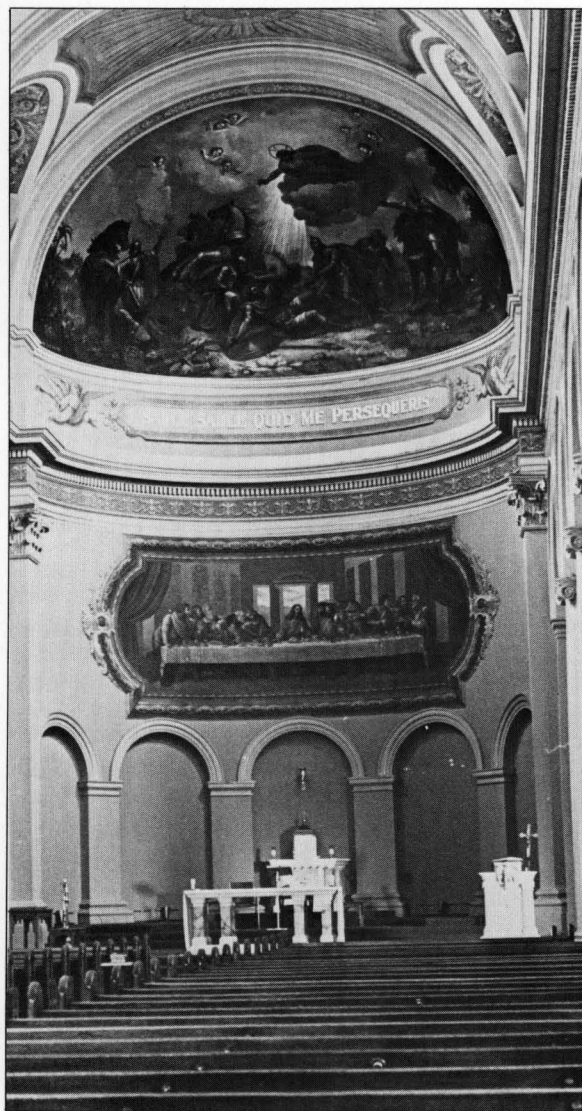
Power Street. Built: 1887.

Architect: Joseph Connolly.

Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. 9.2.3.C

No. 798.

Showing ceiling detail and paintings of "The Last Supper" and the life and death of St. Paul, by Signor Caroselli.



One day she said I would like you to come to my house because I am going to have a Christmas party for my Sunday school class. Now she lived on Leuty Avenue (in the Beaches), which you know isn't far from our church, but I lived far away in Cabbagetown where I was born ... the other side of the Don River.

It was winter and it was snowing. I didn't have any carfare so I walked and walked and finally arrived at my teacher's house. We didn't have rubber boots or snow boots then either. My teacher said come in and sit down. It was nice and warm there. The other children were there too.

She had a nice big cat and it came right over to me and jumped up on my legs, then on my shoulder and began licking my hair and then my neck. Then it jumped down and started to lick my boots. Well the teacher and other children were very surprised to see the cat acting like that. The teacher said "My goodness my cat must like you, I never saw him do that before."

I was very embarrassed because I knew why the cat was doing that. In our house when we had a goose for dinner my mother saved the grease from it. When you were sick with a cold it was rubbed on your chest. It was used to waterproof your shoes, then put on your hair to keep it neat and that is why the cat was licking me. The others never knew, but now you do.

Many beautiful churches were built in the Cabbagetown area. St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church, which dates back to 1822, is one of the oldest parishes in the city. Located on Power Street, just south of Queen, St. Paul's has long been the focal point of the Roman Catholic community. The parish's first church was completed in 1826. Although heavily in debt for many years, St. Paul's was able to survive and grow thanks to the contributions of some of the town's more outstanding citizens, including Samuel Jarvis, William Warren Baldwin and his son Robert Baldwin, all Anglicans.

It should be noted that in a period when religious prejudices were a common problem, many of the donations received were from members of the Protestant community.

A substantial number of additional parishioners arrived with the mass migration of famine victims in the 1840s. By the end of the decade, it was apparent that one priest and one parish could not possibly meet the religious needs of Toronto's growing Roman Catholic community. As a result, in 1847, St. Michael's Cathedral was built at the corner of Shuter and Bond streets.

Plans for a new St. Paul's Church were considered in the early 1880s. Under the guidance and urging of the community's new bishop, the Right Reverend Timothy O'Mahoney, the new church was completed on 22 December 1889. This second structure, which is the present St. Paul's, is a beautiful building, unique in its architectural style. Constructed in the Italian-Renaissance manner, St. Paul's is considered to be one of the most beautiful buildings in the city.

It was not until the 1840s that the first Anglican church was built in the vicinity. Prior to the construction of Trinity Church, the city's entire Anglican community attended St. James' Cathedral. When the cathedral was seriously damaged by fire in 1839, it was obvious that an additional church was badly needed in the area. It also became increasingly evident that the poorer Irish Protestants living in the area could ill afford to pay the pew rentals of St. James'. With great persistence, these needy parishioners finally convinced Bishop John Strachan of their need, and with the financial assistance of Enoch Turner, William Gooderham, James Worts, John Shuter, and John Beverley Robinson, the new church was built.

Completed in February of 1844, Trinity Church is the oldest church building in Toronto. Located on the southwest corner of King and Trinity, this parish was commonly referred to as the "poor man's church", "Little Trinity", and "Gooderham's Church". Trinity Church was seriously damaged by fire in 1961, but was restored with the assistance of many generous donations from Toronto citizens.

ST. PETER'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, 1890?

Carlton and Bleecker streets, northeast corner.

Built: 1865; addition 1890.

Architects: Gundry & Langley; addition: Gordon & Helliwelt.

Courtesy Ontario Archives 13222-100.



A second Anglican church was built in the area in 1865-66. St. Peter's Church, located at the corner of Bleecker and Carlton streets, was established to assist the cemetery chapel of St. James-the-Less (1858), which at that time served a regular congregation in addition to being a mortuary chapel. In order to encourage church attendance among its less affluent parishioners, St. Peter's offered free pews for night-time services. Because of this practice, the parish experienced rapid growth. Over the years, this church has been the object of numerous alterations and renovations, necessitated in recent years by fires. Almost destroyed in the spring of 1973, St. Peter's is once again active in the Cabbagetown community.

In 1874, All Saints' Church was erected at the corner of Dundas and Sherbourne streets. Originally built as a neighbouring parish to Little Trinity, which by this time had quite a substantial congregation, All Saints' was organized to appeal specifically to the wealthier Cabbagetown residents. This elite sector, which had sprung up in the Sherbourne-Carlton area was short-lived, with many of these families moving to the Rosedale area during the Depression. Despite the changing nature of its congregation, All Saints' Church remained a vital force in the community.

Cabbagetown's French Canadians arrived in 1880, after having been contracted to work in a Toronto tannery. Soon after their arrival, it became evident that this minority was uncomfortable practising their religion with the existing Irish-Catholic community. Consequently, the Archbishop of Toronto, the Right Reverend John Joseph Lynch, requested that the Montreal diocese send a French-speaking priest to Cabbagetown. What resulted in 1877 was Toronto's first French-Canadian Catholic parish, known as Sacré Coeur.

For several years, services were held in a vacated Presbyterian church at 430-436 King Street East. The organization of this parish was so successful that in 1896, with the assistance of the pastor, Reverend Phillippe Lamarche, land was purchased on Sackville Street and, in collaboration with the Separate School Board, Toronto's first bilingual school was opened.

On his death in 1924, Father Lamarche was succeeded as pastor by his nephew, Father Edward Lamarche. The site for a new church was purchased in the early 1930s at the corner of Carlton and Sherbourne. Completed in 1938, the church was quickly followed by the building of a new school. Father Edward Lamarche remained pastor until his death in 1962.

There were many other churches located within the Cabbagetown boundaries, all sharing a similar importance in the community. Over the years, many have witnessed changes that few of their original parishioners would have thought possible. The evolution of St. Enoch's Presbyterian Church is particularly interesting. Built in 1891 on the northeast corner of Winchester and Metcalfe streets, St. Enoch's became a United church in 1925. In the 1970s the building was used for the Don Vale Community Centre, and recently the structure has housed the Toronto Dance Theatre.

Gerrard Street Methodist Church erected its first building on the northeast corner of Gerrard and River streets in 1881. A new building was opened at Sumach and Spruce streets in 1923 and the church became United in 1925. When the congregation merged with St. Enoch's in 1939, the 1923 building was purchased by the Kiwanis Club of Toronto to house a boys club. In 1961, the club was renamed the Gerrard Streets Boys and Girls "K" Club.

Located from 1888/89 on Dundas Street near the Don River, St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church had to be physically moved a half-mile west in 1910 to make way for a bridge over the Don River.

Unfortunately, other church buildings in the area did not fare as well. St. Augustine's Anglican Church was destroyed by fire in 1931 and the congregation dispersed. Both Parliament Street and Oak Street (St. Giles) United were torn down in the early 1950s to make way for Regent Park (although Regent Park United Church was built in 1954 on the site of Oak Street).

OAK STREET (ST. GILES) PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. 189 ?

Oak Street, north side opposite Dundee Avenue.
Stood 1888-c1953.

Courtesy Metropolitan Toronto Library T10608.



PROMINENT CITIZENS

From the Cabbagetown neighbourhood have emerged some of Toronto's most prominent citizens. The community has produced outstanding athletes, literati, politicians, artists, celebrities, and businessmen. In the sports area, football greats Louis Carroll and Jack Sinclair played in Riverdale Park and on the Don flats. The area was also considered home for many well-known boxers who worked out of the Classic or Union Jack Athletic Club or St. Paul's Boxing Club. Larry Gaines, described as a "marvel of longevity", kayoed Max Schmeling in 1925, held the British heavyweight title in the 1930s and fought a main bout with Tommy Farr in 1939. Although Gaines won the British Empire Championship, he was never able to contest the championship of the British Isles because he was black and Britain had a ban on black versus white matches.

Albert "Frenchy" Belanger (1906-1969) learned to defend himself as a child in the Cabbagetown streets. Being small with a French-Canadian name, he was a natural target for neighbourhood bullies. Like many other fighters, he turned the street skills to a good account. He later recalled "I found I could do the same thing in a different place and get paid for it". In 1927, Belanger was the world flyweight champion. During his years as a top flyweight, Belanger earned more than \$90,000 which he spent freely. By 1934, his money gone, Belanger was back in Cabbagetown - a waiter in a beer parlour.

Charles Murphy, another Cabbagetown boxer, was the 1931 flyweight champion of Ontario and the 1935 Canadian champion.

Marathon swimmer George Young (1910-1972), was born in Cabbagetown and learned to swim in the Don River. At seventeen he was the first person to swim the gruelling twenty-mile Catalina Channel from Catalina Island to the California mainland. When he returned home in 1927, more than 150,000 Torontonians jammed the streets to welcome him. In 1950, he was voted the greatest Canadian swimmer of the half century by Canada Press.

Sir Ernest Macmillan (1893-1973), conductor, composer, organist and educator, spent eleven boyhood years living in Cabbagetown while his father, Alexander, was a minister at St. Enoch's Presbyterian Church (from 1895 to 1906). Percy Faith, (b. 1908), the Hollywood composer, conductor and arranger was also born and educated in Cabbagetown.

The area has also produced its share of writers, such as naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton (1860-1946), whose book *Wild Animals I Have Known* contains information about the wildlife in the Don Valley. Hugh Garner (1913-1979) is Cabbagetown's best-known chronicler. *Cabbagetown* describes how the 1930s Depression affected the area's poor; and *The Intruders* is an often scathing analysis of the middle class infiltration of the neighbourhood in the 1960s and 1970s.

Cabbagetown was also home for two of the city's prominent newsmen. The late broadcaster Gordon Sinclair wrote and spoke a great deal about his childhood in Cabbagetown, as did J.V. McAree, long-time columnist for the *Toronto Mail* and the *Globe & Mail*, and author of *Cabbagetown Store*.

Sculptor Walter Allward (1876-1955) also spent most of his life in Cabbagetown. Some of his work was done in his Spruce Street home, where plaster casts were often left on the roof to dry. This practice greatly disturbed his neighbours, who felt the casts were distasteful because they so closely resembled real human bodies. Allward had a successful and lengthy career creating memorials and statues. His work can be found at Queen's Park, Parliament Hill, and Vimy Ridge.

Several city mayors also came from Cabbagetown. Included among these were Robert J. Fleming, Emerson Coatsworth, Joseph Oliver, Horatio C. Hocken, Thomas Church, and Thomas Foster.

EMPLOYMENT

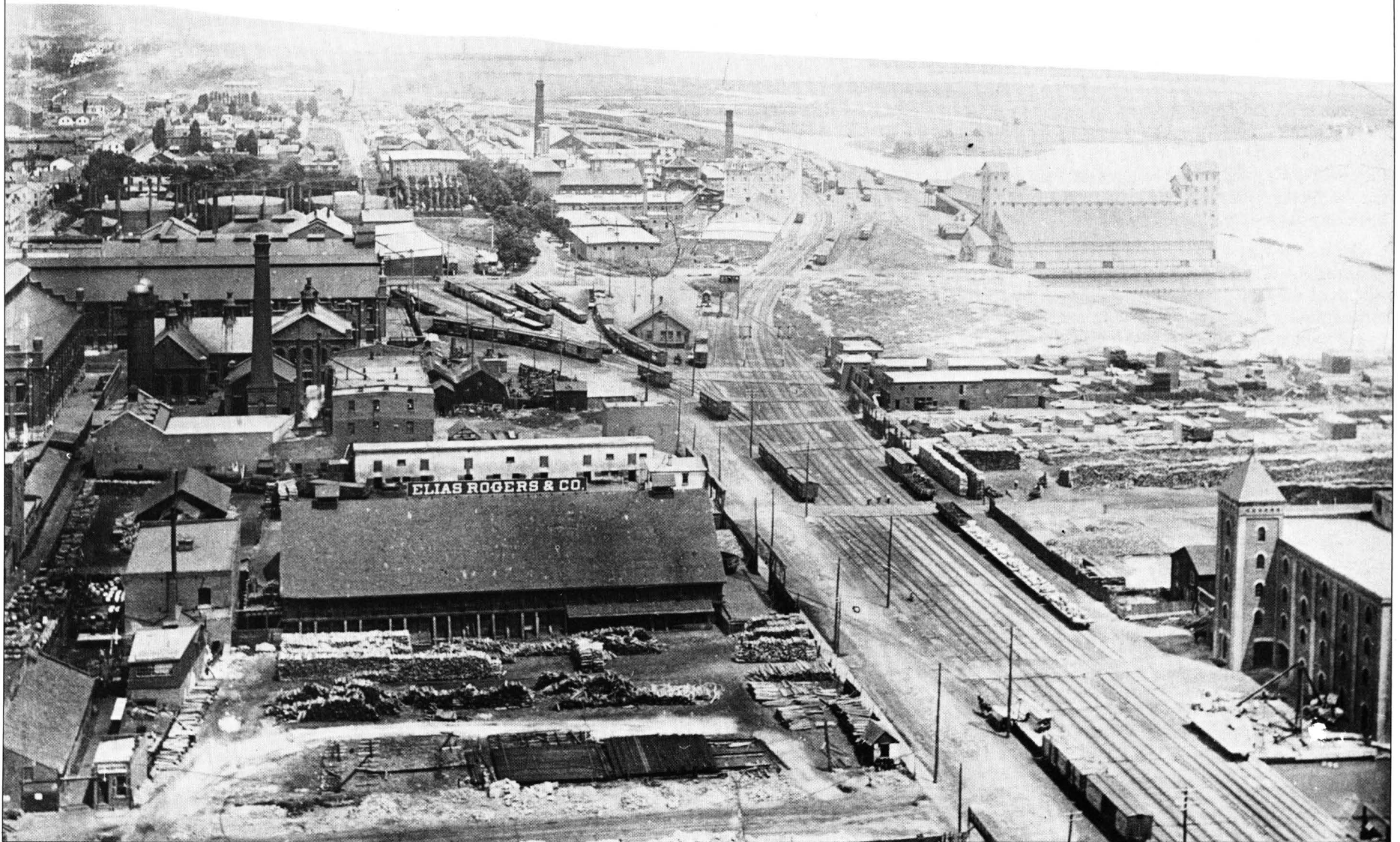
Cabbagetowners were hardworking people, usually beginning their days at the crack of dawn. Unfortunately, the work did not leave a pleasant memory. For most, it was merely a means of survival. The working conditions in Toronto factories were appalling. In fact, in many cases the circumstances in which labourers worked were downright dangerous. The factories were overcrowded and hot, and they lacked proper sanitary facilities. The machinery used was rarely inspected, and as a result many serious accidents occurred. Because no employee benefits were offered, many employees found themselves permanently out of work after such an accident. To make matters worse, workers were expected to put in long hours for little pay. The average work week ranged between ten and twelve hours a day, six days a week. The workers' weekly earnings ranged somewhere between \$10 and \$15 in the 1930s. In general, the work was tedious, but for the many who lacked a trade or formal education, there were few options.

Even when work was available, layoffs were a frequent problem. Some industries hired only seasonal help, leaving many workers unemployed for several months at a time. Yet even under such uncertain conditions, those who could find work were considered fortunate. During the recessions in the late 1800s and the Great Depression of the 1930s, most Cabbagetowners were unable to gain employment. Being predominantly a working class community of unskilled labourers, this neighbourhood was one of the hardest hit during such economic crises. Hugh Garner suggested in his novel *Cabbagetown* that his neighbours were not threatened by the stock-market crash of 1929. Impoverished as many were, few had to fear losing invested money, and in the meantime they hoped that it might teach the elite a good lesson. Unfortunately, what they did not foresee was that the loss of stocks meant the loss of capital, which in turn meant fewer jobs. In such a crisis it was not the educated or skilled who went first, but the unskilled labourers.

TORONTO HARBOUR, 1894.

Looking east along the Esplanade East.
Courtesy Metropolitan Toronto Library T10366.

Shows, at left, Elias Rogers & Co. yards, and
behind them Consumers' Gas Co. works; centre
background, Gooderham & Worts.



PROMINENT BUSINESSES

Alcoholic beverages were always a very popular commodity in Cabbagetown. The markets for liquor and beer, except during the temperance years, were consistent and profitable. Fortunately for Cabbagetown workers, many of the city's breweries and distilleries were located in their community. Gooderham & Worts Distillery is one of the oldest and best known businesses in Cabbagetown. Presently covering a full city block, bounded by Parliament, Cherry, Trinity, and Front streets, Gooderham & Worts has been in continuous operation since 1832. Originally operated by two of the community's most respected citizens, William Gooderham and James Worts, this firm has employed Cabbagetowners for generations. Gooderham & Worts represents one of the most successful businesses ever to be established in the community.

On his arrival in 1831, James Worts supervised construction of a windmill on the bay shore near the mouth of the Don. Worts, financially assisted by his brother-in-law William Gooderham, originally set up a grist milling operation. Within months, the original Worts and Gooderham, Millers was completed. Although an attractive feature, the windmill, which was used to power the mill, was soon replaced by an engine. For several years thereafter, until it was destroyed by natural causes, the windmill was used a navigational aid.

Since the by-products of the milling of grain were the principal ingredients required to make whisky, a distillery was started in connection with the mill in 1837. By 1860, this distillery was the largest in Canada, producing over two million gallons of liquor per year. Today, the company is among the oldest continuously operating businesses in Toronto.

Several years after James Worts's death in 1834, his son, James Gooderham Worts, became William Gooderham's partner. This partnership continued for the next thirty-five years (1845-1880) and witnessed many changes and advances in the company.

Actively involved in many projects (both contributed financially as well as in an advisory capacity to Little Trinity Church), these men were highly regarded in the community. From financial to religious circles, Gooderham and Worts proved to be humanitarians as well as successful businessmen.

Kormann Brewery, located on the southwest corner of Richmond and Sherbourne streets, was the first brewery in the city, established in 1815. Copland's Brewery, founded in the 1840s, was located on Parliament Street south of Derby Street. By 1891 it covered five acres. It was taken over by Labatt's in 1946 and later closed. Just north of Queen Street, near the river, was Don Brewery, established in the 1840s. Also in the area were Reinhardt's East End Brewery (1862), the Ontario

Brewing and Malting Company (1882), and Dominion Brewery (1879). Other smaller breweries were also found in Cabbagetown. Overall, this particular industry quite possibly provided more employment opportunities for neighbourhood workers than did any other.

The Consumers' Gas Company was located on a three-acre site near the corner of Parliament and Mill streets. Originally known as the City of Toronto Gas, Light and Water Company, this firm was responsible for the city's first gaslights, lit on 28 December 1841. Consumers' Gas was to expand again in 1883, when a major complex was built in the area near Front and Berkeley streets. Completed in 1890, the new gasworks extended over more than ten acres, making it one of the largest industries in Cabbagetown.



WORKERS IN A TORONTO BREWERY, 187 ?
Courtesy Ontario Archives S9544.

P.R. LAMB GLUE AND BLACKING MANUFACTORY, c1880.

Amelia Street, east of Sumach Street.

Stood: 1848-1888.

Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. Lamb Collection 9.2.3.G No. 794.



Cabbagetown boasted many other successful businesses and businessmen. One particularly enterprising family was the Lambs. Arriving in Toronto in 1834, P.R. Lamb established the P.R. Lamb Manufactory. Opened in 1848, it was a prosperous glue and blacking company. The family business was taken over by his son, Daniel, in the 1860s. When the factory was destroyed by fire in 1888, Lamb refused to succumb to the tragedy. Instead he devoted much of his time to community projects such as the Riverdale Zoo, as well as holding down various political offices. Lamb's beautiful family homestead at 156 Winchester Street is still standing today.

P.R. LAMB MANUFACTORY AFTER THE FIRE WHICH ENDED ITS BUSINESS, 20 May 1888.

Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. Lamb Collection 9.2.3.G No. 800.



Charlie Meech was a perfect example of the way in which an individual could start from scratch and eventually establish a prosperous business. When he arrived in Toronto in the 1880s, Meech was fortunate enough to find employment at Stone's Butcher Shop at Parliament and Carlton. An ambitious man, Meech eventually took over the store, renamed it Meech's Meat Market, and by the Second World War had made it one of the city's largest butcher shops.

While working in a furniture store that occasionally loaned out chairs to its customers, W.S. Mills considered turning this practice into a full-time business. When the firm was sold in 1907, Mills decided to try out his idea. Purchasing both the horse and wagon as well as the chairs previously loaned out, and displaying cards reading "W.S. Mills - Chairs for Hire", he created the Chairman Mills company. The company name was coined by a family friend, who for years jokingly referred to the owner as Chairman Mills. Mills charged three cents for the rental of a chair, including delivery and pickup. This family business, presently run by Mills's son, Alfred Mills, has since proven itself a very successful venture and another example of the uniqueness of Cabbagetown.

Davies Meat Packing was established in Cabbagetown in 1861. Responsible for the curing and preservation of meats, it was the first of such factories in Canada. Although the firm was originally housed in a building at Front and Frederick streets, it grew so quickly that in 1874 a large plant was built on Front Street near the Don River. By the 1890s, one-half of the Canadian bacon exported to great Britain was supplied by Davies. Eventually taken over by the Canada Packers, Davies Meat Packing represented Cabbagetown ingenuity at its finest.

GENERAL STEEL WARES PLANT,

19 December 1921.

River and Gerrard streets, southeast corner.

Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. Salmon Collection 763.

Cabbagetown housed many other successful businesses, including Kemp's Manufacturing (later known as General Steel Wares), Freyseng Cork Company (Queen Street near the Don River), and Carhartt Clothing (535 Queen Street at River Street). They ranged in size and scope from small corner

shops to large corporations. Some were private firms initiated by enterprising individuals, while others were large industries that took advantage of the area's resources. Regardless of the specifics, few could deny the importance of these businesses and industries in Cabbagetown's history.



CONCLUSION

In the years preceding the Second World War, Cabbagetown became severely overcrowded. Because of the proximity of factories and industries, and therefore the possibility of employment, many families moved into the area, particularly during the Depression. The small neighbourhood dwellings often housed two or more families. With no money available for household repairs or improvements, the homes became run down. Garbage littered the streets and laneways; noise and pollution from the nearby industries filled the air. Never an affluent community, Cabbagetown lay devastated by the Depression. As Hugh Garner suggested, Cabbagetown became the "largest Anglo-Saxon slum in North America".

In 1934 the Lieutenant-Governor's Committee wrote a report on housing conditions in Toronto, commonly referred to as the Bruce Report. This study concluded that much of the Cabbagetown area, referred to as Moss Park in the report, offered substandard living conditions for its residents. The urgency and seriousness of the situation was stressed:

In terms of human happiness or unhappiness, well-being or ill-being, the results of our surveys may be stated very simply. Among the present inhabitants of Toronto, at least 2,000 families are condemned to live a life which, for a large part of each year, is made miserable by glaring defects in the dwellings they inhabit.

The Bruce Report gave an in-depth description of the terrible conditions in which many were forced to live and the effects such conditions had on these individuals, including infant mortality, delinquency, and so on. The study concluded with recommendations for the city to initiate "extensive projects for the demolition of slums and the provision of low-cost houses". The Bruce Report had initiated the first steps towards the construction of Regent Park.

DETERIORATED HOUSES, 22 September 1937.
165-167 Oak Street, south side between Sumach
and River streets.
Courtesy City of Toronto Archives. Housing Dept.
No. 237.



The project was temporarily put on hold, for in September 1939, Canada joined the British Commonwealth in the Second World War. In keeping with their pro-British stance, many Cabbagetowners enlisted or offered their services to help the cause, but something was missing. The enthusiasm so apparent during the First World War was gone. The positive feelings towards Great Britain had not changed, but too many young men had been lost in the earlier war for Cabbagetowners to muster the same response. People were apprehensive; they did not want to send the boys away again. Although the neighbourhood was thankful for the new jobs that the war effort created, the community was reluctant to send off their most valuable resource - their youth.

When their young men were away at war, the neighbourhood deteriorated further. Many of the boarding houses and homes became even more dilapidated, leaving the area looking very ill-kept. After the war, refugees arrived by the hundreds. They possessed little more than the shirts on their backs, and most of them had no other choice but to live in the tumbledown buildings. The neighbourhood took on a very different appearance. People of various nationalities, sharing little in common, moved into the area. Cabbagetown no longer had the intimate, friendly face it had once had.

Cabbagetowners' worries about the effects of the war proved to be well founded. Many of the young men did not return to the neighbourhood. Some did not survive battle, but others simply did not come back to Cabbagetown. Perhaps the neighbourhood was too small after all that they had seen in the war, or maybe they could not bear to return to the simple life that they had known before.

The city itself began to expand, with many leaving the crowded downtown core to live in the suburbs that sprang up on the city's outskirts.

BACKVIEW OF OLD HOUSES, 1951

Dundas Street East.

Courtesy City of Toronto Archives.

9.2.3.W Misc. No. 798.

Families who had for generations lived in Cabbagetown left to start a new life elsewhere. Whatever the reasons, something was lost in Cabbagetown after the war. So many things had changed that it no longer resembled the community they had all known and loved. It was the end of an era, and for many the end of Cabbagetown.

Following the Second World War, many of the slum dwellings that had so plagued Cabbagetown



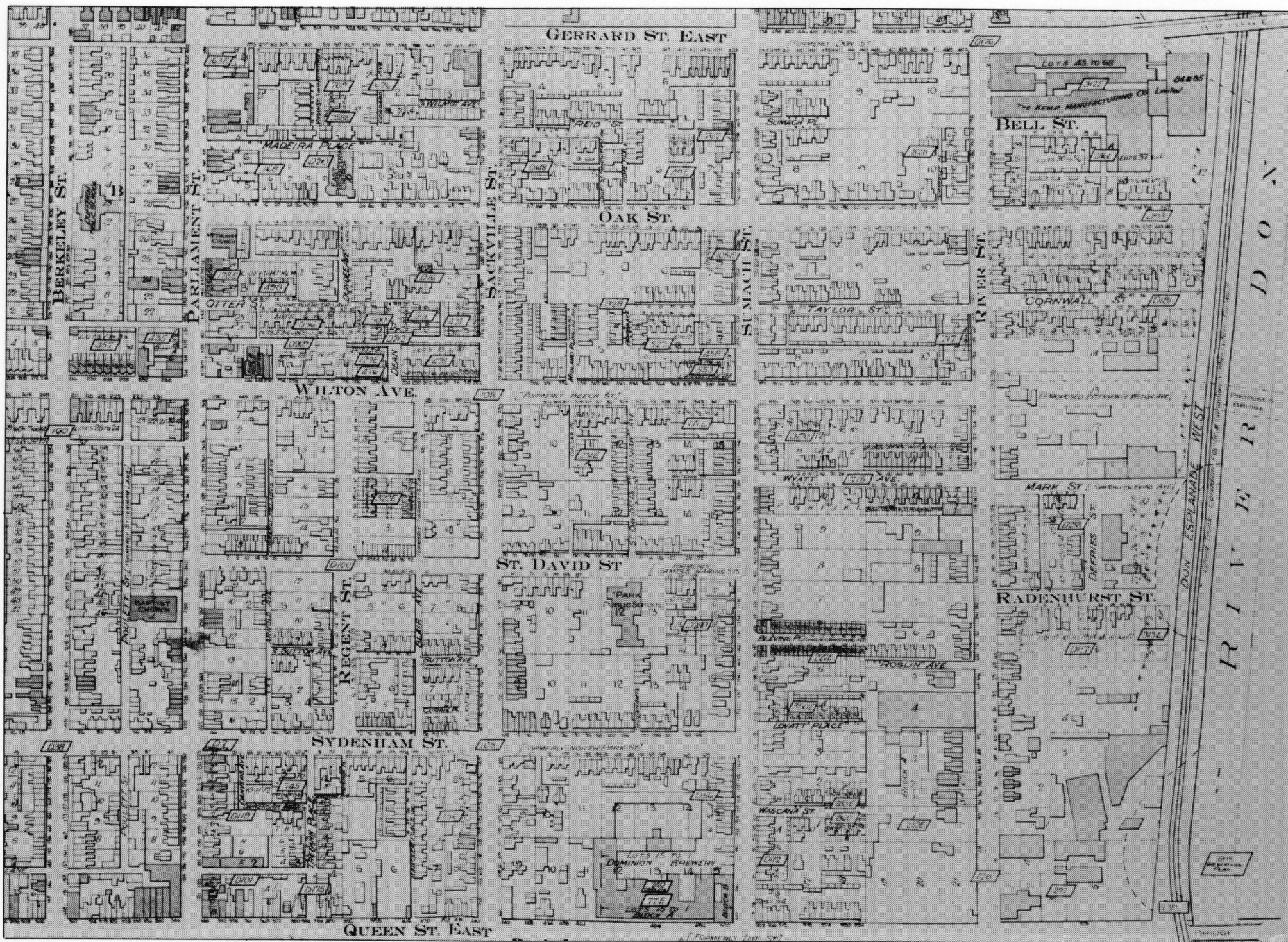
were torn down. As urged in the Bruce Report, these dwellings were replaced by high-density, subsidized housing, known as Regent Park North and South. As the first urban renewal project of its size in North America, the Regent Park Development caused quite a controversy. The situation was, and still is, viewed through very different eyes. By demolishing the dwellings south of Gerrard Street and east of Parliament Street for the construction of first, Regent Park South and then Regent Park North, many believe the Cabbagetown community was destroyed. Others, however, feel this urban renewal saved Cabbagetown from its uncertain future. Without the Regent Park project, Cabbagetown may have continued its course towards becoming a permanent slum. Yet, by destroying the homes, the very fibre of this unique neighbourhood might also have been sacrificed. As the results of this project are still being assessed, it may be many more years before the answers, if there are any, can be determined.

Despite the cataclysmic effect of Regent Park, the neighbourhood adjusted to its new appearance. Many of the older homes in the area north of Gerrard Street were restored by "white painters", so-called because they painted the aging bricks. Eventually, the spirit and communal sense that had played such an important role in early Cabbagetown life returned. In the 1960s and 1970s, when large land developers initiated plans to replace the homes in the Don Vale area with highrise apartments, the Cabbagetown community drew together to fight the threat. Presenting the community spirit that had been so evident in the neighbourhood's early years, Cabbagetowners were able to stop the developers.

Today Cabbagetown is a vibrant and thriving community. The neighbourhood's spirit, which had dwindled in the past, has reappeared. Again, a socially aware breed of Cabbagetowner has surfaced. Many young professionals have chosen this community as their home, creating a demand for houses in an area that many had thought long forgotten. Evidently, Cabbagetown had come full circle.



Detail of GOAD'S ATLAS OF TORONTO, 1910. Maps 27, 28, 40.



Detail of GOAD'S ATLAS OF TORONTO, 1910. Map 28.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

The Local History Collection at Parliament Street Library focuses on the Cabbagetown area, although it encompasses a region bounded by Bloor Street to the north, the Don River to the east, the lake to the south and Jarvis Street to the west. The library's collection includes forty-four taped interviews (on cassette), eighteen folders of clippings and pamphlets, approximately twenty-five government planning documents, about one hundred photographs, and approximately forty books, including all six volumes of Robertson's *Landmarks*.

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PARLIAMENT STREET LIBRARY, 1984,
265 Gerrard Street East.

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