

Upper Canada College

Toronto

1829 -- 1929

by

A. H. Young

Palmarum qui meruit ferat

*To every "Old Boy" of Upper Canada
College and to every other of his friends
who receives a copy of this booklet, Mr.
Young sends best wishes for a joyous
Christmas and for a bright, prosperous
New Year.*

TRINITY COLLEGE,
Toronto, 5,

Christmas, 1928.
New Year, 1929.

SITES AND BUILDINGS

I.

Upper Canada College has occupied in the one hundred years of its existence three sites in or near Toronto—the “School Block,” Russell Square, and that portion of the estate of Mashquoteh on which the present buildings stand.

The occupancy of the “School Block” lasted only a twelvemonth. During that period, which covered the whole of the calendar year 1830, the buildings in Russell Square, for which the contracts had been let in 1829, were completed.

In Russell Square the College was housed from January, 1831, to midsummer, 1891. In September of the latter year it was opened in Deer Park, as the village which grew up to the eastward of Mashquoteh was called.

The “School Block,” which was eventually granted to Upper Canada College by the Crown in the year 1834, was bounded on the west, south, and east by Church, Newgate, and New Streets, to use the names which appeared upon the plan of the “New Town” of York bearing date 1797. The first of these thoroughfares is the only one of the three which has retained its earliest designation. The others are known to-day as Adelaide and Jarvis Streets respectively, the latter appellation having supplanted the intermediate Nelson Street.

This ill advised change was made to gratify the immoderate desire for uniformity in the nomenclature of streets more or less in line the one with the other, which

manifests itself from time to time in Toronto. Unquestionably Nelson, who is still commemorated only by an insignificant little street in the neighbourhood of Russell Square, was of incomparably more importance to the Empire than was Mr. Secretary Jarvis. The name of the latter, quite properly, was, at a comparatively later date, bestowed, by one of his descendants, upon the beautiful broad street running from Bloor Street to Queen Street throughout the whole length of the Park Lot, which had been granted gratis to the Secretary by the Crown.

Upon the "School Block" was erected in the second decade of the nineteenth century the Home District Grammar School, of which, at that time, the Rector was the Revd. John Strachan, M.A., D.D., Incumbent of the Parish of York. This building is familiarly known in the history of Toronto as the "Blue School" because of the colour of the paint which covered it, the Rector having delivered a course of lectures on Natural Philosophy in order to raise money sufficient to meet the cost of procuring the paint and of applying it.

In 1825, two years after Dr. Strachan's resignation of the School to accept the presidency of the Provincial Board of Education, there was superposed upon it by Sir Peregrine Maitland, the then Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, the Royal Grammar School, which for some nine years previously had been located nominally at Kingston. This title derived apparently from the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning, which is still the official corporate style of McGill University.

The Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning, in contradistinction to McGill College, which was chartered only in 1821, was constituted in 1801 by virtue of an Act of the Legislature of Lower Canada at the instance of the first Anglican Bishop of Quebec, the Rt. Revd. the Hon. Jacob Mountain, D.D. The Masters of the three Grammar Schools established as a part of the Institution—at Quebec, Montreal, and Kingston—were to be paid out of the income arising from the confiscated estates of the Jesuits. The income failing temporarily by reason of bad management, the Revd. John Wilson of Kingston had to be content with the salary payable to the Master of the Midland District Grammar School, with allowances as local chaplain to the naval and the military forces, and with a grant from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts for doing clerical duty at the mission of Ernesttown (Bath) and Fredericksburg.

The first Rector of the Royal Grammar School after the removal to York was the Revd. Thomas Phillips, D.D., of Queen's College, Cambridge, some time Headmaster at Whitchurch, Herefordshire. On the appointment of the Council of King's College, York, in 1827, he naturally became a member of that body. In 1829, on the foundation of Upper Canada College, he was named Vice-Principal, under the Revd. Dr. Harris, and, on resigning that position, in 1834, he was appointed Rector of Etobicoke, with headquarters at Weston.

II.

Russell Square, like Peter Street, Russell Street, Russell Hill, and Russell Hill Road, was called after the Hon. Peter Russell, the first Receiver-General of Upper Canada, who, with the title of President of the Executive Council, was to administer the Government of the Province from 1796 to 1799 during the absence of His Excellency John Graves Simcoe, the first Lieutenant-Governor. The Square had as its boundaries King, John, Newgate (Adelaide), and Graves (Simcoe) Streets.

Like Simcoe Place, two blocks to the southward, the Square was intended, apparently, to be a park. Upon the one, however, Major-General Sir John Colborne, Sir Peregrine's successor, fixed as a proper site for the new Legislative Buildings of the Province, and upon the other as the site for the Minor College of the University, the Upper Canada College and Royal Grammar School.

The first buildings erected were the School House and dwellings for eight Masters, the latter, in pairs of equal number, flanking the former and all standing well back toward Adelaide Street, to use the modern name. At the corner of Adelaide and Simcoe Streets, and facing the latter, stood a square detached house which for many years was appropriated to the domestic and the official use of the joint Bursar of the College and of the University of Toronto.

The first addition to the buildings was the "Main" Boarding House, a portion of which, though somewhat altered, is still standing at the south-western corner of Adelaide Street

and the very modern Duncan Street. Erected in 1832, the "Main" did duty without enlargement down to 1871. Then was thrown out to the westward an extension which commanded a full view of the playing field to the south and west.

In 1877, when Mr. Cockburn was Principal, a new Prayer Hall with two large class-rooms beneath it was built in front of the School House, thus breaking the imposing alignment of the buildings. The dignified appearance of the dwelling-houses was taken away by putting upon them mansarde roofs, which were in favour at that day, probably because the then new Government House across the way had set the fashion. At the same time, the most westerly pair of houses was made into one for the lodgement of the Principal, who, having furnished it magnificently, inhabited it for only four years before he tendered his resignation to the Government, with which he was not in sympathy.

All these structural changes were made on the sole responsibility of the Committee of the Senate of the University of Toronto entrusted with the oversight of the College. At the ensuing session of the Legislature objection was taken to the expenditure and orders were issued that thenceforward nothing so extensive should be done without legislative or executive sanction, in spite of the fact that the College had its own separate endowment, which had been carefully increased by Mr. Cockburn. Accordingly, when the roof of the "Main" required to be renewed, the work was paid for out of the surplus of revenue accruing from the operation of the boarding establishment.

Opposition to the College, which, for reasons that it is not necessary to chronicle here, had again become acute in Mr. Cockburn's time, spent itself in vain against the loyalty to his old school displayed by the Minister of Education, the Hon. Adam Crooks. The attacks were renewed after his retirement and they became so virulent as to threaten the extinction of the College in 1887, the Hon. G. W. Ross then being at the Education Office, Dr. James Loudon, an old Head Boy, President of the University, and the Hon. Edward Blake, Q.C., M.P., another old Head Boy, Chancellor of the University.

Thanks to the vigorous resolutions passed at a mass meeting of the "Old Boys" held under the presidency of the Chief Justice of Ontario, the Hon. Sir Matthew Crooks Cameron, who, before his elevation to the Bench, had been Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, the Government called a halt in the proceedings. Two of its members, the Hon. T. B. Pardee and the Hon. A. S. Hardy, if not Sir Oliver Mowat himself, were induced, largely by the influence of Mr. John Martland, M.A.(Oxon)—"Gentle" of happy memory—to insist upon the continuance of the College, even though they consented to its partial spoliation for the benefit of the University, which was then embarking upon the scheme of Federation.

III.

In 1887 the College, which, excepting in the matter of major appointments, had been for fifty years under the governance of the Council of King's College and the Senate of its successor, the University of Toronto, was placed nominally under the control of a Board of Trustees of its own. Actually, however, that meant the Minister of Education, for the Board had no real power or authority.

The Minister had wanted to make the College the practice school for the School of Pedagogy, which, after many vicissitudes, has in recent years become the College of Education. He had wanted also to bring the teaching staff and the classes under the jurisdiction of the Department's High School Inspectors. Foiled in the former design, he accomplished the latter, but it was given up by his successor in Dr. Parkin's time.

By the autumn of 1891 the wholly unsuitable building, which the Minister had planned in collaboration with an architect from his own constituency, was ready for use. But he had allowed a hundred thousand dollars more than the amount stipulated by the Legislature to be expended upon the building operations, for which, according to information which seeped out from the party caucus, he had to endure more than the proverbial *mauvais quart d'heure*.

The University authorities were, very naturally, incensed at the loss of the hundred thousand dollars. Accordingly they, headed by Mr. Chancellor Blake, brought pressure to bear upon the Government to make a settlement which bore heavily upon the College for three or four years.

That this settlement did not bear more heavily than it did, was due to the skilful management of the late Judge Kingsmill, the late W. H. Beatty, Esq., the late Col. George T. Denison, and other "Old Boys." In 1894, under a new Act of the Legislature, another Board was provided for, which had very substantial power, as was demonstrated when Mr. Dickson vacated the principalship and the Government claimed, unsuccessfully, the right to appoint his successor, even as it had appointed him and his predecessors as well as the Masters who were heads of departments.

Though there has been more legislation put through since 1894, the College since then has been governed by a Board composed partly of *ex officio* members, among whom is the Minister of Education for the time being, partly of duly elected representatives of the Old Boys' Association, and partly of members co-opted by the Board as a whole. In practical effect, the Principal, as is just and right, is the real Governor—so long as his policies promise and prove to be for the benefit of the College. But the ultimate authority is the Crown, from whom the original endowments and the present privileges and powers were and are derived.

This constitution of this Public School, which receives no annual or other grants from Government and which has to live on its fees and on the proceeds of its very limited endowments, has been worked out largely by the Old Boys' Association, which was formed at the closing of the College at midsummer, 1891. The chief founders of it were the late Revd. Canon Henry Scadding, D.D. (the first

Head Boy), the late W. J. McMaster, Esq., and the late W. T. Boyd, Esq., Barrister-at-Law.

In everything that pertains to the well-being of the College, the Association, whose President has for many years past been W. G. Gooderham, Esq., is keenly interested. Visible marks of that interest are the Junior School and the Junior School House, whereas personal gifts have been made of the hospital, the gatehouse, the tuck-shop, and the Principal's house. With these gifts are associated, among others, the names of Gooderham, Beatty, Muirhead, Ridout, Laidlaw, H. S. Hammond, and Henry Cawthra.

The grounds have been vastly improved since 1891. The first step in that direction was taken by Mr. Jackson ("Stony"), he and the boys of the first generation making the oval with their own hands. The avenue, the shrubberies, and the gardens were planted in Dr. Parkin's time, 1895-1902. The new football fields, the skating rink, and the like, have been made possible by the generosity of "Old Boys."

Dr. Parkin, who died Sir George Parkin, K.C.M.G., and Secretary to the Rhodes Trust, was chiefly responsible for the erection of the Junior School and for the purchase from the Baldwin estate of twenty acres of land in addition to the original thirty. These twenty, however, were alienated shortly before the war, when it was in contemplation to remove the College to the neighbourhood of Norval, where the College still owns some six hundred acres.

The "original thirty" acres were, however, in reality ten. They fronted upon St. Clair Avenue and blocked Avenue Road. As a

second thought, it was decided to exchange these for thirty farther to the northward, the trustees of the Baldwin estate agreeing to produce Avenue Road to the point at which the main gateway to the College is now situated.

Though bought from the Baldwins, the present site of the College, it is interesting to recall, belonged at one time to the Hon. Peter Russell, already mentioned as the man after whom Russell Square was named. It was granted to him by the Crown in the year 1797, while he was administering the Government. Thus there is an interesting personal connection between the two sites which throughout the greater part of its history Upper Canada College has occupied.

Solum non Animum Mutant.