



North Toronto Town Hall

NORTH TORONTO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

VOL. 39 NO. 3

FALL 2015



Fall Programme

Join us at 7:10 for refreshments



Wednesday, 30 September, 7:30 p.m.

HISTORY OF THE PHONOGRAPH AND RECORDED SOUND

An entertaining presentation with illustrations and demonstrations of antique phonographs from the early 1900s to the 1950s. Learn about the early days of voice and music recording as Canadian Antique Phonographic Historical Society members **Mike Bryan** and **Keith Wright** bring to life the sounds of a bygone era.

Wednesday, 28 October, 7:30 p.m.

HOW WE CHANGED TORONTO

Many people look back on the 1970s as Toronto's Golden Age. **David Crombie** and **John Sewell** were both on City Council in the 1970s, and they played different roles – sometimes complementary, sometimes in opposition. They will talk and debate together about what was important about the 1970s and what we all can learn from that decade. As well, John Sewell will have with him his newly published book: *How We Changed Toronto: The inside story of twelve creative, tumultuous years in civic life, 1969-1980.* (Lorimer, available Sept. 2015).

Wednesday, 25 November, 7:30 p.m.

HOLIDAY TREATS OF NORTH TORONTO

An illustrated journey into memories of holidays past presented by culinary historians **Liz Driver**, **Fiona Lucas** and **Mary Williamson**. From the early 1900s to the late 1960s women in our area were proud producers of cookbooks in which they pooled treasured family recipes. Usually the cookbooks were distributed as fund-raisers on behalf of local churches and synagogues. A souvenir booklet of recipes for North Toronto holiday treats will be given to all attendees.

Fall Walk

Sunday October 4, 2:00 pm (rain or shine)

Glengrove from Glenview Ave. to Lytton Blvd.

Meet on the northwest corner of Glengrove Ave. and Yonge St.

The Society meets at the Northern District Library, 40 Orchard View Boulevard (one block north of Eglinton, just west of Yonge) at 7:30 pm on the last Wednesday of each month from September to November & January to May. Programmes are free and are open to the public. Our co-sponsor is the Northern District Branch of the Toronto Public Library.

March: Alex Grenzebach

Lawrence Park: The Garden Suburb

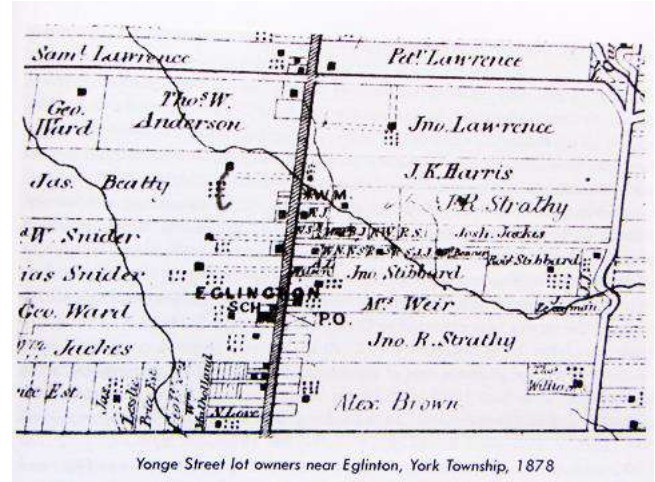
By Alex Grenzebach

Wilfrid Servington Dinnick, the “founder of Lawrence Park”, envisioned the creation of a “garden suburb” similar to developments in England at this time. A garden suburb was an essentially residential development of low to moderate density with an emphasis on gardens and open spaces. Dinnick subsequently referred to Lawrence Park as the “Hampstead Garden Suburb of Canada”. Born in England in 1874, Dinnick had emigrated to Canada with his family in 1890 and by 1908 was president of several interrelated companies, including the Dovercourt Land Building and Savings Company, which developed Lawrence Park.



Wilfrid Dinnick

Dinnick, as president of the Standard Loan Company, had persuaded its directors to purchase the Lawrence farm (lot 5) for \$47,000 and the northern part of the Harris farm (lot 4) for \$17,000 in November, 1907.



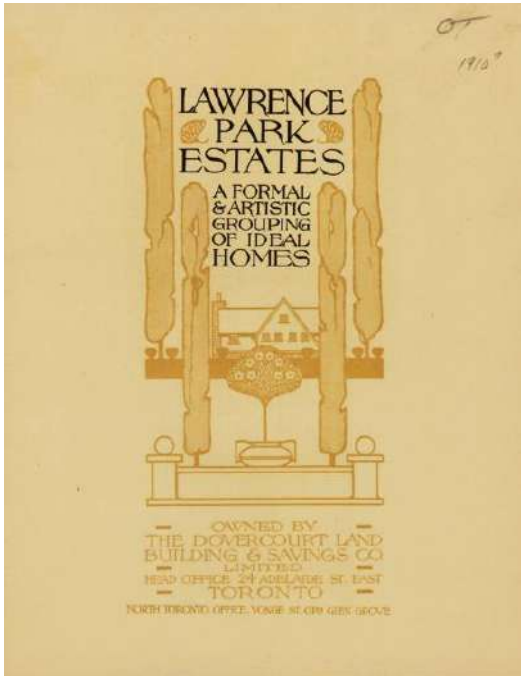
Original Lawrence and Harris Farms

The southern 85 acres of lot 4 were purchased in 1912. Lawrence Park Estates, as it was known, stretched east from Yonge Street to Bayview Avenue and from Lawrence Avenue East southward to just north of Blythwood Road.

Walter S. Brooke, an English consulting engineer, was hired to devise the plans for the “garden suburb” and subdivision plans were registered in January 1910, January 1911 and February 1914.

Until 1914, Vaux Chadwick and Samuel Beckett were the official architects and they had to approve all house plans. Initially, houses had to be detached, made of brick or stone and have a value of at least \$4,000. Stucco could cover no more than half the exterior. Construction started in 1910 – 1911 on the original “model homes” designed by Chadwick & Beckett. These houses were not open to the public, but were featured in promotional material and their plans were made available to prospective buyers.

Lawrence Park continues on page 3



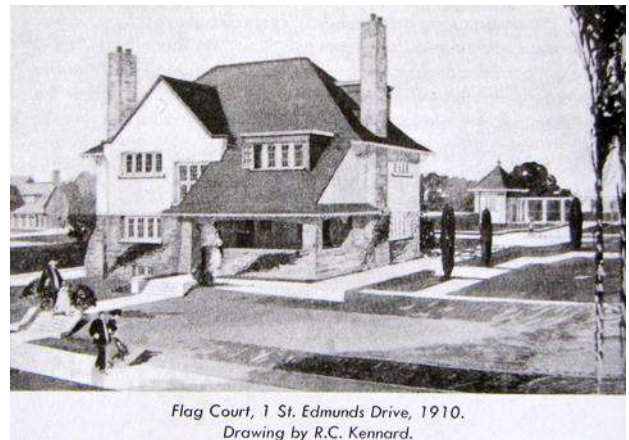
Lawrence Park Estates Brochure

Dinnick rented 77 St. Edmund's Drive for his own family and "Buena Vista" at 35 St. Edmund's for his mother and sister. A number of the early homes featured formal gardens with pergolas. The Dovercourt Company undertook extensive landscaping and Dinnick maintained a nursery from which trees and shrubs were made available at cost to builders and homeowners. Howard Grubb and his wife Lorrie Alfreda Dunington came from England in 1911 to assist with the nursery and approve garden plans. The couple later founded Sheridan Nurseries.



Buena Vista, 35 St. Edmund's Drive, 1911

By WWI, only about 35 houses had been built in Lawrence Park and construction slowed when the housing market collapsed during the war. After the war, a recession and revised tax laws which taxed unimproved property, placed the development companies in financial distress. In May 1919, the Standard Loan Co., including its subsidiary the Dovercourt Land Building and Savings Co., were taken over by Sterling Trusts Corporation which authorized a public auction of unsold lots. In 1919, the bank called in its loans to Dinnick and he lost influence. Destroyed by the collapse of his business empire, Dinnick suffered a stroke and heart attack and moved to England in 1920 where he died in 1923, barely 49. The family returned to Canada and his descendants have continued the family tradition of naming a son Wilfrid.



*Flag Court, 1 St. Edmund's Drive, 1910.
Drawing by R.C. Kennard.*

In the 1920s and 1930s, construction picked up and the North York part (the eastern part) became much more built up. A number of homes, particularly in North York, were featured in *Canadian Homes and Gardens*. In the late 1940s, institutions finally penetrated Lawrence Park with the opening of the Locke Library and Lawrence Park Community Church. In the 1950s and 1960s, building started in the former

Lawrence Park continues on page 4

Lawrence Park continued from page 3

“Garland’s Bush” area in North York and vacant lots continued to disappear. Sewers came to eastern Lawrence Park, but ditches remained. In the late 1970s, demolition of houses to build “monster houses” started.

In the 1980s, the building of “monster houses” continued, particularly in North York due to its more “liberal” zoning by-laws. In 1998, North York and Toronto were merged into the “megacity”, but retained their own zoning by-laws. By-laws were harmonised in 2013, but the former Toronto and former North York parts of Lawrence Park still have different restrictions!

The Lawrence Park Heritage Committee was formed several years ago in response to growing concern about the loss of the character of the area due to demolitions and inappropriate redevelopment. It has held a number of “Century Home evenings” with speakers from the City and the restoration / renovation community. In the spring of 2015, it submitted an application to the City for the consideration of “Lawrence Park West” as a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) under the Ontario Heritage Act. The area under consideration stretches from Yonge Street to Mt. Pleasant Road and from Lawrence Avenue East south to the ravine north of Blythwood Road.

Because of the work backlog at the City, it will be several years before the study can proceed. Even if the HCD is approved, the majority of homes in Lawrence Park will remain unprotected and demolition will probably continue unabated – not a pleasant prospect for Dinnick’s “garden suburb”!

Heritage Calendar

2015 Heritage Toronto Awards and Kilbourn Lecture

by Rahul K. Bhardwaj, President & CEO, the Toronto Foundation

Tuesday, October 13, 2015

Koerner Hall, The Royal Conservatory of Music, 273 Bloor St. W.

This event raises funds for Heritage Toronto while celebrating outstanding contributions to our city’s heritage.

<http://heritagetoronto.org/programs/heritage-toronto-awards/>

Hilary Dawson, Newsletter Doyenne has taken a sabbatical this fall, but do not despair – she will return!

North Toronto Historical Society

An affiliate of the Ontario Historical Society, and a non-profit charitable organization.

% 129 Blythwood Road, Toronto, Ontario M4N 1A5

www.norhtorontohistoricalsociety.org

Annual Memberships: Seniors & Students \$5, Adults \$7, Families \$10

2014 Executive (*Directors)

President & Programmes: *Lynda Moon

Membership Co-ordinator: *Alex Grenzebach, 416-483-8475

Newsletter Editor: *Hilary Dawson

Treasurer: Bill Dawson

Members-at-large: *Doug Campbell, *Brian Dunfield, Ken Pon

Past President: John Hutchinson

Publicity:

Secretary:

Research: Hilary Dawson

Walks: