

NORTH TORONTO HISTORICAL SOCIETY *NEWSLETTER*

North Toronto Town Hall

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COVID Update: To find out when our programmes will resume, check the Toronto Public Library website: <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/programs-and-classes/> or call the Answerline: 416-397-5981

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One Lancaster bomber a day was the production aim of Victory Aircraft at Malton.

Toronto Star 1945 TPL



Special V-E Day Edition

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.

IN MEMORIAM

Barbara Ann Ramsay, 1937-2020



I am sorry to report the death of Rev. Barbara Ann Ramsay in May at the age of 82. She was predeceased by her husband Bill, who had served as a Director of the NTHS, as our second President and as our Coordinator of Walking Tours. Barb and Bill lived most of their married life at 129 Blythwood Road which was built by Bill's great-grandfather in the mid-1880s. Many of you will remember 129 Blythwood Road as our NTHS mailing address until several years ago when Barb and Bill moved to The Teddington Retirement Residence.

Trained as a microbiologist, Barb worked for many years as the Dean of Continuing Education at the Michener Institute. Later in life, she went back to school to obtain a Masters of Divinity degree from Trinity College. Fifteen years ago, just a week after her installation as a Deacon at St. Leonard's Anglican Church, Barb suffered a near fatal stroke which left her partially paralyzed.

As Membership Coordinator for the NTHS, I was the person who picked up the mail from 129 Blythwood. I often stayed for a visit and I have fond memories of chatting with Barb and Bill at the kitchen table, enjoying Barb's cheerful manner and Bill's quiet sense of humour. I also personally delivered our newsletter, both to 129 and to Teddington. Unfortunately, COVID-19 prevented me from visiting Barb with our latest newsletter. Although greatly handicapped physically, Barb always remained cheerful. I recently learned that Barb had been a majorette with the Oakville Police Force Marching Band and with the Toronto Argonauts. This was a role suited to her personality!

I would like to extend our sympathy to the Ramsay family and particularly to daughters Heather and Elaine.

To conclude on a more cheerful note, 129 Blythwood, which is in the Blythwood Road Heritage Conservation District, has been extensively renovated and should be good for another 100 years. I've heard that the young boys in the family particularly enjoy playing in the stable!

Alex. Grenzebach

Flo Middleton Morson, 1935-2020

I am sorry to report that Flo Morson died on June 24 after a short battle with cancer. She was an active member of the North Toronto Historical Society and served on our Executive as Secretary for the last five years. As well as ably fulfilling her secretarial duties and providing excellent minutes, she graciously hosted many of our committee meetings.



Flo was a dedicated and exceptional community volunteer throughout her adult life. She served on a wide range of boards and organizations such as the Grange, United Church of Canada, Elizabeth Fry, Sistering, Victoria College, and North Toronto University Women's Club. Flo was active in her local congregation at Eglinton-St. George's Church and supported social responsibility and environmental issues.

The NTHS expresses its sympathy to Alan Morson and other family members.

Lynda Moon, President

S/L Ross Dawson's VE Day in Brussels

Squadron Leader Ross Dawson, MBE, grew up in the east end of Toronto, attending Riverdale Collegiate and the University of Toronto. He graduated in Mechanical Engineering in 1940. He enlisted with the RCAF in 1941, at the age of 23. In January 1943 he went overseas as an Engineering Officer with RCAF Group #6 Bomber Command. He managed ground crew operations for heavy bomber squadrons of Wellington, Halifax and latterly Lancaster bombers in Yorkshire in brutal and chaotic war-time conditions. At the end of the war he was the Chief Technical Officer for 424 and 433 Squadrons at Skipton-on-Swale with 2000 staff reporting to him, and responsible for providing 40 airworthy 'kites' (aircraft) on a daily basis for bombing missions. During his time in Britain he maintained a personal daily diary which eventually extended to 450 pages.

On Monday May 7, 1945 Ross wrote:

News came through this afternoon that the Germans were going to surrender unconditionally tomorrow & that Churchill & the King would be speaking tomorrow afternoon so it looks like the long-awaited day is here at last. Got back to the station tonight & found things in a panic with 13 kites needed from each squadron tomorrow to go over to B58 aerodrome near Brussels to pick up 24 released POWs in each kite & bring them back here. We had to arrange Mae Wests for them all, paper 'sick' bags, cushions and rations. Moreover, found out that there was a servicing kite to go over too; complete with ground crew, tools, equipment & most important of all – an engineering officer! – boy I'm in here like a duck!

He pulled rank and assigned himself the task of being the engineering officer on the mission.

May 8. We got airborne at 10:30am ... The day was very warm & bright & I enjoyed the trip from the nose of the aircraft in the bomb aimers position where I could see all there was to see ... we passed over close to Antwerp, circled Brussels and finally found our aerodrome B58 at a little town called Melsbrock ... We finally reached our parking strip & got out to be confronted with approx. 3000 POWs of all nationalities, types & colour dressed in every sort of cast-off clothing imaginable with

khaki being predominant of course. We had to wait about an hour for the first of our kites to come in so we talked to a group of them. There were Aussies & New Zealanders, Canadians & Americans, English & Poles & Russians etc. of army, navy & Air Force. Several Canadians came up to speak to us having recognised our a/c [aircraft] letters. Even some from our own Sqdn ... They didn't look to be in too bad condition but their camp (Stalag 3) I guess was one of the better types. However, they were all half starved & for every one of them who could move they said there were 3 left behind who were too weak to move or were in hospital etc. As soon as our a/c started to land the work really started & we spent all afternoon rushing up and down the long line of 75 to 100 planes getting them loaded with 24 POWs each, fixing snags and getting them off again. As soon as one kite moved out of line another would land & take its place so it really was quite a major effort. It was hot a grueling work & I sure began to get tired ...

There was no place to eat or drink except a NAAFI canteen with a queue about a mile long for which we didn't have time to wait, so about 2:45 F/S McIntyre & I seeing this little village off to the side of the aerodrome decided to walk out and see what we could find ... We hadn't gone far along this little cobblestone street in Melsbrock until we came to what looked like a pub with a horse & wagon parked outside. The wagon was piled high with cases of wine etc. & we decided that this place looked interesting & wandered into a little covered courtyard along side. Here was a typical Belgium woman complete with big wooden 'sabots' washing down the cobblestone court. She couldn't speak English so I started off half-heartedly in my very weak French ... However, she seemed to understand very well & took us each by the arm & conducted us into their kitchen where her husband & two other men & a boy were seated around the radio listening to Churchill speak at 3:00 o'clock – it was being re-translated for them as he went along. They all greeted us happily with big smiles, violent arm waves & much jabbering out of which the expression 'la guerre est finie' came out very frequently. The lady bustled around & got us a glass of beer apiece – stuff called 'Kirstch Biere' & tasting faintly of cider. It turned out that the boy

Brussels continues on page 4

Brussels continued from page 3

could speak a little English so he acted as interpreter for us & we got along quite well. Next out came the Cognac & we had two glasses of that & then the old boy got out a box of cigars & handed them around so we were quite happy ... We said goodbye & left shortly after & went back to the aerodrome to get cracking again.

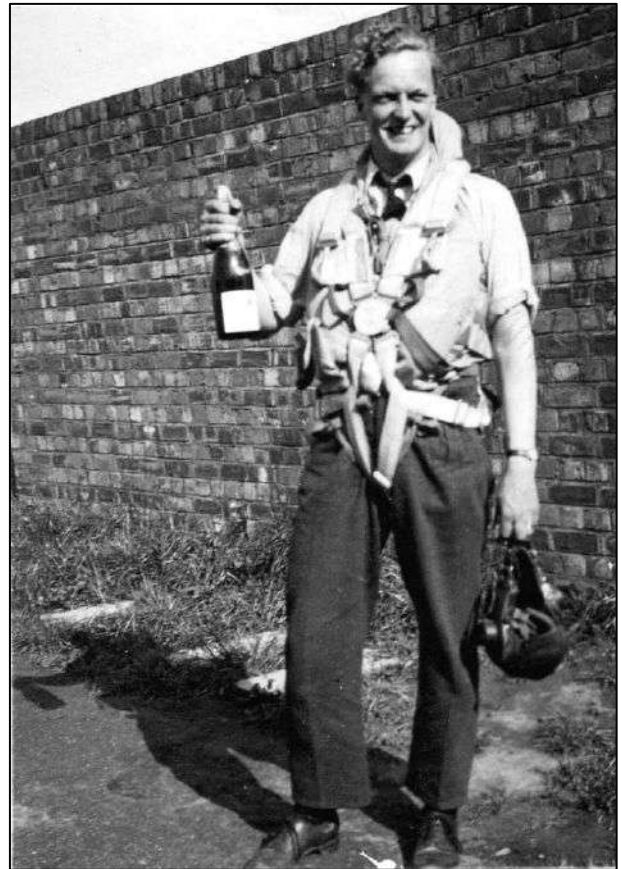
About 4 o'clock one of our aircraft 424-Q burst a tyre on the runway just before takeoff ... we took all the stuff out to the kite, started to jack it up & were making good time – figuring it would be done by 8:30. However the wheel was in soft earth off the runway & we had just removed the old wheel but hadn't put the new one on when the jack started to sink in the soft earth ... There was nothing else we could do until we got some more jacks so ... we headed for Brussels.

We ... thumbed a ride on an RAF truck which deposited us near the famous Botanical Gardens in the centre of Brussels. F/S McIntyre & I then headed for an hotel ... & arranged for a room. Then we started out to see the sights. By this time, it was about 10 pm & there was lots to see. First of all, there were terrific crowds of people milling & weaving around all the streets & squares celebrating VE Day 'La guerre est finie' was the popular cry & many tears of rejoicing were seen too. Long snake dances were formed of soldiers & girls tearing around, huge American trucks were loaded to capacity with people perched all over the place on them careening wildly up & down the streets. Everyone was shouting & singing, throwing streamers & confetti, girls would rush up and kiss us & then tear on again – what a wild place it was! The next big thing I noticed were that all the lights, neon signs & flickering advertisements were on full blast – the first lights I've seen like that in 2½ years & it sure did make me a little homesick for the moment. About every other shop seemed to be a cabaret with a band playing, sweating dancers crowded inside & cool-looking drinkers sipping their Champagne & Cognac out on the sidewalk fronts separated from each other by canvas marquees. We started visiting the cabarets one after another & trying all new drinks until it appeared that our money would run low so we stuck to beer after that – very poor stuff actually more like coloured water. There were innumerable

occurrences and happenings during the evening but all-in-all we spent a very gay & happy time arriving back at our hotel around 2:30 am tired out and very much in need of sleep. We tumbled right into bed & so to sleep with the sound of revelry still going on strongly till well after 6:00 am ...

May 9 Got up about 8:00 am & set out to find our way back to the aerodrome. Some revelers were still going strong when we got out. After trying my French out several times we finally caught a train & got back out about 10:00 am. By dint of great exertions & the use of two mosquito jacks we finally got the wheel changed & taxied it out of the mud in time for lunch at 1:30 – only my second meal since I got over here. I went up to the Officer's Mess & really filled up. Bought a bottle of Champagne for 140 francs & we got airborne at about 3:30 pm. I slept most of the way back & we arrived here about 6:00 o'clock in time to tell all our stories to the boys around the bar for the rest of the evening.

In later life, Ross lived in Lawrence Park with his family.



Ross the day after VE Day in his flying kit with the 140 franc bottle of Champagne *Dawson collection*

75 Years Ago

Items from the Globe and Mail and Toronto Star, May 1945. Both newspapers can be accessed from your own home through the Toronto Public Library website by using your library card number.

CITY OF TORONTO

PROCLAMATION

A Civic Service of Praise and Thanksgiving to Almighty God Will Be Held When Victory Is Achieved in the Present European Conflict

In front of the City Hall
at 12.30 o'clock in the afternoon

**on the day following official announcement
OF "V-E" DAY**

All Citizens are invited to attend

**THANKSGIVING SERVICES—DEMONSTRATIONS AND CELEBRATIONS ON
"V-E" DAY**

in various Civic Parks

Arrangements have been made to hold community services, demonstrations and celebration programmes in each of the undermentioned parks

During the Day That "V-E" DAY Is Officially Announced

EAST:	WEST:	
Leithwood Park Beach	High Park	
Sheppard Park	St. George's	
Riverside Park	St. Andrew's Park	
CENTRAL:	NORTH:	
Trinity Park	Highland Park	
Wentworth Park		

A ample opportunity will be provided in each of the said parks for an expanded celebration with bands, community singing and display of fireworks, in which all classes of citizens may participate.

Time in local radio stations for further details.

On "V-E" Day citizens are urged to observe the following requests:

Participate in the services and celebrations in the park nearest your responsible locality.

Refrain from driving vehicles into the downtown area and do not create pedestrian congestion in the district.

Remove all non-essential vehicles from the streets.

Remember: Victory is Europe's and our final victory.

ROBERT H. BRANTFORD, C.O.
Mayor

AND SAVE THE TREES

Toronto Star, 1 May 1945

In anticipation of the declaration of V-E Day, the City of Toronto announced "A Civic Service of Praise and Thanksgiving" to be held in front of City Hall at 12:30 p.m. on the day following the official announcement. Community services were to be held, too. In North Toronto, the location was Eglinton Park.

With so many wounded servicemen due to return, the race was on to complete the construction of Sunnybrook Hospital. Skilled workmen from outside the city needed accommodation.

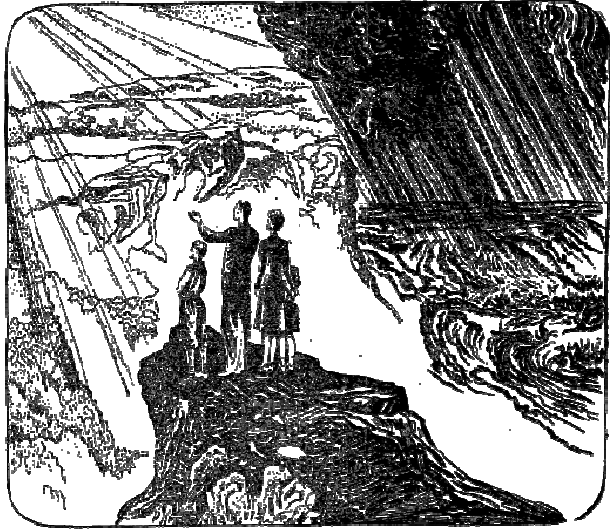
**WILL YOU
SPARE A ROOM
FOR A WORKER ON
Sunnybrook Hospital?**

Rooms are urgently needed for the many skilled workers who are now rushing Sunnybrook Hospital to its completion. Have you a room in your home you would be willing to rent to one of these men for a time? If you wish to help, in this way, to make Sunnybrook Hospital ready for our sick and wounded, please telephone Miss Foster, Midway 5471, today.

TORONTO DAILY STAR

**UNCONDITIONAL
SURRENDER**

Toronto Star, 7 May 1945



We greet with full hearts and glad eyes
THE SUNSHINE OF VICTORY
as it rolls away the dark clouds of war and oppression

STORE CLOSED ALL DAY TUESDAY—OPENING WEDNESDAY 9:30 A.M. UNTIL 5:30 P.M.

BIRKS-ELLIS-RYRIE
JEWELLERS

If You Live in North Toronto

Join With
North Toronto Lions' Club in
"V-E" Day Celebration

Big Programme Arranged
in Co-operation with
Civic Authorities at

EGLINTON PARK

Toronto Star, 1 May 1945

75 Years Ago continues on page 6

When to Read It
 The Globe and Mail
 Partly Cloudy, Cool
 1945 Year, No. 15,784
 Toronto, Tuesday, May 8, 1945
 2 Cents Per Copy
 24 PAGES

THIS IS VICTORY

Globe & Mail, 8 May 1945

Nearly 30,000 people streamed into Eglinton Park to celebrate victory. For two hours the crowd sang favorite songs of this war. An RCA band played; fireworks and street dancing ended the celebrations.

Globe & Mail, 9 May 1945

In North Toronto, streets were practically deserted until late afternoon when a Thanksgiving Service was held in Eglinton Park, where later a band played and there were fireworks.

Police Plan Downtown Ban If V-Day Traffic Congested

Globe & Mail, 8 May, 1945

“All available police officers will be on duty the moment the complete surrender of Germany is announced on VE-Day, police headquarters announced at the weekend. Downtown traffic on VE-Day and the following holiday will be prohibited if congestion occurs, police said. But such action will be taken only if a traffic jam interferes with pedestrians.”
 The area in question was between University Avenue & Jarvis, and Front to College. Fleet Street would remain open for through traffic.

Who's Who in Mount Pleasant Cemetery?

by Doug Campbell

From time to time we will have 3 or 4 names of people interred in the cemetery who have one or two things in common, for instance a position or a business.

All these men enlisted in World War 2. What ranking did they share on June 6, 1944?

- Eric Haldenby (architect)
- Bruce Matthews (executive)
- Guy Simonds

The answer is on page 10

HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE
 2141 West Beaver Creek Rd.
 MAY 8 at 11 a.m.
RABBI ABRAHAM L. FELDERS
 will conduct
VICTORY (V-E) SERVICE
 (Thanksgiving and Prayer)
 Public Cordially Invited.

ST. GEORGE'S
 Corner Eglinton Blvd. and Duplex Ave.
Victory
Thanksgiving Services
DR. WILLARD BREWING
 11 a.m.—V-E Day and the Home
 (Were Our Homes Worth Defending?)
 7 p.m.— 1918 — 1945
 Versailles — San Francisco

GLEBE ROAD
 Glebe Road (East of Yonge)
 REV. F. W. J. BRADLEY, B.A.,
 Minister
 11 a.m.—
A Service of National Thanksgiving
 7 p.m.—
A Mother's Day Service
 Women's Organization in Charge

ST. CLEMENT'S
 North Toronto
 Service of Special Thanksgiving
 To God For Victory in Europe
 8 a.m.—Holy Communion
 11 a.m.—Morning Prayer and Sermon
 7 p.m.—Evening Prayer and Sermon
 Preacher at Both Services:
REV. CANON W. G. NICHOLSON

EGLINTON
 2514 Eglinton Ave. West, North Toronto
 Minister: REV. W. J. JOHNSTON, B.D., D.D.
 Organist: John M. Hodson
NATIONAL THANKSGIVING DAY
 11 a.m.—
 "REMEMBRANCE AND THANKSGIVING"
 Dr. W. J. Johnston
 7 p.m.—
REV. JESSE H. ARNETT, M.A., D.D.
 Moderator of the United Church of Canada
 Provision made for overflow congregation

FAIRLAWN Fair Lawn at Yonge
 REV. GEO. E. THIBBLE, Minister
 11 a.m.—"NOW THANK WE ALL OUR GOD!"
 7 p.m.—"MOTHER'S DAY SERVICE" in charge of the Women's Assn.
 Mrs. G. P. Eiden will speak on "The Ideal Mother"

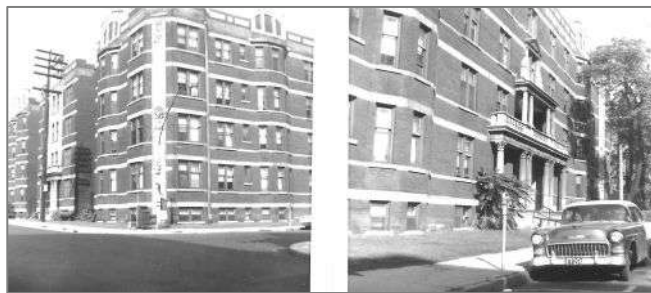
CHURCH of ST. TIMOTHY
 1100 Bloor St. W. and Old Orchard Grove
 Minister: THE REV. E. H. MARRIS
 "Thanks be to God which giveth us the Victory"
 8 a.m.—Holy Communion
 11 a.m.—Service of Thanksgiving and Holy Communion
 Special Children's Service
 8 p.m.—Sunday School
 7 p.m.—Farewell to Scouts and Cubs, Guides and Brownies

VICTORY DANCE TONIGHT
JOHNNY PERKINS and His ORCHESTRA
 1.50 per couple
 Service Personnel 1.00 couple
 9.00 to 12.30
 K1. 0700

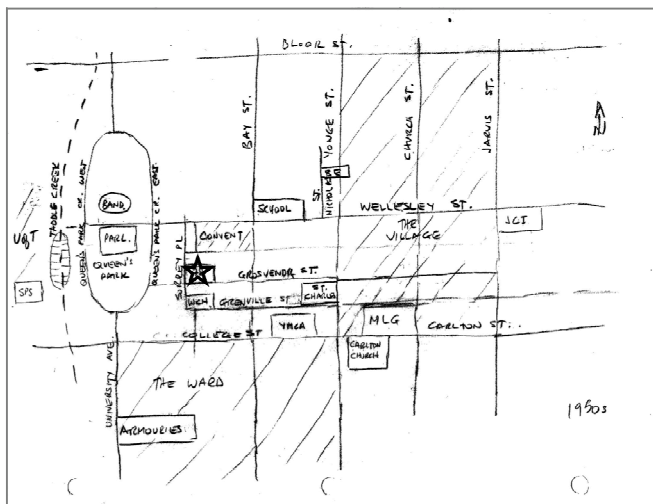
LONDON LUGGAGE SHOP
 Our Shop Will Remain Closed All Day Tomorrow—VE Day

*Toronto Memories:
Going for a Walk in my Ghost
Neighbourhood: Part 1*
by Frederick Keenan

I would like to take you for an imagined walk through the now non-visible neighbourhood I grew up in during the 1940s, 50s and 60s. Perhaps we can call it my “ghost” neighbourhood because nothing – absolutely nothing - of it remains, except for my increasingly indistinct memories.



Athelma Apartments looking north and east – Surrey Place is on the left and the main entrance on Grosvenor Street is on the right.



Fred’s neighbourhood in the 1950s. University/Queen’s Park to the left, Bloor Street at the top. We start at the star, left of centre.

The beginning of the walk, and the centre of my universe at that time, is the Athelma Apartments building at 78 Grosvenor Street, which is two blocks north of College Street, two blocks south of Wellesley Street, and one block west of Bay Street, at the corner of Surrey Place, of which only one short block down to Grenville Street still exists. We are east of Queen’s Park, the Ontario Parliament Buildings, and (a bit further away) the University of Toronto. Can you picture all this?

Built in 1912, just before the Great War, the Athelma Apartments was one of the earliest apartment buildings in Toronto (the very first was in 1908). It was rather elegant, with terrazzo floors and stairs, a caged bronze elevator with an attendant (sometimes me), highly polished brass fittings around the front door, and a wide south-facing balcony with wicker furniture, potted ferns, and ashtrays on stands.

The building was located here in order to be close to the Ontario Parliament Buildings to provide

Toronto accommodation for out-of-town MPPs, for professors at U of T, and for doctors from the cluster of hospitals on College Street and University Avenue.

One of those doctors was Dr. Frederick Banting who, with Dr. Charles Best, managed to identify and purify insulin from animal pancreases in order to combat diabetes. One of the very first patients to receive injections of insulin (in 1919) was Elizabeth Hughes, the 11-year-old daughter of America's most distinguished jurist and politician, Charles Evans Hughes. Elizabeth was moved with her family into a large apartment in the Athelma to be close to Dr. Banting, and to await her treatment for Type I (or juvenile) diabetes. It was successful: she received 42,000 insulin injections during a lifetime that extended another 62 years.

My mother arrived here in 1930 along with her younger sister and her recently-widowed mother. Grandmother didn’t like me very much. She once told my mother, “There is a bad streak in that child.” Grandmother married the Superintendent of the apartment building, “Pop” Crane, two years later. Four years after that, my mother married my father, who eventually took over the position of Superintendent when Pop Crane retired.

Dad’s responsibilities included the coal-fired steam heating system of the Athelma building. I learned how to operate the boilers from him and, on occasions when he was too ill to work, I stayed home from school and ran the boilers.

The Athelma closed in 1961. According to a newspaper clipping at that time, the Athelma was the largest apartment house in Toronto, with 73 suites. The demolition operation in 1962 and 1963

Ghost Neighbourhood continues on page 8

Ghost Neighbourhood continued from page 7

cleared the entire large block from Grosvenor Street and Surrey Place north and east right up to Bay and Wellesley Streets.

If we stand at the corner of Grosvenor Street and Surrey Place, i.e. at the southwest corner of the building, we can look west a short distance to where Grosvenor Street ends at Queen's Park Crescent East, which we will cross. The extensive grassy area on the south side of the Parliament Buildings, with massive beds of tulips and dotted with statues of forgotten politicians and dimly recalled wars, is where local parents often bring their young children to play on the weekends.

If we go around to the part of Queen's Park on the north side of the Parliament Buildings, we come across a bandshell – long gone - where the equestrian statue of King Edward VII now stands. (It is a tradition of engineering students to cover the horse's prominent testicles with red paint.) Military bands march north from the University Avenue Armouries (now demolished), mount the bandshell, and play for Sunday afternoon spectators.

In winter, we go a bit further west, cross over Queen's Park Crescent West and arrive at the valley of the underground Taddle Creek. At this time, the valley hadn't been fenced off and both the west and east slopes are wide open – a university library had not yet been built on the west side – and we have excellent sleigh and toboggan slopes. They no longer exist.

If we climb the western slope of the Taddle Creek Valley onto the front campus of the University of Toronto and look left, we will see the School of Practical Science ("The Little Red Schoolhouse")



The "Little Red Schoolhouse" of the U of T School of Practical Science (looking southwest)

where I spent my first year of civil engineering studies before it was demolished to make way for the construction of the Medical Sciences Building.

From the U of T campus let's walk, in our imagining of the street in the 1940s and 1950s, east on Wellesley Street. Where the office buildings of the Ontario Government now stand is a huge four-acre site belonging to the Sisters of St. Joseph and used as a convent school. This land had belonged to the nuns since 1863, when it was donated to them. It was then known as "Clover Hill", part of the estate of the Hon. John Elmsley. The province paid \$5,000,000 to the Sisters in November 1959 for it to be torn down to make way for an expansion of the Ontario Government office buildings.

When I was young, I used to climb over the fence into the convent grounds. There was an open-air ice pond, where the nuns taught me to skate. A lovely sight: a little kid on twin blade bob skates being held between two nuns in their billowing black cloaks. I bet Wayne Gretzky didn't have a treat like this when he was learning to skate!

Our walk through Fred Keenan's *Ghost Neighbourhood* will continue in a future Newsletter.

North Toronto Memories is an occasional series written by *you*, our members.

Thanks to Frederick Keenan and Alan J. Cooper for sharing their stories in this edition.

Please email your memories to dawsonbh@rogers.com, or mail to 283 Deloraine Avenue, Toronto M5M 2B2.



North Toronto Memories

by Alan J Cooper

My family home was at the corner of Davisville and Millwood opposite the n-w corner of Davisville Park. Along Millwood to the east, past the home of Canada's famous tennis player Don Fontana, was Mount Pleasant, where three stores north was Bob's Hobby Shop, (later George's Trains), from which I was bought my childhood electric train. Across the street and north of what was later Emm's Variety was Manor bakery, with its two sweet ladies making delicious doughnuts for 15 cents. North further still, passed Young's fruit market and Ing's ice cream, was Miller's shoe store, which had a machine for x-raying children's feet.

But back on my west side, there was a kind old Jewish man running Parkmount Cleaners and an antique shop, where I got in trouble as an 8-year-old for opening its door and yelling, "Hi Bud, what's new", much to the suppressed grin of Hodgson's principal, Mr. Treadwell. North further still was "The Fish and Chips shop", formally named Penrose but I didn't know the title or care.



Mount Pleasant north of Millwood, 1951

CTA

THE SPRING OF '51

My nursery school was next to the Church of the Transfiguration, atop a hill on its own city block. My favorite house was across the road at the bottom of the church hill. It was on a corner at the top of a boulevard that ran down to a sort of traffic delta shared with 2 bigger streets.

It was not much more than a bungalow. Its tiny second floor had 2 leaded windows that faced the church park. The house was stucco and its doors,

windows and corner walls were outlined by a mosaic of roughened bricks, with colors mixed and dark. The tile roof was within easy eye angle from the playground and from an uphill position, one could see the roof's long runoff over the sides. The chimney looked to have 8 smoke spouts cut into it, 4 long and 2 abreast. The corner lot's yard was hedged so as to make it invisible to any passing pedestrian but from the hill, one could see a curving, red-bricked walkway that made its way from the house through the yard and past a flower-filled well to a brown wooden gate going to a garage of like design. For reasons I still cannot explain, the house looked to 3-year-old me, Dutch.

It was a sunny day in late April and I paused, as I had done many times, to look at the house. The boulevard had become by that 5th week of spring, resplendent with trees that had begun to bud and the day seemed ideal I thought, for a walk.

When our teacher Miss Thedford temporarily abandoned us 3 and 4 year-olds in the fenced-in playground (I guess to go to the bathroom), I made the suggestion to Big Brian and several others that I give them a guided tour of some of the finer architectural contributions of our North Toronto neighborhood. I was the first to slide under the upturned fence behind the equipment clubhouse. Then I held up the rusted fence for 6 more children — 4 boys and 2 girls — to follow.

The 7 of us sauntered down the slow hill to the sidewalk, then stopped, somewhat stunned by the appearance of a road in front of us. No one had ever crossed a road without an adult before and we did not even know how to do it. Sheila St. Vincent was the eldest among us and said that we should look all 4 ways first but there were only 3 ways to look. No cars were coming from anywhere, so one by one, we followed Sheila across the road.

Once on the other side, I regained the confidence I'd had in escaping the playground. Our group stood in front of the Dutch house and I looked for the first time at its front. The veranda must have been 15 feet wide and was recessed into the house some 10 feet or more. Sitting on the porch's tiled floor was a 2-seater sofa of wicker. We started our walk down Wilfrid Avenue, my taking the lead and

Memories continues on page 10

Memories continued from page 9

commenting on the different designs of each structure. We made it to the bottom of Wilfrid to a rounded corner shared with Belsize Boulevard, and stood opposite a freshly flowered Belsize Park. Behind us was a gracious old home that sprawled across a huge corner lawn, lined with trees.

I was about to continue our architectural tour when suddenly a piercing scream of the kind that stabbed women make in grownup movies, came from Wilfrid Avenue. We turned and saw Miss Thedford scrambling down the sidewalk, with her arms flailing and her words impossible to decipher amidst her high-pitched squeals. Doors opened and soon adults were outnumbering us. As they closed in, a mad chatter seemed to be flying above our heads. It seems we had "gone missing" from the school for almost 6 minutes and within this frenzy, someone had called the police.

We children were all packed into the police car. Miss Thedford charged back up Wilfrid Avenue by herself and by the time the 2 policemen had filled out a report, several minutes had passed. When their car finally did arrive back at the church hill and nursery school, a puffing Miss Thedford was already in the fenced-in playground with the 24 remaining children


The rusted old fence behind the equipment clubhouse was never mended but it became an absolute no-no for any child to go back there.

NOTE FROM ALAN: *All people's names are fictitious but for mine.*

VISIT ALAN'S WEBSITE

alanjcooper.com to find out about his books.

?? *Mystery Pennants* ??



Do you recognize these pennants, dated 1962 and 1963? Please send information to the Newsletter editor at the email or street address below.

??? ??? ??? ??? ???

Who's Who in Mount Pleasant Cemetery?

What ranking did these men hold on 6 June, 1944:
Eric Haldenby, Bruce Matthews, Guy Simonds?

Answer: They achieved the rank of General:
Lieutenant-General Guy Simonds (commander of the 2nd Canadian Corps),
Major-General Bruce Matthews (commander of the 2nd Canadian division)
and Brigadier-General Eric Haldenby (commander of training of Canadian infantry).

We welcome contributions from members: heritage events and achievements, *North Toronto Memories*, brief articles and photographs of local history interest.



Submissions for the next Newsletter by 23 Aug. to dawsonbh@rogers.com or call 416-481-6622.

North Toronto Historical Society

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

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www.northtorontohistoricalsociety.org

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

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