

TALK OF TORONTO



TRINITY COLLEGE, TORONTO

GROWING UP IN A GROWING CITY
THE 30'S, 40'S & 50'S

GEORGE A. FIERHELLER



GEORGE IN HIS 'SEE FAR' POSE WHILE FUNDRAISING FOR THE CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH

George used his experience of growing up in Toronto to develop a career, largely in the management of high tech, that took him out of the City for nearly 25 years. He notes that this is no reflection on Toronto but rather that opportunities arose in Ottawa and Vancouver as outlined in his Biography in the Appendix.

He is back in Toronto and observes that those who stayed in the City while he was away did a good job of keeping Toronto moving forward so that it would be ready for his return in 1985.

He continues to be happily married to Glenna (née Fletcher) after more than 50 years and has two daughters, both living in the GTA, Vicki Fierheller and Lori Wittemeier as well as two grandchildren, Chris and Caitlin.



TORONTO 1933 - 1955

In 1933, the population of Metropolitan Toronto was about 830,000. This figure is for the municipalities that were later included in the 1953 amalgamation.

By 1955, the figure for the comparable area had grown to 1,350,000. About 73% of this population claimed origins in the British Isles. This was down somewhat from the 1933 figure of about 80%.

Interestingly, the next largest category was Jewish although this could hardly have been indicative of a country of origin. The percentage in 1933 was 7.2% and this declined to about 5% in 1955. It was still double the number claiming Italian origin in 1955 at 2.5%.

Looking at the Greater Toronto Area today with a population in 2006 of over 5.1 million people (Halton, Peel, York, Durham and the further amalgamated city of Toronto), those claiming origin from the British Isles had declined to 54%. Even allowing for some 600,000 people who claimed Canada as their country of origin, the increase in the population of Toronto from other than the British Isles has shown an astonishing growth.

It is to the credit of the people of Toronto that this integration has been accomplished as smoothly as any place in the world.

– George Fierheller

Chair Emeritus, Greater Toronto
Marketing Alliance, 2008

BOTH DUSTCOVER FLAPS

TRINITY COLLEGE TODAY

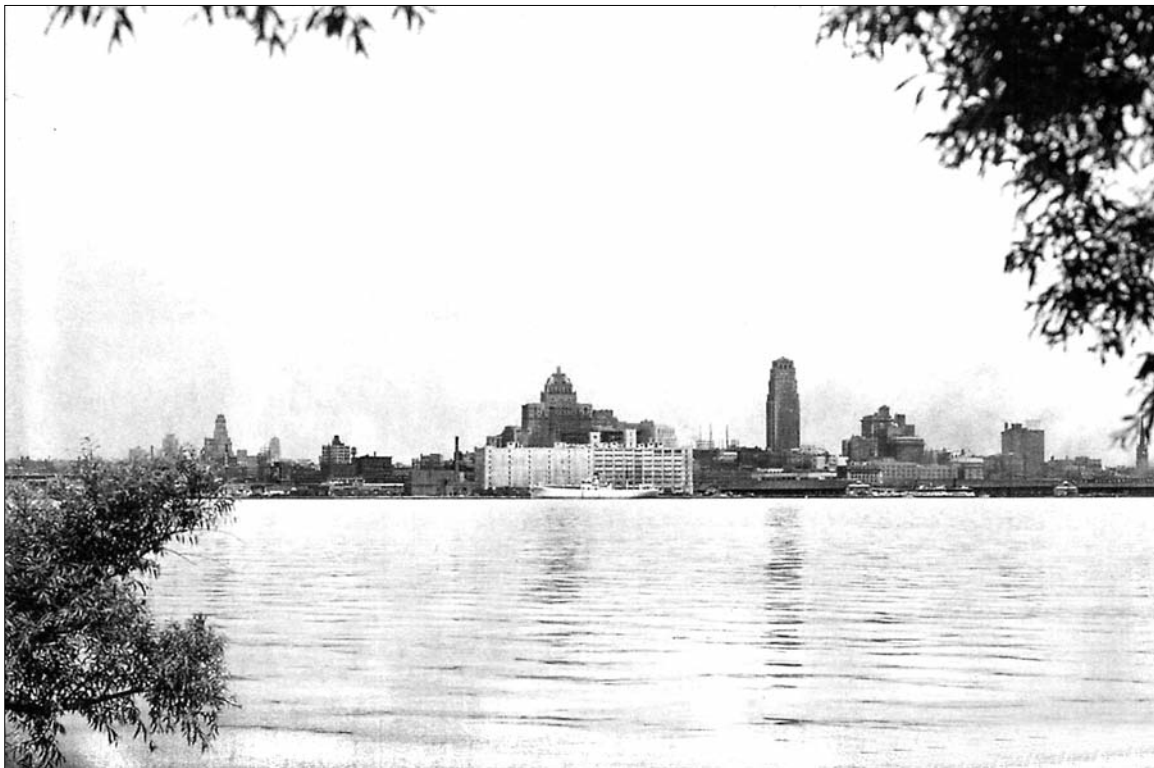
The original College building was a unique Gothic structure opened in 1852 on Queen Street West. Only the original gates now remain at the Bellwoods Park location. The cover photo is the 'new' building on Hoskin Avenue that opened in 1925. It was intended to be somewhat of a copy of the original build on Queen Street which was itself modelled after St. Aidan's College, Birkenhead on the Mersey. The new building is one of Toronto's best examples of Flamboyant Gothic. The Chapel was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and was completed in 1955. Sir Giles was best known for designing the red telephone boxes in the U.K.

– George Fierheller

Talk of Toronto

GROWING UP
IN A GROWING CITY

The 30's, 40's & 50's



GEORGE A. FIERHELLER

© 2008 George Fierheller.

All rights reserved. Permission to reproduce
in any form must first be secured from
George Fierheller through the publisher.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Fierheller, George A., 1933-
Talk of Toronto : growing up in a growing city, the 30's, 40's & 50's /
George A. Fierheller.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-897486-09-2

1. Fierheller, George A., 1933- --Childhood and youth.
2. Toronto (Ont.)--Social life and customs--20th century.
3. Toronto (Ont.)--Biography. I. Title.

FC3097.26.F53A3 2008

971.3'54103092

C2008-907593-5

Cover design by Lina Di Nardo Moss
tdmp@rogers.com



Produced and printed by
Stewart Publishing & Printing
Markham, Ontario, Canada L3P 2X3
Tel: 905-294-4389 Fax: 905-294-8718
robert@stewartbooks.com www.stewartbooks.com

Talk of Toronto

What's Inside?

Dedication to Different Decades	11
Books 'By George'	12
Acknowledgements	13
So What? (A Preface)	15

I. Depression 1933-39

1933

Muddling Around In the Middle-Class	19
--	----

Woodlawn Avenue West is half way up the Yonge Street hill between Bloor and St. Clair. This minor escarpment has been referred to as the dividing line between those who live 'above the hill' and those who do not. Woodlawn is therefore a perfectly middle-class area.

A House on the Hill	21
----------------------------------	----

Number 49 is on the south side of Woodlawn Avenue on what was the wrong side of the street. The north side had some lovely houses commanding a great view of downtown Toronto. Our house was an old turn of the century semi-detached dwelling.

1934

Heating Things Up	27
--------------------------------	----

Coping with Toronto winters in the 1930's was not easy. Heating a house with a coal furnace was a real challenge.

1935

What's Cooking?	29
------------------------------	----

We ate well during the depression but food purchase and preparation was a real challenge. Bread and milk were delivered to your door originally by horse drawn wagons.

1936

The Kids on the Block	37
------------------------------------	----

Woodlawn had a wide variety of income levels and kids to match. The 'Woodlawn gang' was very eclectic.

1937**Boy's Toys**39

In the days before TV, we had to make our own fun but we did have an interesting collection of toys, most of which were available from the Eaton's catalogue.

Boys Will Be Boys42

We discovered quite early that there were other interesting things to play with besides toys.

Junk Food and Other Nourishment42

There were few nutritionists to steer us in the right direction. We made up for the lack of McDonalds or KFC with a wide variety of junk food of no nutritional value whatever.

The Clothes on our Back44

There were no blue jeans. To the extent we could, our clothes mimicked those of our comic book heroes.

1938**School Days, School Days**45

Brown Public School presented another fascinating mix of youngsters. The school is still one of the most sought after public schools in the city.

1939**Royalty Arrives, An Era Ends**47

King George and Queen Elizabeth visited Toronto in August with the threat of war looming.

II. Aggression 1940-45**1940****Woodlawn and the War**49

Other than the many Torontonians who were joining the Armed Forces, life on Woodlawn continued as it had before during the early years of the war.

A Family in the 40's50

It was more common in those days for several generations of a family to live in one dwelling and this was the case at 49 Woodlawn West.

Comic Books and the Imagination51

Comic Books were the substitute for TV although we did not know that at the time. They had a considerable influence on our developing ability to read as well as our inclination to learn this new skill.

Bigger and Better Books	54
A surprisingly wide variety of reading material was available, most of it challenging our imagination.	
1941	
Our War Guests	57
Torontonians did their part to house women and their young families who had temporarily emigrated from Great Britain to avoid the bombing. It was not always a smooth association.	
A Wartime Education	58
It is interesting to look at the composition of school classes in the 1940's and what the school system did to try to involve us in the War Effort.	
Our Toys Mature	61
We are moving on from Dinky toys to Meccano sets and chemistry sets.	
1942	
Back at Brown	63
A photo reveals that there is not a person of colour in our grade four class - a reflection of the demographics of Toronto at that time.	
What We Listened to	64
With no TV, radio was our source of entertainment and news. The Happy Gang, the Soaps and the Serial programs (that might as well have been called Cereal programs) were avidly listened to.	
The Daily Mail	67
Box Tops could get you anything.	
Weapons of Mass Destruction	67
We were equipped with a wide assortment of WMD's including dart guns, BB guns and homemade slingshots.	
1943	
Our Sacrifices on the Home Front	69
In 1942, every family member was issued a Ration Book. Relative to Great Britain and elsewhere, this was not very onerous but it was a first for Canada.	
Staying in Touch	72
Phone numbers were partly alphabetic e.g. Hudson 9-6321 and the phones came only in black.	

1944

The Class of 1943-4473
Partly inflated by the War guests, our class size had now grown to 44, a number that would make any contemporary public school teacher shudder.

Saturday Afternoon at the Movies74
Beyond radio, the movies were a great source of information and entertainment and we youngsters took full advantage of this.

Save Our Souls76
My relationship with organized religion was always shaky but my parents did their best to keep my on the straight and narrow.

Dib, Dib, Dib77
This was the opening of a chant that started our Wolf Cub meetings.

Eating Out79
For grown-ups, Toronto was a culinary wasteland. However we youngsters got along just fine with sodas, milkshakes and Fran's waffles.

1945

The V Days in Toronto81
VE Day was followed rapidly by VJ day and the celebrations reflected everyone's relief to see the end of a terrible War.

The Atomic Age82
The dropping of the atomic bombs seemed to be both the end of an era and the start of a new one.

III. Progression 1946-55**1945** *(Continued)*

A New Home for a New Era85
My parents had been in the house at 49 Woodlawn since 1920. In 1945, we moved to Moore Park.

New Wheels87
The end of the War brought the opportunity for a new car which we promptly took advantage of.

1946

Life at UTS89
Having completed my final year of public school at Whitney Public, I applied for and was accepted at the University of Toronto Schools. This exposed me to some wonderful teachers and a disciplined way of life.

1947	
Hockey Night in Canada	99
I was able to attend Hockey Games when the NHL had only six teams – the good old days.	
Idling the Summer Away	100
We spent several delightful summers at Thunder Bay Beach, a wonderful experience and a wonderful location.	
1948	
Much Music	105
My interest in Classical music was greatly enhanced by the TSO Secondary School Concerts. I also launched into my record collecting although it was on 78 RPMs in those days.	
Expanding Our Horizons	106
A small group of would-be intellectuals organized Saturday afternoon discussion groups and attracted some big names to our small meetings.	
1949	
Go West Young Man	109
My parents decided that it was time that I saw Canada and we took a motor trip to British Columbia.	
Summer Jobs	111
Just about everyone finished the summer by working at the Ex, more formally known as the Canadian National Exhibition.	
Getting Bowled Over	114
My father introduced me to five pin bowling at a time when it was a more primitive sport than today.	
1950	
The New 'Me'	115
I decided that body building was something I should try. It was not a successful venture.	
Flirting in the 50's	116
As UTS was an all boys school, we had to use our imagination to find dates. Fortunately the private girls schools had the same motivation.	
1951	
The Summer of '51	119
My first real job was as a Printer's Apprentice which gave me a interesting insight into how mechanical devices worked.	

The Irreligious at the Most Religious	119
I decided to apply for Trinity College for no other reason than it was difficult to get into. It turned out to be a great experience but did nothing to improve my religious beliefs.	
At Home	122
My parents were intensive card players and often entertained. However in 1951 my mother won a TV set and this changed our family life just as it did for everyone else.	
1952	
Political Science and Economics	125
I had only gone into this course because my father thought it had something to do with business – very little as it turns out.	
The Social Side	126
My classmates and I continued to have a very active social life that had now moved up-market to the Royal York, the King Edward and other such venues.	
Summertime	126
Although I was not in a science or engineering course, I spent a couple of summers surveying for Ontario Hydro in what proved to be a remarkable insight into northern Ontario.	
1953	
Sigma Chi	129
I was never really a ‘fraternity type’ but did get a lot out of this major international fraternity.	
Hart House	130
I became quite involved with Hart House and served on their Art Committee.	
Another Summer Up North	132
I spent a second year surveying for Ontario Hydro as mentioned but this time got to see the north side of Lake Superior.	
1954	
The Grand Tour	133
During my final summer before leaving Trinity I took a grand tour of Europe. As might be expected, this was an eye opening experience. It was followed by a last round of eclectic dating before graduating and entering serious employment.	
The Final Phase	134
I graduated from Trinity with an Honours BA in subjects that I would never use.	

1955**A Final Fling**135

On graduation, I joined IBM and had a final fling in the dating field.

The Shape of Things to Come137

On reflection, I had been very lucky as to when and where I grew up. It was now time to settle into a career and marriage.

IV. So What Happened Since?

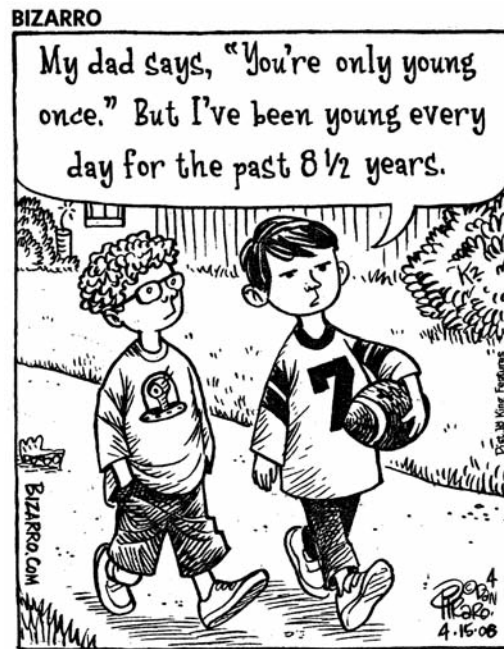
A brief biography.139

V. Bibliography

Beyond the Internet141

VI. Appendices

Research into our past houses at Woodlawn Avenue and Hudson Drive.....143



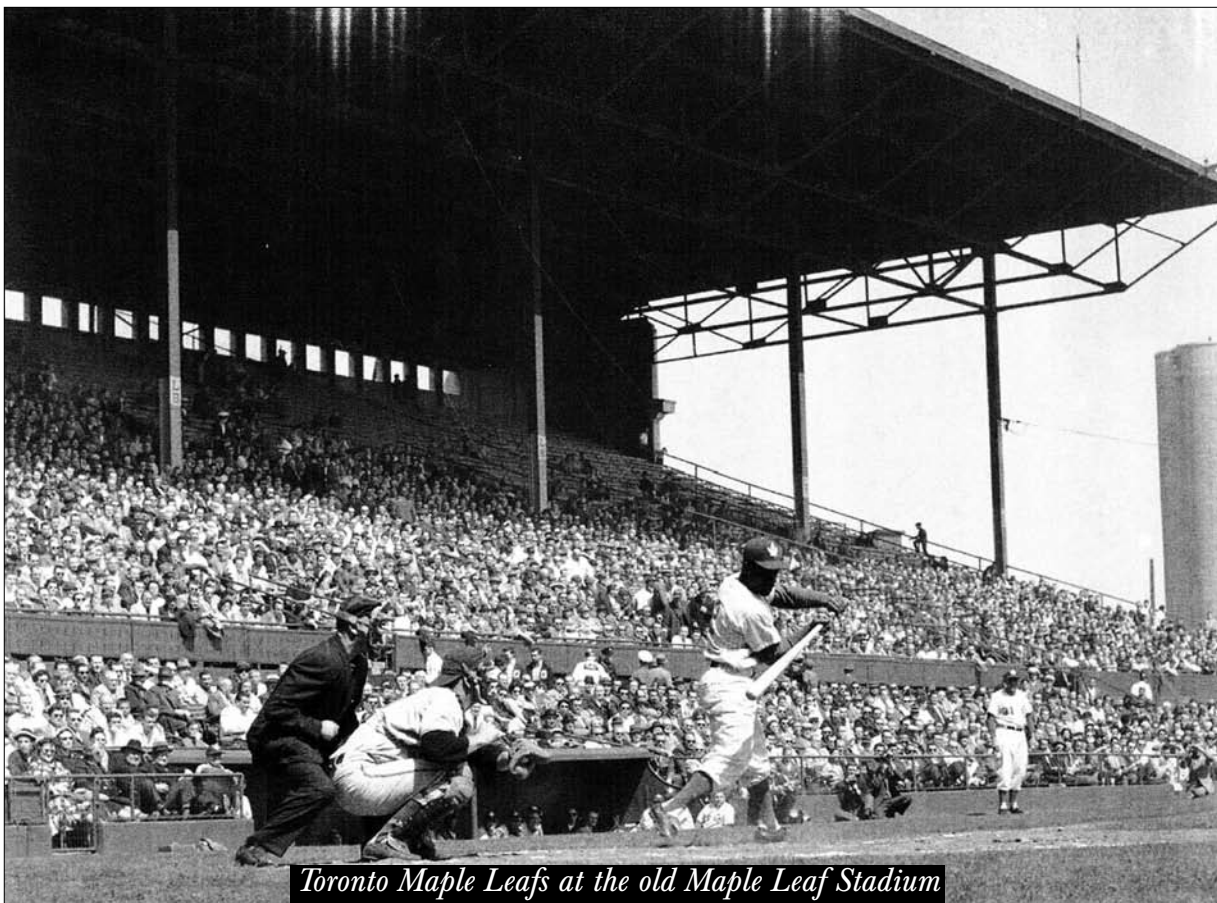
DEDICATION TO DIFFERENT DECADES

The target audience for this book is those who grew up in Toronto in the 30's, 40's and 50's.

This is hardly a growing group!

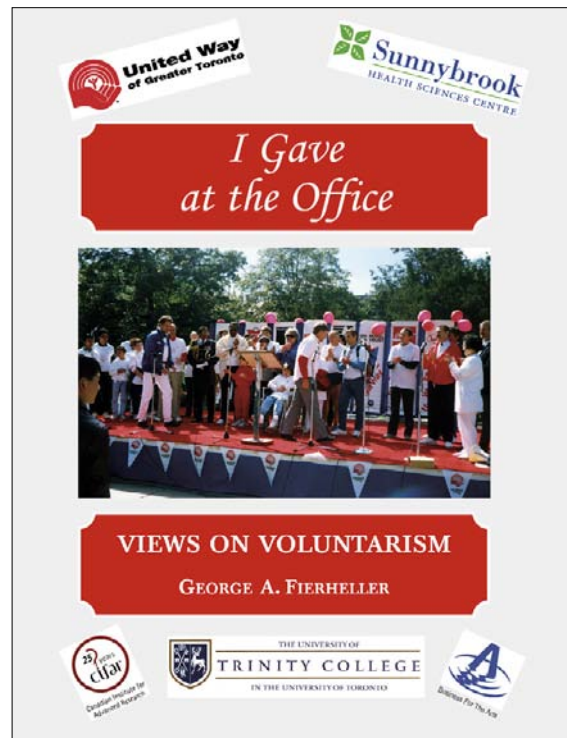
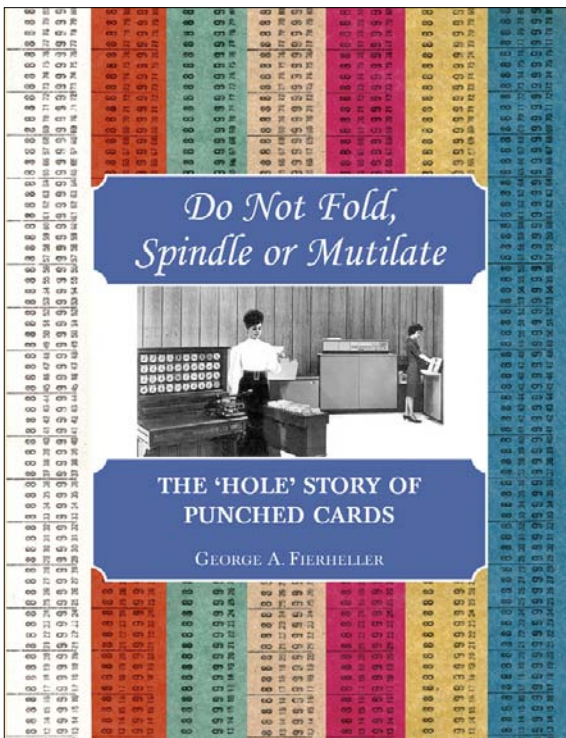
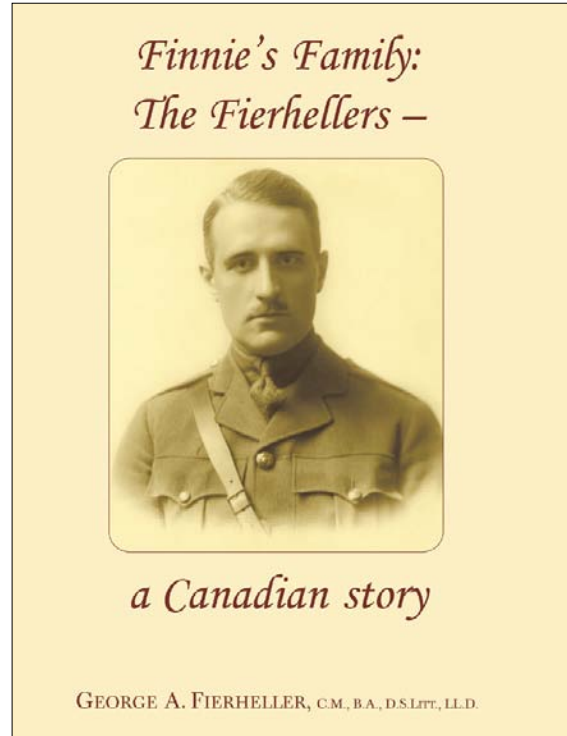
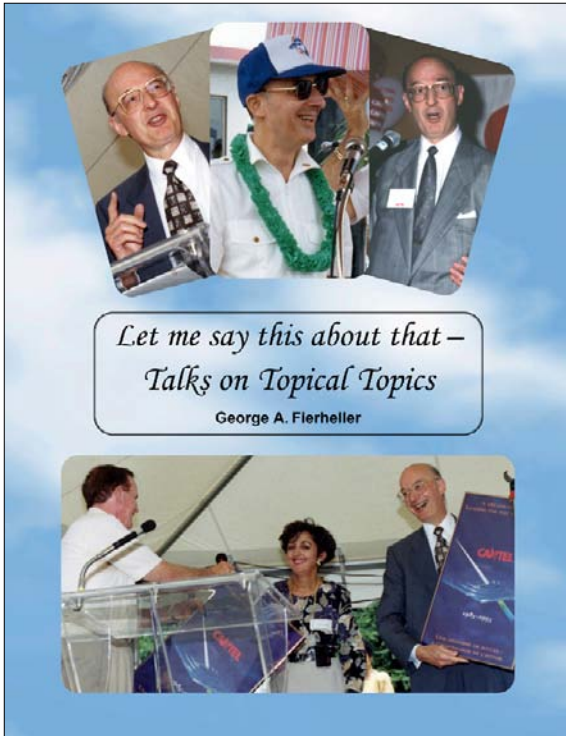
However, I felt that *Talk of Toronto* should be dedicated to those who were born during the Depression, began their education during World War II and then launched their careers in the prosperous post-war era. These were three very different decades and each had a major influence on those who grew up in those times.

I hope this book brings back many memories.



OTHER PUBLICATIONS by GEORGE FIERHELLER

All Books are available to read or download on www.gfierheller.ca



Acknowledgements

No one can take responsibility for my recollections except me and I would not always claim to be a 'usually reliable source'.

Also no one proofs my books for accuracy except for Robert Stewart, my publisher, whose Scots background will not allow him to print gross errors of spelling. As usual, he has been invaluable.

Mike Filey is Mr. Toronto when it comes to our City's history. He had no part in writing this book but I did get some inspiration from his excellent books called *Toronto Sketches*. I met with him at Tim Hortons (one cannot get more Canadian than that!) to discuss the project. He was most helpful.

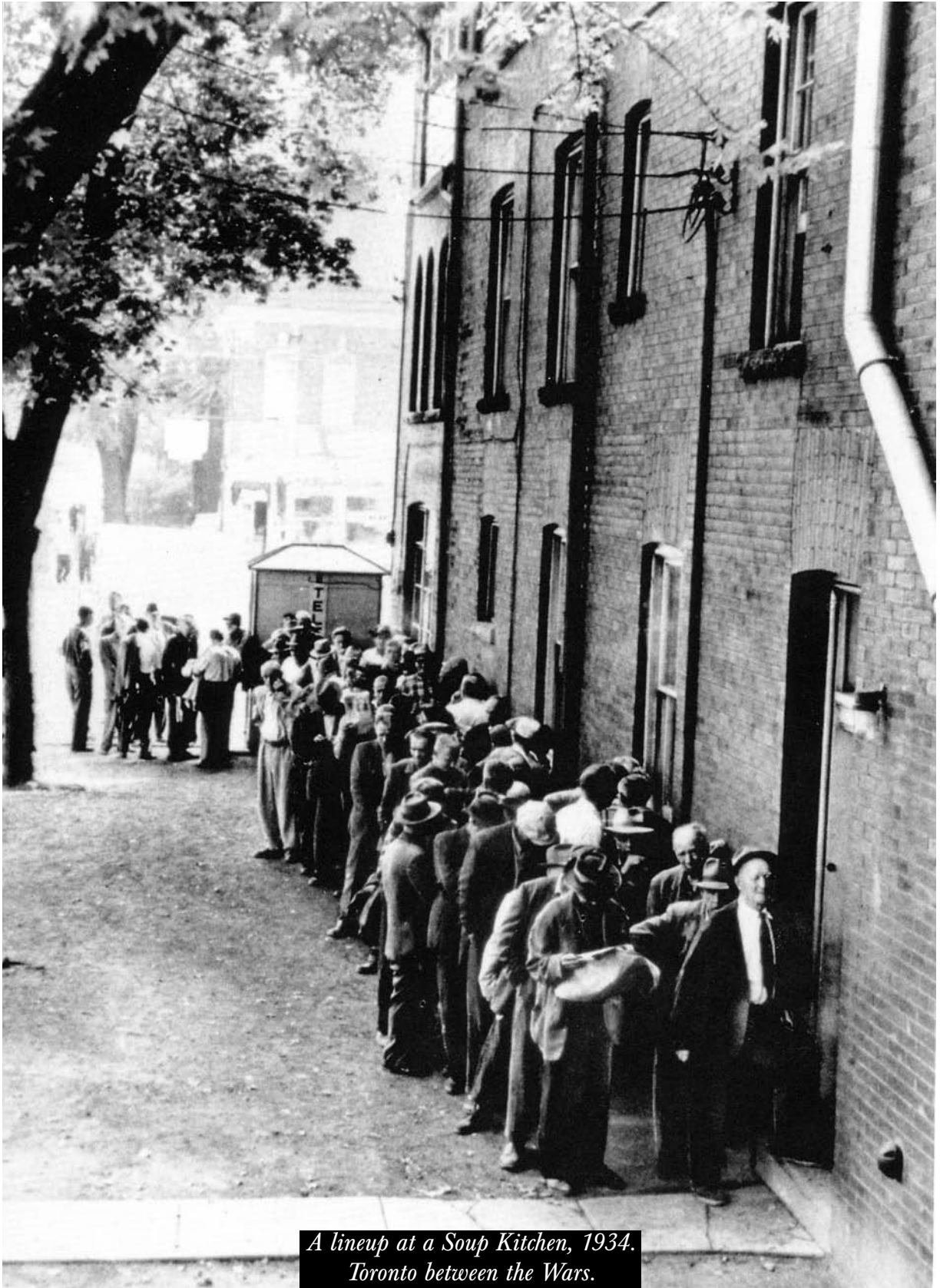
The staff of the Toronto Archives and the Toronto District School Board were similarly helpful as was the staff of Brown Public School.

The Appendices which give more detail on the two houses in which I grew up are the work of Dana King who has a service to research houses called *Every House Has a History*. I suggest you check the website at www.househistory.ca for more information on this service.

My appreciation also goes to my assistant, Jennifer Lopez, who has now listened to endless tapes for my seemingly endless series of books. After the completion of *Talk of Toronto*, Jennifer is moving on to a new career in a less literary life. I wish her all the best in her new position.

So there you have it!

This is a book by me about me and the era in which I grew up. The only honest acknowledgement is to my sometimes shaky memory.



*A lineup at a Soup Kitchen, 1934.
Toronto between the Wars.*

So what?

A Preface

In O. Henry's wonderful short story, *A Municipal Report*, the author quotes Frank Norris as follows.

“Fancy a novel about Chicago or Buffalo, let us say, or Nashville, Tennessee!

There are just three big cities in the United States that are ‘story cities’ – New York, of course, New Orleans, and best of the lot, San Francisco.”

The implication is, of course, that nothing worth writing about could ever happen in Nashville, a myth that O. Henry proceeds to dispel with his story.

I suppose that one could say the same about Toronto. In the middle of the 20th century, a middling sized city in the middle of a middling country could not have been very much to write about.

Michael Ondaatje, with *In the Skin of a Lion* in 1987, wrote a very good novel based in Toronto and in 2006 Michael Redhill, with his *Consolation*, tried the same. Toronto has yet to prove that it is a ‘novel’ city.

Talk of Toronto makes no attempt at being either novel or a novel. It is simply a book of reminiscences about growing up in a rapidly growing city during times of huge social change.

It is a ‘boys’ book’, as I have no idea what little girls did at that time.

If I were to dignify this book, I might call it a ‘Social History’.

In the 1930's, Toronto shared the trauma of the Great Depression. When I was born in 1933, unemployment in the city was 30%, with 25% of the population on direct welfare. Many suburban governments went into bankruptcy trying to carry the load.

The rise of National Socialism in Germany, the Spanish Civil War and even the 1936 Olympics in Berlin seemed remote relative to the state of the local economy. Despite a gradual improvement over the decade, the industrial output in Toronto did not match that of 1929, even by 1939.

For all this, it was hardly a depressing time for a young boy growing up in Toronto. Our family seemed to manage with a spirit of optimism that somehow the 20th century would still ‘belong to Canada’.

We made our own fun in ways that I will recount.

We were taught in schools that still had comforting maps of the world in every classroom, showing the British Empire straddling the globe in glowing pink.

We were 'of' the Depression but did not feel 'in' the Depression. I am sure our parents felt the economic situation much more severely than we did.

Naturally, I remember little of my first few years and there is the danger of retro-fitting memories, i.e., recalling being involved in events that in fact one only read about later. This is particularly true of the war years.

I was in public school (K-8) through all of the Second World War. I started kindergarten in the fall of 1938, and expected that I could find much material about the experience of being educated during a major conflict but in a safe haven far from the actual fighting. Perhaps because we lived in what might be described as a backwater in an ocean of conflict, I could find very little and hopefully this book will fill some of that gap.

The late 40's and early 50's were times of great optimism. The United Nations had been established and actually proved to be effective in the Korean War. The Marshall Plan had been instituted just after the war to great effect in reconstructing Europe. Even the atomic bomb seemed to open the way to an era of endless energy.

Indeed it was a prosperous time that has lasted until the present day, at least in the western world, despite the normal ups and downs of the economic cycle.

My secondary education took place from 1946 to 1951 at the University of Toronto



The British Empire at its grandest.

Schools (UTS). By that time the world was no longer 'pink'. New power blocks had formed, the Cold War was in full swing and everyone who watched the proceedings of the United Nations Security Council learned the Russian word 'nyet'.

I had lucked out. Being born in the baby-scarce 30's, I was one of a small demographic group – a factor that made jobs easy to find on graduation from university in 1955.

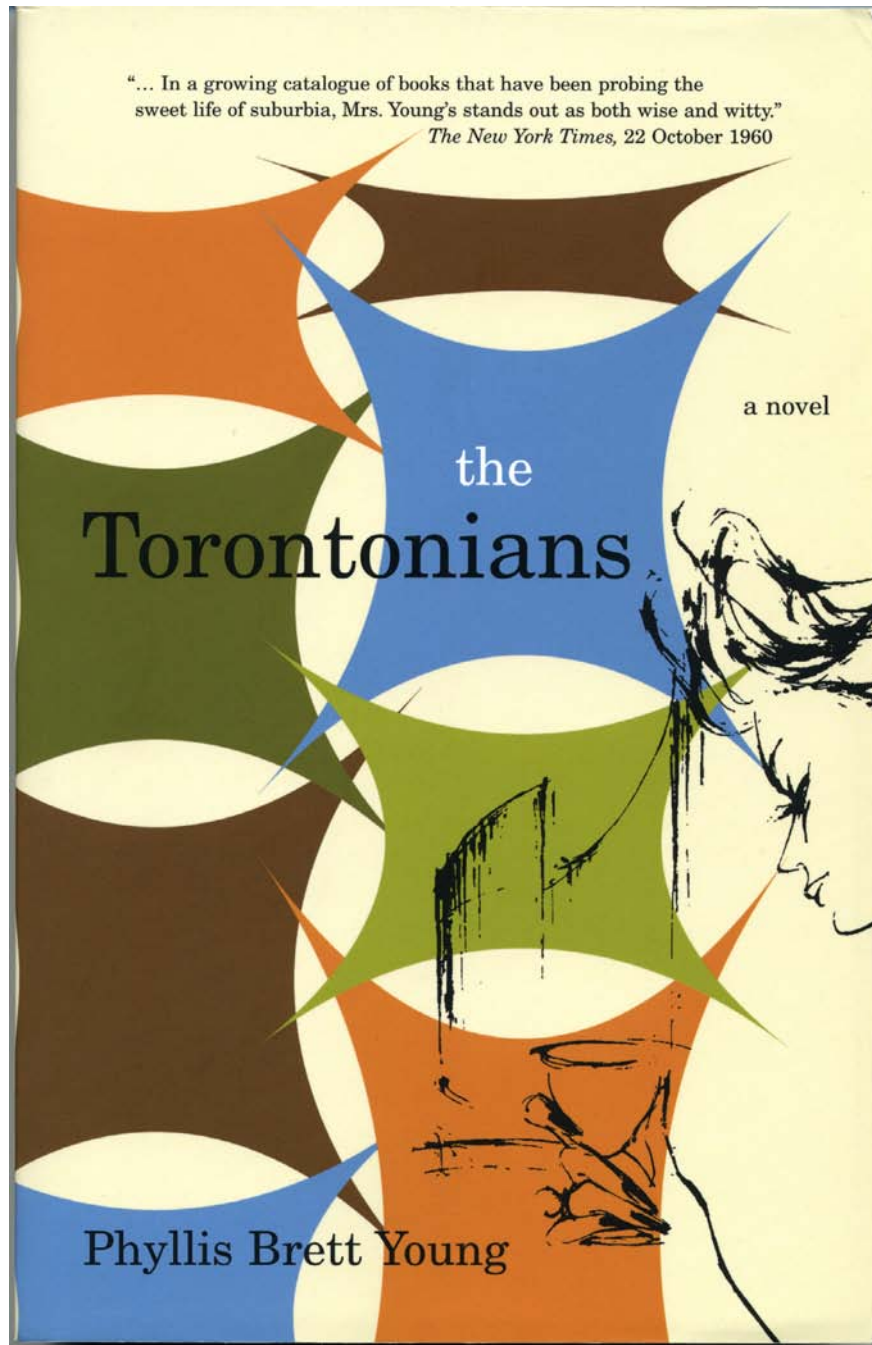
I had survived the Depression quite well and was too young to have participated in the wars of the 40's and 50's. I was still in public school at the end of World War II and had just entered college at the start of the Korean War.

I was clearly in the right place at the right time.

Perhaps because I 'had it pretty easy', I have always felt an obligation to give back to society in any way I can. That is the real motivation for this book – to help others recall at least something of what it was like in Toronto during those years of Depression, Aggression and Progression.



Yonge Street looking south from Woodlawn - the 9:00 a.m. traffic jam on February 18, 1931.



"The Torontonians", by Phyllis Brett Young

Depression 1933-39

1933

Adolph Hitler is appointed German Chancellor.

92% of the German Electorate votes for the Nazis.

In the United States, the 21st Amendment repeals Prohibition.

H.G. Wells writes Shape of Things to Come.

We watched King Kong and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

We listened to Smoke Gets in Your Eyes and Stormy Weather.

I was born on April 26, 1933.

Muddling Around in the Middle-Class

I have often pondered why I look at things the way I do. While I have argued elsewhere (*Finnie's Family*) that one's ancestry and genetics determine much of what we do and why we do it, there is no doubt that environment also plays a large role. What we learned at an early age from our parents, school, the neighbours and the street life undoubtedly has coloured our view of life and our place in it.

So where did I live? I was born into a middle-class family in a middle-class neighbourhood. Woodlawn Avenue runs both east and west from Yonge Street. The house I was born into was at 49 Woodlawn Avenue West.

Woodlawn Avenue could hardly have been more in the middle. Phyllis Young, in a recently revived novel '*The Torontonians*', noted that in the middle of the 20th century the escarpment known as the Yonge Street Hill was a clear dividing line between the better and less preferred areas of Toronto. One either lived 'above the hill', e.g., Forest Hill, Lawrence Park or one lived 'below the hill' in areas that included some of the older parts of the city, e.g., the Annex.

Woodlawn Avenue is about half way up that hill. Woodlawn was therefore about as 'middle' as one could find in Toronto.

The Toronto Radial streetcars at one time came as far south as Farnham Avenue, the street just north of Woodlawn. The intention was that the regular Toronto Transportation Commission streetcars would turn at Woodlawn and go back down Yonge Street. With

this in mind, the Yonge Street end of Woodlawn Avenue West was quite a bit wider than the rest of the street. On the north side just in from Yonge Street, there was a very large excavation, which I assume was planned at one time for a streetcar barn or related purpose. To my knowledge this was never implemented but this large vacant lot made a wonderful playground for the neighbourhood kids.

On the northwest corner of Woodlawn West and Yonge Street was what at one time had been a bank branch office that had subsequently been converted into a photographer's studio.

Directly across the street on the southwest corner was LePage's Drugstore. A variety of other stores ranged south from that.

The west end of Woodlawn Avenue West stopped at what is now De La Salle College. The College was built on the estate of The Honourable John Macdonald. Woodlawn Avenue connected to a small street that used to be known as Swan Avenue, which ran north beside the De La Salle property and joined up to Farnham. The Swan family owned a large house on the north side when I was young. At the time we lived there, the name Swan Avenue had disappeared and that L-shaped diversion was usually referred to by the residents as Little Woodlawn.

It seems hard to appreciate today, but the Northern City Limit at the turn of the century was just north of Woodlawn between Woodlawn and Farnham abutting a huge property owned by a Dr. T. Armstrong.

To the immediate south of Woodlawn was Walker Avenue and below that Alcorn (formerly known as Wickson) and below that Cottingham. I mention these other streets because while Toronto clearly developed up-market north of Woodlawn, in the 1930's and 40's it certainly had deteriorated in the streets south of us. In fact Cottingham was known as a relatively rough district.



*Laying the tracks on Yonge Street. Note the curved exit at Woodlawn.
Also the drugstore on the corner, later LePage's, August 29, 1916.*

All this has changed. Because of its very central location, Woodlawn and the adjacent streets are now considered highly desired locations. I will describe our old house on Woodlawn, as it is a typical example of what a middle-class house of the time would contain.

I might add that these houses have now been redeveloped into up-market town-houses, many selling in excess of a million dollars.

A House on the Hill

As you would expect from the number, 49 Woodlawn Avenue West was on the south side. Clearly this was the wrong side of the street. Across the street were much larger properties and most were detached homes. As the escarpment continued to rise on the north side, these homes were higher on the hill and commanded a great view of Toronto.

Our semi-detached house, on lot 54, was across the street from a much larger house owned in the 1930's by the Gunn family.

There appears to have been a dwelling on our lot in the period 1890-1903 but the first appearance of the semi-detached homes along the south side shows up only on a map in 1910-23. As noted in the Appendix, our house was built in 1906-07.

Around the turn of the century, there was a large property that ran between Woodlawn and Walker called the Morrison estate. Remnants of this estate were carved into an unusual lot that ran behind our property and several others to the east. There was a large home at the eastern end owned in the 1930's by the Sanders family. It was accessed by a private lane running south beside 37 Woodlawn Avenue West. At the back of this otherwise landlocked property was an old red brick two-storey barn that comes into play in another section of the book.

And now to describe our actual house.

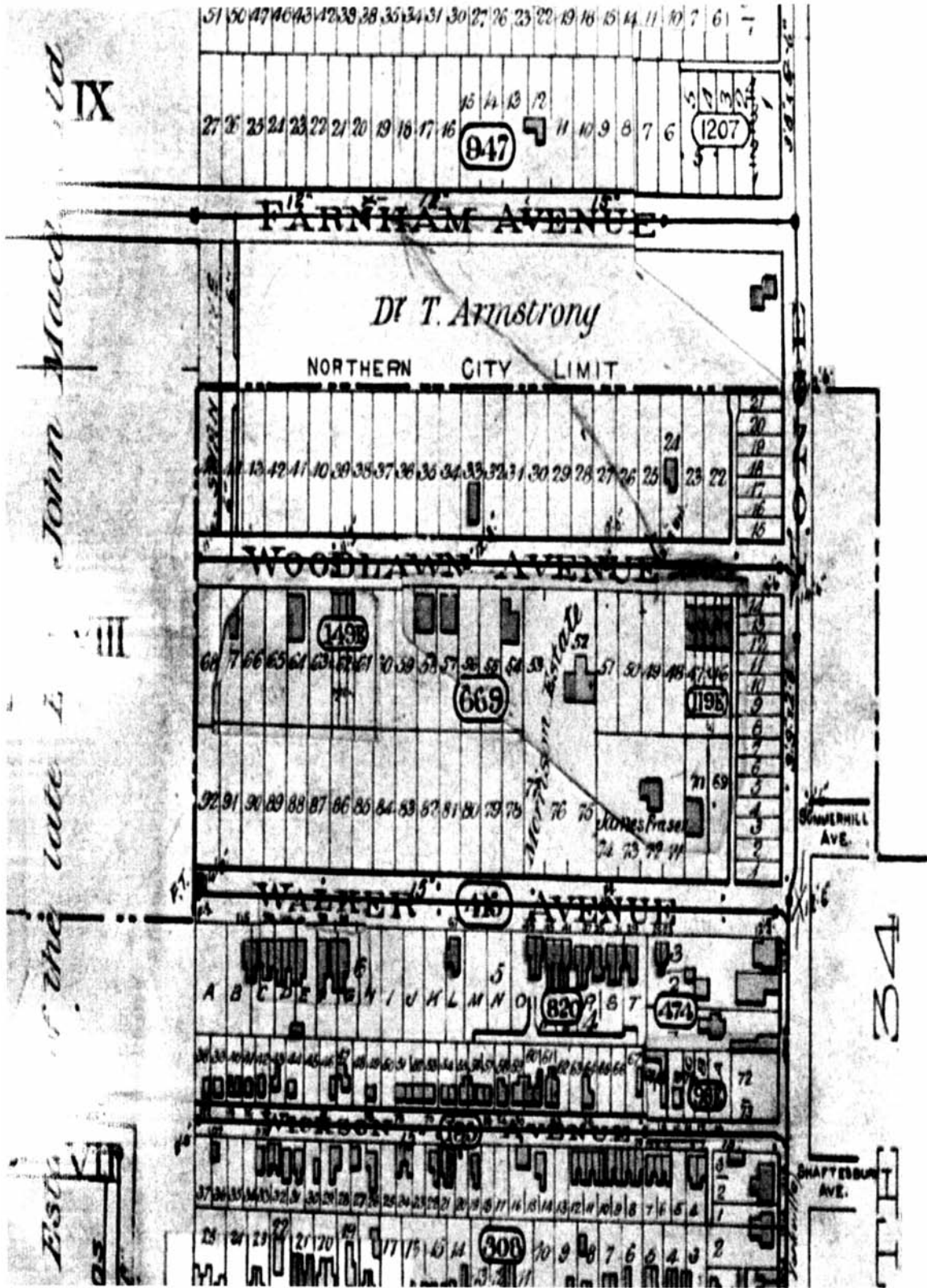
The family history is covered in more detail in *Finnie's Family* but as background I should provide a few family facts.

We were slightly better off than most of our 'south side' neighbours. My father had a stable, middle-management position as manager of Ontario Hydro's Printing, Blue Printing and Photography Department.

My mother was from a well-known Halifax family, a

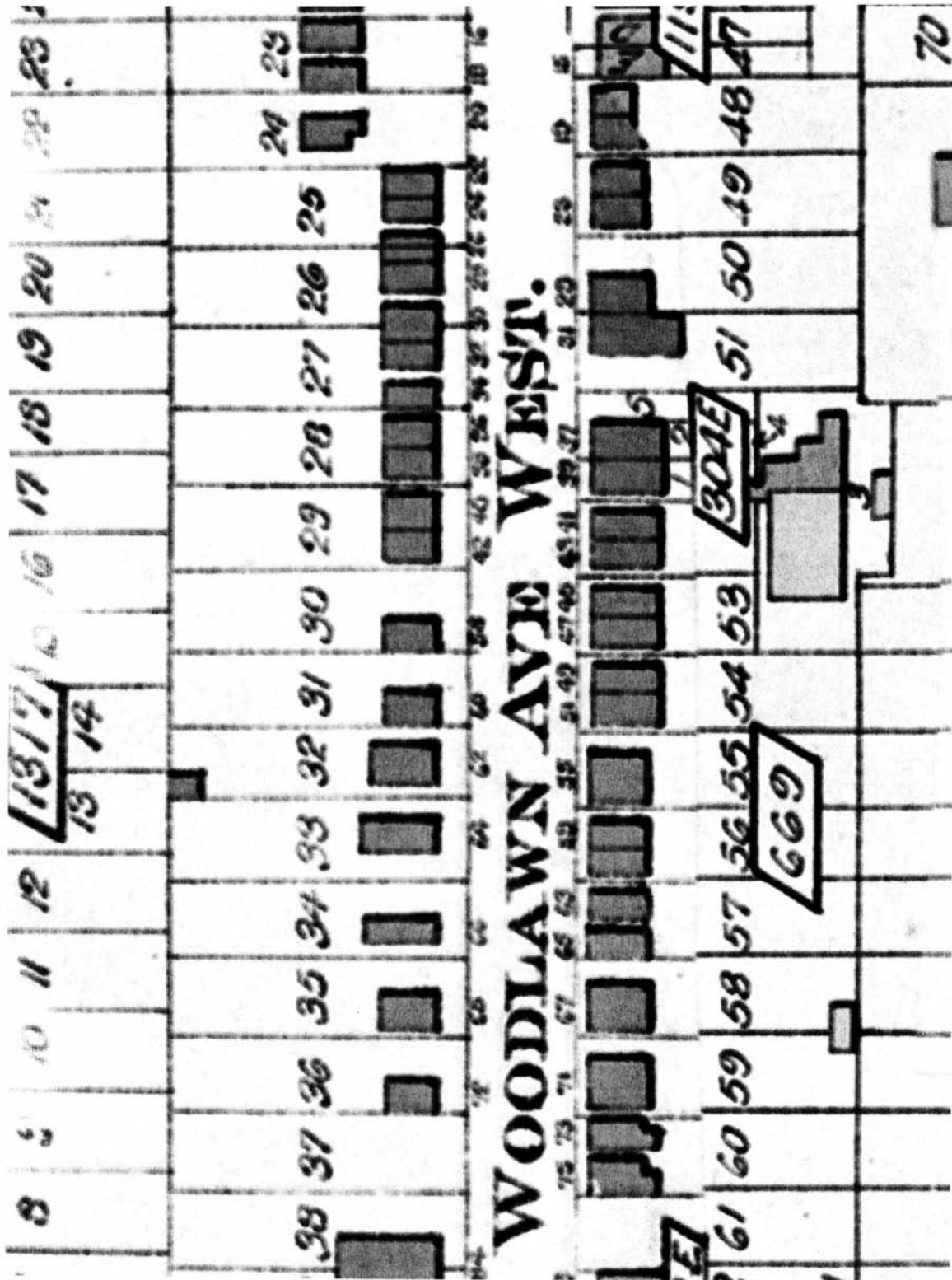


Me in my pram at the east end of Woodlawn, the last time I had a chauffeur! The building in the background is the old bank converted to Ashley & Crippen photographer's studio.



Woodlawn Avenue, 1890-1903.

Note the early structure on Lot 54, later replaced by the semi-detached numbers 49 and 51.



Woodlawn Avenue West in 1912.
Note the single houses on the north side and our half-double on lot 54.

bit aristocratic but one that had fallen on hard times during World War I.

I had two older sisters, Betty who was 16 years older than I and Audrey who was 14 years older. Both were living at home when I was born.

The house had a small front lot and, as was very typical in those days, a rather useless front porch. The front entrance came through a small vestibule. There was a living room on the left facing the front of the house, a dining room at the back of the house, with the kitchen behind the living room and beside the dining room.

To the right of the entrance hall was the staircase to the second floor where there were three bedrooms, a bathroom and a separate toilet room (really a rather sensible idea when you think of it but almost unheard of today).

Leading up from the second floor was another stairway to what had originally been the maid's quarters. There were two reasonable sized bedrooms on the third floor plus some storage space. There were also back stairs going from the second floor to the kitchen, allowing the maid to access the kitchen without going down the main staircase.

Even in the depressed 1930's, we had a maid.

My sister Betty had a tragic life. In 1930, at the age of 12 she contracted encephalitis and this left her mentally incapacitated. Again, as seemed to be the standard in those days, my parents did their best to keep her at home. However, she was subject to fits of bad temper and our maid eventually found this too difficult to cope with and left. I barely remember her. During the latter part of the 1930's, my mother took on all the chores of running the household.

The one other feature that was common to homes in those days was a laundry chute, which went from the second floor to the basement, an area I will now describe.

The house was on a steep hill and had a long wooden stairway going down to an entrance to the garden on the east side. There was a side door and then a door from the basement into the garden. The basement consisted of a large general purpose work room



The front of 49 Woodlawn and me. Note the porch and the storm windows.



My mother with Betty at age 7 months.

where my father had woodworking tools, my mother had her washing facilities and this is where the laundry chute ended up. The other room was the furnace room, which I will describe later.

The final feature of the house was a large balcony outside the dining room and kitchen that did command a fine view of downtown Toronto. The house itself was of red brick construction with a slate roof. It was actually very solidly built. It was, however, solidly attached to number 51 as we shared a common wall to the west.

The reason for this rather detailed description of the actual house is that it now makes it easier to explain what living in a house of that time was like.



*King Cleaners today on Yonge (in the middle) was there in the 1930's.
Where you took your clothes after shoveling the coal and ashes.
The buildings are early 1900's.*

1934

Winston Churchill warns the British Parliament of a growing German air menace.

The USSR is admitted to the League of Nations.

Japan renounces the Washington Treaties of 1922 and 1930 as a first indication of a growing aggressiveness in the Pacific.

1934 is the coldest winter of the 20th century in Toronto.

Heating Things Up

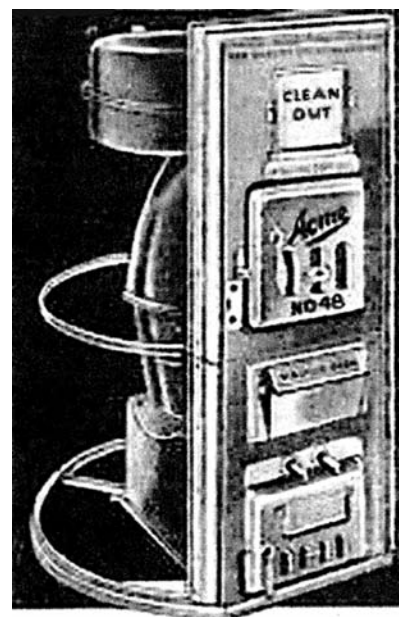
Coping with Toronto winters in the 1930's was not easy. The house on Woodlawn had a coal furnace, as was very typical at the time. There was a fireplace in the living room and in one of the bedrooms on the second floor. The primary heating was from the furnace in the basement through a hot water radiator system. For those of you who remember such 'monsters of the basement' this description will bring chills.

The first challenge was to get the coal delivered. Beside the furnace was a large coal bin that was accessed from an outside window part way down the steps at the east side of the house. The coal was delivered, initially by a horse-drawn wagon from Elias Rogers. A metal chute was inserted in the window and the coal delivery man brought the coal, bag by bag, to the chute and dumped it in the basement.

As one can imagine, the coal dust was everywhere and sweeping up the mess was part of the routine.

The furnace itself was not much improvement over the pot-belly stove developed by Benjamin Franklin. It had a grate in the middle that was segmented and the segments could be tilted back and forward by a lever at the side. This allowed one to shake the ashes down into the lower compartment from which they could be shovelled into buckets.

The trick was to keep the fire going. It was started by paper, some kindling (which was also stacked in the basement) and a match. Once this got going, the coal was gradually shovelled on top until it caught. In the evening one 'banked' the fire by filling it up as best one could and then hoping it would last until morning. This usually meant getting up fairly early to refill the furnace.



A coal furnace without its sides and back. Note the water heating element at the top, the grate in the middle and the ash removal door at the bottom. Eaton's Winter Catalogue 1934-5.

Periodically, to allow the air to circulate through the coal, one had to gently shake the grates with the lever. If one got over-aggressive, all of the coals would fall into the bottom part and you had to start all over again. Shovelling out the ashes was another chore. There was a separate ash collection that took place. The buckets of ashes were put outside at the top of the stairway and they were collected from there by the city (except for the few that we kept to sprinkle on the sidewalk). There was no garage at our house and hence no need to keep any ashes for that purpose.

We had an ash sifter – a galvanized metal semi-cylindrical container with a screen across the top. The ashes were sifted through the screen as the sifter was rocked back and forth. This retrieved any still useable pieces of coal.

It got worse. Above the grate in the furnace was the area where the water was heated, and this circulated simply by rising through pipes to very ugly and space inefficient radiators in each of the rooms. Periodically the radiators would fill with hot air and had to be ‘bled’ through a small tap at the top. This was a job that I actually found somewhat fun and hence had this assigned to me as part of my chores.

Air conditioning was simple – one just opened the window and hoped the screens would keep out most of the bugs.

Double glazing was unknown at the time and therefore each Spring and Fall one had to take down or put up storm windows. These were replaced in the Spring by screens.

I doubt if we appreciate how simple life is with modern HVAC systems.



An ash sifter.

1935

S.S. Normandie takes the Blue Riband by crossing the Atlantic in 107 hours and 33 minutes.

The Bank of Canada is established.

Two years after Prohibition was abolished, Alcoholics Anonymous is organized in New York.

Roosevelt signs the U.S. Social Security Act.

Mussolini invades Abyssinia.

The Luftwaffe is formed.

What's Cooking?

While no doubt wonderful meals were being served on the *Normandie*, in the kitchen at Woodlawn, we got by with somewhat simpler fare.

My mother was a good cook, considering the rather primitive instruments at her disposal. Before describing those, it is worth a look at where we got the ingredients. As I mentioned, south of Woodlawn on Yonge Street was a string of stores. Not uncommonly, there was Duguid's Meat Market, a Greengrocer and even a small Loblaws store. The latter was literally just a small store front and one tended to shop there only for canned or bottled goods.

Ice cream normally came from LePage's Drugstore. The area was replete with King Cleaners and other specialty shops.

All this meant that shopping was a daily chore, as refrigeration was extremely limited.

Canned goods were common but frozen foods were unheard of. Meal planning therefore tended to be on a day by day basis and if you wanted ice cream for dinner, this meant a separate trip to the drugstore just before dinner.

The shortage of fresh fruit and vegetables over the winter meant that preserving was the normal thing to do. My mother put up all manner of preserved fruits such as peaches. We even created our own grape juice by squeezing the grapes in cheese cloth, hanging it from a tripod and letting it drain into a pot underneath. Welch's grape juice in glass bottles had yet to make an appearance.

Some items that are still available but appear to be rarely used, such as Heinz canned spaghetti were good luncheon fare. Modern conveniences such as pre-packaged cake mixes had not yet surfaced. Making a cake was always 'from scratch'.

Most households had a flour sifter, which looked like a piece of stove pipe with a handle on one side and a rotator in the middle that pushed the bulk flour against a screen that then separated the flour into a usable batch for mixing.



12H-420.
Tin Flour
Sifter.. 15c

There were clearly advantages to this approach to cake creation for a three-year-old, as I was allowed to 'lick the bowl' for both the cake mix and the icing.

Ground meat was not usually sold, again because of refrigeration problems. One tended to buy pieces of meat and then grind these in a hand-rotated heavy metal meat grinder that was fastened on the end of the kitchen table when needed.



The kitchen table was typically covered with porcelain (which tended to chip but was easy to clean).

The stove was of course gas. It had a pilot light that was supposed to stay on all the time but went out periodically (fortunately with an automatic cut-off of the gas when this happened). A large box of Eddy's matches were always close at hand.

The gas oven actually produced some wonderful roasts. To this day I still recall that roasts seemed to taste better than those from an electric oven.

Speaking of roasts, when one got one's meat from a butcher, it was far easier to get the cuts that you wanted. One of my father's favourites was what he referred to as a Standing Porterhouse. This was simply a long Porterhouse steak and one carved the meat toward the bone with what was actually the New York strip on top and the filet underneath. When cooked like this on the bone, it produced some of the best roasts I have ever tasted.

Now back to refrigeration. During a good part of the 1930's, this was an icebox. For those not familiar with this contraption, it looked something like a current refrigerator but the top section (rather than being a freezer, which was unheard of) was where a large block of ice was placed. Below that was the area for storing milk or other perishables for at least a short time but the temperature was never very cold. As the ice melted, it drained from the pan on which the ice rested into a pan at the bottom, which then had to be periodically emptied (or it flowed all over the floor).



An Icebox. The ice went in the top, the perishables in the middle and the drip pan was at the bottom. Ours was porcelain, not oak!

Ice for drinks was simply chipped off the block as required (leading to the expression ‘chip off the old block’).

Ice was delivered regularly by Lake Simcoe Ice and Fuel. Jimmy the iceman was greatly admired by the local kids as he seemed immensely strong. He handled large blocks of ice by hoisting them up on his shoulder, which was covered by a leather apron. As the ice obviously did not last long, this happened about every second day or so.

By the late 30’s, our icebox had been exchanged for one of the early electric refrigerators made, in our case, by Frigidaire. This had a huge circular motor on top and was certainly an improvement over the icebox. However, it still did not have anything equivalent to a freezer.

I mentioned ice cream. As you may know, the ice cream brick was invented by a Canadian. It came in relatively limited flavours – the most popular being Neapolitan, with layers of chocolate, vanilla and strawberry. LePage’s Drugstore did have the equivalent



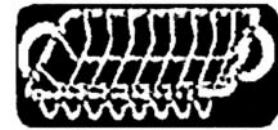
*LePage’s Drug Store is now an animal hospital.
The building has been refaced.*

of a modern freezer and the bricks were as hard as a brick when they arrived, but of course melted very quickly.

Without getting too far ahead of the story, I should point out that old Mr. LePage used to cheat the neighbourhood youngsters when they went in for an ice cream cone. He had a scoop that he handled with dexterity, scraping it along the top of the container of ice cream so that it just pulled off a thin layer that was largely hollow in the middle. Fortunately his days of outwitting the kids was numbered, as this method of selling ice cream cones was replaced by Mello Rolls. These were cylinders of rock hard ice cream that were placed in special cones. At least we got our money's worth!

While still on the subject of frozen things, birthday parties in those days required ice cream. The best place to get such fancy fare was at Walter or George Cole's. These were two brothers who eventually split but both were in the upscale pastry, ice cream and catering business (until both went out of business because their up-market customers rarely paid their bills on time, if at all). I remember my father getting a frozen ice cream bombe that he had neglected to take out of the icebox early enough. It was hard as could be and he ended up trying to divide it up with an axe, much to the amusement of my fellow birthday celebrants.

I have described everything but the kitchen sink. This is a feature that should not be neglected. The normal arrangement was to have two separate faucets with a soap dish suspended between the two. The soap dish contained the ubiquitous Sunlight Soap.



A soap dish with springs to attach it to the two taps.

The sink was where the dishes were done. They were left to drain in a dish rack with someone (occasionally me) drying them. A dishwasher was well in the future and cleaning up after dinner was a fairly major chore.

Cleaning up after anything was accomplished with Bon Ami. Speaking of cleaning, we were somewhat more advanced in our clothes washing. In the basement we had an Easy Washing Machine. This was essentially a large tub on wheels that was powered by electricity. It had a rotator in the tub but also an electrically operated wringer at the top of the machine. The water was kept from splashing out of the tub by a galvanized lid.

It was reasonably easy to get your fingers caught when running clothes through the wringer and it did have a lever that one could hit to stop the wringer before your fingers were totally flattened. Again, dryers



The electric clothes washer.

were a thing of the future. The clothes were hung outside (a concept coming back into fashion I gather). In the winter this was not user friendly. The clothes would regularly freeze on the line and could literally break if you were not careful. This often meant that the clothes were hung up in the basement, where they mingled with the coal dust.

The 1930's saw the introduction of soaps made especially for clothes washing, e.g., you could get your clothes *Rinso White* or later treat them to *Tide's In, Dirt's Out*.

While on the subject of sinks, I might mention that there was a fairly limited array of toothpastes available. Ipana was a popular choice with Pepsodent being a good choice for the powder (*"You'll wonder where the yellow went when you brush your teeth with Pepsodent"*). This slogan got replaced by the neighbourhood kids with *"You'll wonder where the yellow went when you brush your teeth with wet cement"*.

70D-848. A better way to buy soap, for the whole family—each bar is almost 1 lb. weight. Just slice as needed. A mild Castilian. 2 Bars 29c

Imported French Castile Soaps
Two Sizes
70D-850. Imported EATON French Castile Soap, for the best use of the lathering.
Small size cake, 6 for 25c
Large size cake, 3 for 25c

70D-849. Green Soap, for the Infant's Delight. Unscented and perfumed. 6 for 25c

70D-850. Lux Soap. Mild lather, most easily perfumed. 4 for 25c

70D-851. The Soft-Action Palmolive Soap, a SCISSOR CUT for complete safety. 5 Cakes for 29c

Household Cleaners
(Not unscented)
70D-851. Original Flu 23c
70D-852. Bleach. Powder 6 Tablets for 25c
70D-853. Bleach. Powder 2 lbs. 27c
70D-854. Bleach. Powder 2 lbs. 27c
70D-855. Bleach. Powder 2 lbs. 27c

70D-856. Fine Quality Imported EATON French Castile Soap. Large size cake. 3 for 25c

LUX
70D-856. Lux Flower. 10c
70D-857. Lux. 25c

Old Dutch Cleanser
70D-857. Old Dutch Cleanser for sinks, tubs, or bowls without scrubbing. 27c

70D-858. Semi-Flush. 27c

SOAP CHIPS
70D-859. Soap Chips. 39c

Cleaning products. Not much has changed.

"You'll wonder where the yellow went when you brush your teeth with wet cement"

Another toothpaste advertised by Bob Hope on the radio was Iridium. Its motto was *"You too can have a radioactive smile"*. Needless to say this slogan did not last past 1945!

As ice cream was difficult to handle, Jell-O became a common dessert treat. Their radio ads, with the letters J-E-L-L-O sung with a rising cadence, enticed everyone to try this dessert. You rarely hear it now.

Electric toasters were reasonably common but the pop-up toaster had yet to appear. The pieces of toast were placed on a fold-down section on either side of the element. Rather cleverly, you folded the trays on either side up to put the bread close to the element and this toasted one side. When you lowered the tray, the bread slid across the tray actually turning itself over and then the trays would be raised to expose the other side. As this was entirely manual, the toast quite regularly became charcoal.

80H-401. Turn-over Electric Toaster. Fast toasting. Chrome-plated. Complete with cord. Price... 1.75

Popular Style 80H-402. Turnover Electric Toaster in coffee-buff finish. Non-stained. Built, cord attached. Price... 2.45

Electric Toasters (or toast burners if one was not watchful).

Eating at the kitchen table was unheard of. We took all our meals in the dining room. As a remnant of the old days when we had a maid, there was actually a dinner gong that you could gently ring to indicate to her that it was time for the next course. The gong was fun to play with but by that time this was its only use.

I could go on, but by now you have the idea that we ate quite well even without the modern conveniences that were to arrive immediately after World War II.

I had implied that the only way to get food in those days was to shop for it yourself. This was, however, not entirely the case.

Bread and milk were delivered daily to your door. As was the case with ice and coal, this was by horse-drawn wagon.

Our usual bread delivery was by Brown's Bread. The bread man normally rang the doorbell and my mother (accompanied by me in my preschool days) would go out to the bread wagon and select not just bread but cakes, pies and such delectables as butter tarts.

Milk was handled in a slightly different way. Each home had a milk box and ours was down the now well-known steps at the east end of the house. It was common to buy milk tickets, which would be placed beside or even in the top of the empty bottles being picked up. This would indicate what we wanted that day, e.g., so much milk, cream or whipping cream.

Needless to say, in the winter the bottles regularly froze and the frozen milk would expand to push the cardboard lids up in the air.



Milk delivery by horse and by truck. Toronto Archives.

We used Silverwoods Dairy and they developed an ingenious bottle with a narrow neck and a somewhat ballooned smaller top. As the milk was not usually homogenized in those days, the cream would rise to the top. It therefore accumulated in the bulge at the top of the bottle and Silverwoods provided a cleverly designed spoon that would block off the narrow neck, allowing you to pour off the cream. The cream was quite suitable for whipping – nary a concern for cholesterol in those days.



*Silverwood's
Cream Top
Bottle.*

In fact, you could get just about everything you wanted delivered to your home. Eaton's and Simpson's each had horse-drawn home delivery wagons. You could order from the catalogue and have the items delivered. They would also deliver groceries if needed.

The neighbourhood children got to know the bread and milk drivers and their horses. These were magnificent large animals and we used to know their names and were allowed to pat them. The drivers did not mind us feeding them sugar cubes or other items.



*Bread Delivery Wagon. This was taken at
Bloor and Avenue Road, March 23, 1934.*



*The Cleanup!
November 13, 1931.*

It was fun watching the horses eat, which they did with a feedbag. This was placed over their heads although not over their eyes and allowed them to get a snack of oats during the delivery rounds. The horses got to know the route extremely well, although the drivers did have a large hemispherical anchor that they could put out to keep the horse from wandering off, which it rarely did.

The downside to all of this was of course cleanup, and regularly the city sent out clean-up crews to shovel up whatever the horses left behind 'their behinds'. Astute gardeners discovered that this was excellent fertilizer and often beat the city to the collection.

The extent of the use of horses in the early 30's meant that there had to be horse troughs at regular intervals around the city. These have almost entirely disappeared, although there is still one on King Street just across from St. Lawrence Hall. Some of these actually had a drinking fountain for people on one side, with the horse trough on the other.

The street was a busy place. In addition to all of the deliveries, the street scene was filled with knife grinders who walked about the district with a foot-pedal operated grinding machine on their backs and a bell to indicate that they were coming. The housewives (most of whom were just that and not working) would take knives out to the street to have them sharpened.

In addition to garbage collection, during which the garbage collectors would actually come to the side of your house to pick up the bins, there were people who drove carts around the district shouting "rags and bones, rags and bones". They would pick up almost any items people did not want and presumably made their living by reselling these.

The street was truly our home as well as our play place. In those days you really got to know your neighbours as people walked everywhere, to and from stores, schools, churches or to catch a streetcar.

Districts were truly districts in those days.

I remember reading a book by Ray Huang entitled *1587, A Year of No Significance*. It was actually a story of the final years of the Ming Dynasty. He noted in the preface "In 1587, the Year of the Pig, nothing very special happened in China". I always admired his honesty.

1936 was just the opposite.



A horse trough (well, also a people drinking fountain). Still across from St. Lawrence Hall on King Street.

1936

King George V dies and Edward VIII takes the throne.

German troops occupy the Rhineland and Hitler gets 99% of the votes in the German elections.

The Spanish Civil War begins.

Chiang Kai-shek declares war on Japan.

Mussolini and Hitler proclaim the Rome-Berlin Axis.

Edward VIII abdicates and is succeeded by his brother George VI.

*J.M. Keynes publishes *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*.*

Jesse Owens wins four gold medals at the Berlin Olympics.

This glory was somewhat offset by Max Schmeling defeating Joe Louis.

*The newly launched *Queen Mary* takes the Blue Riband, with a crossing of the Atlantic in 96 hours.*

*Charlie Chaplin stars in *Modern Times*.*

The Kids on the Block

War was starting to appear inevitable in these latter years of what the historian E.H. Carr referred to as the “20 Years Crisis”. However, to we preschoolers on Woodlawn Avenue, all of this seemed to make very little difference.

As might be expected, the middle-class nature of Woodlawn meant that the other boys on the block came from widely differing backgrounds.

A couple of houses down from us was a Catholic family named Carpenter, who had adopted a boy a year or so older than I. His name was Ted Martin. I gather they raised him very strictly, with regular beatings for minor infractions. Perhaps because I accepted him as just ‘one of the boys’, he took on something of the role of my protector in the occasional skirmishes with some of the tougher elements from a couple of streets to our south. I predicted that he would have a rather difficult life and this turned out to be true. The last thing I heard of Ted was a newspaper report many years later that as a truck driver, he had run over and killed a young girl. Apparently he was absolved of all blame but he was just one of those who seemed destined to have a difficult life.

A couple of houses farther down the street lived John Collingwood Reade. He was to become one of the most famous news broadcasters during the Second World War. He lived at 43 Woodlawn with his wife Gay, who became a great friend of my mother. They had a son, Clive and two daughters, Nancy and Josephine. Nancy was a bit older than I but we became great friends and remained so until the mid 50's.



*John Collingwood
Reade.
Broadcast
Commentator
1904 - 1963.*

In another of the houses in that area were Paul and Peter Tacon. The father taught art at UTS. Paul, the elder brother and I were about the same age and went through UTS together.

Dick Hopper, Gary Cooper and a number of others made up the rest of the Woodlawn gang. One anomaly was Peter Kaye, who lived on the north side of the street closer to De La Salle. Peter and his parents lived in the Loft in what at one time was likely a coach house of a larger property. His parents were actors and their living area was cluttered with jewelled theatrical swords and the like. Peter had a softer side to him and had a bit of trouble fitting in with the somewhat rougher gang down the street.

Probably because we were slightly better off than many of our immediate neighbours, I seemed to be accepted as the leader of the group. This likely had less to do with me than it did the fact that I had better toys.



By 1937, a City of Toronto wagon had real rubber tires.

1937

Roosevelt signs the U.S. Neutrality Act aimed at keeping the United States out of yet another European Conflict.

Neville Chamberlain becomes Prime Minister of Britain.

The Japanese seize Peking (Beijing), Shanghai and Nanking (Nanjing).

Chiang Kai-shek forms an alliance with Mao Tse-tung.

The U.S. stock market sinks into a serious decline.

Lord Halifax visits Hitler and the Policy of Appeasement begins.

Italy withdraws from the League of Nations.

Amelia Earhart is lost on a Trans-Pacific flight.

The Duke of Windsor marries Wallis Simpson.

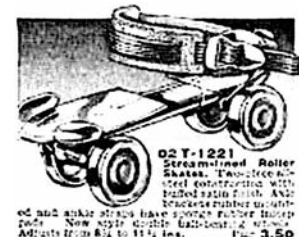
We were watching Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs and Elephant Boy with Sabu.

Boy's Toys

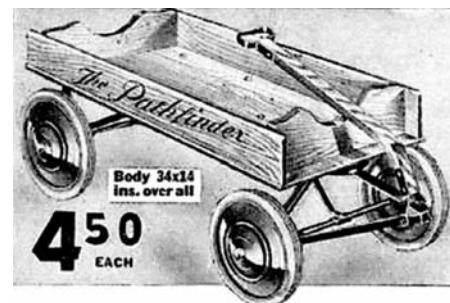
While the politicians were playing out their macro games, the Woodlawn boys made do with lesser entertainment.

To gain mobility, most of us had roller skates. These were not as sophisticated as the current in-line skates, as there was no easy way of stopping yourself. I was lucky enough to have a quite sophisticated pair with ball bearing wheels. These skates attached to your shoes and the clamps were tightened with a key. The downside to having a good pair of roller skates was the hill that ran from west to east on Woodlawn. It was quite steep and once you started down, you were lucky not to end up on Yonge Street.

The other means of locomotion was your wagon. The wagons of the district varied from almost hand-made jobs to my quite sophisticated version made of varnished wood with red wheels. A wagon was propelled by kneeling on the wagon, usually with your right leg, and pumping on the ground with your left.



Roller Skates were in.



Your wagon was the summertime way of getting around.

After a while, one could gain quite a good rate of speed, and races down the Woodlawn hill were regular events. It should be remembered that there were very few cars in those days.

In winter it was sleighs and toboggans. I found the toboggans much more effective, as sleighs with metal runners required almost perfect snow conditions before they would make much headway. Lying facedown on a sleigh while tearing down a hill was a reasonably good way of getting a few knocks on the head but that seemed to be just part of the fun.

Bicycles of course came later.

We also depended on homemade toys. One of the favourite games was called Knockers. In the Fall when the chestnuts were ripe, one could drill a hole through the chestnut and tie a string to it. Then the aim was to swing this at your opponent's chestnut and try to knock it off their string – this was lethal to the chestnut!

Sometimes our parents made toys for us. My father fashioned a beautiful slingshot for me and equipped it with a strong rubber band. This lasted only until old Mrs. Ross, who lived next door, apparently complained to the police that I was harassing the neighbourhood with a lethal weapon. They confiscated it and I became something of a local hero for being the first on the block to have a run-in with the cops.

I also remembered that my father carved a small wooden boat for me and equipped it with a toothpick mast. This was used in the Spring to float down the gutters. In those days we ignored the fact that there were other things floating in the gutters, including the aforementioned horse manure, but sanitation did not seem to be a big factor at that time. The boat lasted until I got a little aggressive and it disappeared down a sewer.

We also played with marbles. This was a game that persisted until our early school days. It turned out to be one of the best training grounds for future entrepreneurship. The game was usually played by having one



*Sleighs were great
on the Woodlawn hill.*



Note the lack of handlebar brakes as bikes at that time had coaster brakes and no gears.



Marbles was a game of real skill.

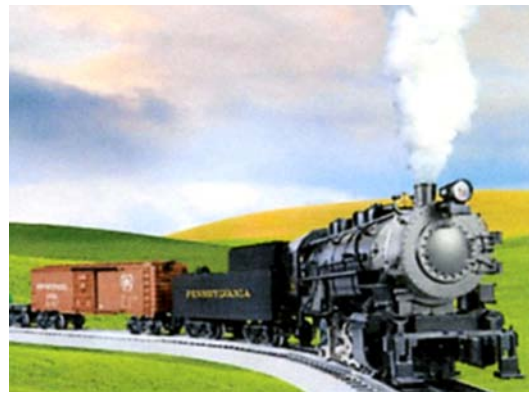
party set up one or more marbles at an agreed to distance from the shooter. For example, if the target consisted of two or three marbles and you hit one of them with your marble, you won the three. Sometimes there was even a bonus of another couple of marbles, depending on the distance you were shooting. Occasionally just one marble would be used, which was obviously much harder to hit. This usually brought an award of ten marbles. The person setting up the target kept all the marbles that missed and usually ended up ahead of the game. There were also some beautiful big marbles called Boulders. These were much larger and were therefore invariably set up as targets on their own.



Boulders

This was a great game for learning to set up a small business, take risks and hopefully earn a profit – not bad for four- or five-year olds. Of course, if not successful, you would ‘lose all your marbles’.

At one point my father bought me a Lionel Electric Train. It had about five cars including the Coal Tender and a Caboose. The train ran on an oval track with fairly sharp turns. It was controlled by a transformer with a rheostat on top to regulate the speed. Needless to say one could create some horrendous crashes by speeding the train up as it approached the curve. I had mentioned the Sanders family who owned the lot behind a number of houses on the south side of Woodlawn. They had a large house and at one time one of the older Sanders boys invited our ragtag group in to look at their train set. It filled an entire basement room and was a magnificent collection of trains complete with artificial mountains, houses and other additions. We came away somewhat in awe.



Lionel was the big name in model trains.

We had the usual assortment of toy trucks and planes. I was particularly impressed with Dinky Toys. These were remarkable replicas with real rubber tires and extraordinary detail. Although air travel was hardly common at the time, I do remember having a Dinky Toy model of the famous Pan-Am Clipper, a huge flying boat designed for early trips across the water. Without getting too far ahead of the story, Dinky Toys (during the war) brought out remarkable replicas of tanks, anti-aircraft guns and other war-like equipment, which I collected avidly and of which I have no idea where they went.



Dinky Toys.

As I move into my school years, I will describe a few other pastimes but there was one that made its appearance even at this early age.

Boys Will Be Boys

It was about this time that we discovered there were other things to play with besides toys. While this is a topic not usually discussed in polite society, we were experimenting with our own bodies.

At first this involved 'playing doctor' or similar pursuits, but gradually evolved into reasonably imaginative sex games. Needless to say the old barn at the end of the Sanders' property proved to be a wonderful location for these activities.

It was all part of growing up and in the absence of Playboy, Penthouse or any other educational techniques, the 'under the back fence' learning experience was all we had.

We did not have a lot of contact with girls in the district and they rarely participated. This was partly because at that age we found them rather uninteresting compared to boys. Fortunately this was an attitude that was to change radically in a few years.

We assumed that our parents knew nothing about what was going on although I rather doubt this. In any case it was definitely more fun than playing with toy cars!

Junk Food and Other Nourishment

Junk food is nothing new but without the benefit of McDonald's or KFC, we had to make do with penny candies of various kinds. There was a small confectionary store just north of Woodlawn on Yonge Street, which sold an exciting array of candy that was guaranteed to have no food value whatsoever.

There were the ubiquitous licorice whips that came in both black and red, both making a mess of your fingers. There were also licorice pipes with red sprinkles on the bowl of the pipe to simulate the burning tobacco.

There was an endless variety of hard candies, including the Jawbreakers, which had to be sucked for a long time to get at the seed that for some reason was put in the middle of them.

If we were really flush (which was rare), we could buy hard candy sticks usually with twisted colours and coming in every conceivable flavour. These were kept in the store in large glass jars as can still be seen in some retrospective candy shops.

There was even a concoction called a Sherbet. This was a dry fruit-flavoured powder that came in a small packet together with a straw. You sucked the powder into your mouth and it dissolved into a rather sharp tasting fruit flavour. It was really a miserable concoction but it appealed because it was so different.

There was a wide variety of chocolate bars but these were relatively expensive for five-year-olds. They included some that are still available such as Sweet Marie, O'Henry, Neilson's Burnt Almond (a favourite of mine) and some non-chocolate concoctions such as Mackintosh Toffee in a plaid package.



Chocolate Bars

On hot summer days there were popsicles in any variety of fruit flavours and a new take on the ice cream cone, which was the Creamsicle. This had a chocolate or fruit covering over ice cream and was on a stick. A version without the stick was the Eskimo Bar.

There were a number of suckers, some round like a ball and others in various shapes. About this time, someone concluded that it was dangerous for little kids to be running around with sticks in their mouths and so the wooden sticks were replaced with cardboard.

The range of drinks was far more limited than it is today, but it included some of the standard favourites such as Coca Cola, Canada Dry Ginger Ale and Orange Crush. There were some relatively non-carbonated drinks, such as Sunkist Orange, which had the advantage of not bubbling up your nose if you drank too quickly.

Finally we chewed. Or more correctly we blew bubbles. Stick chewing gum had been around for quite some time, e.g., Wrigley's flat sticks of gum and Adams Chiclets were just coming on the market. The latter had the advantage of a better flavour but were clearly inferior from a chewing quality standpoint.

In 1928 a Walter Diemer, who worked for Fleer Chewing Gum Company in Philadelphia, was spending his spare time playing around with new gum recipes. One of his batches was less sticky than regular chewing gum and it stretched more easily. Bubble gum was born. In that first year, it was so successful it sold over a million and a half dollars worth.



Dubble Bubble Gum

It was important to differentiate bubble gum from regular gum and apparently the only food colouring that Fleer had in its factory was pink. Walter used it and bubble gum remains pink today.

Of course the real attraction to bubble gum was not the gum itself but the bubble gum cards. Bubble gum was normally sold in flat packages about three inches by two inches and each would contain a card that one could collect. These covered everything from baseball players to airplanes and current events. The cards were aggressively traded on Woodlawn and elsewhere.

Apropos of nothing in particular, if you are ever curious as to why there are no chocolate-flavoured chewing gums, this in fact is not possible. The cocoa butter in

chocolate acts as an emulsifier on the chewing gum base making it extremely soft and ineffective for chewing.

The Clothes on our Back

Jeans were unheard of. In the middle to late 30's, we wore shorts in the summer but breeches in the winter. These bagged out at the sides and for walking in the snow were often tucked into rubber boots.

We wore leather caps with flaps, as the winters in those days were quite vicious. It was not uncommon for our outdoor jackets to have leather patches on the elbows.

The appearance was somewhat modelled on an early comic book character called Smilin' Jack, who flew in open cockpit biplanes with a scarf streaming out behind. He was one of our early heroes, but comic books are another whole topic and to access these, we first had to learn to read – a future skill.



My father with me in my breeches, boots and a flap helmet.



Brown School

1938

Japan withdraws from the League of Nations.

Germany mobilizes and demands annexation of the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia.

The Munich Conference takes place in September after Germany unilaterally occupies the Sudetenland.

Chamberlain declares 'Peace in our Time'. Churchill leads the outcry against this Appeasement Policy. Anthony Eden, the Foreign Minister, resigns.

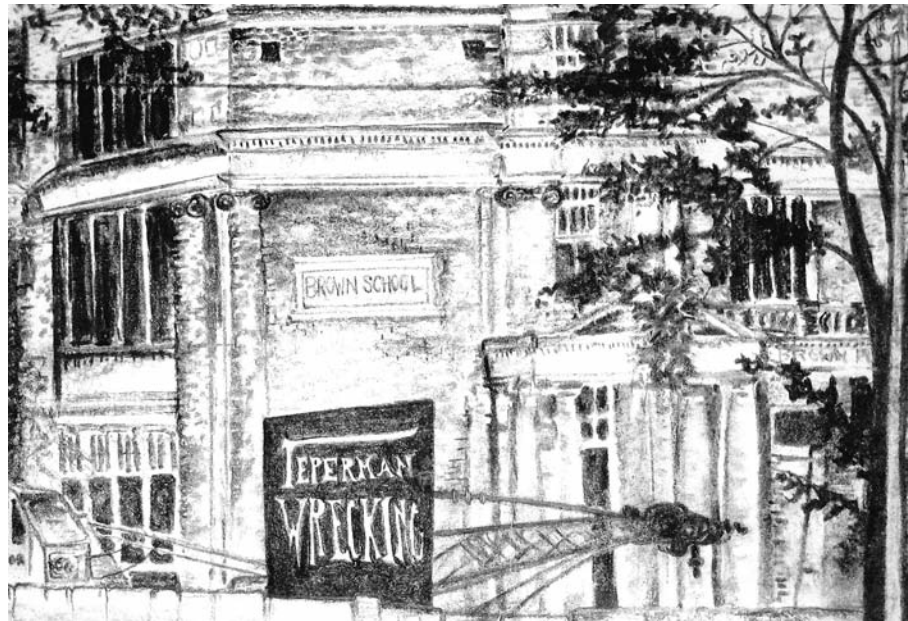
Roosevelt recalls the U.S. Ambassador from Germany.

In September, George goes to Kindergarten.

School Days, School Days

Brown Public School was (and still is) on the west side of Avenue Road just south of St. Clair. The original building was built in 1917 and was a magnificent structure with Doric columns in front. The building was set well back from Avenue Road and had a large schoolyard. It was torn down in 1972 and replaced by a nondescript yellow brick complex of no architectural merit whatsoever. When I attended in 1938, it taught K-8 (it is now a Junior Public School going only to grade six).

Because of its location, it was the primary school for both Forest Hill and the area immediately north of St. Clair, as well as some of the streets as far south as Woodlawn. The result was a wonderfully eclectic mix of students. A number of my Woodlawn friends attended Catholic schools and therefore I was somewhat on my own at Brown.



Brown School being torn down in 1972.

Note the Doric columns supporting one of the two front entrances (girls' and boys') and the faux Ionic columns above.

As was typical in those days, Kindergarten was only a half-day class and you attended either mornings or afternoons. The Kindergarten at Brown was a large room on the ground floor that even had stained glass windows.

The teacher was Mrs. Boyd, who I remember as a kind and compassionate teacher.

Mind you there is very little that I really remember of Kindergarten other than making miles of paper chains glued together with flour paste. I probably did something else constructive but for the life of me cannot remember what it was. I suppose that Kindergarten was really just to get young people used to the idea of regimented schooling and to assist in socializing them.

Despite the fact that it was quite a walk from Woodlawn to the school, that is what we did, rain or shine. School buses in the city were unheard of.

The school system went out of its way to train its young pupils in road safety. There were Elmer the Safety Elephant banners that were flown if the school was accident-free for a period. I remember demonstrations of how to cross the street safely that were assisted by Kneehigh, a well-trained little wire-haired terrier who would put on demonstrations of guiding a volunteer student across the street when it was safe to cross.

One of the early highlights of my years at Brown was the Annual Garden Fête, which normally took place on a Saturday close to Victoria Day. It was well attended by both parents and children and is still held to this day. My favourite diversion was the Fish Pond where you had a small magnet attached to a fishing pole line and a moving stream of water carried small artificial fish with a magnet attached. You were guaranteed to win a prize and this seemed very egalitarian.



Brown School today – yuk!



The Brown School Garden Fête, May 24, 2008.

1939

The Spanish Civil War ends. Britain, France and the U.S. recognize Franco's new regime, thereby legitimatizing a new dictatorship.

Japan continues its invasion of China occupying Hainan.

Britain and Poland sign a Treaty of Mutual Assistance.

Germany, doubting that Britain would actually live up to this treaty, invades Poland on September 1st. Britain and France declare war on September 3rd. The U.S. remains neutral.

The USSR and Germany sign the Brest-Litovsk Treaty making them temporary allies while partitioning Eastern Europe.

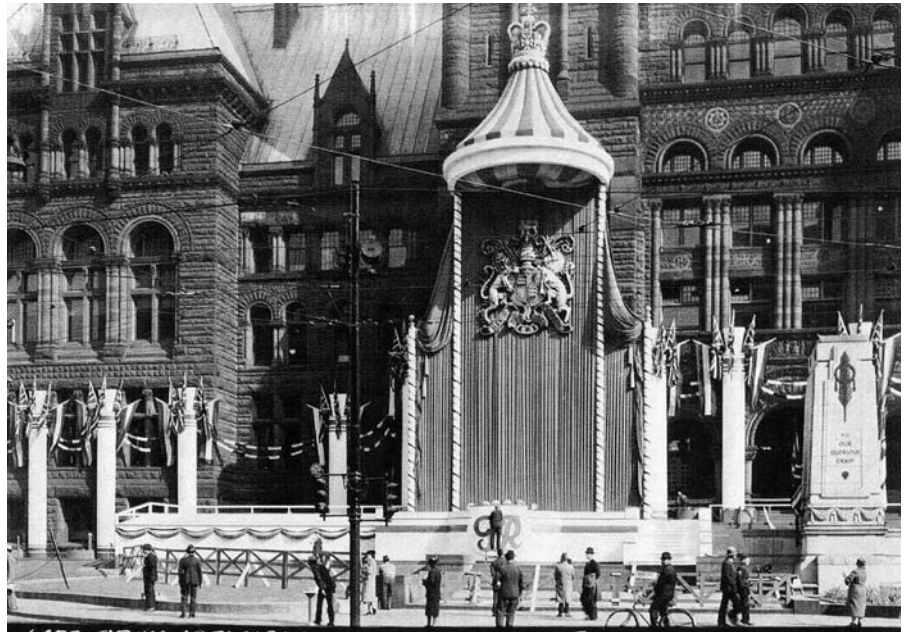
Ernest Lawrence wins the Nobel Prize for the development of the Cyclotron, the first workable atom smasher foreshadowing events on the atomic scene.

*We watched *Gone With the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz*.*

Royalty Arrives, An Era Ends

In May, King George and Queen Elizabeth visited North America to a huge welcome everywhere. With war by then being almost certain, patriotic fervour was at its height. At 49 Woodlawn Avenue, we nailed up a large cardboard shield with pictures of the King and Queen and two British flags sticking out the top. It was not that we expected the King and Queen to cruise our street but it just seemed like the right thing to do. Everyone else was doing the same thing and the city was alive with flags and bunting.

Our only chance to actually see royalty was when they were leaving Toronto and many of us flocked to the Summerville train station.



The Arch in front of City Hall welcoming the King and Queen.

Their Majesties graciously stood at the back of the train and waved to the crowd. We responded by waving back with small British flags. As the train receded into the distance we did not really realize that the British Empire was receding with it. Britain's proudest moments were still ahead of it but the Empire was doomed.

On September 10, 1939, Canada officially declared War on Germany. It was arguable that Canada, as a member of the British Empire, was already at war as of September 3rd but our separate declaration was a political statement that Canada was now in charge of its own external affairs.

Our entry into the War was marked by several bombers flying over the city dropping small leaflets, about the size of postcards. It should be remembered that while most citizens had radios, newspapers were not delivered to our homes at that time. The leaflets made the announcement in English on one side and French on the other.

The leaflets were the only war-related items that were dropped on Toronto. Other places were not so lucky.



The King and Queen at old Woodbine Racetrack.

Aggression 1940-45

1940

Chamberlain resigns (and dies of cancer later that year). Churchill becomes Prime Minister and gives his 'Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat' speech.

The Dutch surrender. Belgium capitulates.

After a short invasion, Finland signs a Peace Treaty with the USSR.

France surrenders and the British Forces in Europe (340,000) make a miraculous escape from the Continent at Dunkirk.

Germany invades Norway and Denmark.

Germany, Japan and Italy sign the Military Alliance.

Europe is now lost to the Nazis and the Battle of Britain begins.

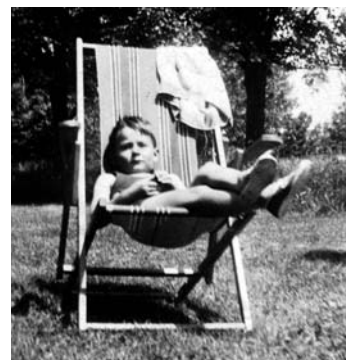
The first group of women and children are evacuated from London.

*Charlie Chaplin made *The Great Dictator* mocking Hitler. The grown-ups watched *Grapes of Wrath* based on Steinbeck's book, while we youngsters watched *Fantasia*.*

Woodlawn and the War

Back on Woodlawn, for the moment, life continued as it had before. The war news was terrible but there was little immediate impact, except for those who had sons or daughters of military age.

The effects of the war began to be felt even in 1940. During the late 30's, the family had an old Hudson car complete with running boards and a thermometer that gave some warning when the radiator was about to boil over. We had used this for somewhat longer trips, such as the summer vacations that my family arranged at Port Bolster on the southern side of Lake Simcoe near Beaverton. There we had rented a cottage for some weeks each year and it was there that I had learned to swim and generally laze away the summers.



As it became clear that gas rationing was on the way and rubber tires were going to be almost impossible to get, the car

*George doing his thing
at Port Bolster, July 1937.*

was (for the most part) put up on blocks and kept in a garage down the street. Rationing was not immediately instituted (in fact not until January 24, 1942) and so our trips up north in the summer could continue for a short while.

A Family in the 40's

It was still somewhat common for more than one generation to live in the same house. My grandmother, Mabel Fierheller, passed away in 1940 and her husband (my grandfather), Dr. George Fierheller, moved in with us on Woodlawn. There were a couple of very happy years for him and for us. I had a particular admiration for this very wise, kind and gentle man. He smoked a pipe after dinner and one of the chores I took on was to clean and refill his pipe for him.

He reciprocated by helping my father build a rink in the backyard. The rink was a great neighbourhood attraction as this somewhat blurry photo would indicate. My father made goals out of pipes and some netting. Everyone helped to flood the ice and shovel the rink as required.

Naturally, I had a Maple Leaf sweater complete with a blue and white toque. For Christmas 1940, I got padded hockey gloves and even shin pads, which in those days were rather skimpy. They had what appeared to be pieces of rattan in slots running up and down the leg and a Bakelite kneepad. Bakelite was an early plastic and was used to make radio casings and similar items – it was phased out when more sophisticated plastics came along.



The rink in the yard behind our house.



Felt Shin Guards



Ice Skates in the 40's.



Me in 'action' on the rink.

I mention all this because with the relatively primitive household equipment and the slightly crowded conditions in the house, everyone had to pitch in with household chores.

My sister Betty was still with us until June 1941 when at the age of 23 she was finally committed to the Ontario Hospital in Whitby.

My sister Audrey, who was by then 21, must have had an awkward social life. It would not have been easy bringing home a date, not knowing what state her sister might be in.

I do recall that at one time she dated a Dr. Jack Arnell who was with the National Research Council. My father had very little use for 'intellectuals' and did not take to him at all. He did have a rather supercilious manner and at one time was demonstrating his new waterproof watch by dropping it into a glass of water. To my father's delight, the watch stopped instantly.

Audrey joined the Canadian WRENs in 1940 and was transferred to Halifax. Therefore by 1941, the two upstairs bedrooms were vacant. This would not last long.

Despite the intense bombing of London that culminated with the terrible raid on September 29, 1940, on July 3rd the King and Queen had rejected the suggestion of sending the two Princesses to Canada. As we shall see, not all their subjects followed their lead.

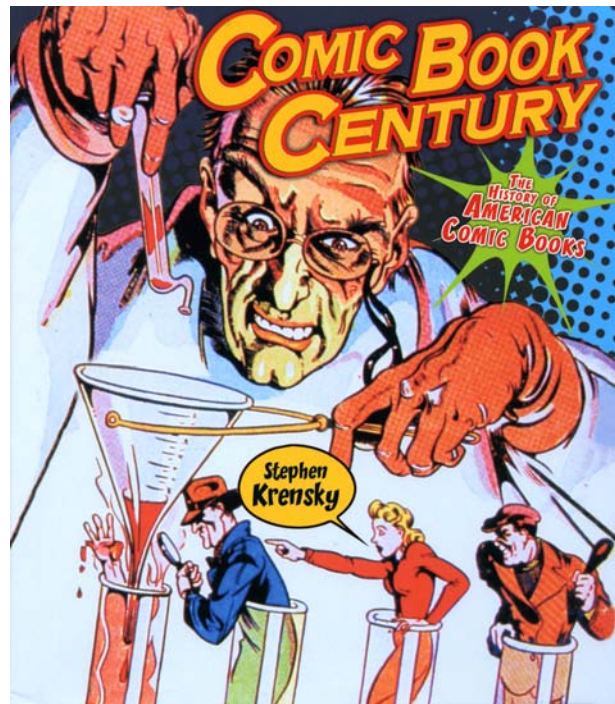
In the meantime, life for me continued in a reasonably normal fashion. As my reading improved, so did my addiction to comic books.

Comic Books and the Imagination

Comic Books were paper TV.

In those days, they were a substitute for police and crime stories, science fiction and the sexy series that one now sees on our television sets. Because of their influence on our age group, they deserve some investigation.

For a history of the comics, one should read *Comic Book Century* by Stephen Krensky or similar books. I will only pick out some highlights from this and other sources.



Comic Book Century (cover) – Stephen Krensky.

The idea of heroes with secret identities doing heroic deeds goes back to at least the early 1900s. Krensky references *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, the famous novel written in 1905 about a masked hero who rescues French aristocrats from the guillotine. You may remember the poem used by the supposedly timid English Lord, Sir Percy Blakeney, who wore a mask to turn himself into The Scarlet Pimpernel:

*“They seek him here, they seek him there,
Those Frenchies seek him everywhere,
Is he in Heaven or is he in Hell
That damned elusive Pimpernel”.*

But even before the idea of masked heroes caught on, in the 1930’s one of the most popular comic strip characters was Tarzan. Another was Little Orphan Annie.

There were some comical comics including *Mutt and Jeff*. In fact one of the first comic books was *Famous Funnies* in 1934.

By 1938, Jerry Siegel and Canadian-born artist Joe Shuster had created *Superman*. The first issue of Action Comics appeared in June 1938 featuring the popular superhero.

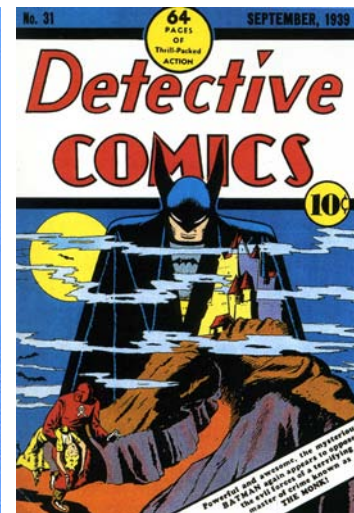
In 1939, *Batman* came onto the scene in Detective Comics.

These were largely published in the United States but by December 1940, as Canada’s trade deficit with the U.S. grew dramatically, the Government introduced the War Exchange Conservation Act, designed to curtail the importation of American products by restricting trade in non-essential goods. Comic books were caught up in this and inadvertently, a separate Canadian comics industry was started.

The Canadian comic books were produced in black and white except for the covers. In fact they were known as ‘Canadian Whites’. They featured Canadian national superheroes such as Johnny Canuck and Canada Jack (or Canada Jack-off as my rough Woodlawn friends called him).



*The first Superman
Comic Book.*



*Batman swings
onto the scene.*



Johnny Canuck et al.

In an effort to bypass the Government's restrictive foreign-exchange legislation, Canadian publishers acquired scripts from the U.S. and produced Canadian versions using the American superheroes. Ultimately this introduced Canadians to *Captain Marvel* and *Spy Smasher*.

There was even a Canadian comic book heroine called Nelvana of the Northern Lights. She was something of a Wonder Woman super heroine who actually predated the latter by several months.

Comic books began to appear in Canada with names such as *Triumph-Adventure Comics* in 1941 and *WOW Comics* in 1943.

In both Canada and the United States, the comic book heroes regularly tackled the Nazis and the Japanese. The cover of *World's Finest Comics* shows Superman, Batman and Robin exhorting the public to "Sink the Japanazis with bonds and stamps".

Even at that time, there was a slight suspicion about the relationship between Batman and Robin, but then my Woodlawn friends might have been expected to come up with such speculation.

Captain Marvel had become the most popular superhero during World War II. Like Clark Kent (Superman) and Bruce Wayne (Batman), Billy Batson had a secret identity. He converted himself into "The World's Mightiest Mortal" by saying the magic word SHAZAM. This gave Billy the special powers derived from "the wisdom of Solomon, the strength of Hercules, the stamina of Atlas, the power of Zeus, the courage of Achilles and the speed of Mercury".

The development of comic book characters started to get more extreme with the Human Torch and Sub-Mariner. The Human Torch was really an android and the Sub-Mariner, who was part sea creature, could breathe underwater. He was in fact a somewhat self-serving hero being more concerned about the preservation of the sea as his environment than with rescuing damsels in distress or beating up Nazis.

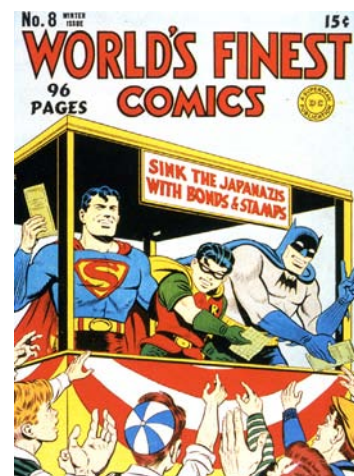
The Canadian comic book industry lasted until 1945 when the flood of American full colour comics swamped the marketplace.



Canadian 'Whites'.



Captain Marvel.



Sink the Japanazis.

While this overview covers just some of the highlights of the 1930's and early 40's, I have included it because it was an important part of growing up.

I should mention the more up-scale Classic 'Comics' that put such masterpieces as *Tale of Two Cities* in comic book form.

Without question, the comics did help youngsters at that time to learn to read by giving them something more exciting than their school books (Spot is a dog, Spot can run, see Spot run, run Spot run).

They had the upside of introducing us to science fiction, although the emphasis was less on correct science than it was on monster stories.

They were really the start of today's TV sitcoms with strips such as Dagwood.

They also introduced us to some quite politically incorrect concepts that would not be acceptable today. Those of you who remember Little Orphan Annie would remember that her father, Daddy Warbucks, was an international arms dealer. He showed up only periodically to rescue Annie and her dog Sandy, with the help of a huge Indian know as Punjab and the mysterious oriental called Asp. The latter two were clearly racial caricatures and were probably amongst the reasons that the comic strip finally disappeared. The fact that Annie, Sandy and the others never grew up might also have damaged their credibility.

In fact, on reflection, many of the comic books were quite gory and sadistic and the women were always very sexy and scantily clad. This of course is no worse than most of today's movies and TV series. However, this led to a book written in 1954 by a Dr. Frederic Wartham called *The Seduction of the Innocent*. Although this is beyond the timeframe of this book, this did lead to an era of self-regulation by the comic book industry that was largely lip service. The industry essentially died with the death of Superman in 1993.

Bigger and Better Books

Beyond the comic books there were actual books of comic characters. Originally these were known as Big Little Books. These would be about 1-1½ inches thick and about 3 inches square. They had hard covers and were usually in black and white only. They would cover such science fiction characters as Buck Rogers with his gorgeous sidekick Wilma and his brilliant scientist friend Dr. Hugh. Flash Gordon was another such hero.

Occasionally in the upper right hand corner of each



Big Little Books.

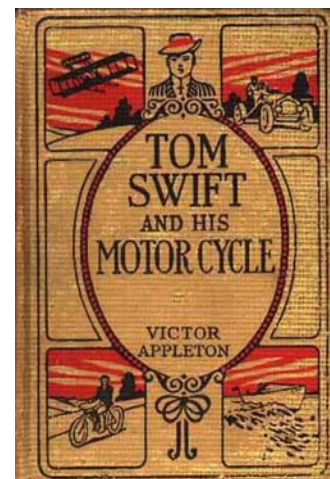


Big Little Books.

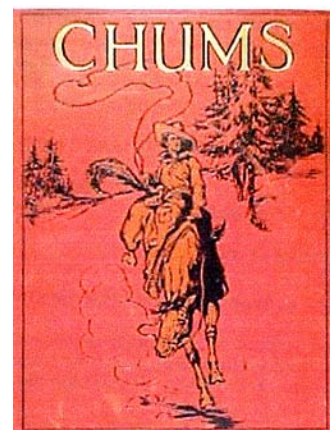
page would be images that would appear to move as you flipped rapidly through the pages, i.e., you could see an individual running or appearing to run. These books were replaced later by Better Little Books, which as I recall were somewhat slimmer versions of the same concept.

By the early 1940's, I was reading some ancient books that I believe came from my grandfather's library. I was becoming fascinated with science and invention and fell into the Tom Swift series of books. These books started appearing in 1910 with *Tom Swift and His Motorcycle* and ended in 1941 with *Tom Swift and His Magnetic Silencer*. The last couple of the books in the series came out in the Better Little Book format with an emphasis on more text and fewer illustrations. In many ways, these books by Victor Appleton were at the leading edge of invention (like Star Trek), pushing adventure stories involving technology to the limits of what could be conceived at that time. His books covered air ships, submarines, electric runabouts and the like. My imagination was also piqued by other publications and my curiosity seemed insatiable. My father somehow managed to find copies of British publications such as *CHUMS* and *Boy's Own Annual*. These were huge books, e.g., over 800 pages and contained adventure stories for boys including some full-length works, 'How To' sections and usually a number of stories that took place in English boys' schools. While designed for the British market, they were a fascinating window on the world and one which I avidly absorbed.

It was probably just as well that I did have some idea of what it was like going to school in another country as we were shortly to be visited by War guests.



A Tom Swift book.



Chums – exactly the edition I had.

1941

Lend-Lease Bill signed in United States.

Rommel blitzes across North Africa to Tobruk.

The Hood and the Bismarck are sunk.

U-Boat war becomes intense, infuriating Roosevelt, who orders the U.S. Navy to shoot at German warships on sight.

Germany violates the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and invades Russia, capturing Minsk and Smolensk and enters the Ukraine.

Churchill and Roosevelt sign the Atlantic Charter.

Japan attacks Pearl Harbor on December 7th and the U.S. declares War on the Axis.

The Japanese invade the Philippines and attack British bases in the east, sinking the Prince of Wales and the Repulse.

On December 25th the Japanese capture Hong Kong, killing or imprisoning the 1,975 Canadian defenders.

The only bright spot is that Montgomery does temporarily halt Rommel in North Africa.

At home we watched war movies such as the 49th Parallel with Leslie Howard.

Our War Guests

Like thousands of other Canadian families, we offered to take War guests from the U.K. These were women with children risking the Atlantic crossing to ensure their children would be safe from the bombing and the threat of invasion. As my sisters were no longer at home, we had the upstairs rooms available and were assigned a British mother, Peg Foster and her two children, Peter and Ivan.

Peter was about my age, i.e., about eight and Ivan was a couple of years younger. We tried to make them as welcome as possible and I was instructed to introduce these British-raised children to the Woodlawn Avenue gang and ultimately Brown School. The two boys were actually quite okay and endeavoured to fit in. There were a few harsh lessons, e.g., their mother insisted on their wearing short pants during their first Canadian winter. This did not last long. The neighbourhood was likely more rough and tumble than they were used to but I did my best to introduce them to Canadian hockey and other necessities.

The integration was a strain on everyone. While they had the entire third floor, they obviously had to share bathroom, kitchen and other facilities. My mother and Peg Foster came to some agreement about cooking in shifts and shared access to the other facilities.

We tried to be accommodating but got the impression that the mother felt this was really 'roughing it' and she was living amongst the colonials. She was not exactly from the British aristocracy and used to embarrass my mother by shouting for her two children out the back window when it was time to come for dinner (like a fish-wife I recall my mother remarking).

In discussions with other war guest hosts, some pattern began to emerge. It appeared that many of those who came to Canada for this purpose were doing so more to get away from a poor marriage than they were to dodge German bombs. In fact I understand that Peg Foster never went back with her husband after the War.

When they finally did return, my mother noted that some of our sterling flatware that had F engraved on it had gone missing. The F of course could stand for Foster as easily as Fierheller.

While everyone tried very hard, the name War Pests was quietly used amongst some of the many hosts in Toronto.

However, all things said, the process was a small sacrifice and one that allowed Torontonians to at least feel they were making a real contribution to the war effort.

A Wartime Education

I have earlier referenced Brown Public School and it is worth spending some time looking at schooling during the war years. It is instructive to look at some school photos from that era. The first would be of my class, probably about 1941, which would have been about grade three.

The first observation is the size of the class. There are thirty-eight students in the photo and as there were likely a couple absent, this meant that class sizes in those days ran about forty. It is amusing to listen to the teachers of today complain about teaching classes of twenty-five. Of course, ESL (English as a Second Language) was unheard of and today's classes are likely more challenging.

The class size may have been slightly swollen by War guests but given the number of desks in the room, my guess would be that this was about the norm in the 30's and 40's.



Grade 3 at Brown.

The second observation would be how similar the wall attachments are to a school room today. I was in my grandson's grade six class a year ago and they seemed to have the same types of pictures.

To save you trying to identify me, I am in the third seat of the row on the right.

The amazing thing is that I can remember the names of most of the girls in the row – likely a sign of my growing interest in the opposite sex. In the front corner seat is Ann O'Grady. Immediately behind me is Di Middleton who, as I recall, played the cello – a rather unusual accomplishment at that age. Behind her was Ruth Natrass and behind her Barbara Menzies.

I will not bore you with the rest of the class except to briefly go down the second row. In the front seat is Tommy Wickett; he and I competed for the affections of the young lady with the pigtails in the third seat of that row, Charlotte Holmes (who tragically passed away in April 2008 just a couple of months after I was helping her with a fundraising project; she had married a John Norcap). Between Tommy and Charley was Ted Hadwin, an individual who also went on to UTS and with whom I became a close friend. He was very bright but somewhat of an outsider. He also passed away in 2008 after some years of being a professor at the University of Guelph.

The blonde chap in the fifth seat of that row is Peter Foster, our War guest.

In the school, the sexes were kept somewhat separate. There were separate boys and girls entrances at the back of the school leading from the playground. I suppose this was dictated by washroom facilities.

The discipline was iron. One of the senior schoolteachers, such as Mr. Trotter, would be given the responsibility of rounding up the children to get them into class after recess or at the start of the day. The students were called to assemble by a large hand-held brass bell. My wife, who was a teacher in the mid-50's, is shown still using one of these classic instruments.



*The School Bell was still in use
in the mid 50's.*

The teachers in the lower grades were largely female but those in the top couple of grades tended to be male. As there were no discipline problems that I can recall, I am not sure quite why this was the case – the glass ceiling I guess. In any event, a minor infraction would lead to a detention after school and any more major infraction than talking in class would result in a trip to the principal's office. The principal when I started at Brown was a Mr. MacPherson, and for my last years at the school was appropriately enough a Mr. Brown.

The strap was certainly applied as needed.

It was not common for students to bring their lunch. Nearly all of us walked home for lunch and were given an hour and a half for this purpose. This meant all the oft-told stories of walking miles through the snow and rain in those days actually did happen.

For those who had to stay for lunch, one of the teachers was assigned lunchroom duty. I recall that it was possible to buy milk at the school but there was nothing equivalent to a cafeteria.

Social life revolved around the school to a large degree. One of the favourite pastimes after school was to buy popcorn, peanuts or candy apples from a push-cart vendor on Avenue Road just outside the school grounds. The kindly old gentleman was there for most of the time I was at Brown. His whitewashed push-cart had a small steam whistle on top and enough heat was applied to keep the popcorn warm and the butter melted. I cannot remember the exact price for a bag of popcorn but I would be surprised if it exceeded five cents.

As this was wartime, the school felt it had to do something to protect the children in

the event of an attack (from what or by whom was never clear). We therefore had practice air raid alerts where we were taught to scramble under our desks.



War Saving Stamps and Books.

There were air raid sirens installed around the city although these were obviously never used in anger. To help finance the war, the students were encouraged to buy War Savings Stamps at twenty-five cents a piece. These were accumulated in a book kept by each student and presumably became redeemable at the end of the war.

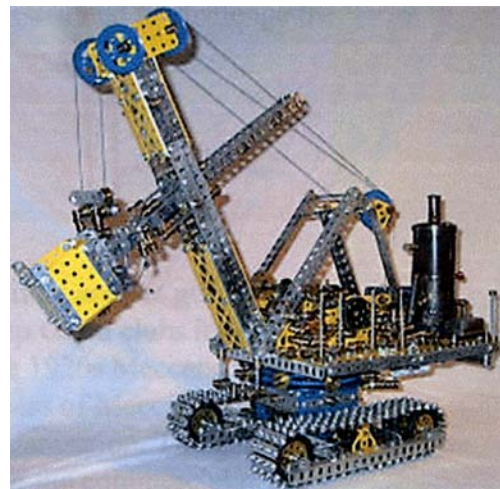
As part of our 'art' class, I do recall sewing together small felt booties, presumably to be sent to indigent war refugees. I am not sure that they would ever have been of any real use but the school system was trying to do what it could to make the students feel part of the war process.

My recollection of the subjects taught, however, did not include much of anything about the War. We seemed to stick to the basics of reading, spelling, grammar, memorizing multiplication tables (no pocket calculators in those days), history and geography. Even at eight years old we were not short of information about the war, as it filled the newspapers and everyone listened to the 6:00 p.m. news, which in 1941 was pretty discouraging.

Our Toys Mature

My parents were very good at supplying stimulating gifts. Some of these, such as Meccano Sets, had been available to me before the war and parts were now becoming impossible to get. In fact Meccano Sets had been around since 1901, when they were invented by a Frank Hornby from Liverpool, England. For those who do not remember Meccano Sets, they were construction sets consisting of perforated metal strips, plates and girders with wheels, pulleys, gears and nuts and bolts to hold them together. I recall even having a small motor that drove the wheels and pulleys. They came with a small screwdriver and wrench.

I was never a mechanical genius but do remember building a relatively impressive windmill in the immediate pre-War days. It was nothing as complex as the picture on the right of

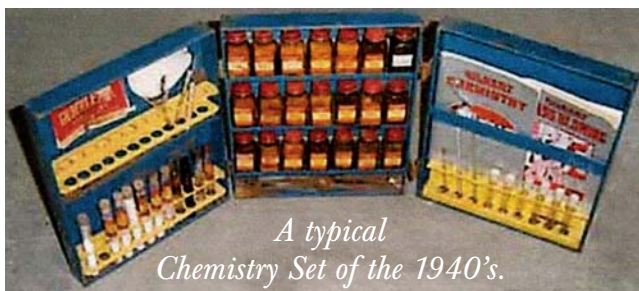


A Meccano construction that was a bit more complicated than I ever tried.

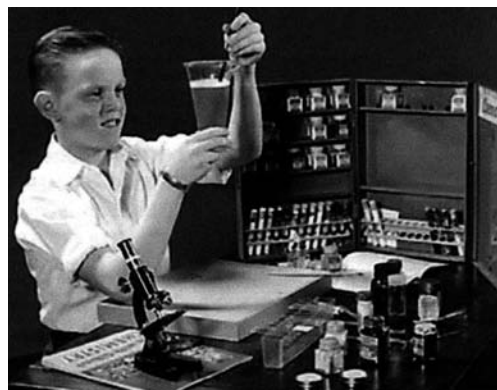
a Meccano model of a steam shovel (by the way you might notice that the steam shovel in those days was actually driven by steam and the bucket faced outwards rather than inward as is the case with current diesel-driven models).

Another immediate pre-war pastime was Mini Bricks. These were a forerunner of Lego and were made from rubber. Otherwise the concept was somewhat similar. The small bricks had pegs on one side and holes on the other and could be assembled into houses, forts, or whatever was required. Separate roofs were provided and small plastic windows could be inserted as needed.

The more exciting plaything for me was my chemistry set. I was given my first chemistry set when my grandfather, who was a doctor, was still alive and he helped introduce me to some of the miracles of the then modern chemistry. My original set was by Chemcraft. However, an equally large manufacturer of chemistry sets in those days was A.C. Gilbert.



Either kind came in foldout metal or wooden boxes with a wide array of chemicals and test tubes. If one were really enthusiastic, one could easily add to the collection, which I promptly did. For example, one could get a small alcohol burner for heating, with a retort stand on which you could place the burner. The stand had rings to hold flasks that could be used for heating concoctions. Although there were instructions for making all manner of products, I do not remember making anything useful. The whole process did make me feel like an appropriately mad scientist as depicted in the comic books I was also reading.



I might add that the earliest chemistry sets actually date back to the 18th century, with the first ones being targeted at children appearing in the late 1830's. The chemistry set reached its heyday in the 1940's and 50's but with the litigious society that came into play after the war, they were largely forgotten by the 1960's.

Just before the War precluded their production, I also acquired a starter microscope. After examining the usual fly's wings and foliage, I realized that I was going to need more power than the primitive device I had, but that would have to wait until after the War.

1942

The Japanese take Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Rangoon as well as completing the capture of the Philippines by occupying Bataan.

In the Pacific, the Americans win the battle of the Coral Sea and then defeat the Japanese fleet at Midway. General Doolittle makes his token raid on Tokyo.

Rommel regains the initiative temporarily in North Africa by capturing Tobruk. He is, however, stopped at El Alamein and is soon in full retreat before Montgomery.

The Germans reach Stalingrad.

The Holocaust begins in earnest.

Germany starts to work on the V-2.

Demand for a second front in Europe grows both in the United Kingdom and, as might be expected, in the USSR.

We listened to the White Cliffs of Dover.

We watched Mrs. Miniver, Bambi and Holiday Inn.

Back at Brown

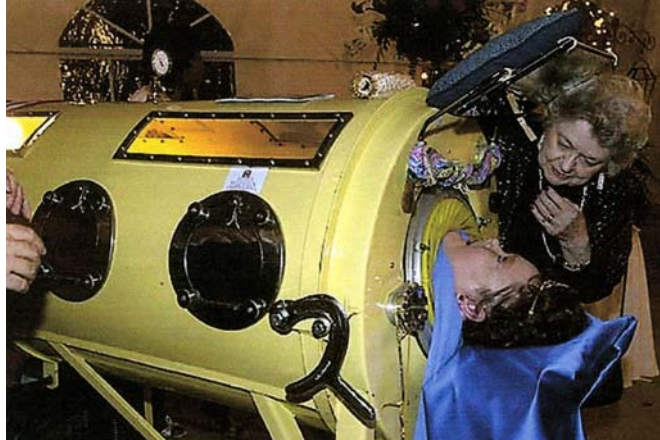
In 1942, I had started into grade four. It is time for another picture.



This class photo was taken outside Brown School. The tower in the background was a flagpole flying the Union Jack of course. There are several observations about the photo that might help put into perspective what it was like in Toronto at that time.

First there was not a pair of jeans in sight. Those in the photo were not dressing up just for this purpose. This was the way they attended school. You will note that some even wore ties.

Secondly, you might note the boy with the white shirt and shorts standing at the right end of the photo. He has a steel brace on his right leg and an elevated shoe on the left foot. He was likely a victim of the terrible polio epidemic in Toronto in 1934. In the days before the Salk vaccine, this dreadful disease killed many and maimed many more. I still shudder at the pictures of young children in Iron Lungs, which were the only way of keeping them alive as the disease had paralyzed their ability to breathe.



An Iron Lung.

A final observation is that there is not a person of colour anywhere in the photo. This will be true during my entire tenure at Brown Public, Whitney Public and UTS. It was simply a reflection of the demographics of Toronto at that time.

There were essentially no Catholics, as they attended separate schools. There were several Jews. In fact in the bottom right hand corner seated is David Shapiro, a very bright chap with whom I became quite friendly. I do not recall even a hint of prejudice or problems but then we were a pretty homogenous group.

What We Listened To

Our main source of entertainment and news was the radio. We had a large floor model with an analogue dial on the front and a frame inside holding a myriad of tubes. You had to wait for these tubes to warm up before the radio would turn on.

There were limited stations in those days and CBC Radio (740 on the AM dial) was the main source of news. However, CFRB (Canada's First Rogers Batteryless) and a smattering of other Canadian stations were available. Much of what we listened to came from the United States. We were able to pick up WGR from Buffalo for example.

One of the mainstays of the era was The Happy Gang (1937-1959). They came

on around noon each day with the opening:

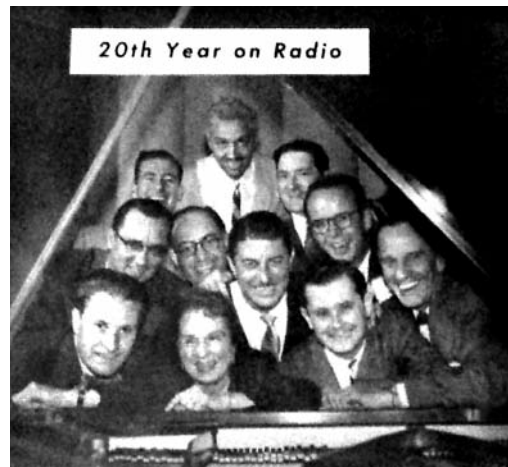
“Knock, knock. Who’s there?”

It’s the Happy Gang.

Well, come on in.”

They performed out of the CBC McGill Street Studio and I remember my mother taking me down to see them live one day. It was quite an experience.

As I recall the leader was Bert Pearl who played the piano. He was accompanied by Blaine Mathe on the violin, Eddie Allen, a singer, Kathleen Stokes on the organ, Bobby Gimby on the trumpet, Bert Niosi, Cliff McKay and others. Many of these went on to fame in other areas.



“The Happy Gang”
CBC TRANS-CANADA NETWORK

Everyone seemed to be able to sing their opening song:

“Keep happy with The Happy Gang

Keep happy start the day with a bang

If you are happy and healthy

The heck with being wealthy

So keep happy with The Happy Gang.”

Okay, so it was a bit primitive by today’s standard but it did cheer us all up.

But that was just the start. From the late 30’s on and in the absence of television, the two great phenomena were the radio serials and the soaps. The latter seemed to be on during the afternoons and I suspect were listened to mainly by housewives. They got their name from their sponsorship by various cleaning products, e.g., Lux, Rinso and Lifebuoy (remember BO or body odour that was suppose to be cured by Lifebuoy?). They included programs such as Ma Perkins and seemed to go on forever.



Remember Lifebuoy?

Of more interest to me in those days were the serial programs provided in the late afternoons for the youngsters. These included serialized sessions of the *Lone Ranger*, complete with remarkable sound effects for his horse Silver and grunts from his sidekick Tonto, all accompanied by Rossini's wonderful *William Tell Overture*. There were other programs, such as *Little Orphan Annie* and *Jack Armstrong, The All American Boy*, that we could pick up on WGR.



Little Orphan Annie. Sponsored by Ovaltine.

Later in the evening there were serials such as *The Shadow* and *Inner Sanctum*. Even the adults enjoyed Lamont Cranston, whose other life was The Shadow and “had the ability to cloud men’s minds so they could not see him,” or *Inner Sanctum* with its squeaking door.

It is important to remember that unlike TV, these programs required great imagination as only so much could be done by sound alone. Fortunately the young people of that time seemed to have a great imagination and in the 1930’s the Woodlawn gang would play out some of the scenarios from their favourite programs.

There were humorous programs as well.

One that particularly appealed to my father was (I believe) called *Finnigan’s Friends*. It was the story of a down and out Archie who ran a restaurant “where the elite meet to eat pigs’ feet”. He had a wealthy friend called Reginald Updike who had more money than he knew what to do with. He was forever describing situations of the wealthy, including one where the Archbishop had come to call on one of his aristocratic friends in England. The aristocrat’s manservant apologized for his Lordship not being in, reporting that he was “in Greece hunting grouse in the grass Your Grace”.

Finnigan was a punch-drunk friend of Archie’s who was not too bright. In one sequence, they got him onto a quiz show, where they had found a copy of the answers to the questions. They got Finnigan to simply memorize the answers without of course understanding the questions at all. For example, one question would be “Who discovered relativity?” Finnigan was to reply “Einstein.” Unfortunately on the day of the program, the questions were all changed but Finnigan’s answers proved to be right on, e.g., the question would be “How do you say ‘have a beer’ in German?” Finnigan’s answer of “Einstein” still proved to be correct. He bombed out on the last question but such series did provide some good laughs and some very clever dialogue.

Radio naturally provided one of the best links to the war. I had previously noted John Collingwood Reade and his six o’clock news broadcast. Others, such as Lorne Greene, also got their start as war commentators.

The Daily Mail

Another way of staying in touch was of course by mail. In those days the mail was delivered twice a day and once on Saturday. As youngsters, we made very good use of this.

In those days, you could buy almost anything with Box Tops. Just about every cereal came with offers that if you “send in two Box Tops and 25 cents to cover mailing and handling” you could get all sorts of wonderful gifts. These gifts would include membership in the Little Orphan Annie Safety Guard or any variety of games and toys. We watched the mail regularly for replies to our numerous solicitations.

The downside to this was that we encouraged our parents (as was the intent) to buy otherwise inedible cereals such as Quaker Puffed Wheat or Quaker Puffed Rice. As I recall both these products were essentially tasteless and likely had no food value whatsoever. However, they had great Box Top offers.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

Toy guns had always played a major role in growing up. I remember having a Buck Rogers Ray Gun that shot nothing in particular but had a section that lit up with a battery when you pulled the trigger.



Buck Roger's Art Deco Ray Gun, 1935-9.

Dart guns were also popular. These were spring operated and shot a dart with a suction cup at one end.

Cap guns were also very popular. The ‘ammunition’ came in the form of a roll of paper about a quarter of an inch wide with small pockets



Little Orphan Annie Safety Guard Decoder, 1942.



Puffed Wheat Box Top Offer.



Quaker Puffed Rice with a Gene Autry Comic Book offer.

of gun powder ranged along it. The tape was advanced each time one pulled the trigger and a hammer hit the powder making a bang. These guns did not shoot anything either.

More advanced weaponry was on the horizon. Air guns came to be the weapon of choice. These were commonly called BB Guns and I was the proud possessor of a Daisy Red Ryder BB Gun Repeater. This was 'the stuff that legends are made of'. It had a solid wood stock and forearm, and could hold up to 650 shots. It was operated by a pump not unlike that of the original Winchester Rifle that won the west. In this case the pump action moved a BB into the breach and pumped air in behind it. Pulling the trigger released the BB. The calibre of the BBs was 0.177 inches and Daisy quickly captured the market with this design. The most prized ammunition were BBs coated with either copper or nickel but during the War these became impossible to get. We had to make do with soft lead BBs, which could only be used once as they tended to flatten out once they struck anything.

The BB guns usually came with a target and in my case this was a small metal box about four inches square, with a slot in the front into which one could slide a paper target. There was a bell behind a hole behind the centre of the target, not that I hit that very often.

We were under strict orders to shoot only at non-living objects under threat of disarmament and we did respect this.

Fortunately in our safe backwater in Toronto far from the war, this was as close to guns as we needed to get.



The Daisy Red Ryder BB Gun, 1940.



Steel BB's coated with copper and nickel – rapidly became unavailable in Canada after 1940.

1943

The Russians destroy the German Army at Stalingrad and Germany withdraws from the Caucasus.

The RAF bombs Berlin.

Eisenhower is appointed Supreme Commander in North Africa.

The German Army surrenders in Tunisia. With Africa liberated, the opportunity for a second front is now open although it does not happen in France as the Russians had wanted.

On July 10th, the Allies land in Sicily.

The Quebec Conference is held with Churchill, Roosevelt and Mackenzie King.

The Allies continue to invade southern Europe and land in Italy at Salerno.

Italy dismisses Mussolini and declares War on Germany, proving to be a shaky partner in the Axis.

Under General MacArthur, the Japanese are being driven back across the Pacific Islands.

The War in the Atlantic is being won against the U-Boats, primarily by the quantities of ships built by Henry Kaiser with his Liberty ships and the effective use of convoys protected, in many cases, by the Canadian Navy.

We listened to Mairzy Doats and Coming In On A Wing and A Prayer.

We watched Bogart and Bergman in Casablanca.

Our Sacrifices on the Home Front

As mentioned, rationing had been introduced in Canada in 1942 and by 1943 was in full swing. Each household filled out an application and ration books were mailed out on Monday, August 31, 1942. Every family member was issued ration books. There were six different series and each book contained coupons for tea, coffee and sugar along with some spares that could be used for other products should they be rationed. Butter was added to the ration list in December 1942.



*A 'stamp'
from a
Ration Book.*

The Wartime Prices and Trade Board also fixed prices.

To give you an idea of the allowance, originally, each person was allowed only 12 ounces of sugar per week and later this was cut to 8 ounces. As the War went on, more items were added including meat, maple syrup, and eventually tinned goods, largely because of the shortage of supplies of tin cans. We all tried to supplement our food stuffs with Victory Gardens although this was of nominal help at best.



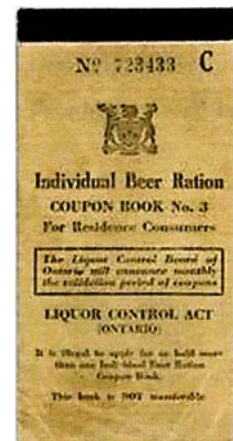
Gasoline was rationed in April 1942 and this led to the use of car pools and put a particular strain on Public Transport. An A ration allowed almost no gasoline, although there was some concession if you were using your car for a car pool. Tires could not be purchased unless one could prove the driving was essential. Doctors who needed to make house calls (and they did in those days) had special allowances, as did truck drivers who got T ration cards.



Silk of course could not longer be imported and therefore silk stockings were out of the question. Resourceful women knitted Victory stockings from yarn or created the illusion of stockings by painting their legs with a brown liquid.

For a short while, metal meat tokens were used but these were phased out as metal became increasingly difficult to get.

Liquor was on the proscribed list and my recollection is that you were only allowed to buy 12 ounces a week, i.e., a mickey. In Ontario, liquor of any kind was always treated as a sinful product. Even before the war, each adult had to have a liquor book. There was no question of the 'supermarket' approach to having bottles available that one could select from shelves. Instead one chose their products from lists that were posted on tables around the store and one had to fill out a requisitioning form. The LCBO stores of the time were referred to as the 'People's Dispensary'. The purchases were then noted in the book. If you could not get a book, you were politically incorrectly, known in those days as being on the 'Indian list'.



All of this led to both hoarding and a Black Market. These activities were frowned upon by patriotic Canadians but they were certainly practiced.

One of my greatest pleasures in the pre-War era were cakes bought at a wonderful bakery on the east side of Yonge just south of St. Clair called the Patisserie Français. These cakes consisted of a thick layer of creamy butter icing and three additional layers of the same inside. They were often covered with chocolate sprinkles or some other decoration. In effect they were almost solid icing.

LETTERS NUMBERS
 13 E 259479 Prefix and Serial Number
 No de Série (avec lettres)

LETTERS NUMEROS


Write Age if under 16... Indiquez l'âge si moins de 16 ans

Name *Daniel Jackson*
 Nom Last Name - Nom de famille First Name - Prénom


Street Address or R.R. No.
 No et rue ou R.R. No.

City or Town *Wheaton*
 Ville ou Village

Province TELEPHONE NUMBER NUMERO DE TELEPHONE
 Province

RATION BOOK 5  **CARNET DE RATIONNEMENT 5**

RB-250 CANADA

RATION BOOK 3  **CARNET DE RATIONNEMENT 3**

RB-150

Name *Wm. J. Smith*
 Nom

Street Address or R.R. No. *221 Pacific Ave.*
 No et rue ou R.R. No.

City or Town *Toronto*
 Ville ou Village

Province *Ontario*
 Province

Prefix and Serial Number **No de Série (avec lettres)**

LETTERS NUMBERS
 T W 301214
 LETTERS NUMEROS

Write Age if under 16... Indiquez l'âge si moins de 16 ans

More Ration Books.

As I recall in the late 1930's they cost about 75 cents each, which was considered quite a price in those days. This gradually escalated to 95 cents during the early war years. Everyone marvelled at how they managed to get the butter for these wonderful confectionaries. They were eventually convicted of Black Market activities and subsequently went out of business. This was probably just as well for our waistlines but it was a sad loss.

Staying In Touch

I can never remember us being without at least one phone at home. These phones were of course dial operated as Touchtone phones were years in the future. They were more commonly wall phones in those days and had relatively long receivers. The only colour they came in was black.

The phone numbers were partly alphabetic. I recall that ours was Hudson 9-6321 for example.

I have not talked much about cottages but in those days virtually all rural lines were party lines, i.e., when you picked up the receiver you were connected to a hand-operated switchboard. You directed the call where you wanted it to go and the operator plugged you into that line. However, to get from your house to the switchboard often involved sharing the line with others. A great sport would be to listen in on everyone's conversation and of course the local switchboard operator could tune in to everybody (and did!). She became a wonderful source of information about who was doing what in cottage country.



The classic black phone - 1937.

1944

The slow progress across the Pacific continued, with the U.S. capture of the Solomon and Marshall Islands.

There are continued heavy air raids on London but the tide is turning, with the RAF bombing Berlin and other sites at night and the Flying Fortresses attacking during the day.

Rome is liberated on June 4th.

June 6th sees the D-Day landings in Normandy, with over 700 ships and 4000 landing craft involved.

The first flying bomb (V-1) dropped on London. Later that year the first V-2 rockets land in Britain.

The Russians recapture Minsk, taking 100,000 German prisoners.

De Gaulle enters Paris on August 25th.

The Battle of the Bulge (Ardennes) begins and this proves to be the last major German offensive in the West.

Rommel commits suicide.

The films we watched were Going My Way and Olivier in Henry V.

We listened to Don't Fence Me In, Rum and Coca-Cola, Sentimental Journey and Accentuate the Positive (it was starting to appear that we could).

The Class of 1943-44

For some reason I took grades five and six together. The class was taught by a wonderful teacher, a Miss Douglas, who is pictured in the photograph on the next page. She was strict but kind and somehow managed a class that had now grown to 44 pupils.

I am third from the right in the back row and to my immediate left is Peter Foster, our War guest. In fact almost the entire back row is composed of War guests, who probably accounted for the swelling of the class size. The War guests integrated extremely well and were generally accepted as fellow members of the British Empire, who just happened to be located here temporarily.

The then love of my life Charlotte Holmes is located fourth from the right in the second row, still with pigtails.



The Class of '43-'44.

But we did not spend all our time in class. One of the major entertainments in those pre-TV days was the movie theatre.

Saturday Afternoon at the Movies

In the immediate area of Yonge and St. Clair were a couple of movie theatres. On the west side just north of St. Clair was a small theatre originally called The Beverley but subsequently renamed The Kent. Across the street was a somewhat larger theatre called The Hollywood. This tended to be where the adults went but the Beverley/Kent was the purview of the kids.

Saturday afternoon was the big movie time and for about twenty-five cents, we had a full afternoon of entertainment.

Normally there were two feature films but this was just the start. They were often separated by cartoons and of course the inevitable serials. The latter were designed to keep you coming back each week to see what happened to your favourite 'comic book on the screen hero'. We could hardly wait for the next episode of Flash Gordon.

As if this were not enough, an important part of the Wartime movie scene was Movietone News. These short news clips provided the only moving visual exposure we had to what was going on around the world. They concentrated mostly on the War of course and were quite frankly propaganda films as much as anything. In a way,

however, they brought the reality of War to those in a city like Toronto in a way that no other medium could. There were scratchy films of battles with a voice-over praising the Allied progress.

But there were other ways of attracting people to the theatres. There were special offers of things like dishes and one could, for a nominal cost, buy one of the set each time one attended. This was a form of an early customer loyalty program.

I also remember being encouraged to attend by getting a discount if you brought scrap metal or other items helpful to the war effort to the theatre, e.g., old aluminum pots.

But the movies as a form of entertainment went far beyond Yonge and St. Clair. The big theatres were downtown. This was where the first-run big productions were put on and they were very popular. The theatres themselves were quite magnificent. The Imperial on Yonge Street (now the Canon) was one of the most lavish, with marble stairways and elaborately carved ceilings.

Farther down the street was Loew's (now the Elgin and Winter Garden), which was equally lavish. The Uptown at Yonge and Bloor survived as a movie theatre for decades after the War.

The most memorable was Shea's on Bay Street just above Queen. The theatre was actually known as Shea's Hippodrome. Jerry Shea, who had built earlier theatres in Toronto, died in 1943 at a house coincidentally on Hudson Drive, a street that I will describe in more detail later. In addition to a first-run feature, news, and cartoons, the theatre boasted a Wurlitzer (or huge organ) that rose up between presentations on a hydraulic platform and the organist entertained the audience. I understand that this instrument now resides in Casa Loma.



*Shea's Hippodrome from the parking lot
looking toward City Hall.*

These large theatres usually had just a single feature. You might wonder how one could squeeze two feature films into the afternoon at some of the suburban theatres. We should remember that movies in those days were much shorter, e.g., 80–90 minutes and there were very few of the multi-hour blockbusters that are so common today.

We all had our favourites and for some reason I remember an actress by the name

of Ella Raines. I recall she had stunning black hair and a silky, sexy voice. She never made it past the B movies.

Many of us would remember laughing at Bud Abbott and Lou Costello in *Buck Privates* in 1941. Sometimes laughing at the War seemed the best way to relieve tensions and while some of their corny sequels such as *In the Navy* were really semi-propaganda, they certainly were amusing.



Ella Raines – just a coincidence or does she resemble some later girl friends?



Bud Abbott and Lou Costello in 'In the Navy' with the Andrews Sisters.

A review of all the movies of that era could be a book in itself and it is time to reflect on the efforts to 'save my soul'.

Save Our Souls

The family attended Deer Park United Church on the corner of St. Clair and Foxbar. The Church had a long tradition in Toronto, having begun in 1881 as Deer Park Presbyterian Mission that had its first building on the northwest corner of Yonge and St. Clair. The present building was built in 1913. The congregation voted to join the United Church in 1925 and I suppose this is when my parents decided to become members of that Church.

The Church had a relatively affluent congregation in those days, although less so than Timothy Eaton Memorial just along St. Clair Avenue. Its main draw during the 30's and 40's was Dr. G. Stanley Russell, who was considered to be the second most influential religious figure in the city (much to his consternation, as he felt he should have beaten out Rabbi Feinberg for this honour). He was a most moving speaker and I doubt if my parents, and later I, would have bothered attending church had it not been for his sermons.



Deer Park United Church.

My parents were not very religious but did do their best to attend the 11:00 a.m. service on Sunday mornings. I remember the offering envelopes, which had two sections, one for support of the local church and one for the overseas missions they undertook.

Most of all I remember a very fine choir and some excellent organ music. Even at this early age, I was becoming a lover of classical music and this was further incentive to attend.

Needless to say, my parents started me in Sunday School. This was largely a waste. I vaguely recall colouring books with pictures of Jesus, and remember being scolded for (at one point) giving him a bright red beard. However, I must have done something right. In September 1942, I was awarded a very nice leather-bound bible also with colour pictures (better than mine). I still have the bible, a fact that indicates it has not been well used since.

My other recollection of Sunday school was having to memorize Psalms, the Beatitudes and other passages. I had to practice in front of the family, including Dr. George Fierheller (my grandfather). I remember his laughing when I used the word 'scribblers' instead of 'scribes'. He actually thought the change was quite apt.

Dr. Russell seemed to take a personal interest in me. Perhaps this was because I was forever querying him on religious matters that did not seem to make sense to me. In fact, for a while, I rebelled at even going to church and the good Reverend made a call at our house and invited me to lunch at the Granite Club, which was just along St. Clair in those days. He referred to this as the 'rediscovery of George'. Regrettably, despite his best efforts, it did not last and I drifted into my current sinful state of atheism.



The 'old' Granite Club on St. Clair.

The building itself did have an influence on my strange interest in church architecture and I always enjoyed visiting such buildings on trips abroad.

Dyb, Dyb, Dyb

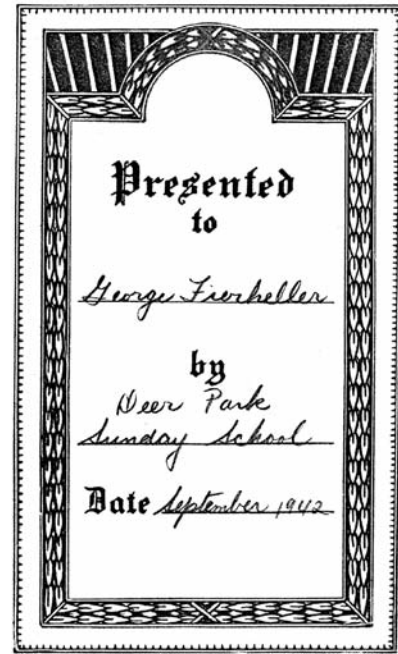
I have another association with Deer Park. I did become a member of the 123rd Wolf Cubs. The Cub group had its meetings in the Long Room, which as the name implies was a rectangular room that could be used for meetings and even games such as floor hockey. Deer Park also supported a gymnasium and despite my minimal athletic ability, at least some of the games like Red Rover or Dodge Ball were fun.

I actually worked quite hard at being a good Wolf Cub. I even qualified for quite a number of what I called Boer Badges. You got these for such relatively useless exercises as learning to tie knots, sending Semaphore signals with flags, starting fires without a match or cooking in the outdoors. It was fairly obvious that these were leftovers from the start of the Scouting movement by Lord Baden Powell shortly after the Boer War. I gather nowadays you can get badges for computer expertise and other more leading edge pursuits.

In fact I did so well that I became Senior Sixer, i.e., the top dog in the Wolf Cub Pack.

At the appropriate age, I was bumped upstairs to the Boy Scouts. I did not last long here as that coincided with my eroding opinions of religion. The attached picture does show me as a Boy Scout, second on the second row from the left looking quite angelic. The gentleman in the black suit was of course Dr. Stanley Russell. To his right is the Scout Master, John Bassel. John's family owned a well known restaurant on Yonge Street downtown. My father took me there occasionally and my recollection was largely of overcooked roast beef sandwiches with nondescript gravy and french fries. However, remember this was in the days before McDonald's and Tim Hortons.

By the way, the title of this section comes from the opening chant that we had to repeat at the start of our Cub meetings on Friday Nights. DYB stood for Do Your Best. The reply was "We'll DOB" ie. Do Our Best.



My Bible presentation page.



The 123rd Scout Troop at Deer Park.

Eating Out

There were other places in Toronto to eat but that was certainly the word to describe them. One would not use the term dining when referring to Murray's or Child's. I do remember as a very young child in the 1930's being taken by my mother to Murray's on Yonge above St. Clair. They had a special child's menu with roast chicken, peas and mashed potatoes in a segmented plate with bunnies on it. At that age, I thought this was quite impressive.

The other great Toronto institution was Fran's, which had its original restaurant on the south side of St. Clair just west of Yonge. It was there for many years. It actually had quite good food of its type, e.g., cinnamon waffles with ice



The original Fran's at St. Clair and Yonge – the counter in the 1940's.

cream on top and maple syrup over all that. Some of us used to stop in there on a Friday night coming home from Cubs (it was a bit out of the way but well worth it).

Milk shakes were another pleasure of those years. The really good places, such as McElraith's Drug Store at Avenue Road and Roxborough, were almost pure ice cream with flavour. It was common then to add a scoop of malt flavouring to the chocolate milk shakes – really decadent.

The other delight was an ice cream soda. To the best of my knowledge these have totally disappeared. They involved a chocolate or fruit-flavoured syrup with appropriate scoops of ice cream and a shot of soda water.

None of this was particularly healthy eating and I remember at one point in my late public school days putting on more weight than I should. One day when I was riding on the streetcar wearing shorts, I overheard a girl a few seats away say to her boyfriend "imagine being so fat you can't keep your legs together". That did it. I put myself on a diet and rapidly trimmed the weight back off. I probably should have thanked the young lady for giving me the incentive to do this.

Perhaps I was prescient in predicting the decline of church attendance but I did hear that in April 2007, the Deer Park congregation agreed to sell its building at 129 St. Clair Avenue West. Stanley Russell would have been horrified.

Appetizers

- Tomato Juice 10 Orange Juice 10
 Seared Prunes (made with Cinnamon Sticks
 and Lemons) 10
 Fruit Salad 15 Grapefruit Juice 10

Soups

— Almost a Meal —

- Campbell's - 10¢
 Tomato Soup
 Scotch Broth Clam Chowder Vegetable

Heins - 15¢

- Cream of Mushroom
 Gumbo Creole Green Pea Chicken Rice
 Cream of Tomato Vegetable Beef

Eggs and Omelettes

— Cooked in Butter —

FRAN Serves Only Grade "A" Strictly Fresh Eggs

- Two Fried Eggs with Toast 20
 Scrambled, Boiled or Poached Eggs
 with Toast 25
 Four Sausages (3) with Eggs and Toast 30
 Ham and One Egg with Toast 20
 Grilled Ham (Two Slices) with Eggs and
 Toast 35
 Hickory-Smoked Country Ham Steak
 with Eggs and Toast 45
 Ham, Cheese, Jelly or Western Omelette
 (Two Eggs) with Toast 30
 Bacon (Three Slices) with Eggs and Toast 35
 Scrambled Eggs (3) with
 Hickory-Smoked Bacon and Toast 45

Waffles and Wheat Cakes

— FRAN'S SPECIALTY —

Served with Syrup and Best Grade Butter

- Three Large Golden Brown Wheat Cakes or
 Large Waffle 20
 Waffle or Wheat Cakes with Sauces,
 Ham or Bacon 30
 Nut Waffle... made with a generous portion
 of Toasted Nuts 30 — A Meal in itself.
 Buttered Toast with Jam or Marmalade 10
 Cinnamon Toast—Well Buttered 10
 Buttered Bread or Toast 05

PLATE COMBINATIONS

— SERVED FROM 11 A.M. TO 2 A.M. —

CHOICE OF BUTTERED WHITE OR WHOLE WHEAT BREAD... Plain or Toasted

FRAN'S FAMOUS HAMBURG STEAK, Gravy and French Fried Potatoes 30¢

As featured on the menu cover, it's easy to understand why this has become one of our most popular orders. Each time Gravy and golden brown French Fried Potatoes included.

CORNERED BEEF HASH... with an Egg on Top 25¢

Made of the choicest grade-Cornered Beef so you'll enjoy every bite. Served with a strictly fresh Egg.

TENDERLOIN STEAK WITH FRENCH FRIED POTATOES AND SALAD 55¢

Choice prime Steer Beef, prepared in our own restaurant. Golden brown French Fried Potatoes, chilled Tomato and Lettuce Salad. This delicious Steak, grilled as you like it, topped off with such creamy Butter. Gravy if requested.

PLAIN OMELET WITH FRENCH FRIED POTATOES 30¢

Made with two strictly fresh Eggs whipped in a bowl, fried in Butter and served with golden brown French Fried Potatoes.

WHEAT CAKES OR WAFFLE WITH SYRUP AND BUTTER 20¢

Our own special recipe which includes whole Milk, best grade Butter and plenty of strictly fresh Eggs.

GRILLED HAM AND EGGS 35¢

HICKORY-SMOKED HAM STEAK, French Fried Potatoes, Salad 50¢

A thick juicy slice of choice hickory-smoked pickle—just sweet Ham, carefully grilled to bring out its full delicious flavor. Served with golden brown French Fried Potatoes and chilled Cabbage Salad.

BAKED BEANS 15¢ — WITH FRANKFURTER 25¢

Big, delicious, highly flavored whole Beans, properly baked.

PORK SAUSAGES AND GRAVY, French Fried Potatoes, Cabbage Salad 30¢

Country style Sausages in rich brown Gravy... French Fried Potatoes and Salad.

HAMBURG PATTY WITH TOMATO AND CABBAGE SALAD 20¢

A refreshing and delicious order of CANADA'S BEST HAMBURG, chilled sliced Tomato and crisp cold Cabbage Salad. Gravy served on Hamburg Party if requested.

SCRAMBLED EGGS (3) WITH HICKORY-SMOKED BACON 45¢

Three strictly fresh Eggs not mixed with Dairy Cream and fried in Butter. Three slices of Hickory-Smoked Bacon. Well buttered Toast.

Special "Three DECK-er" Club Sandwiches

— MADE WITH THREE SLICES OF TOAST —

- TUNA FISH SALAD with Tomato, Crisp Lettuce and Mayonnaise 30¢
 BACON with Crisp Lettuce, Tomato and Mayonnaise 25¢
 EGG SALAD with Sliced Tomato, Bacon, Crisp Lettuce and Mayonnaise 30¢
 PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY with Bacon, Tomato, Crisp Lettuce and Mayonnaise 30¢
 BOILED HAM with Canadian Cheese, Sliced Dill Pickle, Crisp Lettuce and Mayonnaise 25¢
 EGG SALAD with Boiled Ham, Crisp Lettuce and Mayonnaise 30¢

So that you may better enjoy your food... all Griddle items are cooked on a Thermodynamically Controlled Griddle.
 ● Separate Heat Sections for Wheat Cakes... for Meat Orders... for Egg Orders ●

Hot Sandwiches

- Canada's Best Hamburg 10
 Hamburg on Bread with Gravy 15
 Cheeseburg (Hamburg Patty Topped with
 Melted Cheese) 15
 Forest Hill (Cheeseburg with
 3 Strips of Bacon) 25
 Bacon Sandwich 15 Fried Egg 10
 Bacon Sandwich with Lettuce and
 Mayonnaise 20

- Western (Ham, Egg, Chopped Onion) 15
 Canadian Cheese on Toast 15
 Canadian Cheese Grilled 15
 (Toasted on Griddle to melt Cheese inside)
 Bacon and Egg 20 Ham and Egg 20
 Famous Red Hot (Mustard and Relish) 10

HAMBURG DE LUXE - 25¢

- Canada's Best Hamburg Sandwich on Best
 Flavored Brown Gravy and Golden Brown
 French Fried Potatoes

Cold Sandwiches

- Ham (Cold or Grilled) 15
 Combination (Ham and Cheese) 20
 Canadian Cheese on Bread 10
 Peanut Butter 10 Grape Jelly 10
 Peanut Butter and Grape Jelly 15
 Tomato, Lettuce and Mayonnaise 15
 Egg Salad, Lettuce and Mayonnaise 15
 Egg Salad, Lettuce, Tomato, Mayonnaise 20
 Tuna Fish Salad, Lettuce, Mayonnaise 15
 Tuna Fish Salad with Lettuce, Tomato
 and Mayonnaise 20

Hot French Fried Potatoes - 10¢

Cabbage Salad - 5¢-10¢

Desserts

- Coffee Bun—Plain or Toasted 05
 Assorted Pies 10 Pie a la Mode 15
 Cheese Bun—Plain or Toasted 05
 Ice-Cream 10 **Chocolate Sundae 15**
 Maple Sundae 15 Fruit Salad 15
 Home Style Cookies 05

Beverages

- Chocolate Milk Shake 15
 Tea 05 Buttermilk 05 Milk 05
 Coffee (four own blends) 05
 Hot Chocolate 05 Assorted Soft Drinks 06
 Chocolate Drink (cold) 05



The
Ice Cream
Soda.

A Fran's menu from 1940. Note the prices and the cholesterol.

1945

The Japanese are being beaten back on all fronts. The British offensive begins in Burma. The Americans enter Manila.

The Russians take Warsaw and reach the Oder River.

The Yalta Conference between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin takes place. Roosevelt is obviously very frail.

British troops reach the Rhine.

Okinawa is captured.

The last of over a thousand (1,050) V2 rockets fall on Britain as even this last-ditch effort on behalf of the Germans falters.

Roosevelt dies three weeks before the surrender of the Nazis and Harry Truman takes over.

On October 24th, the League of Nations holds its final meeting in Geneva and turns over its assets to the newly formed United Nations.

Mussolini killed by Italian partisans. Hitler commits suicide on April 30th. Berlin surrenders to the Russians on May 2nd.

Germany capitulates on May 7th and VE Day ends the war in Europe on May 8th.

In one of the biggest surprises of 1945, the British election ousts Churchill and Attlee becomes Prime Minister.

U.S. drops Atomic Bombs on Hiroshima on August 6th and Nagasaki on August 9th.

Japan surrenders on August 14th and VJ Day is celebrated around the world.

The V Days in Toronto

The war had hardly touched us in Toronto. The same could not be said for most of the rest of the world. The war dead were estimated at 35 million, plus 10 million in Nazi concentration camps including 6 million Jews.

However, the Canadian war effort had been outstanding. Toronto had played its part in training Commonwealth pilots, producing planes, guns and ammunition and certainly contributed our share of the men and women in all the Armed Forces.



V.E. Day in Toronto.

(Toronto since 1918)

Canada ended the Second World War with the third largest navy in the world in terms of numbers of ships.

I was in Toronto on VE Day and like everyone else, flocked to downtown Toronto. Even though the war in the Pacific raged on, there was a sense of finality to Canada's role as our participation on the Pacific War was small relative to the huge effort in Europe. It is strange the things you remember from that day. At a lull in the celebrations, my parents took me into a small magic shop in the Victoria Arcade and I remember buying a contraption that had four small rectangles of wood connected ingeniously by tape so that they would fold and unfold when you grabbed the top one. I guess as I was still in grade seven, I was still something of a youngster.

We were up north on VJ Day and therefore missed the celebrations.

The Atomic Age

At a very early age I remember becoming quite interested in science. This was not anything that my parents particularly encouraged. I remember buying a book called

Wonders of Science, Simplified and my father remarking that he was glad it was simplified as he did not understand a word of it. I do remember reading enough in books like that, even in public school I had some vague idea of the developments going on in physics, although at that time it was at the level of the discoveries of Ernest Rutherford, sometimes known as ‘the Father of Nuclear Physics’. I knew nothing of the advanced thinking that had gone on in the 30’s in quantum mechanics, led by the likes of Niels Bohr and others. For some reason I remember a promotional brochure put out by General Electric describing the work of J.J. Thomson and his role in discovering the electron. The brochure was full of pictures of the atom, with the electrons flying around in well-defined orbits.

I mention all this because I remember sitting by a radio with my parents when the dropping of the atomic bomb was announced. I recall rather impolitely asking them to be quiet as I wanted to listen to the broadcast. I could not of course fully understand the implications but I do remember saying “this is really important”. Indeed it was.

In Toronto, things started to get back to normal as we entered the era of Progression, the great recovery of the mid 40’s and 50’s.



**Atwater Kent
floor model radio**

*A tube floor model radio
very similar to the one
we had.*

Progression 1946-55

1945 *(continued)*

A New Home for a New Era

By the middle of 1945, with the end of hostilities in sight, my parents decided it was time to leave Woodlawn Avenue. We did not see the district moving up-market, although in another thirty or so years this would prove to be exactly what happened because of its choice location.

Our friends such as Gay and John Reade had relocated from their Woodlawn home to the corner of Forest Glen Crescent and Doncliffe at the north end of Mount Pleasant. My maternal grandfather had passed away in 1944 and left a small but welcome inheritance. We looked at several areas and settled on the convenience of Moore Park. We put an offer in on the house at 36 Hudson Drive for \$11,900 as I recall and this was accepted.

We moved in the summer of 1945 and I transferred to Whitney Public School for my final year of primary education.

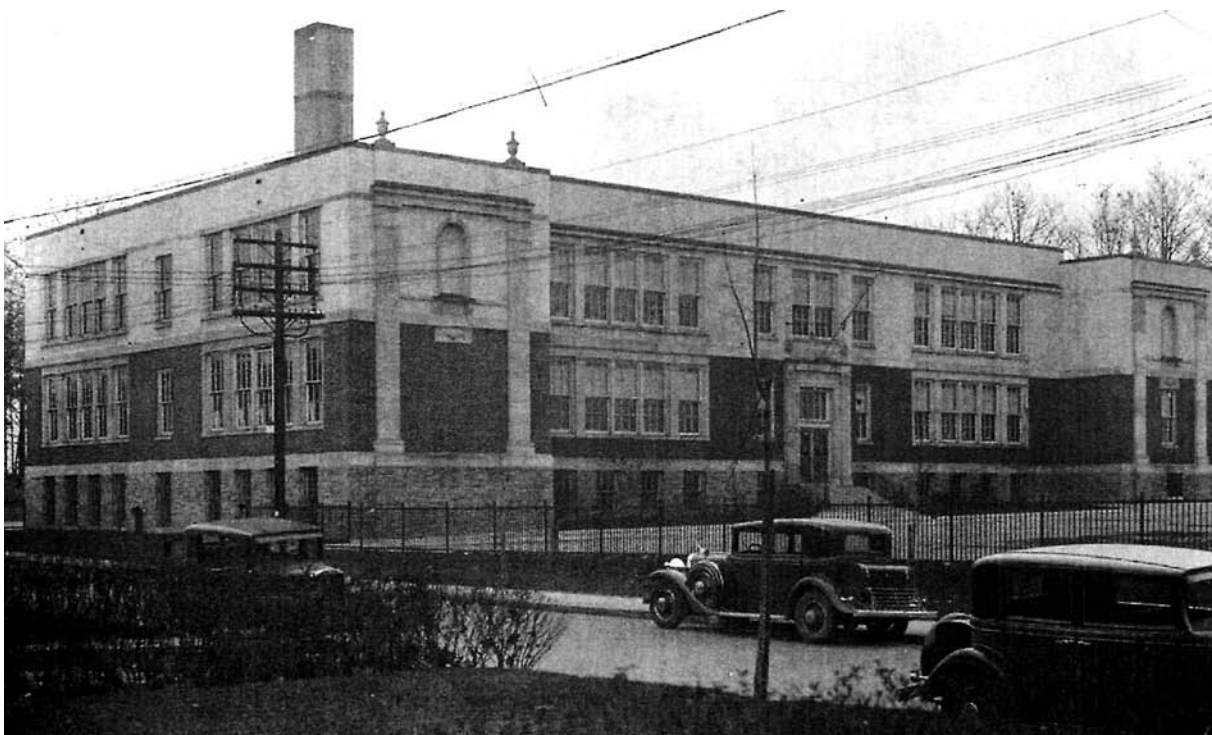


A drawing of our new home on Hudson Drive, 1945.

They were very happy years in Moore Park, which turned out to be a delightful area. It was somewhat farther from shopping but there was an old family-run store called Quinn's, just east of Welland Avenue on the north side of St. Clair. Apparently the Quinns had an agreement with the city that they could stay there as long as they were alive but the area was clearly not zoned for any such use. The store did prove to be an early equivalent to a convenience store, although it did have a limited range of groceries and even meat.

My time at Whitney turned out to be relatively short. I entered grade eight at the usual time in September of 1945 but I did not actually complete my year there. My parents could not afford a private school such as Upper Canada but I applied to and was accepted at the University of Toronto Schools (UTS). As I recall, the annual tuition fee was \$75.00 as the school was largely subsidized by the University of Toronto.

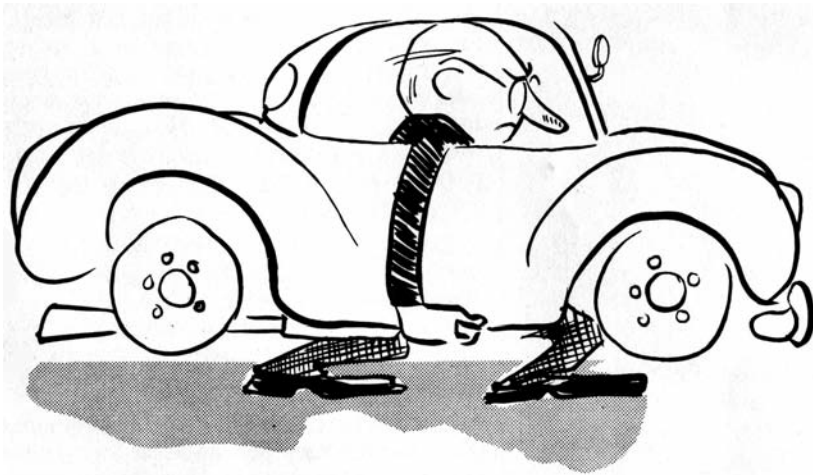
It turned out to be a wonderful choice but it also had the advantage of exempting one from having to write the final public school exams. I was the envy of my Whitney school classmates when I walked out the day I heard that I had been accepted at UTS. I do not even recall being invited back to the graduation. Colonel Bryan, the principal, did make a point of publicly congratulating me as one of Whitney's successful entrants to UTS that year. It was actually slightly embarrassing but it did get me out of my final exams.



Whitney Public School – as it was when I attended.

New Wheels

With the War over in the fall of 1945, my parents were able to trade the old Hudson for a new 1946 Chevrolet. We bought it from a dealer on Avenue Road above Bloor and the salesman, a Jim Cranston, worked very hard to get us delivery of one of the earliest new cars off the line. The problem was we could not get any tires. My father used his pull at Ontario Hydro to get four used Jeep tires, which served us for a month or so until we could get regular issue.



“That’s the last time I deal with Honest Ned”

May 1946—After waiting nearly two years to get a new car, post-war restrictions prevented H. P. from taking delivery until he could borrow a set of old tires from The H.E.P.C., so that he could drive it away.

A new Chev gets its tires.

1946

*The UN General Assembly holds its first session in London on January 7th.
John D. Rockefeller, Jr. donates \$8.5 million for a permanent site in New York.*

Italy ousts its last King, Umberto II, and Japan transfers power from the Emperor to an elected assembly.

The Nuremberg Tribunal sentences ten top Nazis to death, although Goering commits suicide on the evening before his execution.

Juan Perón elected President of Argentina.

Churchill gives his famous 'Iron Curtain' speech.

We watched The Best Years of Our Lives and Hitchcock's Notorious.

We listened to Zip-a-de-doo-dah, Ole Buttermilk Sky, Shoo-Fly Pie and Apple Pan Dowdy as well as Doin' What Comes Natchery.

Life at UTS

The University of Toronto Schools was founded in 1910, largely at the instigation of President Robert Falconer of the University of Toronto. The original intent was to have a boys' school and a girls' school and hence the *S* at the end of its name.

Falconer described UTS in the following way:

“These schools were established as a model for the Province and our ideal has been to do the best, within our limitations, to show the teachers-in-training what a first-class school should be.”

The school was established partly as a training ground for new teachers and also as an experimental school for new text books, courses and methods of teaching.

Dr. W.P. Pakenham, then Dean of the Faculty of Education, laid out the credo for UTS: “The schools must give the boys of Ontario a hatred of sham and cowardice, and love of justice and fair-dealing, and thus create a citizen who the mere thought of personal immorality or wrong-doing in office will cut like a knife. Here lies the duty of the University Schools.”

There was nothing laid back about the University's aim for UTS. This attitude was perfectly reflected in its first headmaster, Henry J. Crawford. He quickly earned the nickname 'Bull' by setting high standards for the school. UTS opened officially on September 12, 1910.

I mention all this because when I walked through the doors in September 1946, there was no doubt that I and my classmates deemed it a privilege to be at UTS. There was never a moment when the pressure to perform was turned off. We all knew that if we did not live up to the high ideals set for the school, we would be back in the public school system and there was always a lineup of people to take our place.

My memories of my years at UTS were clearly those of the teachers at the institution. All seemed to have their own personality and there was no attempt at homogenizing the approach to teaching. It would not be productive to fill this book with reviews of each of these interesting gentlemen (and they were all men), but a few highlights would help to point out the type of teaching that we were exposed to.

UTS had a very ‘English Public School’ approach to education. In addition to French or one of the romance languages, we all took Latin and I even had a short course in ancient Greek (not of much use other than to read Fraternity signs).

I had two Classics teachers. The first was my Ancient History teacher J. Samuel Carlisle, a slight individual who had quite a sense of humour but never smiled. In fact he was dubbed ‘Sad Sam Carlisle’. The other was the dynamic Latin teacher Bernie C. Taylor. He was described correctly as “Handsome, quick with a quip, an imaginative Latin teacher and a football coach”. He was also the author of a book that was tested out on us called *Living Latin*, which tried to make Latin seem relevant by showing its influence on current language and even our institutions. Bernie would organize Roman parties, where we dressed in togas and ate on reclining couches in simulated Latin style.





U.T.S. UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO SCHOOLS
Alumni Association

Vol. 72, No. 2 371 BLOOR STREET WEST, TORONTO, ONTARIO M5S 2R8, (416) 978-3212 FALL 1982



D. L. Mumford



W. B. MacLean



E. J. Collins



K. E. Prentice



R. J. McMaster



R. F. S. Baird



A. D. Lockhart



J. R. Life



C. D. S. Bate



W. A. Stickland



G. W. Cochrane



W. B. MacMurray



G. A. Cline



R. J. Jones



G. A. Kirk



P. H. Tacon



A. McLachlan



B. C. Taylor



W. B. Gray



A. H. Loudon



L. H. Newell



J. L. Gill



J. S. Carlisle

The Staff of U.T.S. - 1951

Joe Gill was an extremely intellectual English teacher and directed many of the Shakespearian productions in the auditorium.

R.J. Jones taught music and languages and conducted the UTS orchestra.

As mentioned earlier, Peter H. Tacon taught art. We even had a shop teacher, Archie McLaughlan. He was a wiz at teaching manual training to a group of relatively untalented young boys, but such a course was felt to be a logical complement to the strenuous academic program.

Mathematics was of course very important and was taught with an iron hand, leading to the naming of W.B. MacLean as 'Nails MacLean'. Don Mumford, who at the time of writing is still alive, inevitably taught with a ruler in his hand and was not beyond using it to get the attention of a student with a wandering mind.

There was a great emphasis on English and Hal Newell led a rather stilted course in English. He would not read any of our essays until they were written out 'in smooth'. He got the nickname 'Smoothie Newell'.

Naturally, athletics and physical training (PT) played a big role. G.W. 'Gib' Cochrane, who had arrived at the school in 1923 as a swimming instructor, took over as the Director of the Sports Program. Gib was not very tall, quite stout and smoked incessantly. I am not sure he was much of a role model, but then I did all I could do to dodge his classes in any case.

The science faculty had attracted some excellent men. Art Loudon taught biology as well as coaching the intramural football team, which was about as athletic as I ever got. Uncle Art could certainly make biology very interesting.

Barry Gray taught chemistry. He was one of the best science teachers I ever had. He came to a tragic end in 1956, after I had graduated. He had saved his two daughters from drowning but in the effort he himself died.

The physics teacher was a war hero, Colonel George Cline. He taught to an ancient curriculum and with my interest in new advances in physics, I found the course quite boring.

I have saved the best for the last. Andy Lockhart was probably the best teacher I ever had. He inspired my interest in history by making it relevant to understanding why the world is the way it is today. He always had his pipe lit in his office and you could visit him at any time. He would regularly invite you across the street for a coffee and a conversation on some topic that you tended to remember years later.

The headmaster of the school during my tenure was W. Brock McMurray. He ran the school in its full English tradition and would regularly start off the Monday morning assemblies with some message about how wonderful UTS was. He always prefaced these

homilies by saying it is with “pardonable pride” that I tell you that our football team won, or whatever the event might have been.

He was ably assisted by Gertrude Seldon, who had been secretary to four head masters from 1921 to 1951. She was a mother to the boys at the school and I remember her as having a fine sense of humour and being full of fun. She somewhat offset the rather austere image of ‘the Brock’. She passed away in her 102nd year in 1982.



E. Gertrude Seldon

The passing of Miss Gertrude Seldon, in her 102nd year, stirs many memories and many feelings. Secretary to four headmasters, Crawford, Althouse, Lewis and MacMurray, from 1921 to 1951, her name is ineluctably linked with their stature in office, and her consistent attention in the office to the needs of the school linked three decades of U.T.S. history.

That Gertrude Seldon remained a significant and warm presence for our Alumni -- Old Boys of course, to her -- after her retirement thirty-one years ago, is her best U.T.S. memorial. The only woman to be made an honorary director of the Association and for twenty-seven years the only “Old Girl” of U.T.S., her position was unique, as was her influence on the boys and faculty of the school for so many years.

What was Miss Seldon like? Others have known her better than I, but I had sufficient time with her in the twenty years since my arrival at U.T.S. to discover what I think many have recognized and shared. She had a quick and startlingly lively mind, a fine sense of humour and a great love of fun. She was warm, and good will to all emanated from her, expressed best, perhaps, in her smile. Gertrude was strong minded and shrewd; she was also flexible and forward looking. She was generous, and as U.T.S. knows so well, she was loyal. Her interest in the school and the boys endured.

I last saw Gertrude Seldon at the Alumni Dinner in October of 1978. She was in happy form, looking many years younger than her ninety-seven, and adorned as usual with many strings of pearls and with a small head piece of bright feathers and sequins in her reddish pale hair. She was full of questions about the school and especially about the first co-ed graduating class. She had said to me several years before, and I wrote her words down, on the matter of girls in the school: “Well, it will seem very strange to me, but surely it is time. I wish I had had a chance to go to U.T.S.” How interesting it is that one of the names that particularly adorns the history of our first forty years is that of a woman.

Gertrude Seldon, 1881-1982

As far as is known, Gertrude Seldon's last few years were very quiet. She ceased to live in Toronto and friends and alumni were not easily able to be in touch with her. My last direct contact was a brief note from her in response to a letter I had written for her ninety-eighth birthday. Two years ago the Directors of the Association, aware that her 100th birthday was imminent, were successful in arranging to have flowers delivered to her. A message came back to say that Gertrude “was very pleased” to have been remembered. It is our loss, and a sad fact, that during these past few years her friends and her old school have not been in touch with her. She has been specially missed on the occasion she specially enjoyed, the annual dinner.

Gertrude Seldon's image will be clearly present in the mind of every young man, and every teacher, who shared years with her at U.T.S. Gratitude for all she gave and all she meant may best be expressed by calling forth that image. She was, it must be said again, unique. The concluding words of a message she was asked to write for “Sixty Years On, U.T.S. 1910-1970” express her graciousness, her love of U.T.S., and her habitual looking ahead.

“Need I say that I treasure beyond words the privilege I have of being the solitary “old girl” in the Old Boys’ Association and my official standing on the executive of honorary secretary-treasurer. At the annual reunions I still see in the faces of the men, the boys I once knew so well, and what is so satisfying at the ripe old age of 87 is knowing that in many cases I am to many of them still the same old Miss Seldon who passed on admit slips to save countless lives.

May I offer my own humble congratulations to the faculty and students of the school on achieving this sixtieth anniversary and add the perennial birthday wish - and many more of ’em?

Donald Gutteridge,
Principal

UTS only taught grades nine through thirteen in those days. The first class picture is likely of class 2A. As noted when commenting on Brown School, this shows a remarkably homogeneous group. Again, without naming all the members of that class, I might pick out in the front row (with the running shoes) Bill Corcoran, who was subsequently my Best Man. To his left is Bill Saunderson, who went on to become the Ontario Minister of Industry amongst many other accomplishments. At the left end of the second row with the glasses is C. Barry H. Watson, likely the top scholar in the school. Barry was brilliant in mathematics and we all predicted he would find a career as a nuclear physicist. Instead he went into Actuarial Science and subsequently headed the Association in the United States. I am in the middle of that second row, and at the far end is Bill Stinson who went on to be President of Canadian Pacific.

In the back row, third from the left, also with glasses, is Bob Wright who became head of the Ontario Securities Commission. The others tended to have equally distinguished careers in a variety of fields.

It was assumed that if you went to UTS you went on to University and indeed this turned out to be almost 100% each year. The majority seemed to go to the University of Toronto but many went elsewhere. For some reason, in the first three years the top class was the Form A. For the last two years being in Form 4B or 5B was the place to be (no pun untended). The final class picture is of 5B (on the next page). In the front row, fifth from the left, is Peter Russell who went on to become a professor at the University of Toronto, specializing in constitutional law and one of the country's authorities in this area.



Class 2A.

Even the school cheer reflected the dedication to excellence:

Themistocles, Thermopylae,

The Peloponnesian War,

X squared, Y squared,

H₂SO₄, Greek verbs,

Latin verbs,

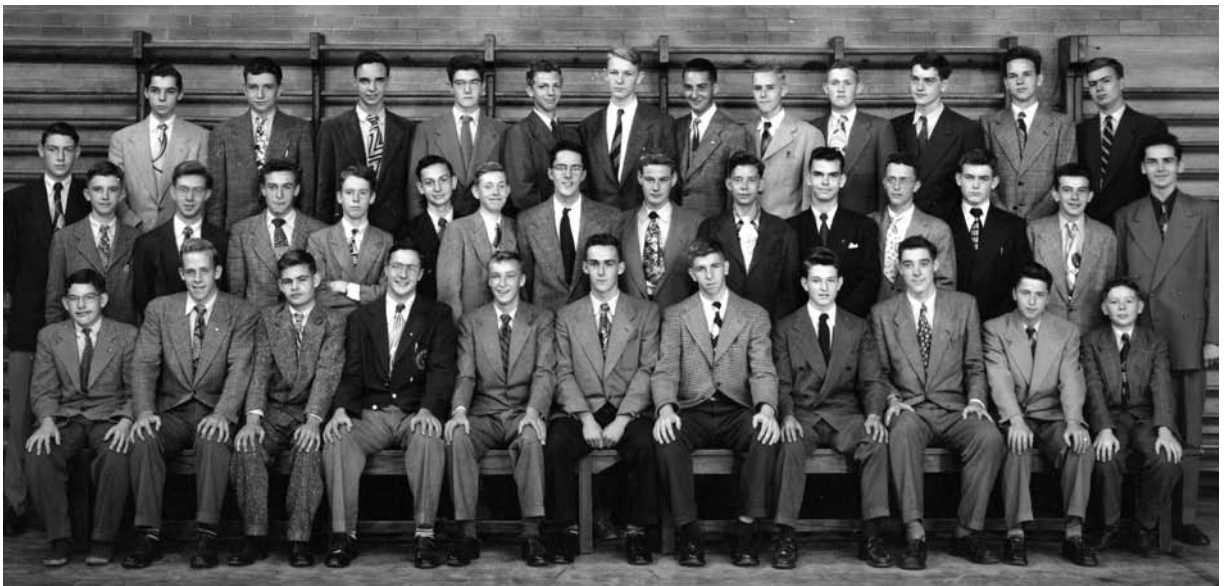
Ancient history,

UTS, UTS,

The Schools of Varsity.

It was not all hard work. A lot depended on your attitude. Mine was slightly irreverent.

First, I disliked regimentation of any kind. My career in the UTS Cadet Corp. was anything but stellar. Major Dadson, who also taught English, took on the job of trying to get this group of students to learn some of the rudiments of military life. This involved dressing up in scratchy and uncomfortable army khakis and periodically parading down to the Armouries, then as I recall on University Avenue. I quickly discovered that if I joined the First Aid platoon, I did not actually have to march but rather stood at the side waiting for some of my comrades to collapse from the heat (which they did reasonably



Class 5B.

regularly). I also recall having to walk through Chinatown to get to the Armouries. The temptation to buy Chinese fireworks (such as squibs) was overwhelming. At one point during a solemn ceremony led by the good Major, we managed to light a string of these to the delight of the rest of the corps. As no one would own up to this dastardly deed, the whole corps was sentenced to another hour of marching around the Armouries. It was worth it.

UTS used to have a Cross-Country run, which they held in High Park. Everyone in the school was expected to be involved and for an anti-athlete like me, this was a bit much. A couple of friends and I would regularly start off the race with great vigour, cut out part way through for a milkshake and then take a shortcut back to the finish line. The staff undoubtedly knew what was going on but did not seem to feel it was worthwhile making a big thing of it. Secondly, we were expected to participate in the annual Shakespeare play and similar events. I managed to capitalize on my growing interest in music by participating in a ragtag Shakespearian chorus at intermission – I was asked to research the music. This seemed easier than memorizing Shakespeare.



My excursion into Shakespeare – third from the left.

One of my voluntary involvements was to enter the extemporaneous public speaking contest. I thought that it would show the right school spirit if I did this. It involved being given a topic at the last minute and then being required to speak of it. I had researched a number of humorous stories that I thought would fit almost any situation and indeed, they did. I only came in second as I was deemed to have spoken somewhat off topic. Andy Lockhart, my favourite teacher, thought I should have won, but then he had a great sense of humour.

There were also Football Dances and the like, although these were rather stuffy affairs usually held in the gymnasium and under strict supervision. Drinking of course was not allowed, sex was taboo, and the dancing was strictly according to Mrs. Van Valkenberg's dancing school routines. It was all pretty tame.

A frank assessment of my years at UTS would, however, be somewhat mixed. Many of the teachers were outstanding but a number tended to 'teach to the exams'. It was expected that everyone would do well on their Senior Matriculation. Many of the teachers did not encourage innovative thinking and I always viewed this as a shortcoming of the rigorous approach employed at the school.



*A U.T.S. football dance.
 Bill Ballyn and Deidrie.
 George and Lou Martin.
 Dave Armstrong and Pattie Eckhart.
 Russ Howland and Marg McCulloch.*

1947

General George Marshall, U.S. Secretary of State, launches a European recovery program later known as the Marshall Plan.

Britain's proposal to divide Palestine between the Arabs and the Jews is rejected by both sides. The question is referred to the UN.

India is proclaimed an independent nation and immediately partitioned into India and Pakistan, with immense bloodshed.

Princess Elizabeth, heir to the British throne, marries Phillip Mountbatten, who then became Duke of Edinburgh.

Thor Heyerdahl sails on a raft from Peru to Polynesia in 101 days, proving the feasibility of prehistoric migration.

Bell labs develops the transistor.

Tennessee Williams wins the Pulitzer Prize for A Streetcar Named Desire.

The Diary of Ann Frank is published, as is Mickey Spillane's I, the Jury.

We watched Gentleman's Agreement and sang songs such as Almost Like Being in Love (it was the era of the ballad).

Hockey Night in Canada

My father was occasionally given hockey tickets by some of his friends or business associates. While I was obviously no athlete, any Canadian boy would have been thrilled to be at Maple Leaf Gardens on a Saturday night to watch the Toronto Maple Leafs at their very best. These were the days when Captain Syl Apps led the team in a league that had only six teams – the Montreal Canadiens, Boston Bruins, Detroit Red Wings, New York Rangers, Chicago Blackhawks and of course the Leafs. With this small number of teams, you got to know all the players on all the teams and they tended to stay with the team they started with. Syl Apps was with the Leafs from 1936 to 1948 and that was the norm.

It was also the era of Turk Broda in goal and the likes of Teeder Kennedy and Howie Meeker.

My recollection is that Syl Apps only dropped his gloves twice in all those years. In those days the players skated, passed and rarely fought. I hope I am forgiven for recalling these as the 'good old days'.

Idling the Summer Away

At about this time, we spent our summers at Thunder Bay Beach on Georgian Bay. For some time, we stayed at the Thunder Bay Inn, a large wooden structure run by the Marchildon family. It was built in the 1920's and by the time we were there, was being run by Alfred and Marie Marchildon.

Thunder Bay Beach was not far from Midland and even closer to Penetanguishene. The beach itself was horseshoe in shape and one of the nicest sand beaches one could imagine. The water was shallow and ideal for swimming.

One could take wonderful day trips to places such as Christian Island, Beckwith Island and Hope Island. To the east was another fascinating spot known as Giants Tomb Island. On Christian Island there was an active Indian community and we used to be able to buy the most incredible birch bark artefacts woven with porcupine needles and sweet grass. Many years later, I purchased a similar item at the McMichael for about \$400.00. I expect the ones we bought at that time were probably about 25 cents.



Map of Lake Huron, Georgian Bay by H.W. Bayfield for the Admiralty.

A map of Thunder Bay from 1864 – the Bay was first called Douglas Bay.

For a couple of years we also rented a small cabin called Royal Oak, which was owned by the Marchildons. Originally this had served as a general store, but turned out to be a delightful place right next to the main hotel.

There were cottages around the horseshoe but these were all well back from the water, leaving the beach free for anyone to use. At the west end of the beach the McNamara family had a large estate with beautiful grounds and an artificial stream running through it. The McNamara family as I recall had made their money in the paving business.

The General Store was hardly luxurious but served the community well and saved too many trips into Penetang or the nearby small village of LaFontaine. The store had a White Rose gas pump that as I recall was manually operated by a pump handle on one side.

There was also a small groceteria and post office run by the Dubeau family that was something of a centre for the community.

Bill Northcott, in a book on Thunder Bay Beach, quotes Gordon Lightfoot's enthusiasm for Thunder Beach as expressed in his 'Christian Island' lyrics. To quote a bit:

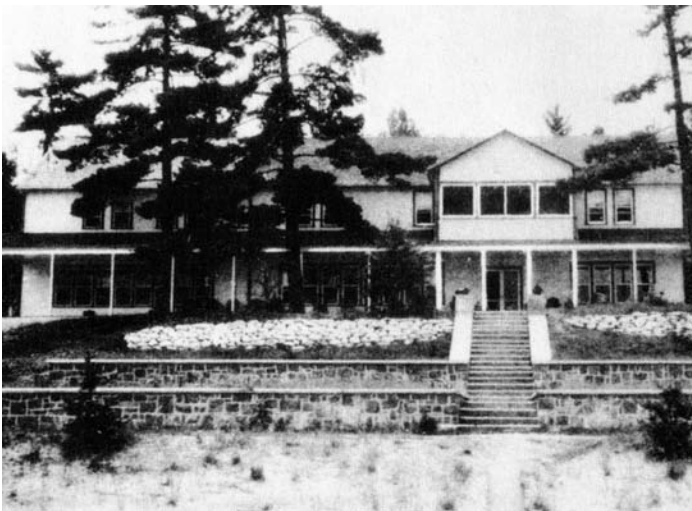
"I'm sailin' down the summer wind,

I've got whiskers on my chin,

And I like the mood I'm in,

As I while away the time of day,

In the lee of Christian Island."



Thunder Bay Inn.



The General Store.

My mother, sister Betty and I would spend at least a month and sometimes longer at Thunder Bay, with my father coming up on the weekends or whenever he could. When we were in Royal Oak cottage, I was able to bring up some of my school friends who I believe found the place as enjoyable as I did.

This was reciprocated. For example, a good friend of mine who I met originally at Whitney, Jock Cleghorn, invited me up to Ahmic Lake to their family cottage. It was in places like this that you actually learned to pump water by hand, utilize an outdoor privy complete with a bucket of lime (I could never exactly understand the need for two-holers, as I was never sure with whom you were supposed to share your enthronement).

It was a place that introduced me to Coleman lamps, with their fragile mantles, that actually gave off a very bright light compared to the old coal-oil lamps I had been used to at Port Bolster. In a way I missed the coal oil, as we used to dip bull rushes in it and make torches.

It was also a time for beach parties with marshmallow roasts.

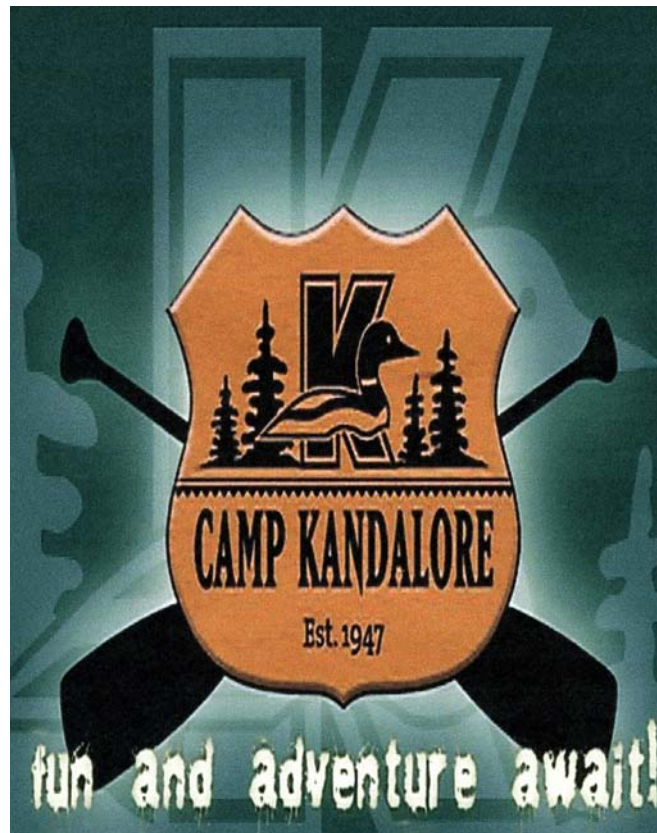
I did not spend much time at professional boys' camps. However, given my scouting experience, I was invited to spend a couple of weeks at Camp Kandalore near Minden. This camp, which still operates, was established in 1947 and they needed some scouts as guinea pigs for the camp. While it had the usual run of activities, although these were very much in a start-up mode, we also worked quite hard to develop the camp, e.g., hauling rocks to build a pier.



Some friends at the beach in a Jeep. I am behind Bucky Summers who is at the wheel with my mother anxiously watching from the Hotel verandah.

Given my dislike of overly organized activities, I only repeated this experience once the next year and then gave up on camp life. I do recall in 1948 I was selected as one of the group leaders and had to take responsibility for getting the other campers back home, amongst other things.

However, more exciting summers were to come.



Camp Kandalore – 1947.

1948

Gandhi assassinated.

The Jewish State comes into existence, with Weizmann as President and Ben-Gurion as Premier.

The USSR stops road and rail traffic between Berlin and the West. The Berlin airlift begins.

Harry Truman elected President of the U.S.

Chiang Kai-shek re-elected President of China.

We watched Red Shoes, The Bicycle Thief and Orson Welles in Macbeth.

Kiss Me Kate by Cole Porter is the hit musical in New York.

We listened to Nature Boy, All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth, and Buttons and Bows.

Much Music

I was actually listening to more than *Buttons and Bows*. My interest in classical music was escalating rapidly, with the wonderful Secondary School Concerts held at Massey Hall under the direction of Sir Ernest MacMillan. He not only conducted a very popular and inexpensive series of concerts for high school students, but also explained the music with a very humorous narration.

This further exposure to the classics led to my talking my parents into buying my first phonograph. My only earlier experience with this was an old wind-up machine that the Cleghorns had at Ahmic Lake. My new device was a model of simplicity – just a turntable, a pickup arm and a very primitive speaker.

That first machine played only 78 rpm records and the needles had to be replaced frequently. Most needles those days were made of steel, although for a short time cactus needles were used and were supposed to be somewhat kinder to the record grooves.

This early machine played only one record at a time, i.e., there was no automatic changer, although it would play both 10- and 12-inch records. The old shellac-based records were recorded on both sides, which meant that any collection



A 1940's pick-up arm – just like the one on my first phonograph.

of music by an artist, e.g., Glen Miller, would have to come with four or five records in an album.

The reproduction was not great and was subject to all kinds of background noises.

As I was starting to entertain some of my friends at home, I built up a reasonable collection of popular music but clearly went for the 12-inch RCA Victor Red Label Classical discs. These eased me into classical music, with such clunkers as Bluebird of Happiness.

A great improvement was underway with the invention (by Peter Goldmark) of the long-playing record. The much finer grooves and the slower speed (33 rpm) provided a much greater density of music on each disc – they were still recorded on both sides. They did require a new turntable and by now the needles were tipped with either sapphire or diamond. Stereo had yet to make an appearance. I actually bought my first LP in 1949 (*South Pacific*) before I had an instrument on which I could play it, but this did lever my parents into upgrading to a radio phonograph console. In those days these were rather attractive pieces of furniture, with a tip-down radio receiver on one side and the phonograph on the other. The speaker systems were much better, albeit still in mono.

In fact the set we got not only had an automatic changer but could play the newly announced, but short-lived, 45 rpm records with the hole in the centre large enough to accommodate the automatic changing mechanism. The 45 rpm records were really only suitable for single songs and were a disaster for longer classical works. The proponents of the 33 rpm LP came out with a seven-inch version to counter this, and the 45 rpm units faded quickly.



The short-lived 45 rpm changer – 1949.

Expanding Our Horizons

At UTS, I seemed to circulate with a group of would-be intellectuals. Our reading habits were somewhat leading edge. When Smoothie Newell, our English teacher, said we could bring whatever book we liked to read to one of his classes, I brought Huxley's *Brave New World* and I am not sure that Newell was even aware of it. However, new ideas were rampant in that optimistic era following the end of the war. To explore this, a small group of us, comprised of Ted Hadwen, Dave Spendlove, Austin Fricker and I would get together on Saturday afternoons to discuss some pre-chosen topic.

With more chutzpah than common sense, we would regularly invite some well-known authority in whatever the field was we wanted to discuss. Amazingly enough the

likes of Peter Newman actually showed up. Perhaps they were just curious at the audacity of this group of young high school students.

Ted Hadwen was the son of a university professor. He was very bright but something of a loner. In the latter days at UTS, he and I vied for the attention of Wendy Michener, daughter of Roly (who would later become Governor General, 1967-74). Wendy died tragically early of a heart condition and Ted subsequently married a friend of hers, Bambi Higgins. He taught in the U.S. and became very personally involved in the Los Angeles race riots. He ended his career lecturing at the University of Guelph.



Wendy Michener on the left.

Austin Fricker was the son of the Director of the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, and David Spendlove was very interested in religion, subsequently becoming a Christian Scientist. For this latter addiction, David did come in for some intellectual ribbing from my future wife Glenna, who would egg him on by asking questions such as “If faith is all you need to cure everything, do you have fillings in your teeth?” Or “Why do you wear glasses?” Pointed but perceptive questions. His answer by the way was that his faith was not yet strong enough.

1949

In China, the Communist Army resumes its offensive against the Nationalist troops. Chiang Kai-shek removes his forces to Formosa and the Communist People's Republic is proclaimed under Mao Tse-tung with Chou En-lai as Premier.

The North Atlantic Treaty is signed in Washington and the Council of Europe is established at Strasbourg.

The Berlin Blockade is officially lifted and the Berlin Airlift ends after 277,264 flights. The German Federal Republic comes into being with Bonn as its capital.

With the U.S. withdrawal of its occupying forces in South Korea, the UN warns of the danger of civil war there.

Jawaharlal Nehru becomes Prime Minister of India.

Rodgers and Hammerstein take New York with their hit musical, South Pacific.

We watch Orson Welles in the Third Man. All The Kings Men takes the Academy Award.

In addition to all the songs from South Pacific, we listened to Riders in the Sky, Diamonds Are a Girls Best Friend and Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer.

Go West Young Man

My parents were not great travellers. My father suffered from claustrophobia and never flew. He did decide that I should see something of the rest of Canada and he, my mother and I took off for a motor trip across Canada to British Columbia. It is one thing to read about the size of our country but quite another to drive across it. We essentially stayed in motels, which were the rage in those days, as my father never felt entirely comfortable in upscale hotels. We did, however, stay at the Banff Springs Hotel and I soon found out why such hotels were not to his liking. We pulled up in front of the main door and when the bellhop opened the trunk, a roll of toilet paper we had been travelling with fell out and proceeded to unravel down the driveway. I thought it was funny but my father was mortified.

We played golf at the Banff Springs Course. My mother was quite athletic but I know where my non-athletic genes came from. My father liked the game but had no real talent for it. The course was everything you might have expected. There really were bears and other wild animals on the course, and one simply had to wait until they moved out of the way before one hit a shot.

For some reason, taking pictures was not as common as it is today (there were no cell



The 1949 Chev during our trip out West.



Photo taken with the Kodak folding camera.

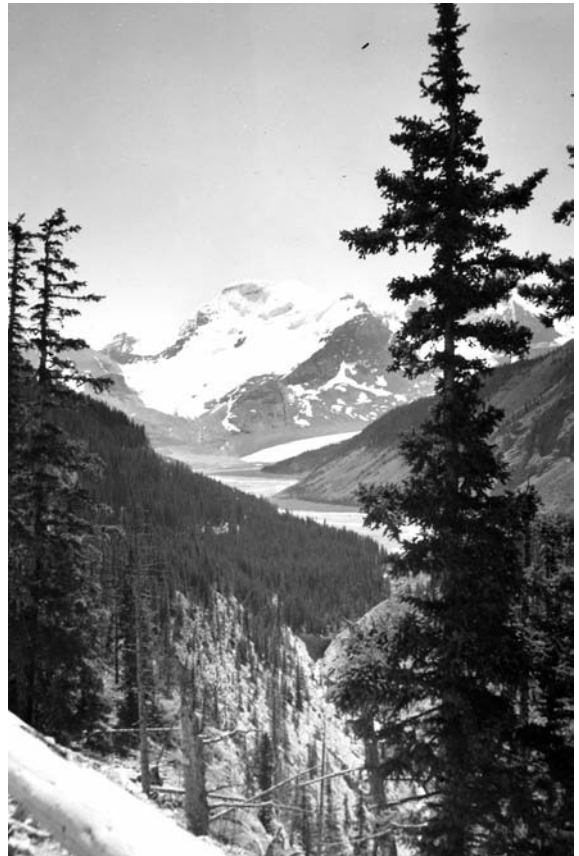


Photo taken with the Kodak folding camera.

phone cameras or anything that convenient). My father had borrowed a postcard-sized camera from the office. It was the kind with bellows. It was clunky to use and as I recall you only got six shots on a roll of film, but the results were excellent and a couple of examples are on the previous page.

Although we did also take a brief driving trip to New York, most of my instincts to travel must have come from elsewhere. I made a mental note to 'see the world' and have been endeavouring to live up to that promise I made to myself ever since.

Summer Jobs

Just about every high school student applied for jobs at the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE). In those days it was the place to be in the last couple of weeks of August and it was a good way to make some pocket money before returning to school.

The crowds attending the CNE were huge, as I recall going well over two million visitors. The Toronto Star used to track this until the attendance started to drop off so badly; I presume the CNE asked them to stop.

The attached picture from 1947 shows the Prince's Gate and some of the crowd enjoying the sunshine. Note the Union Jack as still being the predominant flag.

In those days one of the great attractions of the CNE was the Food Building. The crowds here were enormous, partly because just about every booth gave away samples. Some of those, like Staffords, would give away bags that you could use to carry your loot, and tiny samples of Neilson's chocolates were always a hit.

My first job there was serving soft drinks at Kate Aitken's Teen Town. This was not a very mentally demanding job as it only involved restocking a large Coca Cola cooler, filling it with ice and then doling out the drinks as people bought them.



The Prince's Gate in 1947.

The next year I graduated to the midway. Here I was one of the operators for the Bill Beasley Games. I was in charge of a game that involved pushing a small cart back and forth along a track. The cart had a small semi-flexible rubber flap on one side and on the same side were a series of pegs. The idea was to stop the car with the rubber flap opposite the prize you wanted to win. There were rubber bumpers at either end and if you gave the car a good shove it would bounce back and forth a couple of times before finally coming to a stop.

Needless to say, if a particularly cute young girl came along, one could get pretty good at stopping it where she wanted (not that this really did me any good with getting a date, as they were usually already with someone).

The CNE, I might add, was a great attraction in those almost pre-TV days. The Grandstand show included such slapstick fare as *Hellzapoppin'* starring Ole Olsen and Chic Johnson. In the Grandstand there were also events such as car demolition derbies and the like.

There was something for everyone. The older people loved the Automobile Building where new models were first displayed. The little kids loved the rides. Everyone seemed to eat the candy floss.



Samples at Neilson's.



Giving away samples in 1947 – Stafford's.



Samples at Neilson's.

Getting Bowled Over

In an attempt to make something of an athlete of me, my father used to take me bowling. This is the one sport at which he actually excelled and he and my mother bowled in a local league.

I actually found it was fun. It was five pin bowling but the alleys were nothing like those we have today. There were no automatic pin-setting machines. There were pin boys who cleared any leaning pins between shots and then reset them at the end.

At the end of the evening, it was common to throw a 25-cent tip down the alley to the pin boys – not much reward for what was actually an evening of quite hard work.

1950

The Cold War was in full swing. Senator Joseph McCarthy advises President Truman that the State Department is riddled with Communists. Congress passed the McCarran Act, calling for severe restrictions against Communists.

Communist China occupies Tibet. Tibet appeals to the UN but to no avail.

Truman instructs the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission to proceed with developing the Hydrogen Bomb.

On June 25th, North Korean forces invade South Korea and capture Seoul, just south of the 38th Parallel. The UN Security Council passes the 'Uniting for Peace' resolution authorizing the first major UN cooperative forces venture to repel the North Koreans. The only reason such a resolution could be passed was the absence of the USSR and their inevitable veto of any such action. The Russians had walked out of the UN at that time and for once their timing was bad.

General Douglas MacArthur was appointed Commander of the UN forces in Korea. They recapture Seoul and temporarily cross the 38th Parallel. However, they quickly encounter Chinese forces that have come to assist the North Koreans. The UN forces are almost driven out of South Korea but MacArthur engineers an audacious landing at Inchon, up the Korean Peninsula, cutting off the North Korean troops.

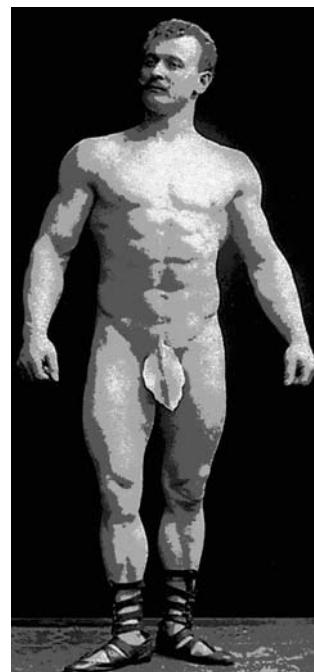
We watched Sunset Boulevard and All About Eve won the Academy Award.

We listened to some dreadful songs such as If I Knew You Were Comin' I'd-a Baked a Cake, A Bushel and a Peck and Goodnight Irene.

The New 'Me'

About this time, I decided that I should get into better physical shape. I thought one way to do this was to buy some exercise equipment, and managed to find a set of tension springs with handles that I was sure would give me the muscular body I thought I deserved. The individual who developed this particular set and whose picture is on the box was Eugen Sandow. He was a famous strongman who made his name at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. He was, frankly, a rather gay-looking guy although I gather he was capable of amazing feats of strength, e.g., lifting a pony off the stage with one arm. What amazed me even more was how he was able to keep the fig leaf on in some of his nearly nude poses – this was before the era of Scotch tape and so I can assume he must have used glue!

Eugen Sandow and the Fig Leaf.



In any case the real inspiration was not Sandow but of course Charles Atlas. The attached picture shows Mr. Atlas in 1938. I had seen the famous cartoon ad that he ran to publicize his course on muscle building. You will recall the sequence where a skinny guy with a gorgeous girl is on a beach and a large bully kicks sand in his face. When he complains to the bully he is promptly pushed aside and his girl expresses the wish that her date was a 'real man'.

After discovering Dynamic Tension, the skinny guy comes to look like Charles Atlas and the next time the beach incident happens, he pulverizes the bully to the delight of his adoring girlfriend.

Unfortunately, in my case it did not all work out as planned. Several of the exercises involved fastening hooks to the wall so that the springs could be attached and one could exercise by straining against the springs while they were attached to the wall. The only place I could find to attach them was the door frame. This worked only for a short while until I pulled the entire door frame off, much to the chagrin of my parents.

I decided I had better 'love the body I am in'.

Besides, Eugen Sandow died in 1925 pulling a car out of a ditch and so body building did not do him much good either.

Flirting in the Fifties

My real reason for wanting to look like Charles Atlas was of course to be more attractive to the opposite sex. UTS, being an all boys school, meant that we had to look elsewhere and our major source of dates was a group of private girls' schools, e.g., Havergal, Bishop Strachan and Branksome. There was a group of young ladies in the Poplar Plains area of Toronto just south of St. Clair Avenue. They attended a variety of well-known private schools and formed a pool from which my friends and I seemed to be able to draw dates. Marg McCullough went to Branksome, Pat Eckardt went to Havergal, and others such as Liz Harris and Ginny Holden went to Branksome or elsewhere. One who caught my eye was Liz Holwell who actually lived on Poplar Plains Road. She and I started to date more often and as my time at UTS was drawing to a close, we decided to 'go steady'. I pinned her with my UTS school pin. She was a lovely girl and we ended up going together for several years.



Charles Atlas.



Liz Holwell.

The entertainment in those days, beyond the usual dull school dances, was at places such as Casa Loma. We usually went on group dates.

The music we danced to was the soppy ballads of the era livened up with the Bunny Hop. On occasion we would go to Fantasy Farm, which stills exists, or Mart Kenney's Ranch where we even indulged in square dancing. Otherwise the dancing was predominantly shuffling around in slow motion, more of a chance to snuggle your girl than perform anything athletic.

It was also the era of house parties. Entertaining at home was common and we regularly held small house parties at 36 Hudson Drive. We simply rolled up the rug and danced in the living room, to be followed by a late evening supper.

As we moved into our final year at UTS, most of us were of drinking age. The favourite drink in those days was rye and ginger ale. However, if we ventured to such commercial establishments as the Club Kingsway, the Brant Inn or the Palais Royale, we had to 'brown bag' our bottles into the establishment. You could then order mixes and quietly add the alcohol under the table.

Everyone knew what was going on but in those days the establishments were not usually licensed. In fact when they finally were able to serve drinks, it had to be with a meal of some kind. This was a bit of a joke, as the usual way the establishment got around this was to require you to buy a cheese plate. This came out covered with Cellophane and cheese, which I am sure had not been edible for months. No one touched it of course but it did meet the rules.

There were some new establishments opening in Toronto, e.g., the Concerto and the Concertino. These were coffee shops serving a limited variety of specialty brews. It was also possible to find wonderful buffets at places such as the Town and County on Jarvis Street or the newly opened Lord Simcoe Hotel with its Pump Room.

Although we were not big drinkers in those days (I never remember drinking to get drunk), it did add to the fun and we did have a lot of fun in those days.



The Palais Royale – one of the few remaining venues of our youth.

1951

The Korean War was battling to a standstill. General MacArthur proposes bombing Chinese bases north of the Yalu River, and Truman relieves him of his Far East command.

King Abdullah of Jordan is assassinated in Jerusalem.

The actual Peace Treaty with Japan is signed in San Francisco.

Churchill and his Conservatives win the General Election in Britain.

We watched the African Queen, An American in Paris and Marlon Brando in A Streetcar Named Desire.

We listened to Hello, Young Lovers, Getting To Know You, Come On-A My House and Kisses Sweeter Than Wine.

The Summer of '51

My father had arranged for me to get a summer job at his printing shop at Ontario Hydro. Nothing like a little nepotism. It turned out to be a fascinating experience, learning to operate both letterpress and offset presses. The staff in the office took me at face value and I went out of my way to avoid being viewed as the 'boss's son'. I did come in for my usual initiation kidding, however, e.g., suggesting that I mix the various colours of ink together when doing a colour print job.

In fact, my only problem was that I tended to work much faster than the rest of the staff and had to learn to pace myself or it might have become an embarrassing situation. At least it gave me some money for my first year of college.

The Irreligious at the Most Religious

I had settled on political science and economics as something of a compromise. I would probably have preferred philosophy and history but my father thought that economics at least sounded as though it had something to do with business (actually not much). After checking out some of the colleges, I elected to apply to Trinity. In those days you had to write an entrance essay and had to have reasonably good marks. Having gone through UTS helped and quite a number of my UTS peers were going to Trinity as well.

The real reason was that it looked as close to the Oxford/Cambridge approach to education as I could find and because it was difficult to get in, this represented a challenge.

By this time I had put all my faith in atheism but I did not make a point of that when entering the College. I knew I was going to have to take four years of religious knowledge but I did not view that as any problem. Despite my lack of belief, I certainly understood the role that religion plays in history and interpersonal relationships, and I have always found the study of religion quite fascinating.

At the danger of insulting most of my readers, one of my interests was in trying to figure out ‘how in heaven anyone could believe that stuff’, realizing that that expression is something of an oxymoron.

Like UTS, Trinity had a reputation for very high academic standards and regularly had a far larger share of Rhodes Scholars than any other college of its size. Undergraduate gowns were worn to all classes at the college, although I took only a few courses there. Many of my courses were taught by the Department of Economics or Political Science or History at the University of Toronto. This is not too surprising, as the first year of the four-year Honours course required you to take social and philosophical studies with a broad range of subjects. This actually turned out to be a good idea because it exposed me to a number of topics before finally zeroing in on my original choice.



Strachan Hall from across the Quad at Trinity.

It turned out to be a nice balance because courses taken at Trinity were usually to a very small number of students, with a lot of individual attention being paid to the students and ample opportunity for interaction.

On the other hand, courses at the University were often taught to hundreds of students, and even with good lecturers they were just lectures.

I was only a day student but whether or not you were in boarding, you were expected to take part



Residence at Trinity.

in many of the college traditions. The most famous was the annual cake fight, which took place at the gates to the college on the east side. The aim was for the freshman to try to get a piece of cake into the quad, while the sophomores tried to prevent this. All manner of tactics were used, including picking the lightest freshman we could find, giving him the cake and trying to pass him over the heads of the defending sophomores. The sophomores retaliated with tactics such as spreading axle grease on the path leading to the gate and other such devious defences.

It was all in good fun, but what was turning out to be somewhat less amusing was a rather mysterious organization call Episkopon. The legend was that the spirit of Father Episkopon lived in the central tower of the college. The members of the Episkopon cult called upon the freshmen to attend a secret meeting, at which any number of personal comments were made.

Perhaps this practice had been amusing when the college had a very homogeneous population. It became quite racist and antisocial even during my tenure, and was ultimately banned by the college.

The practice is alluded to in Robertson Davies' *Rebel Angels*, although Trinity was never identified as the locale for the story.

Speaking of angels, Trinity had and still has a Faculty of Divinity. This was not a group with which I had a great deal to do and they were viewed with some amusement by most of the rest of the undergraduates. This is perhaps best exemplified by a well-known limerick:

*“There once was a young man from Trinity,
Who sold his sister’s virginity
He buggered his brother, gave twins to his mother
And then he stood first in Divinity.”*



The East Gate – scene of the Annual Cake Fight.



The Chapel at Trinity.

There was no animosity between the Divines and the Secularists, although the former were considered somewhat ‘other worldly’.

Trinity had a number of very good teachers. I particularly recall a Professor Cole who taught Greek and Roman history. In fact this turned out to be a course in Greek history as Professor Cole had no use at all for the Romans. However, as the curriculum said he had to cover Roman history, he did this by inviting a visiting professor from Victoria College for a single two-hour lecture at the end of term. He had concluded that a couple of hours was all that was worth spending on the Romans, whom he regarded as barbarians.

Trinity was perhaps best summed up in its famous school yell:

“We are the men of Trinity, so give ear to us

No new ideas shall ever come near to us

Orthodox. Catholic. Crammed with Divinity

Damn the dissenters. Hoorah for old Trinity.”

At Home

My father and mother enjoyed their many friends and regularly entertained them for bridge games. My father had been a member of the longest running poker club in the city. In 1951, he had the good fortune of drawing a royal straight flush in a game with no wild cards. The irony is that one of the other players had drawn four eights at the same time. In a very gentlemanly fashion, my father exposed the hand and refused to bid up what was clearly a winning combination. (See illustration on next page.)

Because of their interest in cards and social entertaining, my parents had never bought a television set. However, in 1951 my mother won a set in a radio contest. It was an old black-and-white (all that was available) Coronet set, but at least it served to launch the household into the world of TV.



“And that one is

T.V. Contest 1951—Mrs. Fierheller brings television to 36 Hudson Drive by correctly identifying current songs.

My mother winning a TV set.

ONCE IN A LIFETIME

Even certified -

You are hardly expected to believe that H. P. "Finnie" Fierheller filled this Royal Straight Flush with the King of Hearts in a regular Wednesday Night Club, straight poker game, no wild cards, at Ches Butler's home Wednesday April 11th 1951.

Now the sad part - just to make this situation perfect, Harry Taylor in the same deal, caught his fourth eight. Honourable mention - - - - dealer: Pete Taylor.

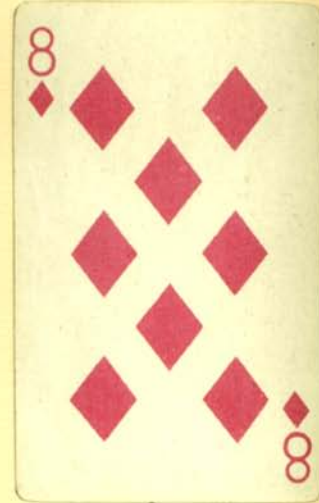
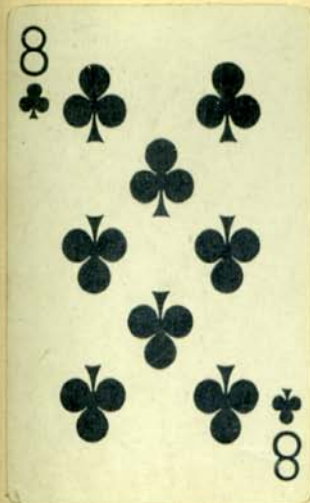


*I was not at this 50
cent's by Fierheller
Dunsmuir.*

*\$5.00 - equal bonus paid
from all the boys -
Not back - Finnie*

Certified

*Pete Taylor
W. Butler
Vince McKeenon
M. D. Lemon
H. P. Taylor
Alec W. Russell.*



My father's winning poker hand.



The 'Political Science' building being turned into a new Royal Conservatory.

1952

King George VI of Britain dies and is succeeded by his daughter Queen Elizabeth II.

Dwight D. Eisenhower resigns as Supreme Commander in Europe and is elected President of the United States.

The flood from East to West Berlin continues, with 16,000 escaping in August alone.

In Egypt, General Naguib seizes power and forms a government. King Farouk abdicates.

Churchill announces that Britain has produced an atomic bomb. Truman announces H-Bomb tests in the Pacific.

In Kenya, the Mau Mau disturbances reach new heights.

Albert Schweitzer wins the Nobel Peace Prize.

*We watched José Ferrer in *Moulin Rouge*, Gary Cooper and Grace Kelly in *High Noon*, and C.B. deMille's *The Greatest Show on Earth*.*

*We listened to *Your Cheatin' Heart*, *It Takes Two to Tango*, and *I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus*.*

Political Science and Economics

Most of my courses were taken at the red brick building on Bloor Street next to Varsity Stadium. It was co-occupied by the Departments of Political Science, Economics and Geography. Its main attractions were the rooms at the top of the tower on the west side, from which one could watch football games or other events, and its proximity to the King Cole Room in the Park Plaza Hotel, which we frequented for beer and conversation. The building is now the new Royal Conservatory, after being extensively renovated.

There were some famous names associated with the Department of Economics although, unfortunately, Harold Innes passed away in 1952 and I therefore had little contact with him. Others were quite inspiring, e.g., Vince Bladen with his *Introduction to Political Economy*. There was a Professor Helleiner who taught economic history. It was a crossover course that related broad economic trends to the way people actually lived, particularly in the Middle Ages. It further spurred my interest in history.

One of the most amazing professors, however, was at Victoria College. I had enrolled in a course without paying too much attention to the actual content. It was called modern history. First it was not exactly modern by my standards (1485 to 1763) but the more amazing thing was that the lecturer was legally blind. He had Braille notes, but his

memory was such that he rarely used these. More alarming was the fact that he was so independent-minded that he would not accept help from anyone. After one lecture, he misjudged the platform and fell rather heavily to the ground. He waved off any offer of assistance and found his way out of the lecture hall.

Economics turned out to be largely mathematics. I had to take a catch-up course in calculus that was taught by a young teaching assistant who was a terrible teacher. I went to see Professor Pounder (father of a great friend of mine in later years), who was Head of the Department of Mathematics at the U of T, and he referred me to a book by a Sylvannius P. Thompson called *Calculus Made Easy*. With the help of this, I managed to get through the course. I also had to take a course in statistics, which actually proved to be quite useful in understanding the uses and abuses of economics.

The Social Side

We continued to have an active social life and I continued to go steady with Liz. As the family now seemed to be slightly better off, our venue for dates sometimes included the Imperial Room in the Royal York with Moxy Whitney and his Orchestra, the Old Mill and dances at the Oak Room in the King Edward. (See the Old Mill menu on the next page.)



The Old Mill – still a favourite.

I felt that I should do something athletic and as I had always enjoyed swimming, joined the Trinity water polo team. This turned out to be one of the more disastrous decisions I made. This is a very strenuous game. One had to swim constantly, chasing a ball that always seemed to be thrown in the other direction, only to find that when you got hold of the ball, someone would likely dunk your head under the water.

Summer Time

For some reason I had always been fascinated by naval history, perhaps because of my mother's side of the family from Halifax or my brother-in-law (who was a Lieutenant Commander in the British Navy during the Second World War). In any case, I applied to join the University Naval Training Division (UNTD). This was a way to enjoy what appeared to me to be an interesting summer, as well as earning some money. I was turned down for health reasons. It appears that at some point I must have contracted a mild form of tuberculosis and had scarred lungs.

On rather short notice, my father once again came to the rescue and got me a job with Ontario Hydro as a surveyor's assistant. The position was in Sudbury, Ontario.

*A 1940's menu from
The Old Mill - note a
Tenderloin steak for \$1.50.*

A la Carte



Hors D'Oeuvres

Hors D'Oeuvres, assorted 1.00	Canape Russe .60
Anchovies on Toast .50	Stuffed Celery .45
Heart of Celery .35	Tomato Juice Cocktail .25
Shrimps, Lobster or Crabmeat Cocktail .35	
Half Grapefruit Supreme .30	Fruit Cocktail .30

Soups

Oxtail .25	Turtle Soup .30	Cream of Tomato .20
Clear Onion Soup .25	Cream of Chicken .25	
Potage Longchamp .25	Cream of Tomato .20	
Consomme Croutons .25	Onion Cream Soup .25	
Chicken Broth with Rice .25	Mulligatawny .25	
Consomme Julienne .25	Vegetable Cream Soup .25	

Eggs and Omelettes

Fried Eggs with Bacon .50	Eggs Benedict .75
French Fried Eggs, Americains .60	
Eggs, Shirred .40	Eggs in Cocotte .40
Scrambled, Garnished .60	Plain Omelette .50
Omelette, Divers .60	Scrambled, Plain .50
Poached Eggs on Toast .50	

Fish

Boiled Salmon, Sauce Hollandaise .75	
Salmon, Broiled, Maitre d'Hotel .75	
Fried Fillet of Sole, Tartar Sauce .60	
Poached Fillet of Sole, Bonne Femme .60	
Fillet of Sole, Meuniere .60	Fried Oysters with Bacon .70
Oysters, Morney, in Shell .75	Baked Scallops in Butter .70
Lobster (in Season) Newburg, Thermidore	
Cold Half Lobster, Garnished 1.00	

Entrees and Specials

Chicken Saute, Parisian 1.50	Fried Chicken, Maryland 1.50
Supreme of Chicken "Old Mill" 1.50	
Chicken Cocotte, Grandmere 1.25	
Veal Chop en Casserole with Mushroom 1.00	
Veal Cutlet, Vienna Style .85	Risotto Financiere .90
Chicken Patty with Mushroom .75	Mushroom on Toast .75
Welsh Rarebit .50	Chicken a la King on Toast 1.00
Scotch Woodcock .60	Yorkshire Buck .60
Golden Buck .60	

From the Grill

Sirloin Steak 1.25	Sirloin Steak for Two 2.25
Tenderloin Steak 1.50	Filet Mignon with Mushroom 1.75
Minute Steak 1.00	Pork Chop Robert .90
Lamb Chops Maitre d'Hotel .90	Calves' Liver and Bacon .75
Mixed Grill, "Old Mill" 1.00	Grilled Ham Steak .75
Planked Steak (2) 2.75 (add. 1.00 per person)	

Cold Meats

Roast Prime Beef .75	Ham .75
Half Cold Chicken 1.25	Roast Pork .75
Roast Lamb .75	Beef Tongue .75
Cold Sliced Chicken 1.00	
Assorted Cold Meats with Chicken 1.00	
All Cold Meats Garnished	

Vegetables

Green Peas .25	String Beans .25	Fresh Spinach .20
Baked Tomato .20	Cauliflower, Buttered or Saute .25	
Asparagus in Season .35	Corn Fritters .20	
French Fried Onions .20	Stewed Corn .20	
Fresh Vegetable Plate with Poached Egg .75		

Potatoes

Boiled .15	Mashed .15	Saute .25	Lyonnais .25
French Fried .25	Home Fried .25	Au Gratin .25	
Hash Brown .25	Julienne .25	Parisian .25	

Salads

Waldorf .40	Chicken .60	Lobster .75	Shrimps .65
Combination .60	Russian .60	Heart of Lettuce .40	
Lettuce and Tomatoes .45			
Salmon, Garnished .60	Beets and Potato .35		
Tomato Antiboise Surprise (Tuna-fish) .60			
Fresh Fruit Salad .50	Orange Special .60		

Sandwiches

Chicken .35	Western .30	Tongue .25	Creamed Salmon .25
Old Mill Special .60 (Swiss Cheese and Ham on French Toast)			
Kraft Cheese .20	Chicken Salad .30		
Club House .60	Lettuce and Tomatoes .25		
Ham .25	Combination .40	Roast Beef .25	
Cheese Dreams .50	Egg .25		

Ice Cream and Sweets

Vanilla, Strawberry or Chocolate Ice Cream with Cakes .15	
Peach Melba .35	Biscuit Tortoni .35
Coupe St. Jacques .30	
Meringue Glacee or Chantilly .30	Omelette Souffle .40
Baked Alaska (individual) .75	French Pastry .20
Chocolate Eclair .15	Caramel Custard .15

Cheese

Kraft .15	Swiss .20	Oka 20
Camembert .25	Roquefort .25	Old Canadian .20

Tea, Coffee, Etc.

Pot of Tea .15	Pot of Coffee .15	Glass of Milk .10
Hot Chocolate .20	Cocon .20	Malted Milk .15
Iced Tea or Coffee .20	Buttered or Dry Toast .15	
Cinnamon Toast .15	Milk Toast .25	

Extra charge of 25c for 1 order served to 2 persons.

Dancing every evening 9.30 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Cover charge, week days 75c; Saturdays and holidays \$1.00 per person.

OPEN EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.

Government Tax 25%
After 10 P.M.

COVER CHARGE AFTER 10 P.M.

It was very rugged work, not helped by clouds of mosquitoes and black flies. The project was to survey for new hydro lines, and this involved cutting paths through some fairly dense bush outside the Sudbury area (there was very little growth close to Sudbury because of the fumes from the smelters). Most of my time was spent as a chain man, measuring the distances between the hubs that were used for sighting the line by the surveyor in charge. These were in the days before laser or other measuring devices and the only way to get the correct distance was by stretching a chain (actually a metal tape) very tautly between the hub you had just put in and the next one going in the direction the surveyor had indicated.

However, it was an incredible experience as a way to see some of Canada's more rugged country.

The group I was with was a pretty rough and ready team, given to fits of binge drinking on the weekend. For a while we were put up at the old Nickel Range Hotel, which actually did have a brass rail in the men's beverage room. I recall one of my companions, after quite a few beers, caught sight of a black man in the bar and probably without meaning to cause offence, kept referring to him as Sambo. The rather large black was ready to take my friend apart but we managed to calm him down, writing the whole incident off as the result of a few too many beers.

It all turned out badly when the next morning at breakfast my friend arrived in the dining room, saw his black friend once again and said "Hi Sambo". The last I saw of that incident was my teammate disappearing out the door with the black gentleman in hot pursuit. My associate appeared later that day with his nose broken and a couple of black eyes.

1953

Stalin dies. Beria is dismissed from the KGB and executed. Khrushchev is appointed First Secretary of the Communist Party.

Vietnamese rebels attack Laos.

Jomo Kenyatta and five other Kikuyu convicted for their role in the Mau Mau uprising.

Marshall Tito elected President of Yugoslavia.

Queen Elizabeth crowned.

On July 27th, the Korean Armistice is signed at Panmunjom.

General George C. Marshall wins the Nobel Peace Prize.

We watched Roman Holiday with Audrey Hepburn, From Here to Eternity, and Richard Burton in The Robe.

We listened to Stranger in Paradise, Doggie In the Window, and Baubles, Bangles and Beads.

Sigma Chi

A good friend of mine, Bob Fielden, had joined Sigma Chi and suggested that I should consider this. I had not really thought much about joining a fraternity but it did seem to be a good way to meet people from other faculties around the huge U of T campus. It turned out to be a very wise decision for me.

I was never a 'fraternity type' but then Sigma Chi was perhaps not a typical fraternity. It had started as a literary society in 1855 and had always emphasized learning as well as fellowship. Although, like any fraternity, it had its share of parties, these were somewhat restrained, relative to a few of the other houses on the street. Sigma Chi had its house at that time at 95 St. George Street, although the property was subsequently appropriated by the university and the house torn down.



The Sigma Chi Fraternity house on Huron.

It is still a parking lot. The fraternity subsequently built its own specially designed house a block or so away on Huron Street.

There were about 40 actives in the house during the time I was a member and one of my jobs as Rush Chairman was to keep the number of members at about that level. The main benefit I felt I gained from the fraternity was a number of lifelong friends, some of whom, like Ted Rogers, I was in business with for many years.

Hart House

Hart House in those days was a men's club on campus. The building, built with money from the Massey Family (Toronto really has no classes, only the Massey's and the masses). It was the main sports facility for the men, with a large pool, squash courts and even a rifle range. Culturally it had become famous for the Hart House String Quartet (formed in 1923) and the Hart House Theatre, which over the years has produced some of the major players on the Canadian stage.

In addition to my interest in music, I had also developed quite an interest in art and decided to run as the Trinity representative on the Hart House Art Committee. I mounted quite an active campaign, complete with posters plastered around the university, and was elected in 1953.

This put me in close contact with the Warden, Joseph McCulley, who became another mentor for me. He had a wonderful style with the undergraduates and caused many of us to take an interest in fields far beyond those we would normally have considered.

In the role as a member of the Art Committee, one would, for example, have sessions with people such as Emmanuel Hahn. Manny, as we came to know him, was one of Canada's leading sculptors. If you look at a Canadian 25-cent piece with the caribou on the back, you will see his initials, EH. I remember having coffee with him and discussing when people were ever in the mood to read poetry.

The Art Committee proved to be fascinating as we had to do 'hangings', which turned out to be a lot more complex than just hammering nails into the wall. Selecting the logical arrangement for the paintings and then balancing the size and subject matter was quite a job. We also managed to get into considerable controversy with one of our shows. In 1955, Graham Coughtry gave his first exhibition with another artist, Michael Snow. The exhibit included some slightly erotic art, and a number of protests found their way into the Toronto papers. The Warden and the members of the committee staunchly defended the artists and their right to display that type of painting.

The show was allowed to continue.



**DOES MODERN ART
CONFUSE YOU?**



**DOES MODERN SCULPTURE
LEAVE YOU BAFFLED?**



**For a return to art
for art's sake**

V O T E

F I E R H E L L E R

FOR HART HOUSE ART COMMITTEE

My campaign poster for the Hart House Art Committee.

Another Summer Up North

I must have performed reasonably well for Ontario Hydro on the surveying team because I was invited back the next year, this time to assist in relocating a railway line across the northern part of Lake Superior. If I thought some of the country around Sudbury was a bit rugged, it was nothing to compare with the beauty and remoteness of this part of Ontario. We spent part of our time in Geraldton and would go out to the survey line on a jigger on the existing rail line. A hydro development was going to flood some of this rail line and it needed to be relocated.

We ended up at the other end of the line in what was then known as Port Arthur and Fort William. These twin cities were later amalgamated and named Thunder Bay.

1954

St. Lawrence seaway project approved by Eisenhower.

Dien Bien Phu taken by the Vietnamese Communists, completing the ouster of the French from Indochina.

Colonel Nasser seizes power in Egypt.

The U.S. and Canada agree to build radar warning stations across northern Canada (Distant Early Warning Line or DEW Line).

*We watched Brando in *On the Waterfront* and Jimmy Stewart in *Rear Window*.*

We listened to Mr. Sandman, Young at Heart and Three Coins in the Fountain.

The Grand Tour

During my final summer before entering my last year at Trinity, I took a grand tour of Europe. The stories surrounding this are well covered in *Finnie's Family*, but suffice to say it was a never-to-be-forgotten experience that expanded on my addiction to music, art, history, the theatre and love. The casualty was Liz.

When I arrived back in November of 1954 (well into my final year, but I figured I could coast to the degree), Liz and I drifted apart. It was probably a case of becoming too involved too young and we needed new horizons.

At various stages for the remainder of my university time, I dated a variety of young ladies.

One of my more interesting experiences was with a couple of nurses from Sick Kids Hospital. It was the night of the Trinity Conversat, which was the large black tie dance (white tie actually, as in those days it was considered quite incorrect to wear black tie in the presence of women). Without Liz, I was having some trouble organizing an appropriate date, as neither of the two nurses were available that evening. However, I came up with a plan. One of the two was available until 10:00 p.m. when she went on shift and the other was available after 10:00 p.m. This seemed to work out perfectly.

With the first date, we went to the usual cocktail parties and then spent a bit of time at Trinity. I then dropped her off at the hospital and picked up the second nurse for the remainder of the evening and the breakfast parties. This did cause some consternation from my friends who thought they had met my date for the evening, but everyone (including the nurses) got a great laugh from the situation.

At one point I briefly dated a gorgeous blond ballet dancer by the name of Lari (actually Larissa) Pavlechenko. She was something of a Bohemian, and one evening when I was in my white tie and tails, I picked her up at her flat. A couple of her male friends were there and when they took a look at me, one commented “Oh my God” and the other just said “Shit”. I began to realize that we really did not have much in common. However, I did take her to see *Rebel Without a Cause* starring James Dean. She was quite an emotional girl and cried through much of it. I consoled her the best I could but it was a short-term relationship.

One of my classmates in political science and economics was Barbara Metcalfe, who I also briefly dated. It turned out that she was a Baha’i. Given my religious beliefs or lack thereof, this did not last too long either.

For a while I dated Wendy Wilson, Michael Wilson’s sister and several others in what was quite an eclectic year.

The Final Phase

My final year at Trinity was abbreviated because of my late arrival back from Europe, but I counted on the fact that the university rarely failed anyone in their last year. I was about to do what Tom Lehrer referred to in his songs as moving away from “Ivy covered Professors in ivy covered halls” and would “Pass and be forgotten with the rest”.

This brings us to the last chapter.



My graduation picture – hair and no glasses!

1955

Churchill resigns, to be succeeded by Anthony Eden.

Eisenhower suffers a heart attack.

Blacks in Montgomery, Alabama boycott the city's segregated bus lines.

Albert Einstein dies.

We watched Marty with Ernest Borgnine, The Rose Tattoo with Anna Magnani, and Billy Wilder's The Seven Year Itch.

We listened to The Yellow Rose of Texas, Rock Around the Clock, Sixteen Tons and Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing.

A Final Fling

In the spring of 1955 I graduated with adequate, although hardly brilliant, marks.

My classmates in political science and economics included the previously mentioned Peter Russell, John Roberts (who was to become a Federal Cabinet Minister), Bill Kennett (who became Superintendent of Insurance), and Art Kruger (also a noted academic). I did receive one compliment from an unexpected source. I had a brief association, not to be confused with an affair, with a young, extremely attractive brunette who was determined to become an actress. Her name was Margaret 'Meg' Hogarth. We seemed to have a lot in common, with a love of the theatre, literature and the like. We had a final date, as it turned out, just a couple of days before she left for Europe to promote her acting career. We exchanged letters for a while thereafter and the compliment came when she noted she had just read Aldous Huxley's *The Genius and The Goddess*. She said that this reminded her of us and I thought that was quite flattering, although more deserved in her case.

Meg, by the way, went on to an outstanding performing career for over 50 years, playing



Meg Hogarth as Maude in 'So Great a Sweetness'.

everything from the classics to Dr. Colleen in the four Canadian RoboCop movies. She became a cultural activist, was Executive Director of MediaWatch and served on the Board of TVOntario for many years.

At Convocation that spring, I graduated with an Honours BA in subjects that I would never once use.

The story of my moving into the high-tech world with IBM is well covered in *Finnie's Family* and *Do Not Fold, Spindle or Mutilate*.



The Shape of Things to Come

The topic of this book has been growing up in a growing city. It was one of the most interesting eras one could live through. Toronto would never be the same after the war.

It emerged as a city that would rapidly overtake Montreal as the financial and cultural centre of the country.

There would be no more school pictures taken with only Caucasians. The flood of immigrants would ensure that the post-war decades would lead to one of the most multicultural and diversified cities of its size in the world, with all of the advantages that this brings.

The decades after the war would see unprecedented growth, a liberated attitude with Sunday sports, over 7,000 restaurants of every type, the largest English-speaking theatre scene in the world (next only to London and New York) and a city that has remained remarkably livable in its downtown core.

I was lucky to grow up during the transition to this new Toronto.

Of course I was lucky in any case.

I had the advantage of attending some of the best schools I could have attended anywhere.

I was in a country that was largely untouched by the war, although those who lost loved ones in that war would hardly agree.

I was too young to really feel the impact of either the Depression or the war.

I was fortunate enough to have some great mentors, such as Dr. Stanley Russell, Warden Joseph McAuley, my fraternity mentor John Graham, teachers such as Andy Lockhart and many others.

I was also lucky to have male friends from all walks of life, many of whom I have stayed in touch with for decades, as well as a stimulating series of girlfriends.

I also started my career as a 'scarce resource', being one of the low birth-rate Depression babies, and I entered the job market, fortunately in the start-up phase of computers, at a time of unlimited opportunity and optimism in 1955.

But all of these things might have come to nothing had it not been for a very caring and supportive family, who encouraged me to do my own thing in my own way.

I was certainly in the right place at the right time. As my friend Ted Rogers always said:

“The best is yet to come.”

In 1955, I started to date Glenna.



Glenna Fletcher.

So What Has Happened Since?

Mr. Fierheller graduated from Trinity College at the University of Toronto with an Honours Degree in Political Science and Economics in 1955. He joined IBM in Toronto that year and subsequently progressed through a number of positions in their sales organization. He was Marketing Manager for IBM's federal government business in Ottawa prior to founding Systems Dimensions Limited (SDL) in 1968.

Mr. Fierheller was President of **SDL** from the inception of the company until it was acquired by Crown Life of Toronto. SDL was one of the pioneering companies in the computer services industry in Canada.

In April, 1979, Mr. Fierheller moved to Vancouver as President and Chief Executive Officer of **Premier Cablesystems Limited**. In July, 1980, Premier merged with Rogers Cablesystems Inc. to form one of the world's largest cable TV companies. Mr. Fierheller was a Vice Chairman of Rogers Cablesystems Inc. and Chairman of **Canadian Cablesystems Limited**, as well as the President and CEO of **Rogers Cable TV - British Columbia Limited**.

During 1983, Mr. Fierheller led the team that was successful in winning the mobile cellular radio licences for Cantel. He was the founding President and CEO of **Cantel Inc.** In September 1989, he was promoted to Chairman and CEO of **Rogers Cantel Mobile Inc.** He was Vice Chairman, **Rogers Communications Inc.** until 1996 and now heads a private investment and consulting firm.

Mr. Fierheller has been actively involved in community affairs in Ottawa, Vancouver and Toronto including: Chairman of the Board of Governors of **Carleton University**; Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Board of Governors of **Simon Fraser University**; Chairman of **United Way** Campaigns in Ottawa in 1971, Vancouver in 1981 and in Toronto in 1991; President of the **Canadian Information Processing Society**;



A dignified 'George'.

member of the Executive Committee of the **National Arts Centre**; a Trustee of the **Vancouver General Hospital Foundation**; a Director of **Vancouver Opera**; and a member of the **Vancouver Centennial Commission**.

Since returning to Toronto, Mr. Fierheller has served as Chair of the Board of the **United Way of Greater Toronto**; Chair, **Information Technology Association of Canada**; Chair, **Smart Toronto**; Trustee of the **McMichael Canadian Art Collection**; President of **The Toronto Board of Trade**; Director, **Ontario Exports Inc.**; Chair of The Spirit of Leadership Campaign, **Trinity College, University of Toronto**; Chair of the **Sigma Chi Canadian Foundation**; and President of the **National Club**; and was on the Campaign Cabinet of the **Canadian Opera House Corporation**.

Mr. Fierheller currently serves as the **Chairman of the Honorary Board of the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance**. He is currently Chair Emeritus of the **Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre Capital Campaign**; a Director of **The Canadian Institute for Advanced Research**; Past Chair, **Toronto Adventurers Club**; and is on the Board of **Business for the Arts** and **SOS Children's Villages** in Ottawa.

He has also served on a number of public company Boards including: **Extendicare Inc.**; **Falconbridge Inc.**; **Telesystem International Wireless Inc.**; **GBC North American Growth Fund**; and **Rogers Wireless Inc.**

Mr. Fierheller has received many awards including a **Doctor of Laws** degree from Concordia University in 1976, a **Doctor of Sacred Letters** from Trinity College in 1999, the **Award of Excellence** from the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association; is a **Significant Sig** from Sigma Chi Fraternity and a Member of the Order of Constantine. In March 1991, he received Toronto's highest honour, **The Award of Merit**. In 1998, he received the highest award from the United Way of Canada, the **André Mailhot Award**. In the Fall of 1998, he was admitted into the **Canadian Information Productivity Hall of Fame**, as well as receiving the **Arbor Award** from the University of Toronto.

In July 2000, Mr. Fierheller was appointed a Member of **The Order of Canada**.

In May 2001, he was honoured by the Association of Fundraising Professionals as the **Outstanding Volunteer** of the Year during The International Year of the Volunteer. In 2002, he received the **Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal** and the **Salute to the City Award** for service to the City of Toronto. In 2005, he was made a member of the Sigma Chi Hall of Fame, and in 2007 was made a member of the **Order of Constantine**.

In 2008, he received the **Family Service Community Award** and the inaugural **Sunnybrook Award for Volunteer Service**.

Mr. Fierheller is the author of several books, including *Finnie's Family*; *Let Me Say This About That*; *Do Not Fold Spindle Or Mutilate*; and *I Gave At The Office*.

Bibliography

General Toronto History

- Toronto Sketches* – Mike Filey
– A series of books by Mike with articles from his Toronto Sun Series.
– Dundurn Press, Toronto
- Toronto Then & Now* – Mike Filey
– Magic Light Publishing, 2000
- Toronto Since 1918* – James Lemon
– National Museum of Man, 1985
- Toronto Between the Wars* – Charis Cotter
– Firefly Books, 2004
- Toronto, No Mean City* – Eric Arthur
– University of Toronto Press, 1986

The War

- The Canadians at War 1939-45*
– Reader's Digest, 1986
- The Tools of War 1939-45*
– Reader's Digest 1969

Schools

- A Strange Elation: Hart House: The First Eighty Years*
– University of Toronto Press, 1999
- With Pardonable Price* – Asheesh Advani
– Re U.T.S.
– Addison Publishing (USA), 1991
- Trinity 1852-1952* – Andrew Watson, Editor
– University of Toronto Press, 1952
- The Founding Moment* – William Westfall
– McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002 (Trinity)

Miscellaneous

The University Club of Toronto – Its Life, Its Times
– Donald Rumball, 2008

Thunder Bay Beach – Bill Northcott
– The Boston Mills Press, 1989

Comic Book Century – Stephen Krensky
– Twenty-First Century Books, 2008

Some Novels

The Torontonians – Phyllis Brett Young
– McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007
(Reprint of a 1960 novel)

In the Skin of a Lion – Michael Ondaatje,
– Vintage Canada, 1987

Consolation – Michael Redhill
– Anchor Canada, 2006

The Rebel Angels – Robertson Davies
– Macmillan of Canada, 1981

Appendices

Attached is information from two research papers on the Woodlawn Avenue and Hudson Drive houses.

Dana King, whose research service *'Every House Has A History'* uses the actual spelling from source documents even if these are not completely accurate, e.g., my father's name does not actually have an 'e' on the end of Harold and his brother's name is Stanley, not Hanley, but that is the way they are recorded and hence that is the way they appear in the attached.

