

## *Upcoming Events*

### **Overview of Toronto's Aviation History**

Join us on Tuesday February 19, 2002 at LAMP at 185 Fifth Street at 7:30 pm for a fascinating discussion by Claude Sherwood from the Toronto Aviation Museum who will give us an overview of Toronto's aviation history.

### **Annual General Meeting**

The New Toronto Historical Society will be holding its Annual General Meeting at LAMP, 185 Fifth Street on Wednesday April 17, 2002 beginning at 7:30 pm.

### **The Estates of Old Toronto**

Join us on Wednesday April 17, 2002 at 7:30 pm at LAMP, 185 Fifth Street for a wonderful slide show from Liz Lundell on the estates of old Toronto. The "Estates of Old Toronto" is a bittersweet look at a less harried age and at the great properties that were ultimately swallowed up by Canada's largest modern city.

### **New Toronto Oil & Natural Gas Company**

Natural gas from Etobicoke soil ! It provided great excitement on the southern concessions of the township many years ago ! The suggestion kindles high hopes and great plans in the minds of many market gardeners and

speculators. Of course, there were many who didn't believe it could be possible, and probably more who spoke of it as the "Bubble" joke! It was the topic of conversation after Church, at the shops, and particularly at the barber shop, for that proprietor had just come from Lambton County where, in 1857, the world's first oil well gushed forth.

The location of what must have been the first oil company in Etobicoke is shown on the York County Atlas of 1878 as being on the west side of Church Street or Royal York Road from the Great Western Railway south to Drummond Ave. in Mimico. This triangular piece of land, together with hundreds of acres north and west of the right-of-way were purchased by the provincial Government in 1871 probably unaware that there were suggestions of natural gas or oil beneath the surface.

Miss Pearl Horner has recalled that her grandfather's home between Beta and Gamma Streets was illuminated for many years by natural gas from a well on his own farm.

The "great" search for natural gas began on April 14, 1892, when the New Toronto Oil and Natural Gas Company Limited was organized. The promoters of the venture were Lewis Gibson Harris, Joseph Barrett and William Parsons, brokers,

Archibald John Thompson, cattle exporter and Thomas McDonald, manufacturer, all of Toronto, together with James Alexander Wright, a Montreal electrical engineer and William Sharpe, a Pittsburgh oil producer. N.J.H. Emory was president.

They planned to bore for oil, natural gas or other valuable water, and to lay mains to serve that part of Etobicoke which was then being subdivided by Joseph Barrett's Mimico Real Estate and Security Company Limited. This was generally known as the Charles Northcote Farm and is now a north section of New Toronto. They also were granted permission to serve the proposed community with electricity, although they probably never intended to use that part of their franchise.

In November of 1892 they were given supplementary letters patent to extend their operation to the Township of Toronto and the Gore of Toronto on the west to West Toronto Junction and York Township on the east.

This suggests that they may have moved to Cooksville, for just after the turn of the century, natural gas pockets were discovered in that area, particularly on the Price Farm north of Dundas at Cooksville Creek, and on the Bull Farm south of Dundas and west of Highway Ten. The accompanying photo is of a Cooksville well. Unfortunately it was only gas "pockets" and a steady flow was never

obtained. Years later it became a habit of those passing by to throw lighted matches in the direction of an abandoned well to see if it would ignite !

The most recent search for oil and natural gas locally is being undertaken by Roy L. Killins, who in May 1954, started drilling on several farms between Churchville and Meadowvale.

The Consumers' Gas Company of Toronto, which has had an increase in the total number of customers each year for the past five, served its first Etobicoke customer with manufactured gas in 1929, Texas and Louisiana natural gas began flowing into Etobicoke in November 1954.

*Etobicoke Press,  
November 18, 1954*

## **Join Us !**

Join us to learn more about the history of the Town of New Toronto. New Members welcome ! Please phone Wendy Gamble at 251-1349 for more information.

## **The Story of New Toronto Past - Present and Future**

The Town of New Toronto was incorporated in the year 1913. It is located in the Toronto Industrial area and situated about three miles from the Western City limits on the main Highway leading to the United States. It is served by both the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Railway

systems through an inter-switching arrangement and has an abundance of railway sidings. The following great industries are located in New Toronto: Anaconda American Brass Company Limited, Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company Limited, Campbell Soup Company Limited, Ritchie Cut Stone Company Limited, Reg. N. Boxer Wallpaper Company Limited, Empire State Ice Company Limited, Canadian Industries Limited, Fabrikoid Division, Donnell, Mudge & Annable, Leather Tanners.

The Town has a total area of about six hundred acres of which about fifty remain vacant for factory development. The Town owns its own water and hydro systems. Its water supply is said to be the best in Canada and it serves all of the neighbouring municipalities, and has sufficient pumping capacity to satisfy the largest possible industries. The hydro and water systems are managed by a Public Utilities Commission elected by the people, and water rates to industries and to the public are very moderate when compared with other municipalities. The price of power compares very favourably with that existing in Cities and other Towns. The Town is protected from fire hazards by a splendid Fire Brigade equipped with the latest apparatus, and fire insurance rates compare with those in large cities....(to be continued in next issue)

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