

New Toronto Historical Society Volume 15 No. 1 – April 2013

Upcoming Events

The Battle of York

Join us on Tuesday **April 23, 2013** at LAMP, 185 Fifth Street at 7PM. Our guest speaker will be Richard Gerrard of Fort York who will tell us about the events surrounding the invasion of Toronto by US forces 200 years ago.

Along The Shore

Join us on Tuesday **May 28, 2013** at LAMP, 185 Fifth Street at 7PM. Our guest speaker will be Jane Fairburn who will tell us about her new book – *Along The Shore*

October 5, 2013. So mark your calendars now.

The celebration will start with a historical walk beginning at 1PM. The walk will begin and end at St. Margaret's Anglican Church on 6th Street. When the walk concludes at 3PM there will be a celebratory tea in St. Margaret's and launch of a new book on the History of New Toronto.

Details to follow.

A Concise History of New Toronto

What became New Toronto was founded by five industrialists from the City of Toronto and one from the City of Philadelphia when they formed the Mimico Real Estate and Security Company in 1889. They went on to acquire 550 acres of land in south Etobicoke, launching the "New Toronto" industrial and residential community with a full page article in the *Globe* on October 25, 1890.

Heralded as "Toronto's Growing Suburb", which "promises in time to equal, if not surpass, old Toronto as a commercial centre" the investors in the company subdivided the adjacent farmlands into residential lots with large industrial blocks

New Toronto Celebrates 100 years!

It was 100 years ago that New Toronto became a municipality. Then the Village of New Toronto the first council met at the School Hall (present day LAMP building) on January 13, 1913 at 7PM for their first meeting.

The first members of Council were George Ironside, Reeve, Charles Lovejoy, Councillor, Fred J Hicks, Councillor, George Edgar James, Councillor, and Samuel Robinson.

The New Toronto Historical Society will be celebrating the 100th Anniversary of New Toronto on Saturday

along Seventh and Eighth Streets. Construction on a number of factories and homes soon commenced.

In order to facilitate the growth of their newly acquired lands, the main investors also became involved in the construction of a radial streetcar line to serve the area and link it Toronto. The Toronto and Mimico Electric Railway began construction of a new radial line along the Lake Shore Road in 1892, reached the mouth of Mimico Creek in July 1893, Kipling Avenue by September 1893, and eventually reached Etobicoke Creek by 1895.

At first there was great interest in the development and many invested in the new enterprise. However, the severe economic credit crisis (much like 2008) caused financial markets to seize up. It began in the United States but soon spread to Canada bankrupting the Mimico Real Estate and Security Company and most of the new factories closed.

At the beginning of the 20th century the economy began to improve. In New Toronto, development started again with new businesses occupying many of the vacant industrial buildings and even constructing new factories.

Reg. N. Boxer, producers of paper products open for business in 1903 and Brown's Copper and Brass opened next door in 1910. With the increase in population attracted

by these new industries, the area became a Village in 1913.

During World War I a number of new industrial enterprises moved to the area, especially after the Lake Shore Road was paved and became the Toronto Hamilton Highway in 1916. These included: the Fabrikoid Division of Canadian Industries Limited, which began construction of their new plant in 1915 on New Toronto Street; the Goodyear Tire Company in 1917 on the Lake Shore Road; and, the Donnell Mudge tannery in 1918 on Birmingham Street.

After the war, industrial development continued. Anaconda American Brass Limited came to the area and rented the existing Brown's Copper and Brass plant in 1922. In 1928 Anaconda purchased the property and expanded the plant.

By 1920 the population increased to 5,000 and New Toronto became a Town.

New Toronto's industrial success continued during the Great Depression of the 1930s. During those trying times, three other major industries were attracted to New Toronto including Campbell Soup in 1931, Gilbey's Distillery in 1933 and Continental Can in 1935.

These industries meant that New Toronto was the most industrialized municipality in Canada on a per capita basis. This led to a prosperous community, especially in the

1950s and 1960s.

With the Free Trade Agreement with the United States, and later North American Free Trade Agreement with the United States and Mexico, in the 1980s, local industry was under increasing pressure and most closed or moved to lower taxed jurisdictions.

Most of the old factories were demolished leaving large vacant lands with a legacy of contaminated soils from their long industrial occupation.

Today only Campbell Soup remains of New Toronto major employers.

However, with the acquisition of the former Anaconda lands by the City of Toronto in 2004, and the Continental Can lands by the Toronto Police Department for the new Toronto Police College, New Toronto's industrial lands are seeing a rejuvenation.

The City of Toronto secured a Canpar as a tenant in 2005 and developed a 170,000 sf. cross-dock logistics facility for Canpar as their major Ontario hub of operations.

The new Toronto Police College, which was opened in 2009, provides an array of training courses starting with new recruits all the way through to the senior managers.