Civitas Peregrina: Abject Space in Early Immigrant Toronto
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Submitted to the Department of Architecture and Department of Urban Studies+Planning in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degrees of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ARCHITECTURE STUDIES and MASTER IN CITY PLANNING

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ABSTRACT

The literature on early planning history tends to document the ‘progress’ made at the turn of twentieth century through the scientific study and rationalization of urban space. Through a detailed study of two areas in early immigrant Toronto, another side of planning’s history is told: the stories about the relationship between social control and the transformation of the city. Toronto is particularly relevant as it has undergone rapid social change through the twentieth century, from an almost exclusively British colonial town to one of the world’s most ethnically diverse cities.

Two areas form the basis for the study: the Ward and Niagara. While the Ward originated as land given as ‘Park Lots’ to aristocracy as gifts for relocating to the nascent town, Niagara originated as a Military Reserve. Thus, the Ward’s development was the function of the market, while Niagara was largely state-controlled. Ten groups of places form the nexus for the stories, forming a broad spectrum of institutions: abattoir, asylum, boarding-house, church, city hall, playground, prison, synagogue, tavern, and theater. Each story focuses on a particular form of social or moral problem in the city and traces the response by the state and civil society. The stories document the responses to perceived ‘others’ in the emerging industrial city – concepts of ‘other’ based on race, ethnicity, class, health, religion, sexuality, lifestyle, even the choice of housing. In tracing the efforts by the state and civil society to control the social values and morals of the population, something of a ‘pre-history’ of planning is illustrated.

The creation of new institutions, new planning mechanisms and new comprehensive ‘plans’ resulted in the simultaneous consolidation of ‘other’ people and practices into undesirable areas (Niagara) and the dispersal of the same where they existed in more vital parts of the city (the Ward). The study situates the specific responses in Toronto within the larger movements taking place throughout North America – movements that formed the basis for the origins of the modern planning system. The study hypothesizes that the confrontation with the ‘abject other’, that is, those peoples, practices and places that departed from the social norm, was foundational to the modern planning system.

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A thesis such as this would not be possible without the help of many wonderful people. I would like to thank Professor Larry Vale for his meticulous comments and enthusiasm. Thanks also to him for sharing his vast knowledge of planning history and his own experiences with ‘public neighbors’. Many thanks go to Professor Mark Jarzombek for his critical reading of the text. As always, his advice continues to ground my work in the larger epistemological and historiographic issues inherent in the writing of history. To my advisor, Julian Beinart, I extend the warmest of thanks. It is through your multifarious approach to the study of cities that this work draws its strength. Your careful thoughts on abjection have opened new insights and allowed the thesis to grow. Our weekly counseling sessions have proven that writing about cities need not be reduced to simple theories; I consider this an encouraging sign.

I would like to thank Sarah Williams for her patience and sharing her GIS knowledge as I struggled to make sense of the mapping techniques embedded within the thesis. I would like to thank Michael Leininger of Rotch Library for his advice on sifting through the volumes of information available on the subject. Many thanks to Rick Bebout of Toronto, who kindly shared his own experiences on his writing about Toronto and provided several photographs throughout the text. My gratitude also goes out to all the wonderful people at the City of Toronto Archives, including Glenda Williams and Mark Cuddy. Thanks also to the staff at the Archives of Ontario and the Toronto Reference Library.

My work at MIT would not have been possible without two generous grants from my alma mater, McGill University in Montreal. I thank the Canadian Bureau of International Education for the Celanese Canada International Fellowship, which also helped fund my work at MIT.

I thank my parents for their support over the years. There are two special people to whom I am indebted. The first ‘person’ is my cat, the Woogie, who stayed up late with me night after night as my ‘research helper’. Finally, there is no question I could not have completed this thesis without the selfless sacrifices made by the most caring person I know. Rose, I thank you for not only your wonderful editing skills but for helping with the maps. Your patience and kindness has without a doubt allowed me the time and space to retreat into my own civitas peregrina.
Front Cover
York Street Looking North to Osgoode Hall and the Ward, 1856.

Rear Cover
Intersection of Elizabeth and Louisa Streets in the Ward, 1925.
# Civitas Peregrina: Abject Space in Early Immigrant Toronto

**BY GREG MORROW**

## CONTENTS

| Illustrations | 10 |
| Introduction | 13 |
| Kristeva, Simmel and Park | Abjection, the Stranger and Moral Regions | 23 |
| **Part One | The Ward** |
| The Ward | ‘A State of Mind More Than a Place’ | 35 |
| House of Industry and Holy Trinity | ‘Designing Canadians’ | 53 |
| City Halls and Civic Square | Health, Sanitation and Housing Reform | 67 |
| Star Theater and Shea’s Hippodrome | Danger in Entertainment | 81 |
| Goel Tzedec and the Chinese Laundries | The Visual Presence of the Foreign | 91 |
| Elizabeth Street Playground | The Health and Leisure Problem | 107 |
| **Part Two | Niagara** |
| Niagara | The Reserve to Reform | 119 |
| Scholes Tavern | A Territorial Solution to Drinking | 137 |
| Provincial Lunatic Asylum | Vagrants and Public Space | 149 |
| Central Prison and Mercer Reformatory | Crime and Vice | 163 |
| The Tenements and Boardinghouses | The ‘Home’ Problem | 175 |
| Civic Abattoir | Separation of Slaughter and ‘Home’ | 185 |
| **Reflections | Towards a Theory of Abject Space** | 197 |
| **Index | Tools and Mechanisms for Planning** | 209 |
| Appendix | 227 |
| Bibliography | 233 |
| **Illustration Credits** | 245 |

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Illustrations

i-1. The Ward And Niagara Within Toronto, 2003. 15
i-2. Charles Booth’s Social Mapping, 1886-1903. 17
i-3. Key Sites In The Ward, 1923. 18
i-4. Key Sites in Niagara, 1923. 21
1-1. The Concession Grid, Toronto, 1880. 36
1-2. Park Lots 9-18, 1st Concession West, 1880. 37
1-3. Plan Of York, 1818. 37
1-4. The Second Market, York, 1831. 38
1-5. Osgoode Hall, Begun 1829. 38
1-6. H.B. Lane Additions To Osgoode Hall, 1844-5. 38
1-7. Cane Map. Central Section Is The Ward, 1842. 39
1-8. Map of the Ward, 1858. 41
1-10. Map of the Ward, 1884. 42
1-11. Map of the Ward, 1899. 42
1-12. Map of the Ward, 1910. 43
1-14. Time Frame of Construction, 1884. 44
1-15. Time Frame of Construction, 1899. 44
1-16. Time Frame of Construction, 1910. 45
1-17. Time Frame of Construction, 1923. 45
1-18. View Towards Ward. Osgoode Hall In Background, 1856. 46
1-19. Center Ave., 2002. 47
1-20. Original Ward Remnant, Elm Street, 2002. 47
1-21. In the Ward (1920) by Lawren Harris. 49
1-22. A House in the Slums (1920) by Lawren Harris. 50
1-23. House in the Ward (1917) by Lawren Harris 50
2-1. Immigrants Arriving By Ship, N.D. 54
2-2. Plaque, House Of Industry, Elm St, 2002. 54
2-3. House Of Industry, Elm St, 2002. 55
2-4. Holy Trinity Church, Eaton’s In Back, 1969. 59
2-5. Holy Trinity Church From Yonge St, 1972. 60
2-6. Dr. Henry Scadding’s House, 1972. 60
2-7. Louisa School, Louisa St., N.D. 62
2-8. Hebrew Advertisements For CNH, 1910s. 63
3-1. Cane Map Showing Taddle Creek, 1842. 68
3-2. Potential City Hall/Courthouse Sites, 1884. 69
3-3. ‘Old’ City Hall With Plaza, 1890s. 70
3-4. Toronto Armories, University Avenue, 1890s. 71
3-5. Unsanitary ‘Shanties’ in City Hall’s Shadow, 1924. 72
3-6. Sample Peddler’s License, 1918. 73
3-7. Map of Critical Sanitary Problems, 1911. 74
3-8. Proposed Federal Avenue Project, 1911. 75
3-9. Proposed Plan for Civic Center, 1952. 76
3-10. New City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square, 1960s. 77
3-11. Demolition of Registry Office, 1963. 78
4-1. Location of Theaters and Newspapers, 1910s. 82
4-2. Shea’s Hippodrome, Terauley St., 1910S. 83
4-3. Shea’s Hippodrome, Interior, N.D. 83
4-4. Bowles Lunch, Queen And Terauley St., 1910s. 84
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-1</td>
<td>Location Of Ward Churches, 1884.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-2</td>
<td>Names Vs. 'Church' In The Ward, 1884.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-3</td>
<td>Breakdown Of Ethnic Origin In Canada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-4</td>
<td>Concentration Of Jewish Population, 1901-31.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-5</td>
<td>Location Of Important Italian and Jewish Places., 1910s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Location Of Chinese Laundry Licenses, 1910.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>56-58 Elizabeth St. Before Renovation, 1937.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>56-58 Elizabeth St. After Renovation, 1937.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>100-110 Elizabeth St. Before Renovation, 1937.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>100-110 Elizabeth St. After Renovation, 1937.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-11</td>
<td>Elizabeth St. And Hayter St. Before Renovation, 1937.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-12</td>
<td>Elizabeth St. And Hayter St. After Renovation, 1937.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-13</td>
<td>Goel Tzedec Synagogue, 1924.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-14</td>
<td>Lyric Theater, Agnes And Terauley St., 1910s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-15</td>
<td>Russian Baptist Mission, Elizabeth St., 1912.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-1</td>
<td>Elizabeth Street Playground, 1913.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-2</td>
<td>Elizabeth Street Playground, 1910.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-4</td>
<td>Sample Family Histories, 1918.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-5</td>
<td>Public Campaign for Slum Clearance, 1930s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-6</td>
<td>Moss Park Scheme, Before Conditions, 1930s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>Moss Park Scheme Proposal, 1930s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Post-war Housing, 1940s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9</td>
<td>Public Notice Of Housing Shortage, 1944.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>Riverdale Court, 1920s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-1</td>
<td>Bonnycastle Plan, Niagara, 1833.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-2</td>
<td>Revised Bonnycastle Plan, Niagara, 1834.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-3</td>
<td>Third Bonnycastle Plan, Niagara, May 1834.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-4</td>
<td>Royal Engineers Plan, Niagara, 1835.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-5</td>
<td>Adopted Bonnycastle Plan, Niagara, 1837.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-6</td>
<td>Browne Plan, Niagara, 1862.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-7</td>
<td>Map Of Niagara, 1858.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>Map Of Niagara, 1884.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10</td>
<td>Map Of Niagara, 1899.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-11</td>
<td>Map Of Niagara, 1910.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>Map Of Niagara, 1923.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-13</td>
<td>Time Frame of Construction, 1884.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-14</td>
<td>Time Frame of Construction, 1899.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-16</td>
<td>Time Frame of Construction, 1923.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-1</td>
<td>Women's Christian Temperance Union Banners, 1888-90.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-2</td>
<td>Dunkin Act Cartoon, Liquor Nuisance, 1877.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-3</td>
<td>Dunkin Act Cartoon, Defeat, 1877.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-4</td>
<td>Distribution of Taverns, 1881.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-5</td>
<td>Crooks Act Cartoon, 1877.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-1</td>
<td>Peripheral Location of Asylum, 1851.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-2</td>
<td>Provincial Lunatic Asylum, 1880s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-3</td>
<td>Provincial Lunatic Asylum, 1880s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-4</td>
<td>The Asylum's Lush Grounds, 1890.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-5</td>
<td>100-110 Elizabeth St., 1884.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-1</td>
<td>100-110 Elizabeth St. After Renovation, 1937.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Elizabeth St. And Hayter St. Before Renovation, 1937.</td>
</tr>
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<td>10-3</td>
<td>Elizabeth St. And Hayter St. After Renovation, 1937.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-5</td>
<td>Lyric Theater, Agnes And Terauley St., 1910s.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-6</td>
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<td>Elizabeth Street Playground, 1913.</td>
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<td>11-2</td>
<td>Elizabeth Street Playground, 1910.</td>
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<td>Sample Family Histories, 1918.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-7</td>
<td>Moss Park Scheme Proposal, 1930s.</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>12-3</td>
<td>Third Bonnycastle Plan, Niagara, May 1834.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-4</td>
<td>Royal Engineers Plan, Niagara, 1835.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-5</td>
<td>Adopted Bonnycastle Plan, Niagara, 1837.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-6</td>
<td>Browne Plan, Niagara, 1862.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-7</td>
<td>Map Of Niagara, 1858.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-9</td>
<td>Map Of Niagara, 1884.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-10</td>
<td>Map Of Niagara, 1899.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-11</td>
<td>Map Of Niagara, 1910.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-12</td>
<td>Map Of Niagara, 1923.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>Time Frame of Construction, 1884.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>Time Frame of Construction, 1899.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-16</td>
<td>Time Frame of Construction, 1923.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-1</td>
<td>Women's Christian Temperance Union Banners, 1888-90.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-2</td>
<td>Dunkin Act Cartoon, Liquor Nuisance, 1877.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-3</td>
<td>Dunkin Act Cartoon, Defeat, 1877.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-4</td>
<td>Distribution of Taverns, 1881.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-5</td>
<td>Crooks Act Cartoon, 1877.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-6</td>
<td>Peripheral Location of Asylum, 1851.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-7</td>
<td>Provincial Lunatic Asylum, 1880s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-8</td>
<td>Provincial Lunatic Asylum, 1880s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-9</td>
<td>The Asylum's Lush Grounds, 1890.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ILLUSTRATIONS

9-5. The Crystal Palace, 1860s. 155
9-6. Toronto Asylum Plan, 1869. 156
9-7. Asylum Engraving, N.D. 156
10-1. Central Prison for Men, 1890. 165
10-2. Central Prison Etching, N.D. 165
10-6. Mercer Reformatory for Women, N.D. 168
10-7. YMCA Advertisement, N.D. 170
11-1. Typical Early Apartment Building In Toronto, N.D. 177
11-2. Interior Of Typical Boardinghouse, 1910. 178
11-3. Macedonian Boardinghouse, 1913. 178
11-4. Typical Shacks, 205-209 Elizabeth St., 1937. 179
11-5. Typical Model House, N.D. 181
11-6. 22 Manning Ave, 22 April 1940 (Before). 182
11-7. 22 Manning Ave, 21 February 1941 (After). 182
12-1. Distribution of Slaughter, 1881. 189
12-2. Toronto Civic Abattoir, 1915. 190
12-3. Typical Housing Conditions, 1911. 191
12-4 Typical Housing Conditions, 1911. 191
12-5. Typical Housing Conditions, 1911. 192
12-6. St. Mary’s Church, 2003. 193
12-7. Toronto Abattoir (Canada Packers), 2003. 194
12-8. Typical Niagara Conditions, 2003. 194
R-1. Park/Burgess Concentric Rings. 205
R-2. Clarence Perry’s ‘Neighborhood Unit’ Concept, 1929. 206
It is a curious thing about cities that, across time and place, they tend to be divided into parts meant for ‘consumption’ (i.e. for the pleasure of the ‘public’) and parts that are not meant to be seen or experienced (what I might call spaces of ‘abjection’). While much has been said about the creation of the great ‘public’ spaces, the histories of cities have been curiously silent on how the marginal spaces of the city are created. My work attempts to understand how such spaces are ‘designed’ (or conversely, erased from the urban landscape) and what tools began to emerge at the dawn of the planning profession to facilitate these urban transformations.

Clearly, one of the legacies of modern town planning has been segregation – typically this is understood in terms of ‘land uses’ but I suggest segregation can also be thought of in terms of people and their practices, which, in turn, manifests itself in the planning system as zoning. Planning doctrine today speaks of uses (or practices) that are ‘incompatible’, which is to say that they cannot co-exist in space. Typically, the argument for segregation centers on health and sanitation issues, or what in economist jargon is referred to as ‘negative externalities’, which may be some form of noise, air or water pollution or simply anything perceived to be dragging down adjacent land values. Incompatibility, of course, is predicated on the notion that there is some form of proper ‘fitness’ – that, in fact, there are some things that are deemed compatible and some things that are not. In its simplest form, this argument divides practices into ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ (either in terms of their effect on land values or the health, welfare or even morals of the community as a whole). Naturally, there are no clear categories that define these positive or negative effects and surely the arbitrariness of that definition depends on who is making the judgment. Yet, there does seem to be, within a specific culture (and across planning departments within that culture), a common idea of what is deemed positive and what is deemed other – that is, what is compatible and what is not. What is other (or ‘foreign’) is inevitably defined in terms of what society thinks of as compatible. This definition of compatibility is a function of the rules and conditions a society sets for acceptable social behavior and, as such, is tied to questions of collective identity. As Freud’s text *Civilization and Its Discontents* suggests, there is a confrontation with the other that must take place in order to define this collective identity – that is, the collective system of rules that governs social behavior and that gives rise to a proper ‘fitness’. I suggest that ‘deviance’ or otherness is necessary to give rise to the set of rules (values, morals, etc.) that governs collective life. Planning mechanisms and the physical transformation of cities are central to this system of rules. In order words, society needs the other, or as I more generally refer to as its peregrina (from the latin peregrinus, foreign or pilgrim) in order to define itself. This confrontation with the other is played out in urban space and can be witnessed by studying the transformation of urban space over time.

This paper hypothesizes that although it has had a longstanding influence on the social and physical form of cities in the past, the confrontation with the peregrina (i.e. the foreigner or, more generally, ‘foreignness’) has played a more fundamental role in shaping the social and physical organization of the modern city and this confrontation is at the core of the planning profession that emerged at the turn of the century. The creation of new institutions, new planning mechanisms and new comprehensive design schemes resulted in the simultaneous consolidation of ‘marginal’ people and practices into undesirable areas and the dispersal of the same where they existed in more vital parts of the city, thereby establishing the roots of use zoning. I believe that the shift from largely homogeneous, rural cultures to more diverse, highly concentrated urban cultures forced society to confront
their other on a scale unheard of before modernity. Clearly, the scenario I describe is more complex than what these statements might suggest. It is a gross oversimplification to suggest that the only motive lying at the root of modern planning is a subversive desire to segregate those people and practices that are deemed other from those that are a part of productive ‘normative’ city life. Indeed, modern planning’s origins are clearly not so pejorative; the societies, by-laws, designs, studies and institutions we have come to rely on were put in place with a genuine design to ‘reform’ and to improve the lives of the people they targeted. Obviously, many important advances have been made and few would disagree that people, in general, are better off today than a century ago. I am not nostalgic about the virtues of life a century ago, even while I write a thesis that underscores some of the surprising influences on the system we continue to rely upon to control urban space; indeed, this planning machine remains in place, to date, to minimize conflict in the urban landscape – a defensive device that serves those who most effectively mobilize and understand its machinations. Through a rigorous study of one place, this thesis attempts to understand some of the mechanisms that were used to address the problems of the peregrina – mechanisms that have clear consequences on the spatial organization of the city. By linking responses to ‘foreignness’ with urban form, we begin to understand some of the origins and early motivations of the modern planning profession.

This text examines how one city (Toronto) confronted its otherness at the turn of the twentieth century (from 1858–1923), as it shifted from a British colonial outpost to a multicultural metropolis. I will tell a series of stories that illustrate not only how this confrontation with its peregrina shaped the social fabric of the city but also how this confrontation was played out in the physical transformation of the city. I study a wide-ranging collection of mechanisms and institutions that the state and civil society used to confront and ‘conquer’ its abject self. Another layer of analysis that examines the market’s response to abject others is also possible, but one that I have chosen not to pursue in this text. For example, it is widely known that restrictive covenants were used to protect property and to restrict who could and could not buy and sell land. While these and other market developments are critical to the early histories of North American cities, they are beyond the scope of this work and are best left for more detailed analysis. Instead, I have chosen to concentrate on civil society and state responses because they provide the clearest illustration of how a collective society tackles those that do not conform to prevailing values and morals. These tools and institutions are diverse – from by-laws, licenses and Acts, to Societies, Commissions, Agencies, and direct design. With such a broad and complex issue, I have chosen to focus my discussions on the institutions and mechanisms that would become embedded within planning and those that have spatial implications. As such, the stories (as autonomous chapters) are centered on the emergence of physical places (Asylum, Prison, Civic Square, Abattoir, etc) since these places can be seen as a link between the social practices of the time (i.e. the rules, by-laws, etc that seek to define collective identity) and the physical space of the city. I do not use the particular physical places as architectural histories but rather as starting points for discussing the particular abject others that came in contact with those places. The discussions also focus on the larger changes taking place in the city, and are organized by area (Ward, Niagara) and in a roughly chronological manner, beginning with an introduction, but allowing for considerable overlap in time with the other stories. This ‘mapping’ of the histories of various places is brought forward graphically through digital maps that continually trace the physical changes of these two areas thus allowing me to link a wide range of perceived problems of ‘otherness’ and the identity struggle this represented to the physical transformation of the city. In making this link, it should become clear how the tools used to confront the abject in the city become embedded within the emerging planning practice.

The text begins with a brief discussion of the other and its relation to the
perceived problems of the city. Drawing from the work of Julia Kristeva and Georg Simmel (and Robert Park’s response to Simmel), this discussion outlines how the threat of ‘contamination’ inherent in modern planning practice is rooted in Judeo-Christian conceptions of purity and identity. Kristeva’s ‘abject’ and Simmel’s ‘Stranger’ are both variants of the *peregrina* – that is, they both recognize that the ‘other’ is a central figure in defining collection identity. Park, drawing on (but in some sense misinterpreting) Simmel, posits the ‘Stranger’ as a marginal figure and relates the associated problems with the ills of the modern industrial city (specifically, the problems associated with immigrant, ‘slum’ areas which he calls ‘moral regions’). Park and the Chicago School become important catalysts for comprehensive social and physical reform (i.e. ‘planning’ as we now understand it). In tracing this lineage I position the *abject other* as a central figure in the formation of modern planning practice.

The main body of the thesis, however, draws upon empirical data from the city of Toronto and is generally divided into discussions about two immigrant areas of that city – ‘the Ward’ and ‘Niagara’ (*Fig. 1-1*). These two areas were chosen because of their importance in the events of the city’s past but also because they differ in one important respect – the way that society confronted the presence of ‘foreigners’ and their associated practices and perceived problems. In both cases, civic institutions were used to transform the social and physical fabric of the area, each responding to social practices (by-laws, Acts, etc) that speak of the perceived problems. In the case of the Ward, ‘positive’ civic institutions such as a Civic Square, two City Halls, Armories, a Registry Office, a Playground and various General Hospitals were used to ‘disperse’ and completely remove the ‘foreign element’ from the area. Today virtually no trace remains of the historic Ward; it has been expunged from the collective memory and, largely, the written histories of the city. In the case of Niagara, ‘reform’ and otherwise ‘abject’ institutions such as an Insane Asylum, Reformatory, Central Prison, City Slaughterhouse, burial grounds, railroad yards and various noxious industries were used to ‘consolidate’ the ‘negative’ elements of the city into one district. Today, the area remains marginalized and continues to house many of these institutions and industries. I will explore the attitudes of the civic leaders of the time (as illustrated through the tools they enacted) and illustrate how the confrontation with the ‘foreign element’ led to differing solutions in the two areas. Principally, I examine how the city used by-laws, the issuing of licenses, the passing and enforcement of various Acts, the formation of new Commissions and Departments, and other methods used to control and regulate urban space and urban land in order to deal with the perceived problems of the ‘other’. Special attention will also be played to the role of design itself in the future of the two areas and the organization of the chapters by place serves to connect the tools to the physical transformation of the city. In some cases, there are connections across the stories, linking practices in the Ward to practices in Niagara. The thesis aims to connect, through empirical evidence, the emergence of planning and new civic institutions to confront the growing problem of the *peregrina* in the face of mass migration and cultural change.

To some extent, the thesis takes on the character of an urban history – not a totalizing one but a story from the perspective of the people whose history has been lost in the boosterism of past Toronto glories. As the evolution of Toronto itself, the story is complex – while some connections between social practice and physical transformation are direct, others are not. Each chapter is meant to be a semi-autonomous text exploring various aspects of the confrontation with otherness. Some stories in the Ward are interconnected with those in Niagara, while some ‘tools’ have implications across many stories. In each case, the stories refer to the Index of Tools and Mechanisms – a reference guide that document these ‘tools’ – that is, the various by-laws, Acts, and emerging planning bodies that have impacted the creation and location of the specific institution. The Index and chapters work together and the reader is invited to see connections between
FIG. I-2. CHARLES BOOTH’S SOCIAL MAPPING, 1886-1903.
the emerging planning mechanisms and the resultant physical form of the city (through ‘mapping’ the urban transformations). This process of ‘mapping’ social conditions on physical space is central to my methodology. Similar ‘social maps’ were important analytical tools for reformers, dating back to Charles Booth’s *Survey into Life and Labor in London, 1886-1903* (Fig. i-2). Booth’s motives illustrate the change that begins to take place during that time: the shift from examining the individual towards analyzing social groups. Booth’s mapping, of course, was intended to understand where laborers lived in relation to their work — the lowest class, which he termed ‘vicious, semi-criminal’ are shaded black, with subsequent classes becoming lighter shades. The consequence of his work, however, was the categorization of people by class. My work explores the intentions of reformers like Booth and how such work became foundational to the modern planning profession. In all cases, the purpose is to understand the tremendous importance the foreigner has had in shaping the physical form of the city and in illustrating how the emerging planning profession was central to this transformative process.

In Part One, I sketch out several stories (chapters) that impacted the transformation of the Ward (Fig. i-3). “The Ward: ‘A State of Mind More Than a Place’” introduces the reader to the Ward and to Toronto at the time of its incorporation in 1834. Here, the early form of the Ward (then known as “Macaulaytown”) is tied to the origins of the city and its importance in the early events of the city. This chapter documents the area’s social transformation from an almost entirely British working-class neighborhood to an almost entirely non-British immigrant ‘ghetto’ and gives the reader an indication of how the area was perceived by the popular press, civic leaders and the people who lived there. From here, a series of cases are presented, each representing a different aspect of society’s confrontation with what it perceived as ‘abject’ — responses to various ‘others’ that had profound spatial implications.

“House of Industry and Holy Trinity: ‘Designing Canadians’” explores the
perceived problems of the (immigrant) poor and some of the institutional mechanisms put in place to address these problems. The influx of immigrants through the 1840s (largely from the British Isles, particularly Ireland) began the debate about immigrants and their role in Canadian society. Issues of what constituted ‘acceptable’ social behavior was tied to religious, non-profit and civic organizations and, here, the roles of the House of Industry and Holy Trinity are explored. Underpinning this discussion are the various responses to immigration, culminating in the Immigration Act of 1869, two years after Confederation.

“City Halls and the Civic Square: Health, Sanitation and Housing Reform” deals with the debate about substandard housing that led to the expropriation of private lands for ‘civic-minded’ institutions like the City Hall and the Armories. In this discussion, I present a lineage of mechanisms from by-laws against dirt and filth in urban space to sanitary by-laws and medical reports on slum conditions – tools that become integral to the emergence of a more comprehensive planning system meant to respond to the ‘other’. The Ward and its problems came to be associated with a ‘state of mind’, one that threatened to spread to other parts of the city. Measures to expropriate land for more ‘public’ purposes were used to remove these problems, culminating in design schemes for a new Civic Center and its associated institutions.

“Star Theater and Shea’s Hippodrome: Danger in Entertainment” explores the belief that the emerging industrial city was ‘dangerous’ in its corruption of ‘public morals’ and the struggle to control entertainment facilities. The Ward area as a district of vice became increasingly associated with its marginalized position within the city. The theater and the marginalized Ward’s urban space as a perceived place of prostitution and ‘social evil’ became dominant within this context. Regulations controlling such ‘Houses of Ill Fame’ (brothels) and ‘Moving Picture’ houses highlight this association between physical space and social behavior.

“Goel Tzedec and the Chinese Laundries: The Visual Presence of the ‘Foreign’” addresses the various ways that collective society (at least those with power) attempted to deal with the increasing physical transformation of the city and the visual presence of ethnic groups in the city. The prominence of synagogues such as Goel Tzedec among many others (including many ‘shtiblach’, or cottage synagogues) in the Ward signaled the shift in social structure that had taken place, to the detriment of ‘Canadian’ culture in the eyes of many. The customs of these new Canadians affronted many ‘Christian’ practices, including activities on the ‘Lord’s Day’, and the practice of peddling, dealing in second-hand goods and even Chinese laundries were spatially regulated. Each of these activities became a rallying point for tighter city by-laws. Likewise, the presence of Yiddish and Chinese signs throughout the Ward was seen as problematic and, when coupled with an active campaign to improve housing conditions with the Toronto Housing Company, was actively ‘toned down’, if not eliminated.

“Elizabeth Street Playground: The Health and Leisure Problem” ties the growing problems of sanitation, poor light and air, and substandard housing to problems with the building fabric of the city. Campaigns of housing reform, street widening, and acquiring land for open space became solutions to improve the physical conditions that contributed to the ‘culture of vice’ that the Ward represented.

In Part Two, I tell a number of stories about the Niagara area (Fig. 1-4). “Niagara: From Reserve to Reform” introduces the reader to Niagara and its early evolution from Military Reserve (and upper-class district) to a low-income, working-class area. I discuss the role of the nearby Fort York in Toronto’s past then proceed to analyze a series of early development plans for the eastern part of the reserve. The subsequent revisions to the plan speak about some of the pressures that ultimately transformed the reserve into an area where reform institutions, noxious industry and poor immigrants were concentrated.

“Scholes Tavern: a Territorial Solution to Drinking” illustrates the as-
associated problems of intemperance, working-class (often immigrant) labor and the space of the city. Here, measures to control licenses of taverns by district allowed authorities to consolidate taverns away from residential districts and into marginalized areas such as Niagara. At the heart of this discussion is the role that taverns played in the political life of the city. Moreover, taverns became locations of important labor solidarity. Therefore, labor and politics played important roles in counteracting the moral reforms launched by that city’s temperance and aid societies.

“Insane Asylum: Vagrants and Public Space” links social problems in the Ward with state-led solutions in the Niagara district. The early establishment of the Asylum in Niagara illustrated a shift in how the marginal were dealt with in Canadian culture and its location outside the city illustrated the initial spatial segregation of the marginalized. An examination of who was institutionalized and for what reasons sheds light on the changing moral attitudes over time. The physical deterioration of the Asylum itself reflected a fall from grace for the once-heralded reform institution. While initially set within the country for replenishment, the arrival of the railroads and industry quickly changed the area.

“Central Prison and Mercer Reformatory: Crime and Vice” links the creation of the Central Prison to problems of crime and vice, largely experienced in the Ward. Here, I also connect the creation of the Mercer Reformatory to problems of tenements, entertainment, prostitution and ‘moral decay’ witnessed in the Ward.

“The Tenements and Boardinghouses: The ‘Home’ Problem” links the controversy surrounding multi-family apartments and tenements to problems associated with the ‘foreign’ population. The boardinghouse — long a social institution for new Canadians — comes under scrutiny as a source of overcrowding (and its associated health and moral problems). Likewise, apartments and tenements, now providing an alternative space for prostitution, sparked a debate about what constituted a ‘proper’ form of housing and resulted in the prohibition of their construction in many parts of the city.

“Civic Abattoir: Separation of Home and Slaughter” details the consolidation of slaughtering activities in the Niagara area with the creation of a civic abattoir by the city. In response to concerns about the contagion of disease and home life, the city removed slaughtering houses (and in some cases, butchers) from the residential parts of the city and concentrated the activities in the marginalized area of Niagara. Here, I also explore how the arrival of the railroad in the 1850s transformed the Niagara area into an industrial zone and attracted immigrant workers into the area. The fabric of the area is shown to respond to this transformation, as lot sizes change progressively from one-acre to minimal ‘party-wall’ lots and houses, once set back from the street, move to form an urban edge.

It should become clear by reading the stories that the Ward and Niagara are two sides of the same coin — while the Ward represented the civic leaders’ attempts to remove and disperse the social and physical problems associated with immigration and the industrial city, efforts in Niagara were often the ‘solution’ to those same problems — thus creating a district which collected these problems into controlled institutions that were seen to ‘reform’ (or at least make ‘productive’) the people and practices deemed as other. Throughout the stories is an attempt to see connections to places and practices in the Ward and the associated tools and mechanisms put in place to deal with perceived problems. Moreover, the role of direct government ownership of land in Niagara is explored in contrast to the private development of the Ward.

The semi-autonomous stories centered around specific places in the two areas of the city are meant to illustrate the many ways that society struggled to deal with the ‘foreign’ during this period of tremendous social and physical change not only in Toronto but for cities in general. Each of the stories identifies people and practices that were deemed ‘other’, documents what tools and mechanisms were created in response to these ‘abjections’ and illustrates how the space of the city
1 SCHOLES TAVERN
2 PROVINCIAL LUNATIC ASYLUM
3 CENTRAL PRISON FOR MEN
4 MERCER REFORMATORY FOR WOMEN
5 BOARDINGHOUSES
6 CIVIC ABATTOIR
was shaped as a result of these direct (institutions) and indirect (by-laws, Acts, etc) measures. Collectively, these stories speak of Toronto’s struggle to deal with social change resulting from mass migration and the birth of the industrial city. These measures and their associated impact on the physical form of the city, I would contend, constitute the origins of modern planning – practices that, although are specific to Toronto, became evident throughout planning in North America. It is instructive to understand how the emerging planning mechanisms simultaneously employed consolidation, segregation and dispersal as means to ‘negotiate difference’ – practices that remain the foundation of planning today. The text concludes by tracing the lineage from Simmel’s stranger to Park’s moral regions to Clarence Perry’s neighborhood unit – a trajectory that resulted in comprehensive planning and urban renewal. Larger questions of how the state, the market and civil society confronted abject others in the ‘pre-planning’ period, therefore, become critical to the emergence of the modern planning system.

Note: Throughout the text, I refer to the Index of Tools and Mechanisms for Planning by the notation (See \[XX\]), where XX refers to number 1 to 50 in the Index. The references in the Index are meant to provide additional context about specific legislation, organizations, by-laws, etc that influenced the emergence of planning practice in Toronto during nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The information contained herein is drawn from a variety of sources, some popular and some academic. Please also note that spelling, in all cases throughout the book, has been changed to American English when citing Canadian and British sources (i.e. neighbor instead of neighbour, etc.).
Patrick Lewis arrived in the city of Toronto as if it were land after years at sea. Growing up in the country had governed his childhood: the small village of Bellrock, the highway of river, down which the log drivers came, drinking, working raucous, and in the spring leaving the inhabitants shocked within the silence. Now, at twenty-one, he had been drawn out from that small town like a piece of metal and dropped under the vast arches of Union Station to begin his life once more. He owned nothing, had scarcely any money... He was an immigrant to the city... Now, in the city, he was even new to himself, the past locked away... He spoke out his name and it struggled up in a hollow echo and was lost in the high air of Union Station. No one turned. They were in the belly of a whale.

- Michael Ondaatje, *In the Skin of A Lion*

Michael Ondaatje’s *In the Skin of a Lion* recasts early twentieth century Toronto in a narrative that carefully balances history, myth and fiction. In a city dubbed ‘Toronto the Good’ because of its staunchly Protestant, morally ‘upright’ outlook, the influx of immigrants drove the economic engines of an budding nation, but at the same time, forced its people, institutions and physical landscape to come to terms with a distinctly ‘foreign’ presence. Ondaatje reveals that side of Toronto at odds with the decidedly ‘multicultural’ policy of today. While many would have you believe that Canada did not share the prejudicial growing pains into a multi-ethnic society (as its U.S. counterpart witnessed), it would appear such morally superior rhetoric belies the past policies and attitudes of its people; immigrants were viewed as a necessary evil. Ondaatje draws upon actual events in telling the stories of the city’s ‘foreigners’ – foreign, not inherently because they were not native born, but rather foreign to the social practices that the dominant bourgeois Anglo-Saxon powers found acceptable. *In the Skin of a Lion* reveals the city’s underbelly as Ondaatje follows a cast of sojourners, immigrants, and transient workers to the tannery pools, factories and sewers where they earned their livings. Ondaatje constructs a virtual map of the city through the lives of these invisible, ordinary, and seemingly replaceable transients. The Ondaatje map illustrates the carefully balanced social fabric of the city, a city convulsing in a constant dynamic of labor and capital, a dynamic that shaped the physical fabric of the city.

Early twentieth century Toronto grew from a remote British outpost into a multicultural city not because of any natural or inherent qualities of place but because of its capacity to concentrate production and capital for the purposes of redistribution. Ondaatje’s work is instructive not because it gives a complete nor accurate picture of life through the intense period of expansion; rather, *In the Skin of a Lion* reveals a lens through which those of us who study urban places have rarely looked – a re-casting of the social and physical form of the city by examining the boundaries between what is the dominant culture and what is considered other.
It is here that my work lies.

Ondaatje’s other is the stranger; after the turn of the 20th century, this other was invariably associated with the immigrant. Many terms have been used over time by various people to talk about this notion of the ‘foreign’ and each has its own peculiarities – other, stranger, foreigner, difference, abjection, etc. However, I believe they are part of the same discussion of what I more generally call the ‘peregrina’.

Peregrine \Per*e*grine\, a. [L. peregrinus It. pellegrino. See {Pilgrim}.] Foreign; not native; extrinsic or from without; (of groups of people) tending to travel and change settlements frequently; “a restless mobile society”; “wandering tribes” [syn: mobile], {nomadic}, {roving}, {wandering}; a foreigner, a wayfarer; a wanderer; a traveler; a stranger.

In what follows, I draw upon three writers (Julia Kristeva, Georg Simmel, Robert Park) who discuss these concepts and I suggest how these concepts can be used to understand changes in the social and physical fabric of cities – not a ‘theory of city form’ per se, but certainly a methodology for re-thinking changes in urban form at the turn of the century. I will begin by drawing from Julia Kristeva’s notion of ‘abjection’ (from the Latin abjicere, to cast away) in formulating a theory of the ‘other’. I then discuss Simmel and his concept of the ‘stranger’. I then turn to Park’s ‘moral regions’ and show how he reacted to Simmel’s work. Park’s Chicago School of Sociology was a group that was influential in the formation of modern planning practice. My work attempts to locate ‘otherness’ within the physical changes that have taken place through the progression from the early to the late industrial city. I intend to illustrate that the presence of ‘foreigners’ is a more specific case of the presence of ‘foreignness’ and that confrontation with such ‘foreignness’ has shaped the physical fabric of the city. This is by no means obvious – what is required (and what is laid out in the subsequent Toronto stories), is a re-examination of a wide range of mechanisms used to structure urban space. The hope is, by the end of the entire text, I will have shown how the social and physical segregation that dominates late modern urban institutions and legislation is intimately linked to the ideas of impurity and abjection that emerged prior to the formal beginning of ‘planning’ itself. I will argue that the confrontation with the ‘other’ becomes institutionalized in emerging planning institutions. I argue that this confrontation resulted in the segregation of people, places and practices that were deemed ‘incompatible’ and show that this process was a key feature of the modernizing process. This process was linked with the construction of collective identity and was instrumental to public policy decisions which directly impacted the social and physical form of cities.

**Social and Physical Change.**

The relationship between social and physical form is by no means obvious and much debate has taken place over the potential connections between the two. Lefebvre, for example, saw a direct relationship between social and physical form – for him, social and physical forms were the result of a specific mode of production (i.e. capitalism) – one needed only to understand how the economic system spatialized labor and markets to understand the relationship between social and physical form. He emphasized, for example, that changing from one mode of production (i.e. pre-industrial) to another (i.e. industrial) “results from contradictions in the social relations of production which cannot fail to leave their mark on space and indeed to revolutionize it”. Others, such as Kevin Lynch, are not convinced that social form and physical form are mutually reinforcing (“I am asking if radical environmental changes brings on radical social change. With one general exception, the answer seems to be that in the short run it does not … Does social change affect the physical environment? Perhaps somewhat more, yet also
only after a time and often not very profoundly). I accept that social and physical changes are tied, but the connections are indirect at best. What is required is a ‘pulling apart’ of the various threads that weave together social and physical change in order to understand the interconnections between them.

This text attempts to say something about cities generally by using the case of one city’s experiences. While Toronto’s experiences are unique, the response to strangers is not; generalities can be extracted out of the specific evidence. Important policy implications for today are inherent throughout this text; the reader is encouraged to keep current practice in mind as he/she explores Toronto’s experiences. The scale of migration witnessed in North America since the mid-19th century is unparalleled and continues to grow each year. Almost everywhere, cities are becoming ever more heterogeneous and multi-cultural; while once a narrowly defined set of social rules defined urban behavior, today plurality and diversity are the norm. What effect has this had on how cities look and feel? Is the response to mass migration the same everywhere or is this conditioned by some specific ‘cultural’ outlook? Whole urban environments are becoming increasingly narrated by reclaiming past stories and using such stories to add value to landscape (resulting in an explosion of historic places and overlapping heritage districts). It may be worth dusting off a few letters, papers, and journals to ensure the stories being told reflect the plurality of histories that have been lived and not simply the stories that political powers would like to tell.

Kristeva and Abjection.

Any attempt to interpret Kristeva’s writing must begin with a discussion of how her work relates to the formation of individual identity and, in turn, how the individual relates to collective society. This construct of collective identity becomes important in the face of the other. While these ideas at first seem broad and ‘theoretical’, they will, in turn, underpin my reading of Toronto specifically and the Civitas Peregrina (the multicultural city) more generally. Kristeva’s notion of abjection highlights important underpinnings of Judeo-Christian society: ideas about purity and space, spatial segregation, shifting impurity to the individual conscience (resulting in sin), and Christian society’s need to control or rationalize the abject. These concepts become important during the nineteenth century as North American societies struggled with the social changes created by the transition from a rural to an urban existence.

Kristeva’s work asks whether difference between various identities is innate or whether difference is the result of social/institutional pressures. Kristeva’s position accepts both. While accepting the possibilities of Freud’s Oedipal phase and Lacan’s mirror-stage as later-stage developments of consciousness, Kristeva does think these explanations are sufficient. For Kristeva, the formation of identity is a more complex process related to what she calls ‘abjection’, which combines innate physiological responses with the imposition of cultural values on a person.

Kristeva proposes that when a child first recognizes the absence of its mother, a void is created, bringing feelings of horror, fear and pain, an innate response to a sense of loss. Thus, the mother is the first sign of the abject. Yet, according to Tina Chanter’s interpretation of Kristeva, abjection itself comes not from inside nor outside the system — but rather because of the boundary between them; since the outside is still understood by reference to the inside, the unthinkable is susceptible to being brought inside the system. This fear of contamination as a means of forming identity seems to be important in Judeo-Christianity.

In Powers of Horror (1982), Kristeva explores the formation of identity within Judeo-Christian thought. Specifically, Kristeva highlights the Book of Leviticus’ concern with purity. It is here, with its “basic concern with separating, with constituting strict identities without intermixture” that biblical text enters the story of the abject. Judaic notions of purity derive from the relation of impure things
(and practices) to the subjective boundary — that is, the boundary between the body and the outside world. Rules that govern these purity rituals (practices) define this identity along the lines of the sacred and the defiled and to ensure purity. Homosexuality, of course, was prohibited along with intercourse within the family. Food taboos were constructed to re-enact the rituals of purity to ensure the fluids of the body did not contaminate the external body. Excrement, blood, semen and mother’s milk were all treated with care so as not to contaminate the body.

Moreover, as Kristeva points out, purity was defined topologically — that is, in spatial terms; according to Leviticus (Chapters 11-16 and 19-26), purity was defined in relation to what was excluded from the space of the Temple:

Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations:

And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; [Leviticus 10: 9-11]

Thus, purity is initially defined in relation to place. The Jews designed a system of ‘separations’ that are spatial in their purest form; the boundary of the Temple defined the morality of their faith. When the Temple is destroyed, these ‘rules’ are carried forth despite the absence of the sacred place — i.e. the function of the Temple remained; the spatial boundary was thus reconstructed as moral boundary. The impure is not banished outright, but rather thrust away (yet present, as if to ensure proper adhesion to the purity rules):

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags. [Isaiah 64:6]

The presence of the abject, then, is necessary to ensure righteousness, to ensure that the people obey the rules. As Kristeva states: “as long as the Temple remained, the altar was expiatory for Israel, but now each man’s table is expiatory for him…. Through the destruction of the Temple, the holiness of the Temple [was] extended to the whole of inhabited space.” Thus the rules associated with space are extended to the private realm of each person in an act that prophesized the emergence of the Christian sect.

According to Kristeva, in Christianity the impure became not an absolute rule, but rather a judgment to be made on the part of the subject him/herself — an interpretation of the prohibition rules. Thus the impure is no longer an object of prohibition but rather an action of indiscretion; Sin, then, is the act of allowing the impure into (or out of) the subject. Abjection then is the process of recognizing otherness both in oneself and in one’s environment. In this way, abjection is a source of, and remedy to, sin.

Kristeva believes that in Christian society, the abject must therefore be thrust away — judgments about what is and is not abject must be made and those excluded must be relegated to the margins of that society in order to construct, rationalize (or preserve) identity. As society became more urbanized, this process played itself out in space; the city became the battleground for identifying and responding to the abject. Yet, according to Kristeva, rather than confront the abject directly, society rationalizes it — by planning, by making art, or by covering it with aesthetic bandages (all actions in the physical sphere). Society purifies the abject (Kristeva’s ‘Horror’) as part of a process of civilizing — we institutionalize the moral laws of religion in how we treat the abject — we purify, segregate and rationalize people/places/practices in order to suppress the marginal part of society that gives rise to our own identity. Thus, abjection itself is a signifying process of identity formation. The signs of the abject (dirt, defilement, death, fear, etc) act to confirm what is within and what is without. According to Kristeva:
It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite. Kristeva credits George Bataille with linking the abject to the weakness of prohibition — that abjection is the inability to exclude.9 It is here — the recognition of abjection as a continual negotiation of that which is other — that forms a positive way of re-examining subjectivity and its role in identity (at the level of the self, the city, the nation).

In Strangers to Ourselves (1991), Kristeva extends her focus to look at how abjection formulates the collective, specifically the nation-state; her primary concern is how the ‘foreigner’ is created within such a nation-state — a move from the other to the stranger. In this work, Kristeva moves from the individual identity to group identity. A foreign body, either within its own or without, prompts the group to either reject or assimilate such strangeness — in other words, “the nation-state establishes itself through the convulsions of the body politic which rejects those parts of itself, defined as other or excess, whose rejected alterity then engenders the consolidation of a national identity.”10 Mary Douglas suggests impurity does not exist because it is ‘natural’ but because it disobeys classification rules particular to the given symbolic system (which could change with time and place). The key question is why one classification system and not another? In other words, what are the values of the group? Kristeva suggests these value systems are rooted in Judeo-Christian preference for separation and purity.

While The Book of Leviticus tells us that abjection comes from the other and the purification system, Kristeva posits that Christianity, through its purification rituals, inverts the abject; now, abjection comes from within, it is a repulsion of his own divided being. In this way, abjection becomes a productive formation — it is required to reconcile the body and the law and thus can never be ejected.

Kristeva sees the 1789 Declaration of Rights of Man & Citizen in France as emblematic of the problem of strangeness — rights are granted to everyone except foreigners; if foreigners were included as the same beneficiaries of national community it would be a sign of the weakness of the collective community. The process of self-identification of the collective body relates then to that of the individual body — an abjection, part of an early experience that must be rejected so itself can establish the borders of its unified subjectivity. Thus when Kristeva declares, “the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time in which understanding and affinity founder,”11 she relates the formulation of collective identity with the formulation of self-identity. It is in this move from the particular subject to the collective subject that we are able to see how Kristeva’s subjectivity, and especially her notion of abjection, can provide insight into the formation of sociology and modern planning practice.

This digression into some of the underpinnings of Judeo-Christian thought and Kristeva’s concept of abjection help us to comprehend why, in the face of a society becoming more urbanized and heterogeneous, civic leaders in Toronto moved to segregate the other.

Simmel and ‘the Stranger’.

Martin Melosi’s study on The Sanitary City explores how the confrontation with the abject underlies some of the earliest forms of ‘planning’. In his study, he shows how private water companies began to serve those that could afford them. As a result, “accessibility to water supply was still largely limited to class … and working-class districts often relied on polluted wells”.12 By 1880, the predominant belief that disease was ‘God’s wrath’ on the dirty and the immoral (miasmic theories) began to be replaced with more scientific bacterial and ecological theories. Yet the problem remained one of the poorer classes and, invariably, with the ‘im-
migrant classes’. Throughout the world, but particularly in North America where mass migration had created large ethnic ‘ghettos’, the problem of sanitation was treated as a de facto problem of foreigners.

Two such discussions of this phenomenon were Georg Simmel’s “the Stranger” (1903) and “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (1908) which would became important in sociological circles. In these works, Simmel was preoccupied with what John Allen calls “changing relations in proximity and distance” and “cultures of movement and mobility”.13 Drawn from his experiences in Berlin at the turn of the century, Simmel’s work introduced the idea of social distancing as a means of confronting ‘the stranger’ – distance created both by the stranger him/herself and by the world around him/her. It is here, as a way of ‘negotiating difference’ that Simmel’s work intersects with Kristeva’s process of abjection. In fact, I would argue that Kristeva’s work encompasses much of Simmel’s discussion of the Stranger.

The unity of nearness and remoteness involved in every human relation is organized in the phenomena of the stranger, in a way which may be most briefly formulated by saying that in the relationship to him, distance means that he, who is close by, is far, and strangeness means that he, who is also far, is actually near. For, to be a stranger, is naturally a very positive relation; it is a specific form of interaction.14

- Georg Simmel, “The Stranger” (1903)

In other words, it is possible for people to be near physically but distant in culture and vice versa; moreover, Simmel did not view this condition as a problem that needed to be confronted but rather it was a condition of modern city life. In “The Metropolis and Mental Life”, Simmel expands on this to postulate that in the face of ‘everyday’ strangers (not merely immigrants but all unknown persons) in the course of modern city life, a new mentality emerged – one of blasé and indifference to strangers, in the face of overwhelming stimuli. For Simmel, people coped with this indifference by distancing themselves from strangers. This concept of distancing seems to exist at two levels – first at the level of the individual (indifference to/avoidance of the stranger on the street) but also at the level of society (indifference to/avoidance of the stranger more generally). By implication, this ‘social distance’ expanded the private realm of the city at the expense of the public realm, as people retreated from public life. While beyond the scope of this paper, there is ample literature that expands on this interpretation of the transformation of the modern city and its public sphere.15 Simmel’s stranger was not loaded with judgments about the ‘proper’ place of the stranger in society. Simmel’s stranger was a constructive condition of modern city life and a part of the modernizing process. Simmel’s work is indeed wide-ranging and in particular his insights into the ‘stranger’ and social distancing became absorbed into mainstream American sociology.

Park and ‘moral regions’.

Robert E. Park picked up on Simmel’s sociology and incorporated the ‘stranger’ (in modified form) into planning practice. According to Levine, Simmel was the “only European scholar who has had a palpable influence on sociology in the United States throughout the course of the 20th century.”16 Principally this connection came through Robert Park and the Chicago School of Sociology. The Chicago School had a huge impact on social and political policy through the first half of the 20th century.17 The adoption of Simmel as a role model for social practice and social planning was not merely by chance. Park was a student at the University of Berlin when Simmel taught there (1899), thus Simmel’s thinking directly influenced Park’s own work. Park himself credits Simmel for much of his own thinking: “it was from Simmel that I finally gained a fundamental point of view for the study
of ... society.” Indeed, when Park and his colleague, Ernest Burgess, published their seminal text, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (1921), they included no less than 10 of Simmel’s writings, including the first translation of ‘the Stranger’ by Park himself.

While Simmel’s writings were largely descriptive, Park took up Simmel’s work and attached a normative and moral perspective; for example, Park believed that the, “city is rooted in the habits and customs of the people who inhabit it. The consequence is that the city possesses a moral as well as a physical organization.” While Simmel saw the conflict between the stranger and the ‘native’ as potentially constructive, Park viewed the presence of the stranger as a problem that was associated with other ills of the city and therefore, needed to be solved.

Park’s methodology introduced ‘scientific investigation’ into the realm of sociology, a practice which would become incorporated into the city departments (Health, Police, Planning, etc) across North America. This methodology studied the composition of building types in neighborhoods as well as their racial and ethnic composition. According to Janowitz, the Chicago School “raised issues of physical and social redevelopment long before [the] Great Depression by these sociologists [Park et al] who had a strong background in the social gospel.” In other words, Park and his colleagues foreshadowed the urban renewal projects and the narratives that led to them that emerged after the Second World War.

Building upon Simmel and drawing from the increasing popular association between immigrant areas and ‘vice’, Park’s vision was that of social engineering and control. His writings are loaded with discussions of assimilation and the problems of what he called ‘moral regions’, that is, ‘districts of vice’. With references to Freud, Park comments that, “…men are brought into the world with all the passions, instincts, and appetites, uncontrolled and undisciplined. Civilization, in the interests of the common welfare, demands the suppression sometimes, and the control always, of these wild natural dispositions.” In one of his more baffling comments that speaks of the ‘moral regions’, Park notes:

In the great city the poor vicious and the delinquent, crushed together in an unhealthful and contagious intimacy, breed in and in, soul and body, so that it has often occurred to me that those long genealogies of the Jukes and the tribes of Ishmael would not show such a persistent and distressing uniformity of vice, crime and poverty unless they were peculiarly fit for the environment in which they are condemned to exist… We must then accept these ‘moral regions’ and the more or less eccentric people who inhabit them, in a sense, at least, as part of the natural, if not normal, life of a city… These areas aren’t necessarily criminal or abnormal but in which a divergent moral code prevails.

It is clear that Park’s struggle with the ‘moral regions’ is a struggle with Kristeva’s ‘abject’ and with Simmel’s ‘stranger’ – that is, of a society coming to terms with its ‘other’. Recall Kristeva’s words: “the nation-state establishes itself through the convulsions of the body politic which rejects those parts of itself, defined as other or excess, whose rejected alterity then engenders the consolidation of a national identity.” It is unclear whether Park’s promotion of moral and social ‘cleansing’ was based on concerns with collective identity (as might be the case in Canada), but clearly there was a normative view of what ‘good society’ was. Park’s suggestions – to be played out through the 1930s and 1940s – included all of the devices that ‘modern planning’ felt would alleviate the conditions of the immigrant classes. The ‘moral regions’ must be contained or erased otherwise they would spread. This fear of contagion again reminds us of Kristeva’s discussion of the roots of Judeo-Christian concepts of identity (both individual and group) and the need to define purification rules that protect the pure from the impure. Seen this way, the urban renewal projects that Park advocated appear to be a rejection of the presence of the stranger, that is, following Kristeva – ‘that part of itself defined as other or excess’. Moreover, the purification rules that seek to reject the abject
become codified in the control of urban space through city by-laws, zoning, and other civic legislation. Without such regulation of urban space, contagion would occur. As Burgess said:

Rapid urban expansion is accompanied by excessive increases in disease, crime, disorder, vice, insanity, and suicide, rough indexes of social disorganization. But what are the indexes of the causes, rather than the effects, of the disordered social metabolism of the city? The excess of the actual over the natural increase of population has already been suggested as a criterion. The significance of this increase consists in the immigration into a metropolitan city like New York or Chicago of tens of thousands of persons annually. Their invasion of the city has the effect of a tidal wave inundating first the immigrant colonies, the ports of first entry, dislodging thousands of inhabitants who overflow into the next zone, and so on and on until the momentum of the wave has spent its force on the last urban zone.  

23

The concepts

As I have tried to show, there is a common discourse to the work of Kristeva, Simmel and Park; this discourse concerns itself with the presence of what they in various terms refer to as abject, foreign, other, difference, etc. Kristeva locates the problem of the stranger with the formation of subjective identity, both individual and collective. For her, abjection is a process of identity formation that is always present. The abject is the ‘thing’ from which the subject reacts, to create prohibition rules that form identity — a process she calls abjection that becomes a requisite of identity and something that cannot be erased entirely because its presence is required to ensure we know what is and what is not part of identity.

Kristeva’s abjection is related to Simmel’s Stranger. For Simmel, the stranger is not merely a person or even a group of people. Rather, the stranger represents a condition of modern city life, one of social distancing. Writing in the late 19th/early 20th century, Simmel observes the conditions created by the opportunities of a mobile society – mass migration to the modern city creates a tension between spatial distance and social distance. For Simmel, the stranger is a part of all of us, just as the abject for Kristeva is a part of all of us.

The question of the stranger becomes especially important in the formative years from the mid-19th to the early 20th century and continues even today. Simmel’s recognition of the impact that mass immigration had on the emergence of the modern city becomes problematized by Robert Park and the Chicago School of Sociology. A student of Simmel’s, Park was receptive to the discussions of the stranger but while Simmel’s stranger was a neutral construct, Park imparted a moral imperative in response to rapid social change. Throughout the 19th century, greater interest emerged in the relationship between disease, vice and the poor. As migration increased with the shift to a more urban, industrial economy throughout the century, immigrants became increasingly associated with disease, vice and immorality. Simmel’s sociology was taken up by Park in order to ‘solve’ the problem of the stranger. Modern planning, it would seem, owns much to Park’s legacy for he and the Chicago School introduced the rigors scientific measurement to sociology and advocated the ‘cleansing’ of both the moral and physical problems associated with the stranger. Drawing on Simmel’s social distancing, Park advocated what would become the urban renewal movement – using spatial segregation and ‘containment’ as a device to protect the morals of the city. In this sense, his actions reflected the concern for purity embedded within Judeo-Christian thought.

While past cultures have equally confronted the presence of the peregrine, the scale of migration witnessed in the modern city has resulted in an institutionalization of this confrontation in civic agencies (health, planning, police, etc), specifically designed to create and enforce purification rules that protect the ‘public’ from contagion. Historically, royal, religious or other ruling classes that
governed the stranger and set up ‘taboo’ behaviors have been replaced with agencies that seek to ‘manage’ otherness. The main body of this text will examine one city in detail (Toronto) in order to show the mechanics of these new institutions and how the city was transformed in the face of Ondaatje’s peregrine – that is, the Civitas Peregrina.

(Endnotes)


7 The shift from locating purity within the space of the Temple to the space of the individual would emerge as fundamental to Christianity’s interiorizing of Levitical abominations. Thus, it seems the New Testament changes the pure/impure dialogue into an inside/outside one – a brilliant (if not subversive) move to transfer the purity rules to the conscience of the individual: “there is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.” [Mark:15]. Now it is no longer those things (people/places/practices) exterior to the body but ‘dark things’ within that can contaminate society. When Pharisee accuses Jesus of entering the Temple without taking a bath, Jesus replies: “you have cleansed that outer skin, the skin that whores and flute players also anoint, bathe, cleanse, and adorn in order to arouse men’s lust, whereas inside they are filled with scorpions and all kinds of wickedness.” [Oxyrhynchus papyrus 840].


10 Norma Claire Moruzzi, “National Abjects: Julia Kristeva on the Process of Political Self-Identification,” in Kelly Oliver, Ethics, Politics and Difference in Julia Kristeva’s Writing (New


15 See, for example, Jürgen Habermas’ Strukturwandel der Öffentlicheit (1962), translated into English by Thomas Burger as The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).


19 Janowitz (1968).


21 Park (1925): 45.


In 1793, Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe ordered Alexander Aitken to conduct a survey in the area of Toronto. Aitken inscribed a line at 43 degrees, 39 minutes North, 72 degrees and 23 minutes West. This line, which he called Lot Street, would be critical to the future development of the city. Below this line, land would be reserved by the Crown for the purposes of a town which would be called York. Above this line, land would be granted to important families to begin the settlement of the town. This initial survey of the town would be incorporated into the general survey of the entire province of Upper Canada (Ontario) over the next century, with Lot Street being the ‘First Concession Line’ (Fig. 1-1). This provincial survey established survey lines at every 100 chains (6600 feet) in both directions, with those parallel to the lakeshore called ‘concession lines’. These concession lines created tracts of land that were divided into 10 ‘park lots’ each 10 chains wide (100 acres), typically running perpendicular to Lake Ontario. Thirty of these ‘park lots’ were granted to individual families by Simcoe after 1793 as compensation for relocating to the upstart village (Fig. 1-2). Simcoe had relocated the Provincial capital here from Newark (Niagara-on-the-Lake) to provide better security from a potential American attack. In 1844, in honor of Queen Victoria, Lot Street was renamed Queen Street and by 1884, the entire first concession line was for the first time called Queen. The north-south survey grid began at Yonge Street, an arterial road that would stretch deep into the Ontario hinterland. Concessions were numbered east and west of Yonge.

The town was the capital in name only. In reality, it was largely a military outpost with only a few hundred settlers. It was chosen as capital because of its protected harbor and distance from the American border. Prior to its selection, the area had been a key trading area for the Mississauga: it was the terminus of the ‘Toronto Passage’, the shortest overland route from Lake Ontario to Lake Huron. Many
have speculated that ‘Toronto’ comes from the Huron word for ‘meeting place’. According to legend, as early as 1615, a dozen Huron led French explorer Etienne Brule to the area, marking the first European contact with the area. The first French explorers had established Fort Rouille a few miles west of the would-be town in 1751. With the defeat of the French army on the Plains of Abraham (Quebec City) in 1759, New France had succumbed to the British. The fort was subsequently abandoned and the area remained undeveloped until the end of the century. Ironically, it was the American Revolution in 1776 that started the development of the area. Some 40,000 British subjects, loyal to the Crown, left the U.S. after the revolution and settled in southwestern Ontario, in Toronto’s hinterland. By 1788, the British had arranged to purchase 26,000 acres from the Mississauga, an area from what is now Scarborough on the east to what is now Etobicoke on the west for the establishment of York.

At the time American forces invaded the town in April 1813, in response to perceived infringes on its sovereignty by British ships in the Atlantic, the population was a scant 700. The Americans returned twice more over the summer, using the town as a convenient place to pillage. These indiscretions prompted the British to quickly finish Fort York and arm the town. By the summer of 1814, the fortifications were complete and the American fleet was finally turned away after another raid on the town. The invasions had caused British leaders to become aware of conspirators in York: expatriates who were more loyal to personal gain than to the Crown. These suspicions led to the rise of the Orange Order, a strongly pro-Monarch Irish Protestant group. The War of 1812 stimulated the growth of the town, as traditional water passages along the Great Lakes had been abandoned in favor of inland routes. Toronto, as it had for centuries before, become the terminus of those supply routes. A merchant class emerged as the town provided the British military with arms and supplies, although the town remained distinctly village-like (Fig. 1-3). The town became a hub for agricultural trade and constructed its first
market in 1820 to accommodate this function. By 1831, a new brick market/town hall had been constructed (Fig. 1-4). This undertaking proved so costly that the town was forced to incorporate into the City of Toronto in 1834 in order to take over the growing debt it had incurred. By this time, the city was home to 9,000 people. In 1841, the provinces of Upper (Ontario) and Lower Canada (Quebec) were united; Toronto’s population was 13,000. Compared to other North American cities at the time, Toronto was a city in name only; its development compares most closely with Chicago.¹

In the first concession to the west of Yonge and the first concession north of Queen were park lots 10 through 14. It was from here that the Ward would grow. By the 1810s, John Elmsley owned the top half of park lots 9 and 10. After his death, his widow sold the lower half of lot 11 to Alexander Wood, who subsequently sold half (25 acres) to Attorney General John Beverley Robinson. This speculative real estate turnover was typical: rather than develop elaborate estates as Simcoe had imagined, the families subdivided the lots, parcelled them off and sold them for profit.²

From 1820 onwards, the Law Society of Upper Canada began looking for a lot to house its main court hall. They had hoped to acquire Russell Square at the corner of King and Simcoe Streets but, by 1827 it had been sold and the Upper Canada College had constructed its buildings. Robinson, seeing an opportunity to make a profit as well as accommodate the Law Society which he oversaw, sold six acres for the same price he had paid for all 25 acres. In order to cover the additional expenses, the Law Society secured a ‘grant-in-aid’ from the government (which they ran) in 1825.³ The court served the entire county, so the site, located across Lot Street, was technically in York Township yet also conveniently adjacent to the city limit. Construction of Osgoode Hall began in 1829 (Fig. 1-5). It was enlarged in 1844-5 by H.B. Lane, architect of Holy Trinity Church, also in the Ward. Lane’s portico transformed the simple building into a Palladian-Georgian palace,
which still stands today. (Fig. 1-6). Its neighbors at the time were fields of green.

Immediately to the east was the estate of Captain John Macaulay, a surgeon with the Queens Rangers, granted to him by Simcoe on 1 January 1797. In the late 1820s, Macaulay's estate on park lot 9 was subdivided into narrow building lots. These narrow lots contrasted with landowners to the east of Yonge, who had subdivided their properties into larger lots. This decision to parcel the estate into small lots was pivotal to its future development. Unable to afford large lots, unskilled workers were quick to take advantage of a locale which afforded home ownership, yet with small lots. Macaulay's estate would soon be come known as 'Macaulaytown' and be renowned for its small 'shanties'. Its streets were named after Macaulay family members: Louisa, Alice, James, Albert and so on. The area was distinctly suburban, as travelers at the time described the area as forested and swampy. By the time the City of Toronto was incorporated in 1834, it had become the city's northern entrance, with travelers arriving from the northern hinterland staying in the four inns that were located there.  

The 1842 Cane map illustrates the nascent state of affairs in Toronto and the Ward at the time (Fig. 1-7). Still present was Macaulay House with its driveway angled towards Yonge Street (1). The only development of the Macaulay estate was along Lot Street. Above the Macaulay House there was little development, the only substantial construction spread along Yonge Street. The Taddle Creek clearly cuts through the area diagonally from College (University) Avenue to Yonge Street (2).

When St. John’s Ward was created in 1853, the area was well recognized as a poor district. From this point forward, St. John’s Ward came to be known simply as ‘the Ward’. After this time, its reputation as a slum increased. By the 1910s, the ‘Ward’ was not only a slum but was the center of the immigrant communities, a “shorthand for foreign Toronto”. Its edges were busy thoroughfares: Yonge Street to the east was the city’s ‘main street’, Queen Street to the south was
the city’s main east-west commercial street, University Avenue to the west was the city’s major symbolic axis terminating at the Provincial Legislature after 1886, and College Street to the North was also an important cross-town artery. Despite the well-traveled periphery, the interior of the Ward was a maze of streets and alleys where few well-to-do would dare to travel. After 1891, the Ward was absorbed into a larger political unit, Ward Three, but the ‘Ward’ label stuck to the original St. John’s Ward area. The area was initially the home of the city’s Jewish, Italian and, later, Chinese populations. More than this, however, the area became the first point of contact for all immigrants, being located at the terminus of York Street which ran directly north from the first Union Station.

The Ward was an ‘incubator’: an area where newcomers, immigrants and migrants alike, could find cheap accommodation close to the shops and factories located just to the south. As individuals and families saved money or gained more familiarity with the city, they typically moved out, replaced by the next wave of sojourners. The title of a 1918 study by the Bureau of Municipal Research (BMR) typified the popular attitude towards the Ward: “What is the Ward Going to do with Toronto?” (See [49]). In this widely distributed text, reformers declared that the Ward was “a condition, an attitude of mind toward life, a standard of living – not merely a geographic locality.” Following a 1911 Slum Report by the Chief Medical Officer, the substandard housing conditions in the Ward had been identified as a source of disease. Worse: disease, crime, immorality (prostitution) and vice of all kinds became conflated with the ‘foreigners’ who lived there. The physical transformation of the area stood in for the social ‘degradation’ that the dominant Anglo-Saxon majority felt was taking place. As officials began to see the environment as a precondition to improper morals and the associated ‘evils’ of the city, physical reform became the tool of choice. These ‘environmentalists’ did not mix words about what they hoped for: the BMR, for example, hoped the Ward would be, “wiped out by the complete substitution of stores, factories, and public build-
Instead, the conditions in the Ward did not subside, due to the rising influx of immigrants, a lack of adequate housing, and a slow reception of foreigners into a labor market that kept immigrant wages low. On the contrary, the Ward grew and spread, like a disease, ‘boiling over’ to the adjacent areas of the city. The specific location of the Ward within the city was critical. Located along the city’s main north-south axis (Yonge Street), it lay in the ‘path of progress’. Landowners in the Ward, many, though not all, of whom were absentee landlords, refused to upgrade properties that they knew would eventually be replaced. Owners held the land in speculation of the eventual northward growth of the central business district. Although the buildings were virtually worthless, landlords had to charge enough rent to pay the high taxes on the land, which was assessed at a high value because of its future development potential. The result was that tenants paid high rents, earned low wages, and lived in deplorable conditions. There was a benefit to the wealthy for maintaining this ‘vice district’. By concentrating the ‘evils’ in one place, the middle- and upper-class ensured that their own neighborhoods would be free of the kinds of places that bred social problems. Moreover, the success of their business in the central business district required a population of workers in close proximity to their place of work. As well, the area acted something as a ‘vice zone’ for the wealthy. Prostitution was rampant in the area and well-to-do clients could easily escape to the dark side of the city, far from the sanctity of their wives and children.

The idea of tearing down the Ward raised other fears: that the slum conditions, the ‘attitude of mind’, might create such conditions in other parts of the city, even the suburbs. As Weaver remarks, the Ward was therefore, “treated by good and proper Torontonians as a blemish whose foreign contagion was best kept from the sanctity of the suburbs”. Indeed, the Ward was predominantly foreign-born: by 1901, 99% of the city’s Jewish population lived in Ward Three. 78% of the city’s black population lived there, 75% of the Italian population, and 62% of the Chinese population lived there. By contrast, only 19% of the city’s British population resided there. However, Ward Three contained more than just the Ward. The area stretched farther north to Bloor Street and contained many well-to-do British residents, so the concentration of immigrants in the Ward in 1901 is even higher than the above numbers suggest. Those concentrations occurred in an area of roughly five by ten blocks, or, just 0.7% of the city’s area. Conditions in the Ward, it was assumed, were a consequence not of economic realities, but of the substandard values of the foreign population. Many reformers thought that a simple campaign ‘to make good Canadians’ out of them would solve the social problems. A strong effort to document the problems, categorize the people and make remedies was thought to assure success. Despite these efforts, conditions persisted.

I traced the physical transformation of the Ward from 1858 to 1923 and compared it to the resultant urban form of today. Digital mapping was used to document this transformation using information gathered from the 1858 Boulton Atlas of Toronto and from fire insurance maps drawn by Charles Goad from 1884 to 1923. The reader is invited, in reading the subsequent stories, to compare the social changes taking place with the physical changes over this period of great transition.

A comparison of the Ward in 1858 with today is revealing (Fig. 1-8, 1-9). What is readily apparent is the difference in scale between then and now. The Ward of 1858 was a collection of wooden shanties: the buildings were very small, with only three major institutions – Osgoode Hall (1), Holy Trinity Church (2) and the House of Industry (3) – mixed among the shanties (Fig. 1-18). Compared with the 1842 Cane map, it is clear that significant settlement of this area occurred between 1842 and 1858. This was likely due to the arrival of poor Irish immigrants from the Irish potato famine. Today, the shanties have long since been removed. In their place are a collection of tall hotels (1), surface parking lots (2), hospitals (3),
FIG. 1-8. MAP OF THE WARD, 1858.

1. OSGOODE HALL
2. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH
3. HOUSE OF INDUSTRY


HOTELS 1
PARKING LOTS 2
HOSPITALS 3
CITY HALLS 4
PUBLIC SQUARE 5
OFFICE BUILDINGS 6
SHOPPING MALL 7
FIG. 1-10. MAP OF THE WARD, 1884.

1. Wesleyan Methodist Church
2. Grace Church
3. Police Station
4. Shaftesbury Hall
5. Children’s Hospital
7. R.S. Williams Piano Factory
8. Planing Mill
9. Coffin Factory

FIG. 1-11. MAP OF THE WARD, 1899.

ARMORIES DRILL SHED 1
‘OLD’ CITY HALL 2
Eaton’s 3
Bishop Strachan School 4
New Children’s Hospital 5
Nurse’s Home 6
Power Station 7
YWCA Building 8
St. George’s Hall 9
Salvation Army Temple 10
FIG. 1-16. TIME FRAME OF CONSTRUCTION, 1910.

FIG. 1-17. TIME FRAME OF CONSTRUCTION, 1923.

CIVITAS PEREGRINA

ABJECT SPACE IN EARLY IMMIGRANT TORONTO

"A STATE OF MIND MORE THAN A PLACE"
succeeded in beginning the dismantling well before the 1950s. The institutionalization of these reform efforts with comprehensive planning and the city’s first zoning by-laws (See [50]), only accelerated this process.

Tracing the physical changes through a detailed mapping from 1858 to 1923 will give a better sense of how the area changed, specifically in relation to the response to abject others who concentrated in the Ward. For example, by 1884, the area continued to become denser (Fig. 1-10). Many shanties were replaced by other roughcast and frame buildings. Several masonry commercial buildings began to emerge along Queen Street to the south and Yonge Street to the east. This period saw the rise of many institutions. Several additional churches appeared: the Wesleyan Methodist Church (1) and Grace Church (2), both on Elm Street, were the most significant. In fact, by this time, eleven churches existed within a seven block span in the Ward’s core (Fig. 5-1). A masonry police station was constructed on Agnes Street (3) and the YMCA’s grand Shaftesbury Hall (4) had been constructed on Queen Street at James. A Children’s Hospital had been constructed along College Street (5). A few industries also appeared: the Cobban Manufacturing Co. (6) and the R.S. Williams piano factory (7) located along Hayter Street, while a planing mill (8) and coffin factory (9) located a block north. Examining the time period of buildings between 1858 and 1884, however, illustrates that the more significant development over this time was the expansion of small, wood residential buildings (Fig. 1-14). In fact, as this map shows, the area’s residential fabric largely re-invented itself between 1858 and 1884. The northern half of the Ward, sparse in 1858, has become almost as dense as the southern half. Buildings along Queen and Yonge Streets have been completely replaced with masonry buildings, reflecting the shift of the city center from the original town north and westward.

By 1899, several important developments had taken place (Fig. 1-11). The Armories (Drill Shed) on University Avenue (1) had been constructed, replacing a group of houses with its monstrous football-field sized mass. The “Old” City
Hall (2) had expropriated another block, previously a mix of residential and commercial buildings, virtually all of which date from the last period of expansion up to 1884. Much of the block at the corner of Queen and Yonge Streets has been bought by the Eaton’s Department Store for its expansion (3). The time series illustrates that most of the building constructed between 1884 and 1899 were larger, institutional buildings (Fig. 1-15). By this time, the Bishop Strachan School on College had been well established (4) and the new Hospital for Sick Children (5) had replaced its earlier version on the same site. A nurses’ home (6) had been built just south of the new hospital. A new power station had been constructed on Teraulay Street (7). The YWCA had constructed its edifice on Elm Street (8), adjacent to St. George’s hall (9), by this time. The Salvation Army Temple (10), on the northeast corner of Albert and James Streets, had been completed. Otherwise, most of the core of the Ward remained largely intact.

By 1910, there were concerns over the sanitary conditions in the Ward (Fig. 1-12). During this phase, the cultural make-up of the Ward really began to transform: by 1910, the area was almost entirely foreign-born. The Ward during this time became denser, as vacant lots were purchased and in-filled. Anxieties led to the Slum Report by the Chief Medical Officer, which recommended transforming the physical environment to cope (See 29). The first decade of the twentieth century continued the trend of large institutions purchasing adjacent properties and constructing larger, more substantial masonry buildings. The dates of construction indicate this trend (Fig. 1-16). The Armories added a riding school to its already substantial presence (1). Osgoode Hall, which had added new wings over the years, continued to expand (2). The Eaton Co. continued its onslaught along Yonge Street, constructing a new store on the corner and buying adjacent parcels, including those on the southwest corner of Trinity Square (3). Notable during this period was the propensity of landowners to construct ‘out buildings’ behind their main residences (4), presumably in response to the greater demand for affordable...
housing by immigrants. Many synagogues appeared during this period, including the spectacular Goel Tzedec on University Avenue (5). The House of Industry added some peripheral buildings to its complex (6). One of the most significant developments was in the northwest corner of the Ward, where trustees for the Toronto General Hospital had acquired and cleared a substantial number of dwellings in anticipation of constructing their complex (7).

By 1923, five years after the Ward was systematically studied by the Bureau of Municipal Research, there were fifteen large institutions in the area: City Hall (1), the Armories (2), Toronto General Hospital (3), Hospital for Sick Children (4), Osgoode Hall (5), Eaton’s (6), Holy Trinity Anglican Church (7), the Registry Office (8), Hester How School (9), Central Military Convalescent Hospital (10), National Theatre (11), Shea’s Hippodrome (12), House of Industry (13), YWCA (14), and St. George’s Hall (15) (Fig. 1-13). Of the 147 acres in the Ward, roughly 50% of the land coverage was dwellings and stores, roughly 25% for streets and sidewalks and roughly 25% for the above large institutions. The building density was 22 buildings per acre. The Ward’s population in 1916 of 10,527 represented an overall density of 72 people per acre, or 96 people per acre discounting the street area: high for Toronto but nowhere near the densities of New York or Chicago. What was most important to Torontonians was not the comparisons to those ‘cities of sin’ but to the other parts of Toronto, where densities were 3.5 times less on average.

An inventory of how the fabric changed from 1909 to 1916 might prove instructive, and corresponds roughly to the time-series map (Fig 1-17). Several obvious changes took place by 1923. The Toronto General Hospital had constructed the first phase of its large complex at College and University. The first phase of a new City Beautiful scheme intended to erase the Ward had been constructed: the new Registry Office had replaced a block of dwellings adjacent to the Armories. The Armories themselves, along with Osgoode Hall, had made some new additions. Eaton’s continued to expand: by this time, they had constructed tall warehouses completely surrounding Holy Trinity Church as well as a substantial new building opposite the Strachan School, which by this time had become the military convalescent hospital. Also notable was the removal of a block of dwellings for the Elizabeth Street playground, by the adjacent Hester How School. The How School replaced the Louisa School which had been destroyed by the Eaton’s expansion. The enormous Shea’s Hippodrome had been constructed opposite City Hall on Teraulay Street.

The overall number of buildings dropped from 1,761 to 1,656. In particular, the percentage of dwellings decreased from 76.6% to 63%, stores increased from 20.4% to 30% and factories increased from 3% to 7%. What was most disturbing to reformers was the relationship between population and dwellings. Despite a 17.8% reduction in stores and dwellings (from 76.6% to 63%), population of the Ward had only decreased by 4.5%. It was clear that although fewer people were living in the Ward, they were packed in at higher densities. The construction of the buildings reflected how much the area had changed from its original wooden ‘shanties’: by 1916, 37% were brick (a 13% increase from 1909), 14% roughcast with a brick front (11.7% increase), 37% were roughcast only (21.4% decrease) and just 12% were frame construction (10% decrease).

From looking at the numbers, it would appear the Ward was ‘correcting itself’ through market succession. Most land values doubled between 1909 and 1916, and many had tripled. So, despite modest improvements in the building stock, the pressure was great to develop larger buildings to justify the additional taxes. Despite the changes in building stock, the tenancy of the area changed very little: home ownership actually dropped from 19% in 1909 to 15% in 1916. In both cases, the overwhelming number of residents rented from landlords. Thus, despite modest improvements in the fabric, the area still remained a growing concern for urban reformers.

Let me conclude this chapter by looking at the Ward through the eyes of
one of Canada’s most prominent artists, Lawren Harris. Harris, would-be leader of
the Group of Seven artists who would become national legends, became interested
in the Ward as an object of study during the late 1910s. Harris’s paintings provide
a good example of how the middle- and upper-class viewed the Ward at the time.
Moreover, Harris’s paintings give a visual impression of the place. So allow me to
diverge a moment.16

Best known for his landscape paintings, Lawren Harris painted the city in
the early phases of his career. Harris’s quest was to create a uniquely Canadian art.
Yet, he rejected modernism, which he felt had resulted in ethnic and racial mixing
that diluted the virtuous and virile qualities of the Northern Race. This anxiety over
immigration is reflected in one of the Group’s promoters (and one of Harris’s good
friends), Fred Housser:

Wherever one goes in Canada he hears talk about immigration. There is
an impatient haste to get the country filled up. We are told it is our great-
est need. Perhaps so, from an economic standpoint it cannot be denied.
From a spiritual standpoint it may be another question … Canada is per-
forming an important part in providing elements of new world character
and outlook where they are in danger of being overwhelmed. Had this
country been invaded by swarms of old world peoples as the [United]
States has been in the past fifty years, we would have been incapable of
performing this task.17

Characteristic of Harris’s paintings, then, is the use of staffage; never does
Harris paint people with faces. Rather, he uses the generic figures, placeholders,
to represent people. Harris’s early paintings of the Ward illustrate his disdain for
the conditions he saw. In the Ward (1920) was typical: the image of the suffering
city (Fig. 1-21). His depiction of the scene is grim: cracking roughcast, no veg-
etation, unpaved sidewalks, solitary figures and an air of despair. Virtually all of
Harris’s paintings are without depth, that is, the projection is perpendicular to the
picture plane, in profile rather than in perspective. A House in the Slums (1920)
reinforces his impression of a place with few redeeming qualities (Fig. 1-22). Even
when nature is introduced into the composition and brighter colors are used, such
as Ward (1918), the flatness of the canvas and the seemingly somber activities of
the faceless figures convey Harris’s depiction of abject space (Fig. 1-23).18

FIG. 1-21. IN THE WARD (1920) BY LAWREN HARRIS.
By comparison, 1840 populations of various U.S. cities: Baltimore (102,000), Boston (93,000), Cincinnati (46,000), New Orleans (102,000), New York (313,000), Philadelphia (94,000). Chicago’s phenomenal growth (from 5,000 in 1840 to 1.1 million in 1890) easily outpaced Toronto’s modest growth (13,000 in 1841 to 181,200 in 1891).


4 See John Ross Robertson, *Landmarks of Toronto* Vol. 1 (Toronto, 1893): 113 and Vol. 3 (Toronto, 1903): 282. The four inns were: Golden Ball Tavern, Butcher’s Arms Inn, Tiger Inn and the notorious Sun Tavern — renowned for its role as the center of the Rebellion of 1837. The Sun Tavern was later known as the Falcon and the Heifer after 1847 but was destroyed by fire in 1855. See E.C. Guillet, *Pioneer Inns and Taverns* Vol. 1 (1954): 205.


7 BMR (1918).

8 Although it is easy to say that the landlords were making a huge profit on the backs of the immigrant poor, this was only partially true. The rents charges were high compared to the quality of the accommodations, but the rents typically just covered the taxes on the properties. Many landlords, more as the years went on, lived in the Ward itself and were themselves recent immigrants, so the story is more complex than a simple capitalist extortion tale would tell.

9 BMR (1918): 5.

10 John Weaver as cited in Artibise (1979): 43.

12 As the BMR said, “The Ward we shall always have with us unless we discover and eliminate or control the forces which produced it,” BMR (1918): 5.

13 BMR (1918): 8.

14 BMR (1918): 8.


16 Just to provide some context, Harris was an Orthodox Christian and a member of the International Theosophy Society, a faith group that rejected the materialistic scientific movements fostered by modernity (Positivism). For Harris, theosophy was a way to deal with the fragmentation of various truths that science was revealing. Like the Marxists, the theosophists believed that capitalism was a failure and destined to further segregate society. Unlike the Marxists, however, theosophists believed that only through moral regeneration could a social order be preserved. For Harris, the replenishing power of nature could reform a world gone awry. Thus, Harris aligned himself with a large group of Toronto reformers who saw the social problems of the city as being the result of a weakening of traditional (Anglo-Saxon) morals.


18 Harris’s poetry also conveys his thoughts about the Ward. One description of the place, could easily have been the scene from In the Ward (1920). Lawren Harris, “A Note of Colour,” in Contrasts: A Book of Verse, II (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1922).

In a part of the city that is ever / shrouded in sooty smoke, and amid / huge, hard buildings, hides a gloomy
house of broken, grey rough-cast / like a sickly sin in a callous soul / Two half-dead chestnut trees / black and broken, stand wearily before it / subdued by a bare rigid telephone pole / The windows are bleary with grime, and bulging / filthy rags plug the broken panes / Dirty shutters sag
The Irish had been migrating to the New World for decades but in the 1840s, famine and poverty made the voyage a matter of survival. In the face of this rural, destitute and largely uneducated immigrant population, civil society constructed social and physical institutions to cultivate them in mainstream Canadian life. Based on the Elizabethan Poor Laws first established by Henry VIII in 1601, these institutions were meant to provide shelter and care for the poor. Up until about 1890, such care was administered locally and privately. At this early stage, problems of poverty and associated ‘evils’ (crime, prostitution, vice, etc) were viewed as problems of individual deviancy. Fundamental flaws in the bourgeoning capitalist society – the division of labor, racial and ethnic segregation, and environmental factors – were not considered. However, by the turn of the twentieth century, these structural flaws began to explain the ills of the industrial city. Symptoms of these societal flaws could be seen not at the level of the individual, but at the level of groups whose collective practices differed from the ‘host’ society. Perceiving the ‘threat’ not to be deviant behavior but symptoms of urban life, all levels of the state began to develop institutions to both study and to alleviate urban ills.

A blight of the potato crop in 1845 sparked a wave of mass migration that would change all English-speaking nations. As harvests across Europe failed, food prices soared. Unable to afford the high prices and unable to produce a harvest, Irish peasants were forced to eat their rotting produce. This sparked entire villages being consumed with cholera and typhus. Some landlords evicted their tenants. Others sent them to the New World. Others willingly left. The ‘coffin ships’ that transported these sick Irish peasants to North America were no panacea: typically one third of passengers died en route as disease spread throughout the overcrowded vessels (Fig 2-1). Those that survived the trip landed destitute. When the famine crisis ceded in 1850, more than a million had died and two million had
emigrated: Ireland had lost nearly 40% of her population. In Canada, Halifax and Quebec were the main recipients of these ships but eventually the rural workers settled in the country’s two major cities, Montreal and Toronto. Unaccustomed to urban life and without work, these Irish immigrants posed a heavy burden on Toronto. As Nicolson claims, the Irish were, ‘disease-ridden, superstitious, uneducated, and untrained,” and “were despised as human vermin, an ‘obsolete people’, fit only for absorption or extinction.”1 Worse: these Irish immigrants were Catholic. There had been Catholics in Toronto since the early 1820s, but dominated by English and Irish Protestants, they were largely marginalized.2 The embedded bias against Catholics combined with poverty to justify the ‘education’ of these new arrivals in order to become good, clean Protestant Canadians.

The plight of the poor and homeless was constantly talked about in public lectures and private sermons. Through public and private donations, a refuge was established on Richmond Street in 1842.3 This ‘House of Industry’, as it came to be known, moved to Shuter Street, east of the Ward before land in the Ward was secured. In 1848, the volunteer committee in charge of the refuge donated land it had assembled to the City. The offer was conditional upon the City building a House of Industry and leasing the premises back to the committee.4 By the end of 1848, the House of Industry was completed at 87 Elm Street, between Elizabeth and Sayer (later Chestnut) Street. The plaque honoring the institution states its mission as: “to provide permanent and temporary lodging as well as food and fuel to the needy in the community, who often were required to do chores in return for help” (Fig. 2-2). It was designed by famed Toronto architect William Thomas, who also designed such Toronto landmarks as the Don Jail and St. Lawrence Hall. After winning the three-person competition, Thomas waived his commission and donated the plans to the cause. A third floor was added in 1899 by E.J. Lennox, architect of Old City Hall, who retained the roof profile of Thomas’ original (Fig 2-3). In 1947, the name was changed to Laughlen House, in honor of the superin-
tendents who had worked there from 1890 to 1944. Laughlen House has operated as a home for the elderly ever since. The House of Industry was constructed just in time. In 1849, the City experienced a severe outbreak of cholera. The culprits were clear: the Irish ship people.

At this time, the City’s hospital, built in 1817, was located to the west of downtown along King Street West at John Street. To deal with the sickly immigrants, the City constructed temporary buildings, ‘emigrant sheds’ and a ‘cholera hospital’, on Peter Street. These buildings were intended to quarantine the diseased: they were effectively holding cells until they died. Most did die. Apparently, there was discussion of constructing a more permanent cholera hospital on the property that the hospital owned at the northwest corner of Brock (later extension of Spadina Avenue) and Newgate (later Adelaide) Street. City council received a petition from abutters who opposed this cholera hospital and suggested locating it adjacent to the new Lunatic Asylum, then under construction on the Garrison Reserve.²⁵ There is no evidence that a permanent cholera hospital was ever built, although it is known the Garrison Hospital at the foot of Tecumseh was used for this purpose. The cholera sheds were of great concern to the City. In a letter dated 24 May 1847, an official writes to City council demanding to know why the City, despite orders from the Provincial government, was blocking additions to the sheds.²⁶ Within two weeks, the City had instructed the General Hospital not to accept immigrants affected with ‘contagious fever’.²⁷ The response from the Province was swift: two days later the Secretary’s Office, the most senior in the Province, ordered the additions to be constructed. The Board of Health was to draw up specifications for their construction. Moreover, the hospital was to ration food and water for those most likely to survive - for six days only. This early ‘generosity’ on the part of the Province was unusual for a time when local charities were expected to aid the sick and the poor. It is unclear whether the state’s concern was for the welfare of the sick or because of the fear that the disease would spread. A letter from the Sheriff

of the Toronto Home District to Mayor W. H. Boulton conveys suggests it is more likely the latter motivated their action:

It is impossible for us to shut our [sic] eyes to the misery that at present exists and to the extent to which it may increase. A feeling of horror and indignation is created that such a state of things should be brought on this country. It is requisite that we should at once feel that great exertions will have to be made, and devise plans to remedy the evil as for may lie in our power.⁸

After considering the Barracks on the southeast corner of Bathurst and Queen Streets as a ‘work house’ for the diseased immigrants, they were finally used as an orphanage for the children of the dead. By January 1848, however, the military demanded the removal of the orphans, as it supposedly needed to use the buildings for military purposes.⁹ With no military campaigns underway, it was more likely the request to remove the sickly children was merely an attempt to rid the area of those who were potentially afflicted with cholera. After all, the state did not feel obliged to help the immigrants. The Board of Health confirms this attitude in a summer 1849 report that claimed that Irish bringing cholera to Toronto was, “[an] extreme injustice to this City…incurred on behalf of immigrants.”¹⁰ Moreover, this injustice was made more objectionable because it required the relief of the destitute inhabitants who were clearly the cause of the illness in the first place: “While it is well known that if contagious disease does make its appearance among the inhabitants of the city, it will most likely not arise from local causes but be introduced by the sick and helpless immigrants.”¹¹ By the beginning of 1855, after a couple harshly-worded letters from the Ordnance Office threatening legal action against the City, the cholera sheds were removed.¹² Moreover, the Toronto General Hospital abandoned its John Street site in favor of a site on Gerrard Street in the east end.

Prior to the famine immigrants, the Irish were distributed across the city, with little segregation by class; there were a few professionals and skilled tradesmen but most were unskilled laborers and transient workers. Up until the famine, the Irish Catholics, unlike the Protestant Orange Order, did not have institutions to assist them. The Catholic Church was far too overstretched to be able to provide aid. The first permanent priest was not assigned until the late 1820s and even then had to travel the City’s vast hinterland to render services for the rural Catholic population.¹³ Of the City’s elite, the ‘Family Compact’ as they were known, a few were Irish Catholics: the Elmsleys, MacDonalds, and Babys. Perhaps because of these few well-connected Catholics, the Irish did not play a major role in the (failed) Rebellion of 1837, when the Family Compact’s control of the city was challenged. Eager to keep the continued loyalty of the Catholic population, the British government actively supported additional Catholic clergy after 1837: with one church, one school, no religious orders, and no press, the Irish Catholics posed little threat to the Protestant majority.

Despite the cholera, Toronto’s population grew from 23,503 in 1848 to 30,775 in 1851, reflecting the influx of Irish Catholics.¹⁴ From a pre-famine population of about 2,000, by 1851, the Catholic population rose to 7,940, 90% of these being Irish. By 1861, Catholics represented 27.1% of the City’s population, its highest ever. About 85% of these were Irish, although the Toronto’s Irish were about half Protestant and half Catholic. The wave of Irish Catholic immigrants changed the perception of the Irish within mainstream Toronto. Unskilled, these immigrants tended to cluster around the industries that began to emerge on the “Park Reserve” in the City’s east end following the introduction of railways in the 1850s. Cabbagetown, immediately north of these industries, became the main Irish Ghetto: as Nicolson (1985) states, after the famine immigration, “the Irish were segregated by class from the rest of the city and internally by their ethnicity.
and religion." With the growth of industry on the western Garrison reserve and the construction of St. Mary’s Catholic Church on Bathurst Street in 1852, many Irish settled in the Niagara district.

Irish practices, even in the city, remained rural. Poverty forced most residents to grow their own food on the small plots surrounding their cottages (hence the name Cabbagetown). They shared their small spaces with pigs and chickens and some had cows in sheds attached to their homes. The famine Irish had been largely forbidden to practice their religion in the old country under English suppression and had become largely ignorant to Catholic traditions. Instead, many peasants practiced semi-paganism, believing in fairies and changelings. The Irish wake, with its elaborate drinking and games, responded to the fear and reverence they felt towards their dead. Alcoholism was almost genetic, serving as a kind of escapism from harsh living conditions. A high mortality rate was endemic. Confining living conditions, poor personal hygiene, lack of proper waste and garbage disposal and consumption of contaminated water contributed to disease.

As their strange and unsanitary practices became more visible, Protestant societies began to view the Irish as a group needing to be taught how to be ‘good Canadians’, an intermediate group, not quite a problem of deviant individuals nor not (yet) a societal problem. Religious strife grew following the arrival of the famine Irish, propagated by Protestant public figures and societies. George Brown, a staunch Presbyterian, was editor of the Globe and routinely stirred the pot of skepticism toward Catholics whom he equated with the worst qualities of the Irish. His stereotypes included rants such as: “the Irish papists come in swarms on the whole to do us evil … They increase taxation for the poor. They render necessary a strong police force…”\(^\text{15}\) Likewise the Education Minister, Egerton Ryerson, after whom Ryerson University was named, also substantiated the view of the Irish as paupers and criminals. In conceding and allowing the creation of a separate Catholic school system, Ryerson had feared their presence in the regular public school system would contaminate the stock of Protestant children. The Orange Order, too, with its Ulster Irish members, succeeded in turning Toronto against the Irish Catholics.

The early hardships of the Irish Catholics contrasted with the more benevolent attitude that Protestant aid societies had towards their own poor. The House of Industry existed as a workhouse for the poor for only about a decade. In 1854, the City considered locating a new House of Industry on the Ordnance Reserve but this was not pursued.\(^\text{16}\) By 1860, a new ‘House of industry and Refuge’ was constructed in connection with the new City jail, the Don Jail, across the Don River on Gerrard Street East. The site was part of the original ‘Park Lots’ given by the Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe to loyal aristocrats. The property, lot 15, was given to John Scadding who had acted as Simcoe’s secretary. In 1856, Scadding’s heirs sold the 120 acre property to the City for the future site of an ‘Industrial farm, House of Refuge and Jail for City and County.’ The intent of this facility was a refuge, ‘for the less criminal portion of the disorderly population.’\(^\text{17}\)

At the time, these institutions were located outside the city limits, reflecting the state’s desire to literally abject (to cast away) these troubled individuals. This action parallels that of the Provincial Lunatic Asylum’s location outside the western limits of the City in 1850. In both cases, the control of urban land by the state was central: the Asylum’s land was the site of a military reserve while the new House of Industry/Don Jail site was located within the city’s ‘liberties’, area not yet claimed by private development. With the construction of the new Don facilities completed by 1864, the House of Industry in the Ward became more of an almshouse. Its function was more ‘soup kitchen’ than anything else. As McArthur and Szamosi contend: “the name ‘House of Industry’ was something of a misnomer, but well-suited to the era’s idolization of the work ethic.”\(^\text{18}\) The managing committee’s recommendation for its name provides some insight into its actual function: An Infirmary for Incurable Patients and the House of Refuge for the Orphan, the
majestic buildings in Victorian Toronto, Shaftesbury Hall at 26 Queen Street West, the southeastern boundary of the Ward. A vast headquarters designed by architect Edmund Burke, the Hall contained a gymnasium, reading room, classrooms and a 600-seat auditorium. Shaftesbury Hall became a center for the dissemination of reform ideas and hosted many famed lecturers. It was demolished to make way for the expansion of Eaton’s in 1902.

The YMCA’s sister organization, the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), also located its headquarters in the Ward. Founded in England in 1855, the YWCA made its way to Canada by 1870 and to Toronto by 1873. The connection between the two organizations was obvious and the YWCA’s first meeting was held in the YMCA’s Shaftesbury Hall on 20 February 1873. By August, they had opened boardinghouses at 19 and 33 Duke (now Adelaide) Street, just south of the Ward. On 10 July 1890, however, the YWCA laid the cornerstone of its headquarters at 18 Elm Street. By 1892, the YWCA building was in full operation. The YWCA conducted classes in English, sewing, calisthenics, dressmaking and cooking – all wholesome activities that every good young woman in Victorian Toronto should know. By 1905, the YWCA had established branch houses throughout the city. Soon, the ‘Y’ established its Department of Moral Health with programs to stem the tide of prostitution. This Department had been set up by Margaret Patterson who would become the first magistrate of the Women’s Court which operated from 1922-34. Patterson also was involved with the Canadian Purity Education Association (CPEA) which operated 1906-14; its mandate was to ensure the propagation of the Anglo-Saxon race. According to Valverde, these social purity campaigns did not operate as special organizations but as larger ones such as the YMCA, WCTU, Salvation Army, among others. Although outside of the state, these organizations had political influence in passing reform legislation. The YWCA was typically run by middle- and upper-class women. Given its target audience of the least fortunate, there persisted a generational and class gap between the volunteers...
and those they tried to help. In 1920, the YWCA’s Elm Street headquarters gave way to the Eaton Company’s ever-widening expansion.

The Salvation Army was started by William Booth in London’s most notorious slum, the East End, in 1865. Its presence in Toronto dates from the spring of 1882. Using its unorthodox methods, the Army claimed 700 members by 1883. The Army rejected educated ministers in favor of ‘soldiers’ of both sexes. Trying to appeal to the common poor, the Army rejected elaborate churches and pew rents in favor of plain halls where people could informally wander in and out. The Salvation Army was most productive from 1896-1904, when the Toronto branch was run by its founder’s daughter, Evangeline Booth. Stories were common of her wearing a red wig riding on a pure white horse through the streets of Toronto leading people to the Salvation Army Temple in the Ward. The Church of England was not impressed with the Salvation Army’s unusual combination of popular culture and religion. The Temple, which began construction in 1885, was located on the northeast corner of Albert and James Streets. Street bands replaced the solemn hymns of other organizations. The Army favored uniforms to quell women’s ambitions for stylish fashion. William Booth divided the Army’s constituents into three categories: 1) the honest poor, 2) the vicious and fallen and 3) the criminal poor. Feeling that existing philanthropies catered only to the honest poor, Booth targeted the second and third categories. The Army’s war cry has always been: “Soup, Soap and Salvation”. According to Middleton, however, its purpose was to battle the three Ds: “Dirt, Disease and the Devil”. To many of the City’s poor Irish Catholics, the Salvation Army Temple was an attractive place for social activity.

The churches were also active in catering to the poor. Ironically, it was the least active church, the Anglican Holy Trinity, who provided the most visible presence in the Ward. Holy Trinity was built in 1848 after the Anglican Church received an anonymous donation for the construction of a church in Toronto (Fig. 2-5). The donor stipulated three conditions: the church should bear the name ‘Holy Trinity’,
it should be built ‘in the good old English style’ and its pews should be free to
the city’s poor for eternity. Only later was it discovered the gift came from Mary
Swale, the wealthy young wife of a vicar in Yorkshire who had never been to North
America. Free pews were unheard of at the time. Since the pews had to be free, the
decision was made to locate it in the midst of one of Toronto’s poorer districts after
land John Simcoe Macaulay (son of Sir James Macauley, a surgeon with Simcoe’s
Queens Rangers), gave family land for the church (Fig. 2-6). The church was
designed by H.B. Lane, architect of the second City Hall on Front Street, and built
by John Harper. Its rector, Dr. Henry Scadding, would go on to fame by writing a
history of the City in 1866. Unlike the many other important institutions that were
once located in the Ward, Holy Trinity and Scadding’s own house would survive the
onslaught of modern planning after the Second World War.

A cynic might suggest that this signals a preservation and writing of histo-
ry that favors English institutions and people at the expense of ‘foreign’ institutions.
The Ward was perhaps the most important immigrant space in Canada’s history,
yet little trace remains of it. Yet, when the Eaton Center was planned in the 1970s,
its form was carefully worked around Holy Trinity. Scadding’s house at 6 Trinity
Square, built in 1861, was even re-located to its present site adjacent to Trinity
to ‘preserve’ his rightful place in Toronto’s physical history (Fig. 2-7). As well-
known architect and writer Eric Arthur remarked when the Eaton Center was being
contemplated: “if history, sentiment and architectural merit have any meaning, the
Scadding house should be preserved as a civic monument.”29 This prioritizing of
histories relevant to the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture was not without precedent.
Two burial grounds in the Niagara district served to highlight the symbolic differ-
ence between ‘valued’ and ‘not valued’ persons. Victoria Square, between Bathurst
and Portland Streets, became an important military burial ground. The space today
is marked by a large monument and is complete with the British Union Flag flying
above (Fig 2-8). The accompanying church built in 1859-60 was placed adjacent
to the burial grounds. Just down the street, however, is the unmarked mass grave of the many cholera victims. By 1852, just a few years after the Irish famine, St. Mary’s Catholic Church was forced to build on the site. Today no monument or marker exists to honor the dead. It is clear that British military officers warranted commemoration while the poor and sickly did not.

By the 1910s, private aid societies had seized upon the growing problem of ‘foreign’ (i.e. non-British) immigrants (See [38]). Unlike in the early decades, when good Christian values were promoted to ‘uplift’ the downtrodden, these societies turned their attention to ‘designing’ new Canadian citizens. An important institution in this regard was the Central Neighborhood House (CNH), which opened on 11 September 1911 in a house at 84 Gerrard Street West, at the corner of Terauley Street (See [09]). The Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) also had quarters in the Ward, at 56 Elm Street. These institutions shared the view that it was their duty to ensure that Anglo-Saxon traditions were upheld. CNH relocated to a larger building at Chestnut and Edward Streets in 1916. CNH was the urban counterpart of Frontier College, which performed similar ‘educational’ duties for the immigrants in the hinterland of Northern Ontario. Frontier College’s director was Alfred Fitzpatrick, who published the infamous Handbook for New Canadians during his tenure, in 1919. As Lipkin claims, the 1912 to 1919 period sees tolerance of ‘foreign’ cultures give way to demands for immediate conformity during the war and finally to nativist beliefs that immigrants are the cause of most Canadian problems. Fitzpatrick was explicit about what qualities a ‘good Canadian’ should have: industry, frugality, cleanliness, temperance, good nutrition, love of God and love of country. In his view, the good citizen:

Loves God.
Loves the Empire.
Loves Canada.
Loves his own family.
Protects women and children.
Works hard.
Does his work well.
Helps his neighbor.
Is truthful.
Is just.
Is honest.
Is brave.
Keeps his promise.
His body is clean.
Is every inch a Man.

Other literature of this period reinforced the notion that Northern races were superior to others. J.S. Woodsworth’s Strangers Within Our Gates (1909) illustrated the problems encountered with assimilating ‘alien’ races. Other popular literature, such as Morley Callaghan’s Strange Fugitive (1928), illustrated the dangers of the industrial city. Fitzpatrick was more direct: “the European foreigner is not as good a type as the Canadian, American or Englishman,” but he was superior to the Chinese, Japanese or Indian immigrant whose race was completely ‘non-as-similable’.

Simply put: “I must take the foreigners as crude material and form the first mould.” Whether these views of foreigners followed or lead public opinion is unclear. What is evident is the widespread attitude that non-British immigrants posed a threat. According to one citizen’s comments to the Bureau of Municipal Research, “if the alien (enemy or otherwise) is to continue in our midst, as he likely will, I would suggest the adoption of a very definite plan of compulsory education for him, whether he is young or old, in English and in the manners, customs, and institutions of our country.” While Frontier College had tendencies towards religious conversion,
CNH was intended to serve the largely Jewish and Italian community in the Ward and was therefore secular. The head of CNH was Elizabeth Neufeld, an American Jew who spoke Yiddish, Russian, Polish and English. Advertisements for CNH were typically run in English, Yiddish and Italian. CNH followed its predecessors’ methods of teaching English classes, sewing and baby nursing. In addition, they offered films on pure milk, water and air which proved popular: Neufeld’s journal notes on one occasion 500 people turned up and 200 more had to be turned away.

Two schools were located in the Ward: the Hester How School on Elizabeth Street and the Louisa School on Louisa Street, opposite Holy Trinity. The Louisa School was also designed by William Thomas and constructed in 1852 (Fig. 2-9). The Jacobethan, two-storey brick structure had separate entrances and playgrounds for boys and girls. The state played an obstructionist role: when the CNH wanted to use the Hester How School for night classes in English, the Board of Education refused. The Board claimed that since the pupils were not Protestants, they had chosen to give the education portion of their taxes to the Separate School Board, which didn’t offer such classes. The Board acquiesced briefly in 1912 and allowed classes to be conducted but stopped them five years later. Despite her good intentions, Miss Neufeld was frank about her role: “we think our object is a patriotic one because the greater part of the work of our instructors is among the foreigners and the importance of Canadianizing them is emphasized by the present crisis.”

That the CNH was an early institution of urban sociology was made clear in 1911 Organizing Committee documents. Here, its stated goals were: 1) to be a headquarters for observation of conditions in the nearby overcrowded, 2) to be a center of social services and 3) to be a center of the reform movement. To this end, it advertised its services in the native languages of those who lived in the Ward, Hebrew in particular (Fig. 2-10).

By the turn of the twentieth century, the care of the poor and the undesirables had begun to shift from private aid societies to more centralized forms of government. This experience seems to follow a similar pattern that emerged in the United States half a century earlier. Although the Lunatic Asylum was constructed as early as 1850, other reform institutions such as the Central Prison for Men, the Mercer Reformatory for Women and several suburban industrial farms did not appear on the Toronto landscape until several decades later, reaching its zenith in the 1880s. The tendency to move the poor ‘out of sight’ appears a common tendency, whether in Protestant Toronto or Puritan Boston. As Vale comments on Boston’s experience, “to the extent that relief provision went both indoors and out of town, the dependent poor, who had long been considered a visible and inevitable part of the town community, were rendered invisible.”

The ‘problem’ of non-British, Protestant immigrants evolved throughout the nineteenth century. In the first half of the century, the only distinct immigrants
were a handful of Irish Catholics. As they were not perceived as a significant threat to the dominant cultural norms of Toronto, efforts to help them integrate with the dominant society were virtually non-existent. When the Irish famine prompted a wave of rural Irish Catholics into the City, Protestant civil society moved to educate these new social groups in the ways of Canadian urban life. By the 1880s, the YMCA, YWCA, Salvation Army, and Women’s Christian Temperance Union had established themselves in the Ward. Institutions such as the House of Industry and Holy Trinity had been well established to help the poor. By the 1910s, the problem of immigration was perceived as a societal problem — the influx of non-British immigrants threatened to dilute the British character of the City and nation. These three conceptions of the immigrant question — individual, social group and society-wide — are reflected in the varying responses to non-British immigrants. By the 1910s, the question of ‘designing Canadians’ had shifted from one of religious conversion to one of racial purity. More drastic measures were implemented to control not only the social behaviors of immigrants but the physical space of the city.

2 In 1805, the York Home Mission indicates there were 6 Catholics. This increased to 46 by 1817, 260 by 1822 and 335 by 1826, and 1,285 by 1830. The first Catholic Church was St. Paul’s in Cabbagetown on the City’s east side, constructed in 1822. These early Catholics were largely Irish, but there was a substantial English and Scottish presence as well. Only after the famine did Catholic become synonymous with Irish Catholic. Archdiocese of Toronto Archives, Bishop Macdonell Papers, Various Church Census 1805 to 1838 as cited in Nicholson (1985): 50.


4 City of Toronto Archives (henceforth CTA), RG1 A1-2, City Council Minutes, 1848, Item 310.

5 CTA, City Council Calendar, RG1 B1, Box 11 (Item #143264), Petition Against Cholera Hospital, West End, 18 June 1849.

6 CTA, Calendar, RG1 B1, Box 9 (Item #143262), Emigrant Shed Prevented, 24 May 1847.

7 CTA, Calendar, Box 9, Destitute Emigrants, 5 June 1847.

8 CTA, Calendar, Box 9, Destitute Emigrants, Letter from W.B. Jarvis to W.H. Boulton, 28 August 1847.

9 CTA, Calendar, RG1 B1, Box 10 (Item #143263), Destitute Emigrants, 25 January 1848.

10 CTA, Calendar, Illness Caused by Immigrants, Committee on Board of Health, 2 July 1849.

11 Petition Against Cholera Hospital, 18 June 1849.

12 CTA, Calendar, RG1 B1, Box 12 (Item #143265), Removal of Cholera Sheds at Garrison, 15 December 1854 and 19 January 1855.

13 In 1834, for example, St. Paul’s Church served a mission area of 729 square miles. This district was reduced in 1838 to 240 square miles. Nicolson (1985): 52.

14 Census of Canada, 1851.

15 Globe 11 February 1856 and Canadian Freeman, August 1869.

16 CTA, Calendar, Box 12, Ordnance Land – House of Industry, 25 October 1854.

17 Toronto Community Council Report No. 6, Clause 18, Heritage Property Report.


21 Originally the YWCA was simply the Women’s Christian Association, changing its name on 6 December 1889.

22 Locations included: 77-79 Richmond Street West, 716 Queen Street East, 180 Simcoe Street, 233-237 Dufferin Street.

23 Originally Booth’s group was called the Whitechapel Christian Mission. In 1878, the organization was reorganized along military lines with preachers known as officers and Booth himself the ‘General’.


25 An anecdote from Morley Callaghan’s Strange Fugitive (1928): 67-8 illustrated the presence of the Salvation Army: “At corners, streets with no traffic, intersecting Yonge, evangelists talked to small crowds. The evangelists had chalked huge square on the pavement and scrawled gospel words. Some evangelists talking on corners where there was a steady flow of traffic got much bigger crowds... He stood there, feeling important but not thinking of anything, thought listening to the Salvation Army man making a speech to the meeting on the corner... He was standing in the Salvation Army circle which had become larger and he
moved along the street to the crowds where Pastor Jimmie Henderson was shouting defiance at the Communists further down the street. Harry listened to Pastor Henderson who was proving by biblical prophecy that the English were God’s chosen people.”

26 The lot was secured by John Watson and two friends for $7,000 and donated to the Salvation Army.
31 Frontier College vol. 132 Annual Report 1912.
32 Frontier College Records IC 1907, L.C. Harkness file, letter from Harkness to Fitzpatrick, 15 November 1917.
33 CTA, SC3 E1, Publications – Bulletins, Bureau of Municipal Research, Box 1 (Item 149214), The making of citizens. Education in citizenship story no. 2, 31 July 1919.
34 Lipkin: 14.
35 Diary of Miss Neufeld as cited in Lipkin: 38.
36 CNH Organizing Committee Documents as cited in Lipkin: 24.
While poor ‘slum’ areas were often gradually replaced under market pressures in the industrial city, the sanitization of the Ward by civic leaders in Toronto resulted from a conscious desire to remove a district long seen as a threat to the health and morals of the City – a foreign quarter that needed to be dispersed. Prior to the turn of the twentieth century, when people of the Ward were largely of English decent, the argument seemed to be a rational and predictable response to a run-down working-class district. During this time, practicality, economics and symbolism drove the location of civic institutions – replacing run-down shacks was viewed as quite a natural progression to bigger and better things. After 1900, however, Jewish, Italian and Chinese immigrant workers began moving into the area, attracted by the low rents and close proximity to the factories just south of the Ward. By this time, civic leaders began to concern themselves with the ‘evils’ of the industrial city – crime, vice, and disease. Such social ills could not be separated from the ‘strangeness’ of these newcomers – their different language, customs, clothes, among other ‘peculiarities’ brought a threat to the social and moral health of the City (if not the nation); social and physical hygiene became interchangeable and the dual ‘solutions’ to the slum were to make better ‘Canadians’ by encouraging native social practices, while simultaneously restructuring their physical environment. The conception of the urban ‘other’ moved from being based on class to being based on ethnicity. Wholesale physical changes were sought after 1910 as a way of reforming the deteriorating conditions and containing (or dispersing) the threat of the peregrines.

At first – from 1858 to 1884 – there were signs of simple market succession, small low-cost structures being replaced with more substantive ones, especially along major streets such as Yonge Street. Before the City created St. John’s Ward in 1853 (prior to that referred to as ‘Macaulaytown’), there were no
railroads (and thus little industry) in Toronto.¹ A snapshot of St. John’s Ward reveals a shantytown of single family wood ‘shacks’, constructed by small-scale tradesmen — in the northern section, in particular, houses were set back from the ‘street’ (if they could be called such) and everywhere sat on small lots divided and sold by John Macaulay two decades earlier (Fig. 1-8).² By 1884, the area was commonly referred to as simply ‘the Ward’, and many of the 1858 buildings had been replaced with attached dwellings (Fig. 1-10). By this time, the area was home to numerous industries — matched only by the vast number of churches.³ This substantial replacement of the built fabric over this quarter century was insufficient to sway the populist view of the Ward as a working-class slum, complete with poor drainage, open cesspools and roaming barnyard animals. In fact, the transformation from a number of single-family houses (despite being a ‘shack’) to decidedly working-class ‘party-wall’ terrace housing cemented the distinctness of the area from the wealthier neighborhoods to the east and west, where the single-family house dominated. This working-class character was not unexpected; in contrast to areas immediately east and west, Macaulay had subdivided his property into very small lots, averaging 20 feet wide, compared to the typical middle-class half acre lots of his neighbors. Such narrow lots necessitated terrace housing and made building a ‘humble home’ within reach for the worker.

Perhaps it was inevitable that the Ward would be plagued by sanitary problems and poor quality buildings. As Spirn’s study of West Philadelphia illustrates, underground water routes can be traced by the considerable settlement and damage to buildings above grade.⁴ It comes as no surprise to hear Rev. Henry Scadding recollect in 1878 that the area around Queen/Yonge in 1820 was, “so remote from York that travelers found it difficult to locate the few houses in the area and that it was quite possible to be lost in the surrounding woods and swamps.”⁵

Tracing the Taddle Creek from its position in Queen’s Park (to the Northwest of the Ward), I can confirm that it did, in fact, cross through the Ward — diagonally from Hayter Street on the west to Albert Street on the east (Fig. 3-1). By 1884, the Taddle Creek had been completely filled in. As much of the natural geography of the Ward’s interior was lowlands, discarded wastewater did not drain away but rather lay stagnant on muddy streets. Poverty only exacerbated these conditions as proper plumbing facilities were the exception.

This was the scene in the Ward when the County Courthouse on Adelaide Street (South of the Ward) was declared a ‘public nuisance’ in 1880 on account of its vermin infestation, overcrowding and poor air quality⁶; this declaration sent a wave of reform across the city and the Ward would find itself in the path of this reverberation. At this time, the population of the Ward was almost entirely of British Isles origin; the city remained homogenous until the turn of the century and over 90% of the population of the country traced its roots to the United Kingdom alone.⁷ There were several pragmatic reasons for considering a site in the Ward – the poor condition of the buildings meant that land could be acquired relatively cheaply, the destitute finances of many of the Ward residents suggested it would

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¹ CIVITAS PEREGRINA
² ABDUCTION SPACE IN EARLY IMMIGRANT TORONTO
³ FIG. 3-1. CANE MAP SHOWING TADDLE CREEK, 1842.
be easy to expropriate property and the proximity of a new courthouse to Osgoode Hall might be looked upon favorably by the justices. Indeed, I have found no evidence to indicate that displacement of the poor was a motivating factor at this time; poverty alone, it would not seem, was not a justifiable means for wholesale urban transformation. The debate centered on convenience, symbolism and, as was typical in Toronto, economics.

As the courthouse debate began (1880), the City recognized an opportunity to combine the courthouse on the same site as a New City Hall, council members being dissatisfied with the current City Hall on Front Street East; this was ideal because the County would subsidize the cost of a new site. Likewise, the County viewed the sharing of costs as amenable and a joint county/city committee was formed on July 26, 1884 to “find a mutually acceptable site.” What began as a courthouse project soon became centered around a new ‘proper’ City Hall – as the City committed to pay the site acquisition costs, it felt it should “have the controlling voice”. Nine sites were debated, three in the Ward (Fig. 3-2). Of the nine, the three Ward sites were the cheapest; the sites adjacent to St. Lawrence Market cost an average of $167,700/acre, while the Ward sites averaged only $26,400/acre, giving the Ward sites a distinct advantage over the others. Economics alone would not determine the choice of site; some committee members liked the symbolic position of the Bay/Queen site, taking advantage of its termination of Bay Street. The Law Society of Upper Canada also preferred a site within walking distance of Osgoode Hall, the Society’s headquarters. The size of the site was also important, as sanitation was becoming a concern by 1880. The committee wanted a large site for two reasons – to secure space for two buildings (City Hall and Courthouse) and because they wanted to ensure the new buildings would have “thorough ventilation”, which had been problematic in the original courthouse. In the end, the Queen/Bay site offered the best combination of size (it was the second largest), economy (it was the third cheapest), convenience

FIG. 3-2. POTENTIAL CITY HALL/COURTHOUSE SITES, 1884.
(it was close to Osgoode Hall) and symbolism (at the head of Bay Street). Construction began in 1889 and by 1899, the city had its new symbolic center; ‘ventilation’ was ensured by being set back from Queen Street, creating a City Hall plaza in front (Fig. 3-3).

Likewise, the Federal Government’s new Armories on University Avenue (1893) seemed less about transplanting the poor than about practical considerations (Fig. 3-4). The movement of artillery and troops necessitated a wider than usual avenue; University Avenue was the largest street in the city and made an ideal location. Also, University Avenue had begun to emerge as a center of government, with Queen’s Park – the Provincial Legislature – being recently completed at the head of University in 1886 and Osgoode Hall being located at the corner of Queen and University. Moreover, the land was cheap and the site could accommodate a large building such as the Armories; in the 1884 City Hall site search, this location was the least expensive ($14,000/ac) and the largest (4-1/2 acres). It would seem that when making decisions about the location the Armories and City Hall, little was mentioned about the character of the area or the people (poor, but almost entirely of English origin) who inhabited it.13

As witnessed by the concern for proper ventilation for New City Hall, there began to emerge greater consideration for the health of the population as the nineteenth century drew to a close; most importantly, the physical environment began to be viewed as a contributor to poor health and sanitation. It is over the last decade or two of the nineteenth century that regulations began to emerge controlling the use of urban space. Unsanitary practices began to be viewed as unacceptable but this view shifted from one of a problem of health and sanitation in English working-class district to a problem of immorality and cultural conflict after the first waves of Eastern and Southern European immigrants began to arrive in the Ward. That is, the construction of the ‘other’ shifted from being class-based to being ethnic- and race-based. Regulations to control practices in urban

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**FIG. 3-3. ‘OLD’ CITY HALL WITH PLAZA, 1890s.**
space began to reflect this changing notion of the ‘other’. As the working-class became synonymous with the immigrant-class, ‘foreign’ began to be conceived of in cultural terms — regulation of urban space was no longer merely a sanitary (health) problem, but rather a moral one, as the peregrines threatened the cultural composition of the city (and the nation).

The shift from class to race-based conceptions of the urban ‘other’ can be traced to the election of the Liberal government under Sir Wilfred Laurier in 1896, after decades of Tory (conservative) power. In contrast to his predecessor, the new Immigration Minister, Clifford Sifton, insisted upon attracting large numbers of rural peasants from Eastern, Central and Southern Europe. His efforts were by no means accepted; Whitaker notes that this action “directly affronted pro-British sentiments by his aggressive recruitment of the ‘foreigner’.” By the time Sifton was replaced in 1905, immigration had increased eight-fold. Despite Sifton’s insistences that ‘none but agriculturalists’ would be admitted, the strong tariff-based National Policy of the Tories had created a tremendous demand for industrial (urban) workers (See [34]). Thus, immigrants admitted as farmers found it easier to work in cities like Toronto.

City by-laws were used as the primary mechanism to control the use of urban space in both pre- and post-immigrant Toronto. In working-class districts, by-laws attempted to confront the health and sanitation issues. For example, by-laws to control the location of privies surfaced, stipulating minimum distances between house and privy (See [40]). Others prohibited animals within the city, an indirect form of class legislation as many poor working-class families relied on animals for food, especially in light of the monopoly of the beef trade in the city until the construction of the Civic Abattoir in 1912 (See [03]). Based on the English nuisance law, these regulations extended to include noise violations, the throwing of garbage or placing of dirt (See [15]). Such measures targeting the working-class were largely social measures to protect public morals (See [39]) and did not have a direct impact on the overall form of the city itself.

As Jewish and Italian immigrants began to inhabit the poorer areas of the city in previously unheard of densities, civic officials began to see problems of health and sanitation as a result of foreign practices and their ‘inferior’ hygiene standards. According to Dennis, “to the city’s British majority, the immigrant presence (including Italians, Macedonians and, later, Chinese as well as Jews) became an explanation for, rather than a consequence of, [the Ward’s] bad conditions.” The different response to pre- and post-1896 Jewish immigrants serves to highlight the greater association of societal problems with racial problems. Indeed — there was Jewish immigration prior to 1896; the 1901 census estimates there were about 3,000 Jews in Toronto. However, these early Jewish immigrants were from Western Europe, many from England itself; with fluency in English and shared customs with their fellow English expatriates, the early Jews integrated with the Anglo-Saxon majority. According to Bebout, among the earliest Toronto Jews were the Rossins who arrived in 1842 and by 1857, had...
established a large, 5-storey hotel with 200 rooms. The Nordheimers, also early Jewish immigrants, went on to famously establish a business in pianos; the first synagogue was Holy Blossom in 1876. Later Jewish immigrants, however, came from Russian ‘Pale’ and other areas of Eastern Europe, bringing with them distinctly a different language (Yiddish) and culture. From this evidence, it is reasonable to claim that Jewish ‘otherness’ was not based on religious differences (since these differences existed prior to the Eastern European Jews’ arrival) but rather on cultural differences in the face of poverty.

By the time Eastern European Jews arrived, by-laws to strengthen not only sanitary conditions were enacted (See (43)), but also measures to control how people used urban space; such by-laws were the result of a desire to control activities that civic leaders (i.e. the Anglo-Saxon majority) felt were a threat to their definition of an ordered (Anglo-Saxon) ‘Canadian’ life. Sanitary and health concerns continued — even heightened — but instead of being merely a function of unfortunate economic conditions in the working-class neighborhoods, concerns now stemmed from the ‘moral degradation’ of the population due to the presence of ‘the foreigner’. Unsanitary conditions were the result of inferior ‘races’ rather than simply poverty, as had been the dominant narrative in the late nineteenth century. Worse: the worst conditions were in very neighborhood where City Hall had been located (Fig. 3-5). Legislation targeted activities in urban space which, in turn, would re-structure the physical space of the city.

Peddling, for example, was seen as a distinctly ‘Jewish’ activity that officials felt was offensive and must be regulated. The contention was, in part, political. Tax-paying store owners (who at this time were almost entirely white, Anglo-Saxons) condemned the peddling trade because they did not have to pay property taxes like fixed operations and thus could consistently undersell the merchants. Others complained that shouting out in the street was forbidden by City noise by-laws and thus was illegal. Some argued that peddling (in particular
of foods) posed health risks as safety and quality could not be ensured. Closely associated to peddling were activities in the salvage, or second-hand, trade. Newspapers would seize any opportunity to link such ventures to criminal activity – the argument that pawnbrokers were buying stolen property and therefore encouraging criminal activity. The City responded to each of these demands by regulating these activities. By-laws passed after 1896 mark a higher degree of government intervention into what was and was not accepted public behavior. Officials acknowledged targeting the peregrines by passing by-laws that required ‘junk shops’ (as they were called) to have a license, keep a record of all transactions and, to make it explicit, that all records be written ‘in the English language in ink’ (Fig 3-6). Jewish and Italians ‘ragpickers’, without space to store their wares, began piling their inventories in the laneways of the Ward as on-lookers reacted with horror, prompting by-laws to prohibit the display of ‘junk’ in front of houses. Predictably, peddlers responded by simply storing their goods ‘out of sight’, behind the shanties of the Ward, leading to the characteristic duality of Ward space – ‘orderly’ outward ‘public’ faces on the one hand and mazes of collected wares and even more shabby out buildings in behind. Under these circumstances – out of sight, out of mind – it is understandable how physical conditions in the center of the Ward (and behind the shacks) could continue to deteriorate for the next decade.

Seeing themselves as ‘sojourners’ – with no intention of staying in the country long-term, here only to make as much money as possible to send back home – some immigrant men paid only for a bed in a room filled with other strangers. Since they had no other ‘space’ to spend their down-time, the street became the ‘living-room’ for many; charges of ‘vagrancy’ ballooned as loitering in the streets was viewed as idle activity, if not altogether dangerous. Other releases for immigrant workers were, of course, their local cafés or drinking establishments. As these leisure places multiplied throughout immigrant areas such as the Ward, City officials reacted by supporting the temperance movement which ultimately led to prohibition in 1916 (See (45)).

Fearing that the ‘Ward’ (“more an attitude than a place”) and its associated ‘evils’ would spread to the wealthier (Anglo-Saxon) neighborhoods, the City moved to prohibit any business activity on what they considered ‘residential’ streets. Only doctors, dentists and surgeons would be allowed to operate on such streets. Chinese Laundries, butcher shops, stores and manufacturers, in particular, were prohibited on many streets (See (37)). So-called ‘moral’ offenses were widespread over this period. Following the enactment of the Lord’s Day Act in 1906, business (or even certain ‘leisure’ activities) on the Sabbath was illegal (See (28)); many Jews were fined for infractions. Greek ice cream parlors, too, came under great scrutiny for operating on Sunday. Not even streetcars were allowed to run on Sunday. Gambling houses, in particular, Chinese Fan-Tan games, were prohibited and frequently raided. No ‘indecent’ writing, pictures or language

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**FIG. 3-6. SAMPLE PEDDLER’S LICENSE, 1918.**
was permitted in public and children were not permitted on the street after dark. Fortune-telling, keeping a ‘disorderly house’ and the ever-popular ‘corruption of public morals’ were among the charges common in the Annual Report of the Chief Constable.21

Of course, civic officials ignored the dire circumstances that new immigrants faced. Poorly paid or, worse, prohibited from working in certain places because of racial bias, Jewish workers needed to supplement their low wages with other activities such as peddling. Children were forced to work because the family could not support itself, not because Jewish families had an aversion to education as leaders implied. Exacerbating their difficult circumstances was the pattern of land ownership in the Ward, as absentee landlords refused to invest in properties that they felt were destined to be replaced. This speculation created an unusual situation where land values remained disproportionately high, in anticipation of reaping the rewards of future growth; as the buildings were worth virtually nothing, the entire assessment was in land value. From this perspective, landlords were not ‘making a killing’, as some scholars have suggested, but rather charging rents that merely covered the cost of property taxes. From the tenants perspective, however, these rents were proportionally high considering the poor quality of the buildings and the low wages they were being paid. To make matters worse, several landlords owned properties elsewhere in the downtown area and recognized what they ‘lost’ in the Ward could be made up by charging higher rents on business properties located to the south of the Ward — they recognized that for those businesses to be profitable, they needed to rely on having a low-paid workforce located in close proximity to their business. As Dennis remarks, “continued existence of the slum was necessary for the prosperity of adjacent areas.”22

While it may be tempting to assume that it was white Anglo-Saxon landlords who were exploiting the new Jewish immigrants, Dennis’s study of ownership patterns reveals this is not strictly the case. Initially, Jews did rent from
non-Jews – in 1899, only 6% of Ward residents were owner-occupiers, 10% rented from other Jews and 84% from non-Jews. By 1909, 17% were owner-occupiers, 57% rented from other Jews and only 26% from non-Jews. Just five percent of properties were owned by Jews in 1899, while 62.5% were owned by Jews in 1909. Rents in Toronto had doubled from 1897 to 1907, and many Anglo-Saxon downtown residents chose to leave the City for the suburbs, where it was more economical to own, rather than rent. The result was that conditions deteriorated rapidly – a combination of divestment and rapid migration.

As conditions worsened, officials began seeing signs that the Ward immigrant quarter was ‘spreading’ beyond its traditional boundaries. The daily newspapers, located just south of the Ward, campaigned against the ‘foreigners’. The City, linking long-standing problems of sanitation with the ‘strange’ practices of newly arrived immigrants, launched an investigation into the city’s immigrant areas, culminating in the 1911 “Report of the Medical Health Officer Dealing with the Recent Investigation of Slum Conditions in Toronto, Embodying Recommendations for the Amelioration of the Same (See [29]). The Medical Health Officer, Dr. Charles Hastings, deplored the conditions as, “a menace to public health, a danger to public morals and, in fact, an offense against public decency.”

Hastings mapped the locations of the worst sanitary offenses; clearly, it was the center of the Ward, out of sight of most of the city’s population, where conditions had reached critical levels (Fig. 3-7). Hastings believed in environmentalism as the cause of poor health but also felt conditions are amplified when combined with the ‘feeblemindedness’ of an ‘inferior race’ of people, as he maintained was the case in the Ward. Quoting a British researcher, Hastings notes:

The environments in which the children of the poor and the degenerate class are reared, are such as must necessarily breed immorality, crime and vice … fertile soil in which to bring the seeds of crime to fruition. Here the gardens of vice raise large crops. In metropolitan slums haunts of depravity and disease
The teachings and examples of drunkards, thieves, filthy personalities, gamblers and prostitutes in large city slums are rarely ineffective. It is not surprising that an endless stream of thieves, murderers, prostitutes, lunatics, epileptics and hospital patients issue from such recruiting stations as the city slums. Criminal and moral lepers are born in the atmosphere of physical and moral rottenness pervading the slums of large cities. Here is the very fountain head of the river of vice and crime that many more of us talk about, but only a few enter, for these social conditions are usually studied from the outside.25

Hastings advocated physical reform as the solution to the problems and applauded the Co-partnership Tenants’ Housing Council and Co-partnership Tenants Ltd, both headed by Henry Vivian, MP in England, as a model of reform. This model promoted the area be “planned out as a whole in accordance with the hygienic, artistic and economic principles of Town Planning”.26

The call for physical reform did not only come from the City’s health officials but also from the business community.27 As early as 1897, wealthy merchants had formed the Toronto Guild of Civic Art, although it wasn’t until 1901 that it began to consider physical reform (See (20)). It was the ‘Great Fire’ of 1904, however, that provided a convenient opportunity for the Guild to propose a city-wide improvement plan. Toronto was a ‘boom-town’ in 1904 – increased industrialization and immigration coupled with advances in the elevator and cast-iron construction had caused land values to rise, putting pressure on businesses to build bigger and taller buildings. Virtually all the residential buildings in the core of the city had been replaced by 1904 with commercial and retail buildings. On the evening of April 19, 1904 a fire broke out in the E & S Currie necktie building on Wellington Street (several blocks immediately south of the Ward) and raged throughout the night, destroying fourteen acres of the central core and over 100 buildings. The response prompted reforms in fire regulations and building codes but also championed a rise of civic populism. Business interests and private

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**FIG. 3-9. PROPOSED PLAN FOR CIVIC CENTER, 1952.**

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Ownership of many services (water, transit, sewers, etc) had led to great inequalities and tremendous congestion in the core of the city, as providers refused to extend lines to outlying areas. The fire ushered in an era where the state took control of such services. After the 1904 fire, with the City Beautiful movement in full flight following the 1893 Chicago Exposition, the idea of large-scale design for the city took hold. By 1909, the Guild had drawn up its “Plan for the Improvements to the City of Toronto”, a proposal that would see broad, diagonal avenues cut across the city. The City Beautiful movement, of course, was a continent-wide effort to reform central cities by grand gestures designed to enhance the public space system and civic structure of cities and Toronto would be no exception.

Coupled with the 1909 Plan was a more detailed strategic intervention proposed by architect John Lyle in 1911 – a new Federal Avenue that would run between a new Union Station and a new ‘civic square’ that would be conceived to replace the substandard structures of the Ward (Fig. 3-8). A detailed plan of the civic square was drawn up in the 1950s (Fig. 3-9) (See [11]). Both plans called for a massive civic square, a large civic administration building situated axially to the new Union Station, with flanking civic buildings to the east and west, creating a “a Civic Center worthy of its position as one of the leading cities in Canada”.

It is obvious that the civic ‘planners’ did not value the area: “there are only two buildings of importance – namely, the Manning Building and the Queen’s Hotel…. In the Ward district, and immediately below the Ward, ninety-nine per cent are of the cheapest possible description.” This attitude disregarded projects such as the new $250,000 Shea’s Hippodrome which was currently under construction. Clearly, the motivation behind the removal of the Ward was more than simply beautification – this becomes clear when the Mayor attested that the project “will help remove conditions which are aggravating disease and crime…. We must remove housing conditions which contribute to juvenile delinquency. In that respect we have a moral duty to our fellow man…. It will combat the deterioration
of values there." With Dr. Hastings’ Slum Report fresh in the minds of civic leaders, the City took the steps of expropriating the land in 1912 – the first piece of the plan was the new Registry Office (one of the flanking buildings), begun in 1914 and completed during the War. The War effort, however, caused great strain on the City’s finances and it was apparent Toronto was too slow to realize its grand City Beautiful scheme. After the War, efforts to revive the plan met with moderate success (See Fig 3-11) - the New Union Station was built but the New City Hall would have to wait another 25 years (after the Depression and World War Two), as the city slowly bought up the remaining Ward properties – by 1952, the City owned 45% of the area; the remainder would be expropriated. The grand civic center was finally achieved in 1965 with the opening of Viljo Revell’s New City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square, a vast but largely underused ‘public space’ whose intentions were far grander than it turned out to be (Fig 3-10). The Registry Office, one of the city’s finest Neo-Classical buildings, did not ‘fit’ the style of modern civic center and was destroyed in 1963 (Fig 3-11).

Health and sanitation motivated the scrutiny of the Ward by civic leaders and civil society. Beginning with the decision to build a new City Hall/ Courthouse, the Ward was transformed from a dense urban poor neighborhood to a lost neighborhood, replaced with largely symbolic civic institutions. In so doing, political leaders and health officials rid themselves of a fabric thought to be dangerous to the health and morals of the immigrant and non-immigrant population. Moreover, they removed the distinctly ‘foreign’ presence that dominated this central area of the city – a foreignness that was associated with crime and vice. Prior to the turn of the century, this ‘foreignness’ was defined largely by class as the area was a working-class English slum; at this time, gradual replacement of the dilapidated urban fabric was justified on the basis of a natural progression of the market and the need to alleviate unsanitary conditions. By the 1910s, however, the campaign to remove the Ward was argued on moral grounds – sanitary arguments were fused with fears that the questionable practices of the immigrant masses would ‘spread’ (like a disease) to neighboring districts. The response was dispersal – grand ‘planning’ and design schemes were drawn up to displace the abject others across the City and the worst of the lot – the vagrants, prostitutes and other criminals – would meet their fate in institutions designed to reform them into ‘good Canadians’. Over the next half century, the area would be completely transformed; the Ward would disappear, not only from the physical landscape but from the minds of the civic leaders and nativists who feared it.
The first railroad, the Ontario Simcoe Hudson, arrived in 1853. The Great Western came in 1855 and the more substantial Grand Trunk had laid lines through Toronto by 1856.

From the Boulton Atlas of 1858, it is clear that well over 90% of the buildings are wood buildings (lighter shade).

From the Insurance Map of 1880, there are no less than 13 churches in the Ward (area bounded by University, College, Yonge and Queen Streets) an area of approximately 150 acres, or one church every 11.5 acres. Industries listed on the maps include planning mills (37 Buchanan St., 19 Alice St.), coffin manufacturing (D.W. Thompson, 59 Buchanan St.), picture frames and mouldings (Cobban, 53 Hayter St.), piano manufacturing (R.S. Williams, 31 Hayter St.), laundries (49 Elm St.), among others.


The 1851 courthouse was designed by two of Toronto’s most astute architects of the time, Cumberland + Ridout. In the *Handbook of Toronto* (1858), the author (reportedly George P. Ure) criticizes the building, saying, “this is a massive and substantial Roman Doric building executed with an apparent economy which is scarcely in keeping with the decorated style of public buildings generally adopted in the City.”


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Anglican</th>
<th>Presbyterian</th>
<th>Methodist</th>
<th>Other Protestant</th>
<th>R. Catholic</th>
<th>Jewish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>30,775</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>44,821</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>56,092</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>86,415</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>144,023</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The previous City Hall on Front Street, Toronto’s second, was designed by Henry Bowyer Lane in 1844-5.


Originally, the city was to pay 10/12ths of the site acquisition costs. Toronto City Council Minutes, Special Committee re: New Court House, Report No. 2 (8 February 1884), Item 47. City of Toronto Archives RG1 A1-2 (Council Minutes) - Appendix, 1884. It was eventually decided, however, that the City would pay the entire cost of the site and the County would pay an annual fee for use of the building, Council Minutes – Appendix, Special Committee re: New Court House, Report No. 4 (15 February 1884), Item 90).

One committee member remarked, matter-of-factly, that the Bay/Queen site was “centrally located and obtainable at a reasonable price on account of the inexpensive character of the buildings erected thereon.” Report No. 1.


Canadian Immigration rose from 16,835 (1896) to 141,465 (1905) and increase of 8.4 times. Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission.

In 1897, MacKenzie King (who would later become Prime Minister of Canada 1922-30, 1935-48) estimated there were 2500 Jews in Toronto – about 300 from England and 500 from Germany. The remainder were ‘recent’ immigrants from Poland and Russia; thus most Jews prior to the 1890s were of Western origin. Dennis (1997): 380.

Rick Bebout, “Streets of faith, Church & Bond: sizzling preachers, divine & democratic”, unpublished paper, 2002. The ‘Rossin House’, for example was highlighted in the Handbook of Toronto (1858), reportedly authored by George P. Ure, and has been described as a ‘grand Italian Palazzo’ built 1855-7. Ure calls it, “Our largest and most handsome Hotel,” with cast-iron and plate glass fronts and marble sills, stone dressings, and gas lights in all 252 rooms.

Although Holy Blossom on Richmond St. was constructed in 1876, there were sufficient numbers of Jews in Toronto by 1856 to have two congregations. Acceptance of these early Jews can be witnessed as Christian Torontonians contributed 25% of the construction cost of Holy Blossom [Dennis (1997): 380].

Miss Neufield, head of the House of Industry, describes scenes where Jewish women argued over who owned the ranging chickens intended for Friday feast and noted that “it is custom that all quarrels be staged in the street”. Miss Neufield 1915, “Life in the Ward,” unpubl., City of Toronto Archives (CTA) SC5C, Box 1, File 13. Reference by Catherine Brace in Dennis (1997).


Dennis (1997): 381.


That physical reform was advocated by the business community is typical of the era – for example, the infamous ‘Plan of Chicago’ of 1909 was commissioned not by the City but by the Commercial Club.


By the end of nineteenth century Toronto, vice was widely seen as a transgression of Christian morals. Located close to the heart of the City’s poorest (and emerging immigrant) quarter, movie houses and theaters soon came under the scrutiny of social reformers who saw them as both promoters of, and places for, illicit sexual behavior. Urban ‘otherness’ in this context was defined by the state and civil society in terms of sexuality. Civil society responded by campaigning against unsupervised leisure activities and managed to convince the state that movie houses and theaters should be regulated, both in terms of their location in the city and the material they would be allowed to show. The Ward, as the City’s ‘Red Light District’ was targeted by several movements that collectively underscored the urban reform movement itself – the ‘playground’ movement, the ‘eugenics’ movement and the ‘social reform’ movement. These forces exerted pressure on the entertainment houses such as the Star Theater, just south of the Ward and Shea’s Hippodrome, the City’s largest theater located opposite the City Hall on Bay Street.

The peregrines during this time were framed on the one hand as foreigners who were dragging down the ‘moral tone’ of the nation, and by their apparent ‘victims’ on the other hand – the working ‘girls’ and ‘boys’ on the street. The district of concentrated theaters gave way to the police state; sexual deviants were banished to the Insane Asylum and Mercer Reformatory in the Niagara/Liberty district.

In 1912, the burlesque show Darlings of Paris opened at the Star Theater in Toronto, just two blocks south of what was regarded as the southern limit of the Ward. The theater opened around 1897 and was ironically located at 23 Temperance Street, the one-block street named after the campaigns to reform the drinking habits of the working-class (See [27]). By the 1910s, burlesque shows were not held in high regard by the middle-class elite who could afford to go to ‘more appropriate’ (and more expensive) shows at the city’s high-end theaters. Lenton
describes the vaudeville routines at these so-called nickel-parlors, as anyone seeking amusement:

...Could enjoy the daredevils and acrobats, for mystery and intrigue there were magicians, escape artists, mind readers.... Exotism abounded in the foreign acts and with the fire dancers. And there was plenty of music, songs and comedy, the lifeblood of vaudeville. In other words, there was something for everyone, including the children, who were entertained by animals, puppets, clowns, child performers and animal impersonators. Everything was to be enjoyed and nothing was to be offensive.²

The Star and other ‘budget’ theaters targeted the low-income (and increasingly ‘foreign’) crowd of the adjacent Ward district; there were no less than 17 theaters within a few blocks of the intersection of Queen and Yonge Streets (Fig. 4-1). The largest and the most prominent, Shea’s Hippodrome, was located in the Ward, opposite City Hall on Bay Street (then the notoriously precarious Terauley St.). The Hippodrome was part of the large Shea empire; Michael Shea had grown his business from a single theater to 23 in and around Buffalo and he expanded his business to Toronto with two theaters on Yonge (1899) and Victoria Streets (1910). In 1914, he constructed the Hippodrome – a massive and grand theater seating 2,622 for the phenomenal cost of $250,000 and was dubbed Canada’s largest theater at the time (Fig. 4-2). The Hippodrome was the place to be in Toronto and played host to many famous impresarios of vaudeville including comic Red Skelton and the O’Connor sisters. Its interior featured elaborate lighting and ornamentation (Fig. 4-3). Its famed organ was salvaged before the building was demolished in 1956 to make way for Toronto’s now-famous New City Hall, designed by Finnish architect Viljo Revell. The organ subsequently played a role in the hearts and minds of Torontonians as the sound of Maple Leaf Gardens, the shrine of the cherished
Maple Leaf hockey club. Reform efforts (coupled with a retreat of the theater as an institution) were successful – little remains of the vast theater district; the Elgin & Wintergarden and Pantages Theaters are the lone restored artifacts while a couple have been retained (and modified) as, ironically, adult theaters.

With six daily newspapers as their immediate neighbors (Fig. 4-1) – most controlled by the City’s middle and upper-class business elite – it is easy to see how and why the theaters became such an obvious target of social reformers. Several high-profile trials detailing illicit sexual encounters in the theaters only served to promote the stereotype that theaters were breeding grounds for the sexual ‘other’ – notably homosexuals, promiscuous men and ‘street boys’, and prostitutes and ‘working girls’. One such case was the case of Arnold (15 years old) and Thomas C. (26 years old), as described by Arnold in a written testimony to the police:

I was coming out of the Star theatre. I met Thomas C. on Temperance Street. I walked to the corner of Temperance and Yonge street. I said it was nice weather. He asked me if I would go to His Majesty’s Theatre. I went with him. He got 2 seats at the wall. I was sitting next to him. He drew his hand up my leg. I then went with him to Bowles Lunch. After supper we went to the Hippodrome and after the show I went home.

Maynard also documents another case that seemed typical. Fourteen-year-old Reginald S. was caught having sex with Ernest O. (age 33) in the Gallery at the Star in March 1921. Ernest was an usher at the theater; when asked why he had consented, Reginald replied: “I got in free”. Bowles lunch, for its part, was an all-night cheap-eats place at Terauley and Queen (southern edge of the Ward), a place well known to ‘street boys’ (Fig 4-4).

After Darlings opened, word spread of its ‘promiscuous’ nature to the self-appointed watchdog of Toronto’s social conscience, the Toronto Vigilance
the Lord’s Day Alliance (1899–1906) which had successfully campaigned for the Federal Lord’s Day Act (See [28]). Shearer, armed with his political clout, called the City’s Staff Inspector Kennedy and the two men attended the show that night; Kennedy told Shearer that it would be difficult to prosecute. Shearer, for his part, described the show as, “vilely suggestive, ... indecent and demoralizing.”

St. Clair returned the following night and seemed satisfied but was told by agents of his ‘Vigilance Committee’ that weekend shows typically were more lavish; St. Clair returned on Saturday and to his horror, discovered the show was more suggestive than the previous Monday. Outraged at the lack of action by the police, St. Clair drew up a report which he presented before the Vigilance Committee on March 13. Members of the police and press attended this meeting where he declared the Star Theater to be, “a licensed brothel – inciting people to commit lustful deeds – things that would be disgraceful in the palmy days of Rome!”

The daily Telegraph ran a story entitled, “Show ‘Hell on Earth’” the following day and supported St. Clair’s position when it said, “it puts the people of Sodom and Gemorrah to shame to have such things openly, brazenly and shamelessly carried on here”. The story also went on to describe a scene where young boys sat in a crowd filled with ‘vile’ working-class men in an atmosphere ‘heavy with smoke’. St. Clair’s outrage was so passionate that as a way of drawing attention to the issue, he drew up a description of Darlings in nauseating detail and circulated this evocative text to thousands of Torontonians. As Campbell contends, the text was filled with concerns of masturbation and homosexuality. Ironically, St. Clair was arrested by the police for ‘distributing indecent writing’.

With the support of the churches and the ‘moral societies’, St. Clair’s campaign against the Star Theater continued for the next year as he filed lawsuits against the Star (on indecency charges) and newspaper editors (for personal defamation). The St. Clair affair typified social purists’ campaign against the inherent dangers in forms of entertainment that were ‘not wholesome’ in lieu of more...
righteous leisure activities that would be supervised in the newly created parks and playgrounds (See [01]); central to their concerns was the concentration of theaters, especially in close proximity to the immigrant quarter of the Ward, creating what they felt was a ‘district of vice’. Male morals were at stake – both because the suggestive burlesque acts encouraged male promiscuity which fuelled the survival of prostitution and because the theaters were seen themselves as places for illicit sexual behavior (both hetero- and homosexual). It is clear that St. Clair, Shearer and other moral reformers between the turn of the century and World War One framed otherness according to sexuality and sexual behavior. When St. Clair avowed, “we are engaged in what we believe to be a holy warfare,” he links the improper sexual behavior with the tenants of good Christian society.

By the 1910s, reformers had convinced themselves of the link between immorality (sexual, at least) and the health and sanitation concerns of the Ward (See [29]). Inspector Kennedy even compared the Star Theater to a cesspool: “‘[a]n open cesspool in front of the City Hall would be less injurious to the public health than that place of so-called entertainment [the Star] is to the moral health of those who frequent it.’”13 Prostitution, or more generally, wanton sexuality, was the social evil that linked concerns about the health of the population with their morals; the medical profession in Canada fostered the notion that prostitutes were the carriers of disease. The urban reform movement was the umbrella for several intermingled movements that sought to improve city life; in addition to the ‘social reformist movement’, the ‘eugenics movement’ and the ‘playground movement’ called for reforms that simultaneously attacked the infidelity of the ‘inferior races of foreigners’ and impure spaces of leisure in the industrial city. The state and civil society were active on all fronts and the same organizations (Moral and Social Reform Council, Women’s Christian Temperance Union, Salvation Army, Toronto Vigilance Committee, etc) were coalescing around key issues and it is clear that sexual deviancy (and specifically prostitution) was central to their reform efforts.

Kohm traces efforts to control prostitution and sexual deviancy to an 1839 Toronto by-law, later adopted by the United Province of Canada in 1858, that declared “all common prostitutes or night walkers wandering in the fields, public streets or highways, not giving a satisfactory account of themselves” would be considered criminals.14 Laws designed to control prostitution were enacted not because of concerns for women’s rights and their ‘virtue’ per se, but rather to protect the lineage of ‘chaste’ middle- and upper-class women. Prostitution was considered merely a nuisance – to be kept out of sight “in their proper place”. Many believed it was not only inevitable but necessary to maintain public order among the single men of the cities and to provide an outlet for male sexuality; poor women were one thing, but poor and immoral women were criminals if they could not explain why they were on city streets. The 1865 Contagious Diseases Act illustrates the double-standard of prosecuting immoral women while at the same time seeing prostitution as a ‘fact’ of male sexuality. Moreover, it links immoral activity to disease and health (See [12]). This Act stipulated that prostitutes who infected soldiers or sailors with venereal disease could be detained for up to three months in a hospital for examination, yet offers no punishment to the men themselves.15 This attitude is advanced after Confederation with the 1869 Act Respecting Vagrants which incorporated the 1858 Act but added provisions for ‘houses of ill fame’ and declaring ‘female streetwalkers’ criminals. The 1869 Act Respecting Offenses Against the Person cements this differentiation between moral and immoral women by stipulating protection only for “‘previously chaste’ young women from ‘seduction’ and ‘unlawful carnal knowledge’”16

Even the 1892 Criminal Code of Canada applied only to ‘good women’ (i.e. being a crime only for procuring women who were ‘not common prostitutes or of known immoral character’) (See [131]). Further, the Defense of Canada Act (1917) made it an offence for “any women infected with venereal disease to have sexual intercourse with a member of the armed forces, or to attempt to solicit a
serviceman for sexual purposes.” 17 To enforce this recommendation, the Ontario government appointed a Royal Commission on ‘venereal diseases and feeblemindedness’, which recommended the state be given the power to enter any house of anyone suspected of being infected with venereal disease and to remove them for treatment. Reformers no longer accepted sexual deviancy as a necessary evil but rather something to be eradicated. Yet, protecting women’s rights was conditional on being a ‘good citizen’. This argument appears similar to Vale’s discussion of the poor and ‘public neighbors’ in puritan Boston where he illustrates that public protection (and assistance) was made available only to ‘honest and worthy poor’. 18

As with the destitute in puritan society, women in Ontario society were expected to be ‘model’ citizens and only then would be afforded protections under the law. In all cases, the sexual peregrine would be shuttled down Queen Street to the Mercer Reformatory, or if the girl’s ‘lust’ was too shameless, to the Insane Asylum – the Ward and the Niagara districts were indeed two sides of the same coin.

This attitude towards sexual deviancy on moral grounds began to shift with the birth of sociology and the scientific study of the relationship between sexuality and disease. Foucault contends that modern attitudes towards sex changed under the influence of so-called ‘experts’, who viewed sex as something to be ‘administered’ by professionals. 19 Justice Meredith, the presiding judge in the St. Clair case illustrates the prevailing link at the time between physical cleanliness and moral (Judeo-Christian) cleanliness in his ruling: “Neither a good nor a bad motive can alter the character of the act, in such a case as this. If unlawful, a good motive will not make it lawful, nor if lawful, will a bad motive make it unlawful…” 20 It would seem Judge Meredith, in true form to the Social Gospel, drew his judgment from Levitical notions of purity and cleanliness – compare his words, for example, to the Book of Matthew: “it is not what goes into a person’s mouth that makes him ritually unclean; rather, it is what comes out of his mouth that makes him unclean.” 21 St. Clair, for his part, in a meeting on July 3 of the Vigilance Committee reiterated this connection between social and health reform, as the Star attests in its recap: “the speaker declared that the spread of disease made this fight not only a moral fight, but a sanitary one…” 22

The shift from a moral to medical argument was in large part supported by the eugenics movement, a draconian group of reformers who believed that problems of the city were the result of increased immigration and the innate inferiority of certain races, notably the Jews (‘Hebrews’), Southern and Eastern Europeans and ‘Asians’ (they lumped Chinese, Japanese and ‘Hindus’ under this category). Not coincidentally, the movement was spearheaded in Canada by Dr. C.K. Clarke, Dean of Medicine at the University of Toronto – and – superintendent of the Insane Asylum on Queen Street. The greatest fear of the eugenics movement was that the racial purity of the Canadian population was threatened by the spread of venereal disease, prostitution and the rise in the number of immigrants – and in their minds, these were intimately linked. For example, writing in the Canadian Journal of Mental Hygiene in 1920, Clarke proclaimed that more than ninety per cent of all prostitutes treated for venereal disease in Toronto were “distinctly feeble-minded or insane”. 23 Clarke’s views were shared by Theosophists such as Lawren Harris, leader of the famed Group of Seven painters, who painted the Ward district extensively – his work becoming progressively more disdainful as the years passed. Religious institutions took up this argument as well. The wave of immigration that swept the nation in the immediate pre-war years caused a ‘moral panic’ among native-born Canadians. Their rapidly increasing numbers together with their higher birth rates led to widespread anti-immigrant campaigns that successfully changed immigration laws to severely limit non-British/American (or non-Western European) immigrants. 24 Bacchi even claims that one of the main motivations of the suffrage movement was to counteract the vote of the rising immigrant population – a population that was considered immoral and feebleminded. 25 Clarke is not bashful about his view of immigrants: “from this class are derived petty criminals...
of all kinds, prostitutes in large numbers, and persons who are constantly keeping
themselves and those who have to associate with them, in hot water."\textsuperscript{26} Moreover, Clarke is disdainful of sociologists (and environmentalists) who suggested that
physical surroundings and economic circumstances contributed to people’s beh-

avior.\textsuperscript{27}

When all was said and done, St. Clair, Shearer and the social purists had
won a major battle – the Province amended its \textit{Municipal Act} in December 1912 to
give municipalities such as Toronto greater control to prevent or regulate ‘theaters,
music halls, bowling alleys, moving picture shows where vaudeville performances
are introduced and other places of amusement’ (See \textsuperscript{(32)}). The Chief Constable
was particularly nervous about the impact such places had on young boys and,
typical of the emerging civic policy, advocated a territorial solution: “increasing
number of young boys frequenting pool rooms, and as the moral atmosphere of
these places in none of the best, I would recommend a change of the age limit from
16 to 18. The policy of confining these places as much as possible to the business
parts of the City works well, as their presence in the residential districts would be objectionable.”\textsuperscript{28} Thus, the reform movement led to regulations to organize the
physical space of the city.

As the state and civil society framed \textit{otherness} according to illicit sexual
behavior, places of amusement such as the Hippodrome and the Star Theater
became viewed as places of danger. In response, under pressure from Social
Gospel organizations (and the various sub-movements – from the eugenicists, so-
cial reformers and parks and playgrounds movement), the state opted to regulate
these amusement places. Two strategies emerged: one was to control what these
theaters showed by issuing short-term licenses (three months to a year) which
allowed state agencies such as the Morality Department and non-profit agencies
such as the Vigilance Committee to impose their conceptions of morally accept-
able entertainment. The state also encouraged the concentration of such amuse-

ment places away from the ‘pure’ middle- and upper-class residential districts, so
as not to corrupt the morals of ‘productive’ society. By the 1910s, however, it was
clear that this strategy had backfired – concentration of these dangerous places
close to the Ward led to an increased association between such places and the so-
cial ‘evils’ of the city – prostitution (the carrier of disease), unsanitary conditions,
and the concentrated immigrant groups of the city. The response lay in dispersal
– to an increasing policing of these places of entertainment and a greater range of
power to arrest ‘streetwalkers’, street ‘boys’ and ‘working girls’. The receptacles
of these sexual deviants (homosexuals and lustful girls) were the Insane Asylum
and Mercer Reformatory, located just a short streetcar ride down Queen Street, in
the Niagara district.
The Star Theater was later known as the Empire Theater. For consistency, I will use the Star.


4 ‘Street boys’ refers to the many (typically immigrant) young boys who wandered the city’s streets, typically peddling or selling newspapers. ‘Working girls’ has a double meaning – normally referring to prostitutes, the term equally applied to any girl living alone and working in the City. Propagated by a few incidents, people widely believed that even girls with ‘respectable’ daytime jobs were promiscuous and supplementing their income with prostitution in their private apartments. Girls tended to work for the Bell Telephone Company and Eaton’s, which was located along Yonge Street in the Ward.

5 Archives of Ontario, Crown Attorney Prosecution Case Files, York County, 1918, case 35 as cited in Bebout.


7 Early reviews of the show seemed positive: The Toronto World was enthusiastic in its praise of the Darlings of Paris, showing photos of the stars and commenting that it would relieve the working-classes from the woes of their everyday lives [“‘Darlings of Paris’ at Star This Week,” World (25 February 1912): 6]. It went on to call the show “a scream from start to finish.” [“The Darlings of Paris,” World (26 February 1912): 8.]

8 For a detailed account of Shearer’s contribution to the perception of a white slave trade efforts see Strange (1991): 146-150. In particular, Shearer was wary of Chinese and Jewish immigrants who he felt were running an illegal prostitution operation, thus posing a threat to ‘chaste’ white women.

9 Mariana Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap and Water (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991): 56-7. Valverde goes on to describe Shearer as “[a] self-described Puritan of the twentieth century, Shearer comes closer than any other figure studied here to the stereotype of the moral reformer keen on prohibiting pleasures and uninterested in people’s welfare”.


12 By October, under public pressure the Crown reversed its decision and decided to prosecute the Star Theater. See “Star Theatre to be Indicted by the Crown Attorney,” Star (14 October 1912): 1.


21 See Matthew 15: 11; Mark 7:15.


23 C.K. Clarke, *Juvenile Delinquency and Mental Defect*. Canadian Journal of Mental
Immigration to Canada up to its present day (2003), has never reached the level it attained in 1913, when 400,870 people immigrated to Canada. The second, third and fourth highest totals were in 1912 (375,756), 1911 (331,288) and 1910 (286,839) – for a total of nearly 1.4 million immigrants, a stunning figure considering the entire population of Canada was only 6.9 million by 1910 (i.e. a 20% increase in four years). Immigration Office and Census of Canada.

Carol Lee Bacchi, Liberation Deferred? (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983): 104 as cited in Kohm. Women in Ontario were given the franchise with the passage of the Ontario Franchise Act on 12 April 1917. Manitoba was the first province in Canada to grant this right on 28 January 1916.


Clarke states that, “The arm chair students of sociology pooh pooh the statement that the majority of fallen women are mentally defective, but the facts are incontrovertible. Economic instability is often stated as the cause, and almost every reason but the right one unduly emphasized [sic].” Clarke (1920): 229.

After 1900, the Ward transformed in a very visible and very physical manner. The signs of foreign ‘invasion’ were everywhere: foreign languages spoken on its streets (Yiddish, Italian, Chinese), foreign signs in its shop windows, new foreign institutions (synagogues, social clubs) and new culturally specific places of business (Chinese laundry, kosher restaurants and delis, etc). The ‘spreading’ of these ‘foreign’ elements was a visible reminder of the changing social fabric in Canadian culture. Underlying this fear – and in many ways legitimizing it – was a set of legislative measures (licensing, immigration policies, religious laws, etc) that defined the racial hierarchy of the time; Anglo-Saxon culture was meant to be dominant while institutions and practices from ‘inferior’ races (Chinese, Jewish, Italian, etc) were subordinated. These measures spread to the regulation of urban space. By tracing the visible ‘presence of the foreign’ in the Ward, such as the emergence of synagogues and Chinese laundries, and the state’s responses to these changes, it is possible to understand some of the racial undercurrents that would become embedded within a more comprehensive regulation of the City.

A list of the cultural institutions in the Ward in 1884, and especially the predominance of churches, illustrates its predominantly white, Anglo-Saxon heritage (Fig 5-1). The 1884 map itself reveals the attitudes of its creators – for example, while virtually all Protestant churches are called out by name, Catholic churches and synagogues are simply called ‘church’ (Fig. 5-2).1 By the turn of the century, civic reformers became very aware of the Ward’s position as the archetypal ‘foreign’ quarter. By the 1910s, this awareness turned to panic, as financially successful Jews and Italians began to move westward into the Kensington area (west of University Ave.).

As McLaren notes in Our Own Master Race (1990), Anglo-Celtic Canadians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were eager exponents of the
Spencerian concept of racial hierarchy, and more importantly, white hegemony. The hierarchy was clear and widely accepted. J.S. Woodsworth’s widely disseminated *Strangers Within Our Gates* (1909) expressed this hierarchy clearly in his descending layout of chapters of different groups: British immigrants were the best (and presented first), then Americans (brought down only because of their aggressive nature!), then Scandinavians (as solid Northern peoples), Germans, French (lower only because of their Catholicism), Eastern Europeans (Russians, Doukhobors, Lithuanians), Austro-Hungarians (Bohemians, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Poles, Hungarians), those from Balkan States, down to less desirables like the ‘Hebrews’ (Jews), Italians, Levantine races (Greeks, Turks, Armenians, Syrians, Persians), the ‘Orientals’ (Chinese, Japanese, ‘Hindus’) and not to be outdone, the ‘Negro’ and the ‘Indian’. From the late nineteenth century to today, the Canadian population has undergone a progressive, but by no means radical, change (Fig. 5-3). In 1871, 60.5% of the country was of British origin. Just after the end of the First World War, in 1921, the proportion of Canadians of British origins had dropped to 55.4%. The ‘radical’ social changes that caused the tremendous ‘moral panic’ after 1900 can only be seen as having been exaggerated in light of these numbers. In particular, the ‘Chinese threat’ was unfounded: the ‘Asian’ population, an aggregate of Chinese, Japanese and Indian, accounted for less than one percent of the population at all times prior to 1971. No more than 1.5% of the population has been Jewish at any time. Italians represented less than one percent of the population up until the Second World War. A five percent reduction of the British population over fifty years represented, in reality, a small change. By the 1920s, the country, outside of Quebec, remained dominated by people who shared British values. A further reduction of 10% (to 44.6%) in the percentage of British-origin Canadians occurred between 1921 and 1971, as a result of higher immigration after the Second World War. Yet another reduction of 10% has taken place since 1971, with 33.6% of Canadians today claiming British descent, representing a 50% reduction since Confederation. French descendants likewise have experienced a 50% reduction (31.1% in 1871 to 15.9% in 2001). The country which was 91.6% French or British in 1871 has, since 2001, more than 50% of its population not descended from either of those countries. This transformation has occurred gradually over the course of 130 years.

Federal immigration policy reinforced the racial hierarchy. Initially, after confederation in 1867, immigration was promoted in the new nation in order to
build a populous nation to defend her. Instead of a strong central government, however, much of the political power was transferred to the provinces. The British North America Act (BNA) of 1867 which created the Dominion of Canada provided for only two agencies under direct federal control — immigration and agriculture (See [05]). This was not accidental. With direct control over both, there was a very conscious effort to attract immigrants in order to settle (and work) the land, particularly in the sparsely populated West (present day Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia) — principally to ensure that the United States would not lay claim to it. With the Liberals taking over the federal government in 1897, the door was thrown open to widespread immigration, a policy intended to accelerate this Westward settlement. By 1905, a new immigration minister, Frank Oliver, was named. In response to the backlash created by ‘foreign’ or ‘alien’ immigration, Oliver was proud to declare: “it is not merely a question of filling the country with people… It is a question of the ultimate results of the efforts put forward for the building of a Canadian nationality… This can never be accomplished if the preponderance of the population should be of class and character as will deteriorate rather than elevate the condition of our people and our country at large.” In other words, British subjects were desirable while many others were not.

The new Immigration Act of 1906 widened the potential reasons for exclusion — reasons that were particularly pertinent to current thinking (See [21]). The ‘feeble-minded’ were now explicitly excluded. Others who were banned: those ‘afflicted with a loathsome disease’, ‘professional beggars’, prostitutes, persons ‘convicted of crime of “moral turpitude”’, anyone ‘likely to become a public charge’, and anyone who ‘may become dangerous to the public health’. Obviously, with such subjective criteria, immigration officers had latitude to deny a wide range of ‘foreigners’. In 1910, at the height of the ‘white slave trade’ panic, women or girls ‘coming to Canada for any immoral purpose’ were also denied. A 1911 draft order-in-council specifically prohibited black immigrants but this was never enacted; instead, medical and character checks at the U.S. border effectively did the same job. By 1919, alcoholics and those with mental or physical defects or a condition of ‘constitutional psychopathic inferiority’ were added to the list. Within an age of reform, if ‘faulty’ immigrants could be excluded altogether it would ensure the country remained ‘pure’ and, not insignificantly, lessened the expense of having to ‘correct’ their problems. Through the First World War, most Germans and Eastern and Southern Europeans were labeled ‘alien enemies’ and closely watched.

This campaign against non-British immigrants widened even while the country experienced tremendous economic growth after the turn of the twentieth century. The growth could not be met without higher immigration, even if that meant bringing in people from ‘inferior’ races. By the 1910s, immigration levels...
were extremely high – with immigrants increasing the population of the country by 20% in four years from 1910 to the end of 1913. The vast majority of these new immigrants were not British but rather were Eastern and Southern Europeans. Whitaker suggests that this increase of ‘alien’ immigrants despite popular opposition to them was fueled by private interests who thought that mixed races would dilute the labor movement – for example, Chinese workers were denied the franchise and tended to drive wages down. The perception of ‘foreign’ workers taking ‘native’ jobs exacerbated the situation. When a recession briefly slowed the economy in 1907 in British Columbia, nativists formed the Asiatic Exclusion league and led anti-‘Oriental’ riots in Vancouver. The following year, the federal government restricted immigrants to people who arrived directly from their native land – since there were no direct ships from India, this effectively eliminated Indian immigration. Large corporations such as the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), eager to obtain cheap labor, contested this action in court and won (See 14).

As Carolyn Strange notes, “eugenicists were the most notorious promoters of the racial purity concept, but the racist belief in the inferiority of ‘lesser’ races, ethnic groups, and non-Christians pervaded all levels of civil society.” In addition to the eugenicist belief that ‘foreign’ races were inferior, there were other causes of prejudice. In many cases, foreigners were viewed as radical political
agitators – fears of communism ‘infecting’ the Canadian public sphere led to deep suspicions of the Finns, Russians and Eastern Europeans. For the many politicians with well established connections to business interests, any increase of labor activity was worrisome. With the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919, more draconian measures were instituted. After 1919, amendments to the Immigration Act allowed the government to deport any non-citizen who advocated (or was associated with someone who advocated) the overthrow of a constituted authority and allowed local officials to report such behavior to Ottawa. In 1920 the Royal Canadian Mounted Police was formed and one of its early roles was the surveillance of ethnic organizations. As Whitaker claims: “immigrants of certain origins (especially Ukrainians, Russians, Finns, and Jews) and those holding certain political opinions (mostly left-wing) were marked as potential enemies by the Canadian state.”

Nativism continued through the 1920s beginning with the Empire Settlement Act of 1922 (See [17]). This scheme was an agreement between England and Canada to re-settle over 100,000 British subjects in Canada in order to ensure the Anglo-Saxon character of the country. Societies such as the National Association of Canada and the Native Sons of Canada were born on anti-immigrant platforms. Even the Ku Klux Klan made its way from the U.S. in order to “defend a white Anglo-Saxon ‘Kanada’ against the influx of foreign ‘scum’.” Business interests continued to trump the anti-immigrant movement supported by the labor movement and the churches; the 1925 Railways Agreement with the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific railways, for example, allowed over 185,000 immigrants from discriminated-against countries to come to Canada, provided they were genuine ‘agriculturalists’ (See [41]). Anti-immigration tendencies predictably rose through the Depression and the Railways Agreement was promptly cancelled following the election of R.W. Bennett’s conservative government in 1930. Over 28,000 were even officially deported from 1930-5, although the actual figure was probably higher. Japanese-Canadians, of course, had property confiscated and were for-
ibly relocated to concentration camps during the Second World War. Even after the war, in 1947, then Prime Minister Mackenzie King reminded the nation that, “Canada is perfectly within her rights in selecting the person whom we regard as desirable future citizens…. The people of Canada do not wish, as a result of mass immigration, to make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population.”

This litany of racial and ethnic prejudices belies the current policy of multiculturalism which first was adopted in 1974. Clearly, the current embrace of different cultures was not always the case in Canada.

Chinese, Jewish and Italian immigrants were considered particularly problematic, as they were seen as being unable to assimilate. As early as 1885, a ‘head tax’ of $50 was placed on every Chinese immigrant if they wanted to enter the country – a hefty price at the time. By 1901, a Royal Commission had been launched to study Japanese and Chinese immigration (See [42]); it concluded that these immigrants were “obnoxious to a free community and dangerous to the state,” and the head tax was raised to $100. By 1904, with immigration rising rapidly, the head tax was increased to $500, an astronomical number at that time (roughly equivalent to $10,000 today). By 1923, this head tax was abolished, replaced by an absolute restriction on Chinese Immigration (See [10]). This exclusion would continue for 23 years, ending only with the passage of the Canada Immigration Act in 1946 (See [08]). During which time, a remarkably low 25 Chinese immigrants entered the country. People believed that such exclusion was justified – as a writer, a lawyer no less, in the 1920s wrote:

It may be very right indeed to separate a man by law from his wife and family if he belongs to a race whose increase in the country would be disastrous to those already in occupation of it; especially if such intruding race be very prolific and very difficult to assimilate; and by reason of a more meager standard of living capable of undoing the masses of those to
whom such a country belongs. But aside from all that, the Chinese cannot rightly be said to be separated by any Canadian law from their wives and children in China. They are free to go back to their wives and children any time, and God speed them!12

Jewish immigrants also paid a heavy price. Early Jewish immigrants were of British or American descent and thus were easily assimilated into the Anglo-Saxon elite of Toronto – religion was treated as distinct but not critical to the majority’s conception of difference, probably because Judaism represented such a small percentage of the population and its followers very much adhered to capitalism and common cultural norms. After 1900, however, most Jews were from Galicia – with their distinct language and appearance, they were immediately viewed as different from the majority of Torontonians. This internal division within the Jewish community between ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ can be traced to early nineteenth century Russia when Czar Nicholas I reclassified Jewish occupations into ‘useful’ and ‘useless’. This prompted many to abandon petit trading practices in favor or artisan or labor practices. With the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881 and the subsequent May Laws, many Jews fled Eastern Europe (nearly two million left between 1880 and 1914)13; Canada received some of the early emigrants and many more in the years immediately before the First World War.

Most importantly Jews, Italians and, later, the Chinese were spatially concentrated in the Ward. Hiebert’s mapping of the Jewish community from 1901-31 illustrates this spatial pattern (Fig. 5-4).14 In 1901, the bulk of the Jewish population that had arrived after 1880 was concentrated in the Ward. Some Jewish residents lived just south of the Ward and along Queen Street – these largely represented affluent Jews of British descent who had arrived prior to 1880. By 1915, early Jewish settlers who had sufficient capital moved westward across University Avenue, while recent arrivals remained highly concentrated in the Ward. Given the fears of ‘foreign’ culture through the 1910s, such a ‘spreading’ of Jewish population westward was viewed by the Anglo-Saxon majority as a propagation of the social evils that they associated with such ‘foreignness’. For example, only one house was Jewish on Kensington Street, just west of the Ward, at the turn of the century. By 1915, all but two of the 82 dwellings on Kensington were Jewish. By 1931, the Ward was no longer the center of the Jewish communities. The Ward had largely given way to Chinese institutions and it became the center of the Chinese communities.

The pattern of Jewish settlement parallels that of Italian settlement. In 1901, the few Italian immigrants (1,156 according to the Census of Canada) in Toronto lived around the Ward.15 By 1915, a similar pattern of initial concentration in the Ward and later succession to wealthier areas can be seen in the Italian communities, which by this time were estimated at 12,000.16 Through the 1910s, the Ward was clearly the center of Italian activity, as witnessed by mapping the important places referenced by John Zucchi (Fig. 5-5).17 By 1931, however, much of the Italian community (of 15,507, again according to the Census) had shifted to the College/Grace Street area to the west of the Ward.

Chinese laundries were viewed as problematic. Unlike today, efforts to segregate laundries from the middle- and upper-class neighborhoods were not based on the potential ‘incompatibility’ of land uses but instead were based on a perceived cultural difference. Beginning in 1911, launderymen were required to apply to council for a license in order to operate (See [26]). In 1912, for example, 119 launderymen applied for licenses and 73 (61%) were refused while 46 (39%) were approved.18 The laundry industry was without question dominated by the Chinese – a random sample of the 1910 license applications revealed that 45 out of 49 (91.8%) applicants were Chinese. Mapping the locations of the approved and rejected laundries reveals a distinct spatial pattern (Fig. 5-6). Approved laundry licenses were located in the poorer districts while rejected laundry licenses were
FIG. 5-6. LOCATION OF CHINESE LAUNDRY LICENSES, 1910.
in the wealthier districts. The overall pattern, however, appears to suggest that council was careful not to allow laundries to concentrate in any one area, as was the case with tavern licensing. Rather, the pattern suggests that laundries were more equally distributed throughout the poorer neighborhoods.\(^{19}\)

Chinese laundry establishments were also associated with, if run in conjunction with, ‘illegal’ Chinese gambling places. According to the Chief Constable’s report in 1907, incidents on gambling were on the rise on account of ‘Chinamen playing Fan-tan among themselves. The passion for play among Chinamen is deep-seated, and they will not readily abandon a practice that they regard more as a pastime than a vice.’\(^{20}\) By 1909 the Chief Constable reported that raids on such establishments had not been successful. The introduction of the 1911 laundry license legislation, could be viewed as an indirect attempt to gain control over these gambling activities (See [24]). By 1913, the Constable began to become concerned with the Chinese trafficking of opium. Moreover, by the 1910s there was intense fear that Chinese pimps had set up a ‘white slave trade’ with white female prostitutes (See [18]). The Presbyterian Church and women’s groups therefore supported closer regulation of the activities of Chinese immigrants. These ‘criminal’ activities in association with the Chinese, in addition to already racist attitudes, made them a target of control.\(^{21}\) This manifested itself spatially though the regulation of laundries.

Another indication of social change that City legislators concerned themselves was the proliferation of Chinese and Yiddish signs. As the Bureau of Municipal Research notes in the widely cited 1918 ‘What is the Ward Going to do with Toronto?’ Report, “another great cause of the untidy and unsightly conditions in this district is the manner in which the buildings and fences are covered with signs and advertising matter of all kinds.”\(^{22}\) While acknowledging that advertising existed elsewhere in the City, the Bureau pointed out that it was more relevant in the Ward on account of the recently arrived immigrants. Invariably, the ‘chaotic’
images of these signs fused with reports detailing the unsanitary conditions in the Ward. The disorderly impression of large amounts of Chinese and Yiddish signs and advertising constituted what the Bureau called ‘sign nuisance.’ Efforts to curb ‘foreign’ signs were widespread. According to Lemon, in 1920 Alderman John Cowan asserted during a debate on a motion to ban non-English advertising signs: "If foreigners who came here to make a living could not conform to English ways and customs they could return to their native countries."\(^{23}\)

Ahead of the Queen Elizabeth’s visit in 1939, the City undertook a comprehensive survey of substandard housing conditions in some of the slum areas, including the Ward and Niagara. In addition to demolishing the worst of these slum houses, the Department of Public Works undertook a program of housing and business improvements. In the Ward, these efforts included signage reform. Comparing the condition of 56-58 Elizabeth Street (named for the Queen) prior to renovations with that after renovations reveals the clear ‘regularization’ of Chinese signs in addition to ‘toning down’ all forms of advertisement (Fig. 5-7). Before the renovation, a prominent ‘Coca-Cola’ sign adorns the side of Joe’s Café Chop Suey, with large signs in the windows and above the storefront. After the renovation, in addition to several new windows and the stone appliqué, the Coke sign, and the storefront Chinese signs have been replaced with ‘Joe’s Café Chop Suey’ in the window and a smaller Chinese script on the door (Fig. 5-8). This ‘toning down’ of the advertising and ‘foreign’ language was typical. Down the street, at 100-110 Elizabeth Street more extreme measures were employed (Fig. 5-9). The entire set of buildings was replaced with a simplified ‘modern’ version. All Chinese writing and advertisement was removed entirely (Fig. 5-10). On the grounds of civic improvement, civic leaders conveniently ‘regularized’ the urban landscape and successfully removed the presence of the foreign.

This ‘regularization’ of the physical landscape did not stop at foreign signs, although these were particularly problematic. The feeling of civic leaders
was that no self-respecting neighborhood would have a proliferation of signs on its buildings. Part of the ‘improvement’ of a neighborhood, then, was to remove the visual clutter. A case in point was the building at the corner of Elizabeth and Hayter Streets. Before 1937, the building was plastered with signage. (Fig. 5-11) Targeted for ‘renewal’, the building was torn down completely and replaced with a low, neat-and-tidy series of buildings (Fig. 5-12). According to Harney and Troper: “Somehow an assortment of foreign storefronts, new church congregations and social clubs was equated with crowded immigrant housing conditions and the general uneasiness the ‘natives’ felt about the new languages heard in the streets. So the reason offered for the obliteration of an immigrant area was obscure. Was it to break up forcibly the concentration of foreigners and thus to hasten assimilation, or did it have no other motive than the extirpation of unsafe housing conditions and unsightly commercial blocks?”

The fear that the foreign presence was spreading, replacing Anglo-Saxon values, prompted civic leaders to actively discourage – even remove – physical parts of the city that were deemed ‘other’.

Another visible presence of the foreign was the widespread emergence of synagogues and other Jewish institutions in the Ward. Toronto’s first synagogue, Holy Blossom, was to the southeast of the Ward and, over time, became ‘reformist’ in nature. Established in 1863, it served the ‘old’ Jewish immigrants from Western Europe. That congregation’s elaborate temple on Bond Street was inaugurated in 1897. Offended by this liberal interpretation, ‘new’ Jewish immigrants, largely Lithuanian and Galician, began a second congregation called ‘Goel Tzedec’ in 1883 in the Ward. By 1907, this congregation had raised sufficient funds and increased its membership enough to construct the elegant Goel Tzedec synagogue on University Avenue in the Ward (Fig. 5-13). According to Spiesman, Goel Tzedec had a capacity of 1200 and was modeled on the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Westminster.

Adding insult to injury to steadfast nativists, former churches were bought...
and modified as synagogues or Jewish theaters. For example, in 1909, the Western Presbyterian Church at the corner of Elm and Terauley Streets (often referred to as the Bible Methodist Church) was purchased and converted into the Lyric Theater (Fig. 5-14). Likewise, the ‘New Jerusalem Church’ at 17 Elm Street was purchased in 1906 by a group of Polish Jews (later, the Beth Jacob congregation) who converted it into the Polishes Shul, or Elm Street Shul. After only two years (1908), the congregation split into two with a second congregation called Tomchei Shabbos taking up residence on Chestnut Street. This synagogue was only a few houses away from a long-standing shul on the same street called Shomrei Shabbos, which itself had occupied a converted church. After 1908 and a splinter congregation formed a synagogue on Terauley Street called Machzikei Hadas. Four congregations met in houses on Center Street by 1911, including the Tower of Justice Synagogue at 29 Center Street. These shitbeleh (cottage synagogues) did not appear on municipal records but are known to have occupied many of the Ward houses, reinforcing the Jewish character of the Ward. Likewise, a Russian Mission was established on Elizabeth Street (Fig. 5-15). According to Weaver, by 1910 with seven synagogues and Jewish places such as Minto’s Kosher Restaurant and the Lyric Theater, “the area most definitely took form as a distinct society”. Further, after 1909, a Jewish day nursery and free dispensary were opened on Elizabeth Street below Dundas (Agnes). As Speisman notes, the dispensary was a direct attempt to counter missionary activities, especially those of the Presbyterians, who provided such facilities in order to attract parents and children into the missions. The dispensary would eventually grow into one of Toronto’s best hospitals, the Mount Sinai Hospital, in approximately the same location. By the 1910s, the Ward was very much a ‘shetl’, a “miniature Jewish civilization in the heart of Anglo-Saxon Toronto.”

Despite the tension between ‘old’ and ‘new’ Jewish immigrants, the boundary remained permeable because of cultural institutions such as the Lyric and Goel Tzdeci. For example, other affordable housing areas existed outside of the Ward, particularly the Niagara district to the west. Although most of the wealthier ‘old’ immigrants had moved westward along major thoroughfares, 14% of the Ward’s Jewish population was considered white-collar (Hiebert). The segregation of the Jewish population was, in part, due to the landsmanschaft to which they swore allegiance. This system of societies and congregations bore the name of the European town or community from which the immigrants came. The synagogues were important institutions for recent arrivals — they provided interest-free loans, moral support, credit to purchase merchandise, and were important contacts for employment. Secular organizations were also important: by 1899, the community had formed the Toronto Hebrew Benevolent Society and by 1905, the Pride of Israel Sick Benefit Society. By 1909, the Hebrew Ratepayers Association was established, which often worked with the dominant Protestant Orange Order on shared issues (See (35)). For example, a 1910 Globe article comments that the McCaul Street Synagogue (just west of the Ward) protested the Ontario government’s decision to ban alcohol from synagogues, a protest that presumably would have been supported by similar Orange Order efforts to fight prohibition.

Other signs of Jewish ‘presence’ in the Ward alarmed councilors whose City Hall sat uncomfortably within the Ward. Jewish peddlers roamed the streets as part of the second-hand and ‘salvage’ trade. Peddler licenses soon were required. Hiebert’s study of the Jewish workforce confirms their reliance on self-employment
when ethnic prejudice prohibited their entry in some trades and when wages were insufficient to provide sustenance to the family. While only 25.9% of Torontonians were self-employed in 1901, some 60.8% of Jewish households were self-employed. Peddling decreased rapidly by 1915, likely for two reasons: economic success and government discouragement of the practice. How much each was a factor is obviously difficult to quantify. However, a 1912 City by-law that prevented peddlers from shouting in the street, could only reduce their numbers. On the other hand, as more immigrant merchants opened shops, there was more competition, lowering prices and driving peddlers out of business.

While nearly 25% of Jews were peddlers in 1901, this had dropped to 8.7% by 1915 (overall self-employed likewise dropped to 40%). This decrease in peddlers occurred while the Jewish population rose dramatically following the failed Russian Revolution in 1905 which forced many Jews to seek safety in the United States and Canada; the Jewish population increased nearly eleven-fold from 1901 to 1915, from 3,000 to 35,000. By this time, the distinction between ‘old’ and ‘new’ was largely irrelevant since the ‘old’ population in 1915 represented only 2% of the total Jewish population in Toronto.

The visible presence of the foreign provoked a response from civil society and the state. Immigrants were classified into a rational hierarchy based on their perceived qualities and ‘worth’. Despite efforts to reduce and prohibit immigrants from specific cultures – principally Jews, blacks, Italians, Chinese – private enterprises ensured many were allowed into the country in order to suppress the growing labor movement and keep wages low. Having accepted their role in the production of capital, Anglo-Saxon civic leaders wanted to at least control the appearance of the foreign. Foreign businesses and institutions stood in for associated activities that did not completely mesh with ‘proper’ Canadian society. Synagogues represented a part of society that did not honor the Sabbath as the Holy Day. Chinese laundries were often associated with gambling. Trades by both

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**FIG. 5-14. LYRIC THEATER, AGNES AND TERAULEY ST., 1910s.**

**FIG. 5-15. RUSSIAN MISSION ON ELIZABETH STREET, 1912.**
Jews (peddling) and Chinese (laundrymen) were inherently foreign. Rather than ethnically ‘cleanse’ the City, city agencies instead engaged in visual cleansing. The regulation of Yiddish and Chinese signage as well as control of laundry and peddling activities would limit the location and extent of these foreign practices. In the face of the presence of the foreign, the physical landscape had to be manicured to suppress the foreign elements, while promoting ideal values.

(Endnotes)

1 Called out are: Holy Trinity Church (Trinity Square), Grace Episcopal Church (65 Elm St.), Wesleyan Methodist Church (42 Elm St.), Bible Christian Church (NE corner Agnes St. & Terauley St.), New Jerusalem Church (17 Elm St.), Methodist Episcopal Church (92 Chestnut St.), Mission Church (192 Elizabeth St.), Methodist Church (NE corner University St. and Elm St.). Three others known to be Catholic churches, are listed simply as ‘Church’ (53 Center St., 107 Chestnut St., 12 Albert St.).

2 See Angus McLaren, Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada 1885-1945 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990), chapter 4.

3 See J. S. Woodsworth, Strangers Within Our Gates or Coming Canadians (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972). Originally published in 1909. A sampling of his comments is useful to reiterate the widespread beliefs:

1. British: ‘we need more of our own blood to assist us to maintain in Canada our British traditions and to mould the incoming armies of foreigners into loyal British subjects’ (46)

2. Americans: ‘very desirable, and they bring with them an ample supply of capital and energy’ (64)

3. Scandinavians: “accustomed to the rigors of a northern climate, clean-blooded, thrifty, ambitious and hard-working, they will be certain of success in this pioneer country, where the strong, not the weak, are wanted’ (77)

4. Germans: ‘even those who detest ‘foreigners’ make an exception of Germans, whom they classify as ‘white people like ourselves’. The German is a hardworking successful farmer’ (84)

5. French: ‘the coming of these immigrants creates no new problem. Naturally the French language and the Roman Catholic religion unite them more closely with the French-Canadians than with any other class in Canada’ (90)

6. Eastern Europeans: ‘when we pass to Southeastern Europe we enter what is to most of us a terra incognita…their praiseworthy qualities and their shortcomings are alike
the outcome of their firm beliefs and their dogged persistence in clinging to these beliefs’ (92,101)
7. Austro-Hungarians: ‘they are intensely patriotic, but, since they have decided to make Canada their home, are taking a great interest in our politics. In time, they ought to make good citizens’ (118)
8. Balkans: ‘they are a simple, sluggish people, who have been oppressed and downtrodden for ages; therefore, it can scarcely be expected that they can land in this country, and at once fall in with our peculiar ways, and understand or appreciate our institutions’ (122)
9. ‘Hebrews’: ‘the majority are disinclined to do hard manual labor, yet are most industrious and make a living where others would starve…they come here wretchedly poor, and yet in some way they exist and make money’ (127)
10. Italians: ‘unaccustomed to city life, do not know how to make the most of the poor accommodations they have; so there come filth, disease and crime’ (134)
11. Levantine races: ‘most of them have come to us within the last few years, and they constitute one of the least desirable classes of our immigrants’ (138)
12. ‘Orientals’: ‘the Orientals cannot be assimilated. Whether it is in the best interests of Canada to allow them to enter in large numbers is a most important question…for all Canadians,’ (155)
13. ‘Negros’ and ‘Indians’: ‘aversion to silence and solitude…lack of reserve…impulsiveness, strong sexual passion and lack of will power…we may be thankful that we have no ‘negro problem’ in Canada’ (158).

4 Frank Oliver quoted in Reg Whitaker, Canadian Immigration Policy (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1991): 3.
7 Winnipeg had the country’s largest concentration of Scandinavians and Eastern Europeans who held particularly strong labor and communist views.
11 Royal Commission on Japanese and Chinese immigration (1902).
13 The persecutions in Poland were less intense than in other parts of Czar-controlled Russia, partially explaining why it wasn’t until the late 1890s that Polish Jews began to arrive in Toronto.
15 The Census was notorious at this time for underestimating the population of ‘foreigners’, since it often could not adequately account for ‘sojourners’, those who traveled from town to town, job-by-job. Therefore, the number of Italians in Toronto was likely higher than 1,156.
16 It must be recognized that the ‘Italian’ communities were not homogenous. Subsequent references to ‘Italian’ refer to the collection of peoples from different regions of Italy — in particular Sicily, Puglia, Abruzzi, Calabria, Lazio, Basilicata, Isernia, Campania, Venetia, Marche, Piedmont and Tuscany. As John Zucchi notes, “the immigrants who came from Italy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries strongly identified themselves with their hometowns or home districts. Yet, in Toronto, they also came to identify strongly with an ‘Italian’ community.” John Zucchi, Italians in Toronto: Development of a National Identity, 1875-1935 (Kingston and Montreal: McGill–Queen’s University Press, 1988): 5.
18 City of Toronto Archives, RG1 A1-2, Council Minutes (1910).
19 There are, of course, important market reasons for the pattern that should not be ignored. Wealthier residents typically did not require laundry service as they could do this ‘in house’. Similarly, unlike taverns which tend to create a ‘entertainment district’ of sorts, neighborhoods presumably only required a certain number of laundry establishments, which partially explains why they would be more evenly distributed. Despite these tendencies, the explicit rejection of laundries in certain neighborhoods is clear in the maps.
21 An anecdote from Morley’s Callaghan’s Strange Fugitive (1928): 96-8 describes the area during this time: “They walked over to Elizabeth, the street of Chinese merchants, chop-houses and dilapidated roughcast houses used for stores. Some cafes were of new tan brick, with electric signs. Chinese men sat on steps or stood in groups under street lights. No women were to be seen. They cross over from Elizabeth Street by the Registry office, the new white stone building oddly out of place in the neighborhood, and walked up Chestnut Street to Angelina’s, a brick house with a store front and big white letters on the plate glass, “Italian Restaurant.” It was dark but no lights were in the windows… He thought vaguely of Chinamen standing on Elizabeth Street, wondering if it were true they had a peculiar way of making love to white girls. He thought of it nearly every time he walked up Elizabeth Street.”
25 The Globe reported that the theater seated 2,000 and cost $65,000. Globe (2 February 1907): 14.
28 There is some debate about when Machzikei Hadas opened. Stephen Speisman claims that it opened on Terauley Street in 1906 (113). Rabbi Shlomo Jacobovits’ account, however, illustrates that it opened in 1908. A Globe article on (26 July 1907): 12 claims that the “Terauley St synagogue [was] to open its doors next Sunday”. Regardless of the exact date, it is clear that this period led to fractioning of congregations and multiplication of synagogues.
29 Tower of Justice Synagogue location was according to the Globe (18 April 1908): 24.
34 The estimates of Toronto’s Jewish population are as follows: 3,000 (1901), 9,000 (1907), 15,000 (1909), 18,619 (1911 Census), 35,000 (1915). By 1915, Jews accounted for 6.5% of Toronto’s population.
After 1900, the Progressive movement responded to the problems of disease and public hygiene by calling for a widespread reorganization of the physical fabric of Toronto. These very real problems had also been talked about by those who advocated for housing reform. Tackling the disease and hygiene issues resulted in a synergy between the housing reform and the parks and playground movement. Although large city parks had been popular for some time, reformers now believed that the creation of open space throughout congested neighborhoods would create better penetration of light and circulation of air, two factors whose absence health officials felt contributed to immorality, disease, and feeblemindedness. As the city’s most notorious slum, the Ward was the first area targeted, resulting in the creation of the Elizabeth Street Playground.

Parks and playgrounds became an important rallying point for the Progressives because it allowed them to alleviate the poor housing conditions in slums indirectly. Rather than attempt to merely tear down tenements on the grounds of their filthiness, reformers argued that open space was necessary to ensure the healthful growth of children. Thus, reformers turned the condemning political battle with individual landowners into a positive opportunity: in the place of residences for only a few families could be an urban amenity that the entire community would enjoy.

This argument had been made before, in the 1840s, as cities in North America began to industrialize. At this time, it was felt that large sections of the city should be reserved for public parks that would be an amenity for the entire city.¹ Out of this movement arose such urban parks as New York’s Central Park (1858–1878), Boston’s ‘Emerald Necklace’ (1878–1896) and Montreal’s Mount Royal Park (1874–1876), all designed by famed landscape architect Fredrick Law Olmsted.² Olmsted was unusual in his rejection of the city as a moral problem of
vice and crime. For Olmsted, the biggest threat to the city was the erosion of social bonds, impersonal human relations and the lack of opportunities for quiet reflection. Olmsted advocated direct public action to secure the necessary places of repose. With its replenishing and elevating powers, nature was the proper avenue for that action. As cities became increasingly congested, however, it became apparent that a single park at the city scale was not enough to prevent slum conditions and poor health. By the 1890s, efforts to create neighborhood parks in congested districts were well underway.

The potential for parks and playgrounds to alleviate the overcrowded conditions in the slums was identified as early as 1885 by the New York Tenement House Commission. In its report, the Commission recommended removing the notorious block of tenements known as ‘Mulberry Bend’ in the infamous Five Points area of the Lower East Side. Mulberry Bend was the object of scathing commentary by Jacob Riis in his attack on the tenements How the Other Half Lives (1890). As a result, in 1887, New York passed the Small Parks Act to facilitate the construction of neighborhood parks in Manhattan. It was only in 1896, however, that Mulberry Bend Park was finished. As Boyer comments in describing Mulberry Bend’s transformation: “Degeneracy and vice would yield to sunlight and fresh air; profanity and drunken brawling to the laughter of children at play! Where generations of trace distributors, Sunday school teachers, city missionaries, Children’s Aid agents, and friendly visitors had trudged on their weary rounds of uplift, trees and green grass would flourish.” By 1897, the city had appointed a Special Park Committee, with Riis as its secretary.

Toronto, of course, was slow to adopt the parks and playgrounds approach compared to other North American cities. However, by 1908, a committee had formed to study the possibilities. That year, the Board of Education opened its first supervised playground at the Elizabeth Street Public School. By 1910, the city passed the first by-law to expropriate private property in the Ward for a playground.
resulting in the Elizabeth Street Playground (See 101). This one-acre playground was the first operated by the Parks Department and represented the only dedicated open space in the Ward (Fig. 6-1, 6-2). The playground was well located to work in conjunction with Central Neighborhood House, which was located nearby (See 109). Central Neighborhood House used the playground as a forum for its reformist activities, including organized ‘play’ activities for children. Indeed, the parks and playgrounds movement was a large part of larger efforts in Toronto to ‘Canadianize’ recently-arrived immigrants.

The Ward’s immigrant youth did not have inside common spaces to play since their homes were too small and many families had to take boarders to subsidize their rents. Without dedicated play spaces, the streets became the domain of children’s play. Single, transient men who boarded in the Ward were also forced to loiter in the streets. Prostitutes, too, used the streets as a forum to conduct business. The only form of inside recreational space available were the nearby vaudeville theaters and movie houses. These places of entertainment, too, were associated with prostitutes and homosexual activity; the vaudeville acts, themselves, were considered risqué. It was observing these circumstances – the unmonitored intermingling between children and the less savory class of Torontonians – that caused reform-minded professionals and businessmen to begin campaigning for public intervention. These reformers argued that it was in the best interests of society as a whole to provide ‘wholesome’ activities for children and the working-class in general. Without such recreation, children would join the many foreign gangs that had begun to control the streets of the poorer districts.

In addition to securing the land for the parks and playgrounds, it was necessary to construct public lavatories, pools and fountains within those places in order to improve hygienic conditions in the slums. However, in their efforts to provide places of repose, the Progressives created more potential spaces of danger. Parks, in particular, became spaces where illicit sex took place, both hetero- and
homosexual.\textsuperscript{4} Wonderful natural places of reflection during the day, the parks were dark and removed from the gaze of the city at night. Public lavatories, too, became ‘abject spaces’ for sexual encounters. According to Maynard, boys and girls would trade sex for food, shelter, admission to theaters or simply money.\textsuperscript{5}

As reformers became aware of these subversive uses of their places of hygienic reform, they recognized that they must be coupled with greater policing presence. As Maynard explains in “Through a Hole in the Lavatory Wall,” Toronto police set up elaborate schemes for catching people ‘in the act’ in parks and lavatories.\textsuperscript{6} These state actions were supplemented by volunteer organizations that acted to police the public spaces of the city. The Vigilance Committee, located just south of the Ward, was one such organization that worked in tandem with more official reform efforts (See \textsuperscript{481}). For example, in one of its leaflets the Vigilance Committee solicited the help of fellow citizens: “Will YOU not be one of the Committee’s representatives on your block? Help us to have our hand upon the entire moral pulse of the city.” Likewise, the parks and playgrounds themselves came under the gaze of professional on-site managers. Children in the playgrounds were expected to ‘abide by the rules’ so that order would be maintained and the proper values of sportsmanship and play were instilled.

By the late 1920s, a great percentage of the Jewish and Italian communities had moved westward, out of the Ward, replaced by increasing numbers of commercial establishments. Since the Elizabeth Street playground was built to provide open space for the Jewish and Italian communities, its purpose became diminished. In 1928, the Toronto General Hospital purchased the Elizabeth Street Playground and extended Gerrard Street through to University Avenue, cutting the playground in two. The southern end was added to the Hester How School located adjacent to the site. The Parks Department ran programs for young children there, picking up the idea that Central Neighborhood House began, until the Hospital for Sick Children acquired the site. The fire insurance map from 1954 indicates the site by this time was home to the Elizabeth McMaster House, a nurse residence for the new Hospital for Sick Children to the west (Fig. 6-3).

In addition to expropriating land for parks and playgrounds, the city also engaged in street widening as a means to increase the open space in the Ward and other slum areas (See \textsuperscript{161}). The benefit of street widening, in reformers minds, was twofold: not only did it provide better light and air but it also reduced the depth of lots. For J.J. Kelso, President of the Ontario Children’s Aid Society, a slum was a “series of lots about one hundred and fifty feet deep, with three or four houses, hovels or shacks erected, one behind the other, and entirely hidden from the view of the passerby.” Therefore, any attempt to lessen the depth of lots would be a positive development. Kelso’s faith in environmental reform was typical: “If there could be [a] drastic measure passed requiring every house in which human beings dwell to front on a forty or sixty-foot street, or else be pulled down, how long would

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Name & Age & Religion & Occupation & English & Irish
\hline
\hline
Father & 40 & Jewish & Russia & Peddler & Peddler & $12/18 W & Yes & Yes
\hline
Mother & 35 & Russian & Peddler & Peddler & $12/18 W & Yes
\hline
Boy & 9 & Russian & Peddler & Peddler & $12/18 W & Yes
\hline
Girl & 7 & Russian & Peddler & Peddler & $12/18 W & Yes
\hline
\hline
Father & 42 & England & Peddler & Peddler & $12/18 W & Yes & Yes
\hline
Mother & 30 & Russian & Peddler & Peddler & $12/18 W & Yes & Yes
\hline
Girl & 16 & Russian & Tobacco Factory & $8.00 to 8.50 W & Yes & Yes & Yes
\hline
Girl & 15 & Russian & Tobacco Factory & $8.00 to 8.50 W & Yes & Yes & Yes
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Sample Family Histories, 1918.}
\end{table}
drunkenness, vice and ignorance exist?" In other words drunkenness and vice could be eliminated if every street was forty or sixty feet wide.

For Kelso and many other reformers, the slum was the catch-all for everything undermining Canadian society. The central question of the time was this: "did the pig make the sty? Or did the sty make the pig?" The earliest social control advocates in industrial cities like Toronto clearly believed in the former. The progressives, on the other hand, believed in the latter. Harney explained the response as follows:

Obliteration of the Ward and the dispersal or assimilation of its people became the logical course for the city’s guardians. The litany that Dr. Hastings recited – contaminated water, overcrowding, windowless rooms, unsanitary water closets, filthy lanes and alleys, cesspools rising up through the back lots – called for obliteration as a response.

Parks and playgrounds were integral to the reform efforts in Toronto. The city had doubled in population from 1886 to 1905 and again from 1905 to 1914. The number of people aged 15 and under fifteen increased from 54,068 to 139,757 from 1901 to 1921. As the proportion of British residents fell and the number of foreign-born children grew, the city’s middle and upper-class became more concerned about the activities of young men. The growth of gangs and the associated rise in petty crimes by the city’s youth prompted reforms to turn children’s leisure into a public issue.

Reflecting the attitudes of the time, in 1918, the Bureau of Municipal Research published its report on “What is the Ward Going to do With Toronto?” (See [49]). Included were social surveys documenting the population and physical conditions of the Ward. One set of ‘data’ was the family histories; far from scientific, these tabulations reflected the judgments of the surveyors about the Ward.
residents. A random example proves instructive (Fig. 6-4): in particular, under the category ‘General History’ were scathing descriptions of the family members. In ‘Family 1’, the wife was categorized as a ‘low-grade imbecile’. The eldest son was also labeled a low-grade imbecile but was also ‘not in [a] condition (mentally) to be allowed to associate with other children.” The other boys were apparently easier to judge: one was labeled simply ‘imbecile’, the other simply an ‘idiot’. Combined with the exposé on the congestion in the Ward, it was clear that reformers linked the low mental abilities of Ward families to poor light and air. The Bureau claimed, for example, that because there were few open spaces in the Ward (except Elizabeth Street playground), “the streets … become their place of amusement with a consequent loss of health and decency, and it does not create an atmosphere which is likely to raise the already too low standard of living of the foreign resident or make for good and efficient citizenship.” The concern with health and sanitation issues was paramount at this time since returning veterans brought back the Spanish Flu, which devastated large numbers of the poor.

Prior to the Elizabeth Street playground children were forced to play in the streets, out of the watchful eyes of adults. Children were seen as the key to a stable Canadian society: the city’s youth could achieve the desired ‘melting pot’, breaking the supposed link between class, ethnicity and youth crime. A wide array of interests campaigned for public intervention — the Council of Women, the Guild of Civic Art (See [20]), the Playgrounds Association all pressured the city to allot funds for parks and playgrounds. Between 1900 and 1930, the budget for these purposes increased over 50 times, from $66,000 to $3.5 million. In 1902, the city operated just two rinks and one toboggan run (under contract from private interests). By 1935, the city operated 72 skating rinks, 64 hockey rinks, 17 slides and eight toboggan runs. The state had indeed intervened to provide more ‘wholesome’ activities for the city’s youth.

By the 1930s, the value of supervised children’s activities was fully un-
makes the pig’, so the thinking went, then the best place to experiment would be an area with an Anglo-Saxon population. Although there is little evidence to suggest it, there might have also been the feeling that the redevelopment of Moss Park was akin to helping ‘one’s own kind’, before helping the immigrant communities. The solution at Moss Park was to place new rowhouses and low-rise apartments surrounding a large central play-space (Fig. 6-7). Ideas were easier to draw up than to build, however. It was not until the higher levels of government had committed to funding public housing that the Moss Park plan was acted upon. The Dominion Housing Act of 1935, the National Housing Act of 1938, and the Home Improvement Program of 1936-40 reflected modest attempts by the Federal government to address the critical housing shortages in cities like Toronto. Efforts were just beginning to expand when the Second World War arrived, setting back public housing in Canada for a decade.

As was the case with the First World War, returning veterans prompted public intervention into the private market, with the federal government’s Wartime

City officials were so proud of their accomplishments in advancing children’s welfare that when Lieutenant Governor Herbert Bruce delivered his 1934 Bruce Report, they were shocked at the appalling housing situation in the city (See [106]). Bruce called on all levels of government to address the chronic housing shortages and unsanitary conditions in the central city. Bruce proposed repairing or demolishing the worst of the housing stock as well as building publicly owned and subsidized rental housing.Bruce proposed a program of slum clearance (Fig. 6-5). His plans for public housing schemes would be child-centered. It is here where the intersection of the housing reform movement intersected with the parks and playgrounds movement. The goal was to remove old buildings and restructure the blocks to allow for generous play-spaces in connection with new housing.

The case study for Bruce was Moss Park, a low-income area in the city’s east end, near Cabbagetown (Fig. 6-6). It was thought that there was a strong link in this area between juvenile delinquency, limited open space and poor housing conditions. Moss Park exhibited all the signs of the Ward, except it eliminated one variable: Moss Park was largely a low-income British district. If it is the ‘sty that makes the pig’, so the thinking went, then the best place to experiment would be an area with an Anglo-Saxon population. Although there is little evidence to suggest it, there might have also been the feeling that the redevelopment of Moss Park was akin to helping ‘one’s own kind’, before helping the immigrant communities. The solution at Moss Park was to place new rowhouses and low-rise apartments surrounding a large central play-space (Fig. 6-7). Ideas were easier to draw up than to build, however. It was not until the higher levels of government had committed to funding public housing that the Moss Park plan was acted upon. The Dominion Housing Act of 1935, the National Housing Act of 1938, and the Home Improvement Program of 1936-40 reflected modest attempts by the Federal government to address the critical housing shortages in cities like Toronto. Efforts were just beginning to expand when the Second World War arrived, setting back public housing in Canada for a decade.

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As was the case with the First World War, returning veterans prompted public intervention into the private market, with the federal government’s Wartime
Housing Ltd., a crown corporation that built and managed thousands of rental units (Fig. 6-8). At the time, there was a severe housing shortage in Toronto, prompting the city to advertise in local newspapers for people to not move into the city (Fig. 6-9). It was the 1949 National Housing Act, however, that created the Central (now Canadian) Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and prompted more aggressive public housing efforts (See [33]). CMHC picked up Bruce Moss Park plans and realized the 26-acre Regent Park (in a much different form) from 1947-59, marking the first public housing project in Canada. The typical three-story ‘dumbbell’ and six-story ‘dog-bone’ buildings form what remains Canada’s largest public housing project. The rhetoric in the late 1940s echoed that of the 1910s: through physical rejuvenation the morals of the city would be uplifted. For example, Mayor Leslie Saunders declared that the new Regent Park slum clearance project would, “help remove conditions which are aggravating disease and crime…. We must remove housing conditions which contribute to juvenile delinquency. In that respect we have a moral duty to our fellow man…. It will combat the deterioration of values there.”

This integration of open space and model housing, however, had been experimented with in the 1910s with the work of the Toronto Housing Company (See [47]). The Housing Company was organized on a British model as a limited dividend corporation with a mandate to provide affordable housing for the working class. The City of Toronto was a partner in the enterprise, guaranteeing 85% of the Company’s bonds, making it a semi-public affair. The Housing Company was a direct result of Dr. Charles Hastings’ suggestion to use the model developed by Henry Vivian, a Member of Parliament in England. Vivian headed the Co-partnership Tenants’ Housing Council and Co-partnership Tenants Ltd. These partnerships would buy or lease land on the outskirts of an industrial center and plan the whole area as a whole in accordance with the ‘hygienic, artistic and economic principles of Town Planning’. Subscriptions for loan stock and share capital were then invited with a five per cent return and any returns beyond this were put back into the community, who acted as shareholders. Hastings argued this allowed for greater mobility of laborers. The Toronto Housing Company combined business with philanthropy and picked up on the British model by setting a five per cent return.

The Housing Company built two developments, Spruce Court and Riverdale Court, providing housing for 256 low- to moderate-income families, although the rents were still beyond the reach of the working-class. The enterprise was a victim of timing: the 1913 recession and the subsequent War limited its success. Riverdale Court was designed by Eden Smith and Sons and built in 1914-16 and located east of the Don River (Fig. 6-10). The units, called ‘cottage flats’,

FIG. 6-9. PUBLIC NOTICE OF HOUSING SHORTAGE, 1944.
were marketed by the Housing Company as ‘modern apartment[s] with [their] own front door on the street,” reflecting the prevailing option that a single-family house was preferable to shared dwellings. With steeply pitched roofs, larger overhands, half-timbered gables, brick and stucco walls, heavy wood front doors and lush gardens, the project had a distinctly ‘domestic’ character; the idea was to provide both privacy and a sense of community. The key feature of the design was the ‘play-court’, an open space located in the center of the development where children could play under the watchful eyes of parents. Riverdale Courts remains today an effective co-operative. The Housing Company ceased construction projects in the 1920s but maintained their properties into the 1960s, when it ceased operations.

Spruce Court, also design by Eden Smith, was completed in 1913 on the corner of Spruce and Sumach Streets in Cabbagetown, near Dundas and Parliament Streets. It is also extant. The project comprises 78 units of various sizes in two- and three-story buildings. Like Riverdale Court, all apartments have a front door and a porch. They face either Spruce Street or Sumach Street, or face one of two courtyards open on one side to the street. The first half of the project formed the Sumach Street courtyard in 1913. The Spruce Street courtyard followed in 1926. Like its counterpart, the English Cottage Style used at Spruce Court evoked in the popular mind the image of a simple and domestic, country life. It was this same desire to evoke country like and provide open space that was behind the park and playgrounds movement. The movement resulted in many neighborhood parks being opened through the 1910s.

The appropriation of lands for parks and playgrounds combined with housing reform efforts after the turn of the century. Reformers linked hygienic reform with crime, immorality and low mental abilities. If the city was to be cleansed (of disease and bad morals), it was through the physical improvement of the slum districts. Congestion led to urban vices in the eyes of the professionals conducting social surveys. By contrast, the countryside did not have these problems and was not congested. Therefore, reformers saw open space and the provision of nature in the city as solutions to mitigate urban problems. By 1910, the city moved to expropriate land in the Ward for the construction of the Elizabeth Street Playground. As the only open space in the Ward, it became the center of civil society efforts to teach children good values and provide an alternative to the street as a place of recreation. These efforts were central to the assimilation process. The overt rhetoric about moral reform during the Progressive era (1890s-1910s) had largely faded by the 1930s. However, the principles of integrating housing reform with the playground movement were evident in the slum clearance plans for Moss Park. These urban renewal plans drew upon the early efforts by the Toronto Housing Company in which there was a central ‘play-space’ around which low-income housing was clustered. By this time, the state had begun to recognize the importance of providing quality environments for the working classes. It was not until the 1940s, however, that higher levels of government joined this trend, making Canada one of the last countries to adopt a public housing program. Regent Park, the first of these efforts, picked up the Moss Park plan and adapted it on a comprehensive basis.

FIG. 6-10. RIVERDALE COURT, 1920s.
(Endnotes)

1 See, for example, Andrew Jackson Downing, “A Talk About Public Parks and Gardens,” *Horticulturalist* 3 (October 1848): 153-8.

2 Olmsted worked with Calvert Vaux until 1874 when the partnership was dissolved.


4 An anecdote from Morley Callaghan’s *Strange Fugitive* (1928): 22-3 illustrates the point: “He walked through Queen’s Park, walking very slowly. It was dark but there was a bright moon and the thick trunks of the tall trees were stark against the sky. Benches were in the shadows of the tree trunks, and in the dark he walked too close to one and heard a discreet couch. He turned on to the path again. A match was lit near a flower-bed and low bushes along the main path, and he remembered he had sat on that bench with Grace Leonard the only time he had ever been alone with her. They were on the bench an hour and a half talking of trivial matters till nearly midnight. A policeman on a bicycle coming through the park had seen him light a cigarette and have come over to say that if they were respectable people they would go home at once, and leaning against his wheel, he had watched Grace suspiciously, as they moved away.”

5 See Steven Maynard, “‘Horrible Temptations’: sex, men, and working-class male youth in urban Ontario, 1890-1935,” *Canadian Historical Review* (June 1997).


10 Census of Canada, 1901 and 1921.

11 Bureau of Municipal Research, “What is the Ward Going to do With Toronto?” (Toronto, 1918): 38.

12 BMR (1918): 11.


The development of the Niagara district of Toronto represents the counterpoint to the Ward. While the Ward was developed privately as the aristocracy parceled and sold off their property, Niagara was entirely owned by the state. Niagara was one of two ‘reserves’ originally set aside for government and military purposes. The eastern reserve along the Don River, called the ‘Park Reserve’, was the original site of the first parliament buildings. The western reserve, called the ‘Military’ or ‘Garrison Reserve’, was the original site of the Fort York and its grounds. Niagara consisted of two distinct districts – one to the east and one to the west of Garrison Creek. The Creek has since disappeared, the result of landfill and the construction of the underground sewer system so this distinction appears to have subsided. The only reminder of the Creek exists as a large plaque in the sidewalk with the word ‘water’ displayed around it in 22 languages.

It was here that the battle of York took place with the Americans in 1813. Throughout 1812, the War between the British and the Americans had largely resulted in convincing British victories along the border. Seeing an opportunity to take the Canadian capital, the U.S. fleet launched its attack on York on 26 April 1813. Mindful of recent defeats, U.S. Major-General Dearborn rallied his troops: “it is expected that every corps will be mindful of the honor of the American name and the disgraces which have recently tarnished our arms, and endeavor by a cool and determined discharge of duty to support the one and wipe off the other.” The fleet landed west of the Fort and with the defenses only partially complete, handily pushed back the British and native defenders. With defeat imminent, British General Sheaffe ordered the Fort’s magazine destroyed in a tremendous explosion that killed American General Pike along with American and British soldiers. Sheaffe fled the city, leaving the townspeople to make the best terms of capitulation. By nightfall the Stars and Stripes flew over the city.
Even before the War of 1812, land at the Garrison Reserve had begun to be granted for non-military uses. With the town growing westward along King Street, the ordnance department as early as 1808 proclaimed that the edge of the reserve would be a 1000 yard arc radiating from Fort York – the firing range of the arms. The first concessions were granted to elite families. According to the notes on the 1852 Fleming Map, 22 acres of the reserve were granted to William Walton, Secretary to Lieutenant Governor Gore on 19 April 1808. On 20 November 1810, another 10 acres were leased to Attorney General John McDonnell (Fleming Map). On 17 March 1812, three months before President Madison declared war on Britain, 240 acres were granted to James Brock, cousin of Major General Sir Isaac Brock, who would be heralded for his capture of Detroit a few months later. By 1820, several other temporary licenses of occupation were granted on reserve land. For example, John Farr was granted use of property on the west bank of the Garrison Creek for use in connection with his brewery, giving some indication of the significance that the Creek had for industrial uses.

As relations improved between the United States and England and the threat of American invasion subsided after the War of 1812, the development of the Garrison Reserve began in earnest. Despite British officials insisting that York was not militarily significant, local leaders campaigned to have new, more modern fortifications built to the west of old Fort York. The transformation of the area began in 1833 when Lieutenant Governor Sir John Colborne made the decision to develop the eastern part of the Reserve. It was hoped that the proceeds from the sale of eastern land would finance the construction of the new Fort to the west. All previously granted land was to revert to the Crown in on 31 March 1834.  

The evolution of this initial phase of development highlights the important transformation that was about to take place on the Reserve. Initially, Front Street, which ran along the southern boundary of Niagara, was a prime residential address overlooking Lake Ontario. After the original parliament buildings to the east were...
torched during the American occupation, the new parliament buildings were eventually reconstructed at Simcoe Place in the western part of the town, a few blocks to the east of Niagara. As such, most of the important politicians and military officials took up residence along this prime stretch of Front Street.

On 22 May 1833, Colonial Secretary Baron Stanley authorized the Commissioner of Crown Lands to sell the property on the Military Reserve east of the Creek. The 1833 Bonnycastle Plan illustrates the first idea for the development of the area: a grand circus would be the centerpiece of a symmetrical scheme with several dedicated public open spaces (Fig. 7-1). One of the most striking features of the plan is the dominance of one acre lots. Such large lots reflected the socio-economic status of the class of buyer that the government expected to attract. Those that could afford to construct estates would make suitable neighbors for the Lieutenant Governor, whose new house was being constructed on the southeast corner of the Reserve. A new wharf was constructed to increase the value of the land. A public auction was the legally sanctioned method for disposing of Crown land. The sale terms that were set also ensured that only the wealthiest of residents could afford to buy the lots: one third of the price was to be paid upon sale, the balance due with two annual payments with 6% interest. Typical finance terms at the time for Crown land were one quarter down with three annual payments. Obviously, by setting more stringent purchase terms, the Crown Lands Commissioner was trying to limit sales to those with the highest ability to pay. The subsequent maps indicate this tactic was successful: without exception, the buyers were government officials, leading merchants or professional men. They had predicted the lots would fetch an average of £200 each. In fact, 18 lots were sold, collecting a total of £7,618, an average of £423. Indeed, they had attracted the city’s elite.

Despite the sale of certain lands, the plan for the area continued to be debated. A revised plan was presented in early 1834 (Fig. 7-2). A few things are striking. Obviously, the central circle is no longer present. Lots have been de-
creased from one-acre to \( \frac{1}{2} \) acre (except, of course, for the lots that has previously sold along Front Street to the south and Queen Street to the north). The curved street that initially marked the artillery range from the Fort is now gone, although the inscribed arc remained noted on the plan. Rather than terminate at the curved street to the west (Niagara Street), King and Newgate (Adelaide) Streets are now suggested to continue westward. This is the first indication of potential development west of Garrison Creek. The military burial ground at Victoria Square is now smaller. A market square has also been inserted into the fabric. Also, Niagara Street has been shifted westward, pushing the lots along Garrison Creek into the creek itself. This move is possibly related to the recognition of the Creek as an amenity for industry. The combined effects indicate a shift away from the area as an ‘estate’ district.

A third plan was unveiled on 5 May 1834 (Fig. 7-3). Here, some of the ideas of the previous plan were removed. King and Adelaide Streets no longer extended to the west. A more elaborate semi-circular terminus was proposed for Wellington Place, which included a wider, tree-lined connection to the government complex at the other end. The lots along Garrison Creek now are pulled back from the water’s edge. The burial ground has been enlarged again and a new Church is proposed for the termination of the Wellington Street axis.

A fourth plan prepared by the Royal Engineers on 20 February 1835 firms up some of the ideas (Fig. 7-4). The semi-circle terminus to Wellington Place is now gone. The market has now shifted out of the path of Adelaide Street and moved east one block to allow a series of lots along Portland Street. The 1837 plan that was adopted draws upon the 1835 map (Fig. 7-5). Notable was the purchase of all the lots between Tecumseth and Bathurst Streets south of Niagara Street by Receiver General John Dunn.\(^6\) It was here that the City slaughterhouse would be placed 75 years later. In order to increase property values in the area, Colborne wanted to have a church built in association with Victoria Square, the
military burial ground. This did not occur until 1859 when St. John’s Anglican Church was completed. The initial sales raised £9,971. The estimates for the new barracks, however, increased from £10,000 in 1833 to £59,000 in 1837, so any question of additional projects, such as the church, was out of the question. And on 27 October 1836, the strict financial terms were abolished in favor of the Crown standards.

The onset of a depression in 1837, coupled with the 1837 Rebellion, ensured that the area would develop as a working-class neighborhood since only small lots were affordable. So, despite a weak economy, 104 lots sold, bringing in £11,272. Thus, by the end of 1837, most of the lots to the east of Garrison Creek had been transferred to private hands, a venture that netted the government £30,609. New barracks were constructed further to west, on the site of what are presently the Exhibition grounds. They were never used. The area west of the Creek remained undeveloped as of 1837. From this time forward, the area began shifting away from its elite origins towards the working-class district that it remains today. This process was accelerated in 1841 when the British government joined the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada into the United Province of Canada. As a consequence, the Capital was re-located to Kingston; the wealthy politicians who had settled along Front Street left the city.

By this time, the decision had been made to locate the Provincial Lunatic Asylum west of Garrison Creek; it opened in 1850. As the Irish famine immigrants arrived in the city sick and destitute, many were housed in the make-shift ‘immigrant and cholera sheds’ in connection with the General Hospital, just a couple blocks east of Niagara. Many of those that survived settled in the nearby Niagara district. Despite the prior desire to construct an Anglican Church in Niagara, it was the Catholic St. Mary’s Church on Bathurst Street that was completed first, in 1853. With the arrival of the railways in the 1850s, the transformation to a working district accelerated further. The once picturesque address overlooking the harbor had been forever changed: slowly, the harbor was partially filled and the rail lines were run across the front of the city. As the 1862 map suggests, landowners responded to these new conditions by subdividing adjacent lots that they owned to create terrace housing lots as narrow as fifteen feet wide (Fig. 7-6).

The earliest detailed view of the area comes from Boulton’s 1858 Atlas (Fig. 7-7). It is apparent from this map that despite the sale of property, reserve land even east of the Creek was sparsely populated. A handful of detached buildings scattered the landscape to the east. Rail facilities began to be constructed immediately north of the Garrison (1). Farr’s brewery remained active, located on the Creek at Queen Street (2). To the west, only the central section of the Asylum was complete (3), its wings added in the following decades. It is apparent from this map that Niagara was largely undeveloped and quite rural. This reflected its position beyond the edge of the city limits at Bathurst Street.

By 1884, significant development had taken place on the reserve (Fig. 7-9). The industrial and institutional character of the area had begun to take shape: the Central Prison for Men had been completed in 1874 (1) and the Mercer Reformatory for Women in 1880 (2). Industrial uses began to appear: the Inglis plant (3), The Massey Manufacturing Co. (4), the Western Cattle Market (5), the Dominion Bridge Co. (6) and the John Abell Co. (7). Cosgrave’s brewery (8), which would become an important center of the Irish community, appeared opposite Farr’s brewery on the Garrison Creek at Queen Street. Industry even began to infiltrate the more residential eastern part of the area: a trunk factory appears at the corner of King and Niagara Streets (9), the Essex Manufacturing Co. on John Dunn’s former property (10) and another factory opposite St. Mary’s Church on Little Adelaide Street (11). The accompanying map illustrates the transformation more clearly: virtually none of the buildings that stood in 1858 remained (Fig. 7-13). The exceptions were the central pavilion of the Asylum, some of the Garrison buildings and only a few scattered buildings east of Tecumseth Street. None of the
buildings west of Tecumseth were there in 1858. Virtually all of the houses were wood frame, while some of the commercial and institutional buildings (Asylum, Prison, Reformatory, Massey Plant, Cosgrave’s, Farr’s, St. Mary’s and the trunk factory) were masonry.

By 1899, the western part of Niagara (often ironically called ‘Liberty’) had begun to develop (Fig. 7-10). Here, new streets and blocks had been laid out between the northern and southern railroad tracks in the area around Mercer Reformatory (1). However, none of these blocks had yet to be built upon. The Massey Plant had undergone extensive additions (2). By this time, the Asylum had sold portions of its estate on the east and west and these had been divided into blocks (3). A public school had been constructed on one of the east blocks (4). The eastern half of Niagara had become denser. Niagara Street itself had witnessed the construction of a row of residential buildings below Wellington Street (5). John B. Wells lumberyard and planing mill appeared at the corner of Strachan and Wellington Streets (6) and more cattle sheds had been added at the Cattle Market (7). Two more plants had located adjacent to the railways: the Toronto Glass Works to the north (8) and the Northey Co. to the south (9). The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) had by this time been formed as an amalgamation of several railways and significantly expanded its yards on the western edge of the area (10). The CPR offices were also constructed adjacent to Fort York (11). The City had taken over the Essex site to the southeast and constructed a planing mill and gas tanks (12). The factory opposite St. Mary’s had disappeared by this time. A third church appeared on the northeast corner of King and Tecumseth Streets (13). Meanwhile, a number of hotels appeared: on the northeast corner of Wellington and Niagara Streets, the northeast corner of King and Strachan and the southeast corner of King and Tecumseth Streets (14). And not insignificantly, a YMCA branch had opened beside the Asylum on Queen Street at Defoe Street (15), indicating the area was a low-income neighborhood since it was here that the ‘Y’s invariably located. Analysis of the age of buildings on the western half of Niagara shows that the entire area had been built from 1884 onwards with, again, the Asylum and Garrison being the only exceptions (Fig. 7-14). One block along Strachan Avenue at Adelaide Street was entirely new but most of the buildings of the residential district to the east of Garrison Creek were holdovers from prior to 1884.

The picture in 1910 illustrates greater densification of the area and a continued invasion of industrial uses (Fig. 7-11). The greatest change between 1899 and 1910 was the development of the southwestern part of the area on the new blocks surrounding Mercer Reformatory. Although many of these blocks were parceled into small lots, no residential construction appears to have taken place. What was constructed was largely small industrial enterprises (1). A new baseball diamond, however, was installed immediately south of Mercer (2), although it is unclear whether there was any connection between the two. Looking at the timeline of buildings, the residential part of Niagara again remained largely unchanged (Fig. 7-15). Virtually every new building constructed between 1899 and 1910 was commercial or industrial, the exception being the easternmost blocks of the former Asylum lands. Given that the city and these new industries were receiving new immigrant labor, it can be assumed that most of the new population was necessarily being absorbed into the existing housing stock. With increased population and little new housing, conditions within Niagara houses deteriorated. The CPR rail yards on the western edge of the area were greatly expanded during this time (3). The City, faced with competition from the Town of Toronto West Junction, expanded its cattle market across the rail tracks (4), opposite the original cattle market. By this time, the Garrison Creek began to be in-filled. Stanley Park first appears in the location of the Creek (5).

By 1923, the area was a dense ‘industrial park’, with a wide range of noxious industrial and institutional facilities (Fig. 7-12). Immigrant workers who worked in these industries were forced to share urban space with polluting indus-
tries. By this time, the area surrounding Mercer was completely filled with industry (1). With the failure of the Central Prison’s attempt to provide convict labor to neighboring industry, this facility had closed. The main building and several of the Prison outbuildings had been demolished (2). The Massey Harris Co. had spilled across Strachan Avenue to occupy another block (3). The most significant addition to Niagara between 1910 and 1923 was unquestionably the Municipal Abattoir (4) and the Public Cold storage facilities (5) at the foot of Tecumseth Street. Looking at the age of buildings in 1923, it is clear that the area was a fairly equal mix of buildings dating back to 1884 (Fig. 7-16).

Comparing 1923 to today, it is clear that Niagara remains a marginal area – a ‘zone in transition’, as Park and Burgess would say (Fig. 7-8). The Civic Abattoir remains, now Canada Packers (1), its pungent odor as strong as ever. The Lunatic Asylum building has since been demolished but replaced with another ‘modern’ version (2). Additional cruciform buildings complete the Center for Addiction and Mental Health ‘campus’ (3). Only a fragment of the Central Prison remains (4). Mercer Reformatory is gone, its site empty (5). Most of the early industrial buildings surrounding Mercer remain (6). Notable is the much lower density of the residential district to the east. The block between King and Wellington, Niagara and Tecumseth, in particular, was demolished to make way for modern subsidized housing (7). Other blocks along King Street have been replaced by contemporary buildings (8). A municipal salt and salt depot is adjacent to Canada Packers (9). Niagara’s southern boundary has added the elevated Gardiner Expressway (10) in addition to the railways. The shoreline, once at Front Street, has moved some 600 meters (2000 feet) forward. With the railways and elevated highway obstructing the view, there is no perception of the water from Niagara.

Niagara’s transformation from an elite residential area to a ‘zone in transition’ was facilitated by its position on the former Military Reserve. That the state controlled the land indicated a conscious desire to create a district of industry and social experimentation. The process of finalizing an initial development plan for the area east of the Garrison reserve illustrated the necessity to sacrifice the once wealthy district: small lots and more lenient finance terms initially were proposed to ensure the sale of property for the construction of a new garrison further to the west on the reserve. The availability of land and the emergence of the railways would transform Niagara into a place where all the city’s ‘others’ could be concentrated – out of sight and out of mind.
1 CANADA PACKERS
2 CENTER FOR ADDICTION & MENTAL HEALTH
3 MENTAL HEALTH ‘CAMPUS’ BUILDINGS
4 FRAGMENT OF CENTRAL PRISON
5 FORMER SITE OF MERCER REFORMATORY
6 INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS
7 SUBSIDIZED HOUSING
8 CONTEMPORARY BUILDINGS
9 MUNICIPAL SAND & SALT DEPOT
10 GARDINER EXPRESSWAY

FIG. 7-8. MAP OF NIAGARA, 2003.
1. CENTRAL PRISON FOR MEN
2. MERCER REFORMATORY FOR WOMEN
3. INGLIS PLANT
4. MASSEY MANUFACTURING CO.
5. WESTERN CATTLE MARKET
6. DOMINION BRIDGE CO.
7. JOHN ABELL CO.
8. COSGRAVE’S BREWERY
9. TRUNK FACTORY
10. ESSEX MANUFACTURING CO.
11. FACTORY
FIG. 7-10. MAP OF NIAGARA, 1899.

1. NEW BLOCKS
2. MASSEY CO. ADDITIONS
3. NEW ASYLUM BLOCKS
4. PUBLIC SCHOOL
5. RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS
6. JOHN B. WELLS LUMBER YARD
7. ADDITIONAL CATTLE SHEDS
8. TORONTO GLASS WORKS
9. NORTHEY CO.
10. CPR FACILITIES
11. CPR OFFICES
12. PLANING MILL AND GAS WORKS
13. NEW CHURCH
14. HOTELS
15. YMCA BRANCH
FIG. 7-12. MAP OF NIAGARA, 1923.
FIG. 7-14. TIME FRAME OF CONSTRUCTION, 1899.
FIG. 7-15. TIME FRAME OF CONSTRUCTION, 1910.
FIG. 7-16. TIME FRAME OF CONSTRUCTION, 1923.
Throughout the text, I refer to the western study area as simply ‘Niagara’. Many Torontonians refer to area west of the since-vanished Garrison Creek as ‘Liberty’. The irony of this name will become evident as the reader proceeds through the subsequent stories. For my purposes, I will simply term the two areas as ‘Niagara’.


3 From note on the 1833 Bonnycastle Map.

4 The new government complex opened in 1832.


6 I have re-edited the subsequent series of maps (1833-1862), removing certain pieces of information, re-orienting some of them and re-labeling them, in order to give the reader the clearest comparison of the ideas.

7 Colborne to Goderich, C.O. 42, v414 (23 January 1833): 80 as cited in Ganton (1975): 22. CTA.

8 Ganton (1975): 27.

9 Ganton (1975): 32.


11 The Capital changed locales often during this period. After only a couple years, it relocated from Kingston to Montreal. After a riot in Montreal a few years later, it was decided to have the seat of government alternate between Quebec City and Toronto. By 1865, with the new nation-state emerging, Ottawa – located on the border between French Quebec and English Ontario, was selected as the permanent Capital.

12 I have re-drawn the Boulton and Goad atlas and fire insurance maps for 1858, 1884, 1899, 1910 and 1923 and compared them with current CAD data obtained from the City of Toronto; these are presented subsequently. The original maps were scanned and arranged digitally and used as templates for the drawings presented here. The intent is to ‘map out’ the physical transformation in the most polemical way, omitting much of the insurance information in order to compare the changes to the built fabric. The study area was limited to Bathurst on the east, Queen Street to the north, the western edge of the Lunatic Asylum on the western edge, and the rail lines to the south.
From an early date in Toronto, drinking was seen as a danger to health and order. Beginning with the Sun Tavern’s role in the Rebellion of 1837, taverns came to be known as centers of political activity with each tavern associated with a particular political party. Largely, these saloons were associated with the working-man, as the aristocracy (who dominated local politics) had the benefit of private clubs and spacious homes for entertainment. The temperance movement – begun as a rural, Christian, and largely women’s movement – targeted the tavern and its associated evils. This movement had an anti-urban bias and reformers came to see taverns as boardinghouses for a transient population and places of radicalism – antithetical to the platitudes of family life. Throughout the nineteenth century, measures were introduced to control the extent and location of taverns, resulting in what M.P. Sendbuehler calls a distinct ‘territorial solution’ to the tavern problem. Comparing the spatial map of taverns in the 1850s with the 1880s reveal that taverns, despite still being concentrated along major streets, had begun to ‘spread’ into other areas. Although it would be an exaggeration to suggest taverns infiltrated the upper-class neighborhoods, the fear of taverns and drinking (and its evils) was sufficient to introduce legislation meant to control their location. By restricting taverns to working-class areas, reformers could maintain political control over the City’s institutions and preserve both the moral values and land values of the middle-class areas.

Concerned with the adverse effects of alcohol, in 1808, members of the Congregational Church in Moreau (Saratoga County, New York) formed the first Temperance Society in North America – the Temperance Society of Moreau and Northumberland. By 1813, a group in Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance, had followed suit. However, significant efforts to discourage (but not prohibit) liquor only came with the formation of
the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance (American Temperance Society) in Boston on 13 February 1826. By 1828, this movement had reached Canada, with the creation of the Montreal Temperance Society, and quickly reached the Town of York (renamed Toronto upon its incorporation 6 March 1834); by 1832, the Temperance movement claimed 10,000 members in Upper Canada (Ontario).² The Temperance movement was widely viewed as originating in rural areas, and only later, as drunkenness came to be associated with crime, became important in dense urban centers. As such, its message carried a strong anti-urban bias even from the beginning and problems associated with the industrial city became conflated with intemperance. By 1874, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) had formed in Canada (Fig. 8-1), championing the temperance cause from the grassroots level while another women’s group much later (1894), the National Council of Women, lobbied political leaders for legislative reform. Begun in the U.S. in the 1850s, the WCTU was originally formed because its members felt that alcohol was at the root of all of society’s ills: crime, poverty, sexual immorality. The obvious physical manifestation of their concerns was the tavern itself — not only because it was a place of heavy drinking but because it was a place where young, sojourning men stayed, thereby becoming a perceived center of crime and prostitution.³

Early concern for the tavern as a place of civic disturbance in Toronto began with the construction of the Sun Tavern in 1825 by John McIntosh on the northwest corner of Queen and Yonge Streets (what was then the southeast corner of ‘Macaulaytown’ which would come to be known later as the Ward).⁴ Robertson, in 1893, describes this building as a large, white, square frame building.⁵ McIntosh was the brother-in-law of William Lyon MacKenzie, who started the radical newspaper The Colonial Advocate in 1824. MacKenzie was the leader of a growing group of dissidents opposed to the Family Compact’s control of City affairs.⁶ In 1828, MacKenzie was elected to the Legislative Assembly of the colony of Upper Canada as representative from York but was expelled from legislature for publishing libelous attacks on the government. That he was re-elected four times is a testament to his popularity among the general population — each time, however, his seat in Parliament was refused, stoking the flame of Reformers. According to Robertson, after he was expelled from Government House, MacKenzie was canonized by the people and he was carried through the streets back to the Sun Tavern.⁷ When Toronto was incorporated in 1834, MacKenzie was elected as the first mayor; by the fall of that year he was elected to the Provincial Legislature, where his Reform Party had gained control, advocating complete self-government for Upper Canada. MacKenzie was dealt a major blow, however, in 1836 when he and his party were defeated by the Tories for re-election. Stung by the defeat, he started another newspaper, The Constitution, which advocated open rebellion and a republican government for Upper Canada. As Robertson explains, “naturally enough this inn [Sun Tavern] became the head quarters of the leaders of the Radical Party, and here
were held the meetings, and here were passed the resolutions which eventually lead to the Rebellion.” In 1837, he led a group of armed rebels into Toronto with the intent of over-throwing the aristocratic government. The rebellion failed and he fled to the United States, returning to the Province in 1849 when those involved in the rebellion were granted amnesty; MacKenzie went on to again serve in the Provincial legislature from 1851-8.

From this early date, taverns were seen as centers of radicalism and danger to public order. Christian (largely Protestant) women emerged as a voice against the ‘evils’ of liquor. Addie Chisholm, president of the Christian Women’s Temperance Union writing in 1884, recalled how in 1856 in Rockport, Massachusetts some 200 women raided several liquor establishments, destroying all they found.8 Chisholm rallied domestic concerns and proclaimed: “Homes have been invaded, not with noise of drums and clash of arms, but silently as by the stealthy step of death. Their purity and peace have been destroyed.” With the arrival of the railroads in the 1850s and the subsequent industrialization of Toronto, the voices favoring liquor controls grew—a chorus directed at, what the Chief Liquor Inspector in 1868 called, ‘the bane of our cities’9; by 1864, the United Province of Canada tabled an Act aimed at controlling the sale of liquor—the Temperance Act (better known as the ‘Dunkin Act’ after its sponsor, Christopher Dunkin) (See [44]).10

The Dunkin Act allowed local voters to determine whether drinking would be permitted within specific jurisdictions; under this federal statute, any thirty voters could petition to hold a referendum on the issue. If the referendum carried, then local councils could be compelled to introduce a by-law to prohibit the retail sale of alcohol within that jurisdiction. A caveat was included, however, that permitted producers and wholesalers who sold five or more gallons to be exempt from the provisions. The idea was that the law would target not drinking per se, but the institution of the tavern. The five or more gallon clause was widely viewed as class legislation since it permitted wealthy citizens to continue to buy in bulk but poor working-class laborers could not afford to buy such large quantities (for example, it would take the average laborer four days to earn the cost of five gallons of whiskey). Moreover, by targeting the tavern specifically, legislators were addressing the growing concern that they were no longer hotels (i.e., amenities for travelers) but merely ‘drinking dens’ and boardinghouses. This early association between uncontrolled drinking and boardinghouses would reappear in the 1900s when the City faced the widespread growth of apartment and tenement buildings (See [46]).

The primary audience of the saloon had shifted from the traveler to the working-class laborer (the middle- and upper-classes were presumed to have the luxury of entertaining in the private spaces of their homes). This is confirmed by Chief Constable Grasset’s testimony: “…the ground was taken that they [taverns] were of no use to the traveling public, and that they were only patronized by mechanics and laborers going to and from their work.”11

Since the tavern served as a ‘public forum’ for laborers (as well as for many, a social center and home), it became an important political institution. In fact, taverns couldn’t afford to provide such a large indoor common space without the associated profit from selling drinks. By the 1850s, the industrialization of North America was in full gear. Taverns were important institutions to the working-class and in many cases were the catalysts of the urban labor movement. For the many transient and seasonal workers (most of whom were single men), the saloon provided cheap accommodation—and what the innkeeper lost on the rental of rooms, he made up for by selling alcohol. Despite the elite’s anxieties about taverns, they recognized that they provided a service that, if removed, would cause the City’s relief bill to rise dramatically. Closure of taverns would leave the City faced with the uncomfortable prospect of “mingling between these rough workers and respectable citizens,” which was a cause of great concern.12 When the 1864 Dunkin Act was introduced, then, a tension had developed between the pressure to curb drinking and the desire to segregate a class of people that “did not mix well
As the debate grew, it became apparent that members of City Council were actively supporting the anti-Dunkin camp—a tacit indication that Council members and tavern keepers were in cahoots. In fact, the Dunkin campaign emerged as not only an attack on the working-class but the city’s long-standing Tory (conservative) foundations. This is not surprising considering the Inspector was Ogle Gowan, the founder of the first Canadian Orange Order—the notorious conservative Irish Protestant club whose members had long been among Toronto’s working-class (See [35]). Interestingly, according to Kealey, Gowan had promoted Temperance Lodges by the Orange Order in the 1860s, which constituted a major break with Orange tradition with its heavy emphasis on the social role of drink. Gowan argued that, “our institution in not confined, wholly, or even chiefly, to the uneducated classes of the community, but includes large masses of intelligent and educated men. Remove from them the mirth and hilarity of the festive bowl, and some other source of enjoyment must be provided.” As the temperance movement gathered steam, the labor movement was drawn into the debate over taverns. Since taverns were places of social interaction for workers, any attempt to scale them back was viewed as an attack on the rights of the working-class.

Working-class Toronto traditionally supported the Tories. The Orange Order was predominantly working-class—on the order of 80%—which explains why the Orange Order was essentially synonymous with Tory support. The Order even split its lodges in Toronto according to the federal electoral divisions, indicating that lodges were intended to be rallying points for political campaigns. Houston and Smyth’s study of the Order revealed that financiers and large industrialists were not represented in the Order, confirming the working-class character of its leadership and members. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Orange Order was associated with militant strife—in particular, riots against Catholics, a practice that had been transplanted from Ireland. Over the period of 22 years from 1867–92, there were 25 documented riots. Before 1859, lodge meetings were held in tav-
erns, a practice discontinued because of Gowan’s intent to appeal to a wider base of patrons. Despite the shift away from the tavern as the center of the Order, the perception remained that associated organized working-class groups with social unrest. Labor movements were central to these perceptions.

Two of the most prominent leaders of the Order, for example, were J.S. Williams, editor of *Ontario Workman* and Robert Glockling, District Master Workman of the Knights of Labor, indicating strong connections to the labor movement. The ‘Nine Hours Movement’, begun by disgruntled typographical workers and printers, was central to the associations between labor, the Orange Order and the tavern. Labor had suffered a major setback in 1866 when the federal government eased trade tariffs on imports, putting greater pressure on domestic companies and giving workers few levers for collective action. However, the ‘nine-hours’ movement drew its strength from the ‘eight-hours’ movement advocated by Ira Stewart in the United States, which had resulted in the passage of that country’s first eight hour workday law by Congress (and signed by President Johnson) in 1867. By 14 June 1872, the ruling federal Tories had passed the first Trade Unions Act, which alleviated employees from prosecution due to labor dispute. With the unearthing of a political scandal involving Sir John A. MacDonald’s federal government and Pacific Rail contracts in the early 1870s, the Tories were forced to resign. The Liberals took power in 1873 and the re-established higher tariffs (back to 1859 levels) put labor in a position to demand better working conditions, higher wages and shorter hours. In September 1873, the first Canadian Labor Union Convention took place in Toronto; Williams’ *Ontario Workman*, the official organ of the ‘nine-hours’ movement, published excerpts of Marx. By this time, in 1872, the Liberals had gained power in Ontario, despite Toronto remaining largely in the hands of the Tories. One of Toronto’s largest employers was a Liberal, George Brown and his *Globe* newspaper, who did not support the labor movement as it threatened his business. The new group of Toronto Tory politicians who had risen to power on the backs of the labor movement was referred to as a ‘junta’ because of their almost total control of Toronto’s working-class, and indeed, the Orange Order. This was the scene as the Dunkin campaign began to emerge.

The Order was attractive to workers not only because of its patriotic and Protestant ties, but because of its benevolent functions. If someone was unemployed, lodge brothers would help. If someone was sick, the lodge would provide a free doctor and pay medical expenses. If someone died, the brothers would pay your funeral costs and provide financial aid to the widow and orphans. Others joined the Order because of its clear connections to some government jobs, including the post office and customs house federally, and the gas and water works, police and fire departments locally. Despite no longer being the locations for meetings, the taverns retained their political allegiance to the Order and when the Dunkin debate surfaced, these local taverns once again became the centers of the anti-Dunkin campaign.
By contrast, the pro-Dunkin camp relied on a temporary amphitheater constructed on an empty lot on the corner of Queen and Yonge Streets, at the southeast corner of the Ward district. The wooden stage and bleachers, prominently featured in the many political cartoons of the time, hosted two thousand people nightly, debating the pros and cons of the Dunkin Act immediately before and during the campaign. The vote itself was not a secret ballot but an open ballot, resulting in a very slow process that lasted over a month. The anti-Dunks, rallied by the Orange Order, harassed voters at the only polling station in the Drill Shed at Front and Jarvis Streets. They ‘bought’ votes by offering whiskey and free taxi rides to the polling station. The importance of the taverns in rallying support was obvious because of the different tactics the pro- and anti- camps used. While the pro-Dunkins relied on the public forum of the amphitheater to make its case, the anti-Dunkin campaign was localized within ward organizations – these were based out of the taverns. Only halfway through the campaign did the pro-Dunks realize the importance of such ‘informal’ public spaces and attempt to rally support this way; as their cause was antithetical to the tavern, the pro camp was very unsuccessful in gathering this locally-based support. According to Sendbuehler, one of the principal local meeting places was the Scholes’ Tavern/Hall on Queen Street West, where the audiences were, according to the Mail, “composed principally of working men.”

Given the Order’s strength within the working-classes and the workers’ reliance on the tavern as a social institution, the results of the Dunkin debate were not surprising. While the Dunkin Act carried in ‘the rural and more or less purely Canadian districts’, it did not carry in Toronto (42% yea, 58% nay); reformers (i.e. pro-Dunks) blamed this failure on ‘newcomers’ who clung to ‘Old Country’ habits with ‘even greater tenacity.’ Since Toronto was ethnically homogenous during the 1870s, the ‘newcomers’ referred to were probably workingmen from England and Ireland and not people ethnically different from the native-born
FIG. 8-4. DISTRIBUTION OF TAVERNS, 1881.
Canadians. A survey of the voting pattern indicates a correlation between working-men and anti-Dunkin support and similarly, between the location of taverns and anti-Dunkin support. The highest pro-Dunkin support registered in the wealthier wards — St. James (56% yea) and St. Thomas wards (55% yea); there were no taverns in St. Thomas’ Ward and those in St. James’ Ward were located entirely along is western boundary — that is, at its periphery — Yonge Street. By contrast, St. Lawrence (70% nay) and St. David’s ward (64% nay) strongly opposed the measure; these wards had the highest concentration of taverns.22 It is clear from these results that temperance advocates were not reacting to the immediacy of taverns ‘invading’ their residential neighborhoods but the concentration of ‘drinking dens’ among the working-class districts. Despite rhetoric that the saloons had ceased serving the traveling population and had begun to disperse across the city, the overwhelming majority of taverns in 1881 were concentrated along major thoroughfares and adjacent to working class districts (Fig. 8-4).23 While some taverns were located in the middle of the Ward, the vast majority were along the edges of the Ward and Niagara. Although clearly there were more taverns, the pattern of concentration did not differ substantially from the situation in the 1850s; that is, taverns had remained largely were they always had: in the ‘Old Town’. Taverns were not so much located where workers lived but along the routes to and from where they worked. These results indicate that pro-Dunkin supporters were likely fearful of the dangers not to their own safety and property values, but to the ‘evils’ associated with the high concentrations of taverns close to the working areas.

Modest attempts to stop the collusion between inspectors and local political interests were introduced in 1873 when licensing was transferred to the Police Commissioners and Municipal Councils. This did little to discourage political patronage among tavern keepers. By this time the WCTU and other temperance organizations successfully lobbied the Liberal government to initiate temperance measures such as the Dunkin Act. A second Temperance Act (a revision of Ontario
Liquor License Act) was also passed by the Provincial Liberals (who had gained power in 1872) in 1876 called the Crooks Act after its sponsor, Adam Crooks (See (27)). The Crooks Act, which was put to referendum, removed local control of licensing by allowing the Province to appoint boards of commissioners for each municipality; with licensing now effectively controlled by the Province, local political favoritism was largely eliminated (or at least transferred to the Province!). Not surprisingly, Crooks was a Liberal, representing Toronto West – the only Liberal to win a Toronto seat in the 1871 Provincial election. Although the appropriately named Crooks’ campaign was challenged in the courts on the grounds that he did ‘favors’ for voters to win their ballots, the presiding judge did not feel they warranted overturning the election result. This small Liberal victory did not last as Crooks was not re-elected in 1875. Therefore, according to Kealey, “of the two major parties, then, the Tories had a considerable edge in the quest for working class electoral support.”

The Crooks Act used population to determine the maximum number of liquor licenses in a given jurisdiction; for Toronto, this resulted in a 26.7% reduction in the number of taverns – from 300 to 220. By 1884, any ten voters could object to the granting of a liquor license by petition on a wide range of criteria: 1) that it was ‘not needed’ (which clearly was open to interpretation), 2) that it was “in the immediate vicinity of a place of worship, hospital or school…”, or 3) peace and quiet would be disturbed (again, very subjective). The immediate impact was obvious: taverns that had ‘spread’ into residential neighborhoods were soon shut down. It is worth pointing out that only those ‘with the franchise’ could petition; at the time, many transient workers and recent immigrants, or those not owning property, would not have been given the right to vote. The clear implication was that working-class voices were severely underrepresented in debates about tavern licensing (Fig. 8-5). The ‘exceptional’ nature of residential areas was made explicit in 1887, when another provision was introduced by the Province that allowed any 75 voters to protest the granting of a license on the grounds that it was a ‘residential and not commercial locality’ (with any ten voters able to request that the Board of License Commissioners determine whether it was residential or commercial). Further attacks on taverns came as the City passed by-laws to cap the total number of liquor licenses to 150, a figure that was reduced to 110 after a 1909 referendum. By 1916, the Province had legislated total prohibition, which lasted until 1927 (See (45)). In 1895, Chief Constable offered insight as to the effect and cause of these reductions:

…the dwelling districts of the city have a very sparse number [of taverns]…the trade is more concentrated in the central parts of the city….There was an agitation from the temperance people to centralize the trade in order that it might be under better supervision by the police and the Inspector. The argument was made that there was no use for those places in the residential part of the city, and consequently a great many of these places in the outskirts…were refused licenses.

The tavern was seen as an institution that represented many evils: drinking itself, but also labor unrest, religious strife and social rioting, transient workers, boardinghouses and places of prostitution, and crime generally. With the aid of temperance societies such as the WCTU and periods of Liberal politicking, legislative measures were introduced to reduce the number and to control the location of taverns. The result was a ‘territorial solution’ to the tavern – not only were the number and concentration of taverns reduced through proportional licensing and municipal caps, but taverns were explicitly prohibited from residential areas and near civic (schools) and religious (churches) institutions. Long before ‘zoning’ was officially termed in the 1916 New York City regulations, such legislative actions effectively segregated the space of cities such as Toronto into class districts.
As Sendbuehler attests, “Liquor law is but one example of a legal framework that preceded modern planning, but that has had clear implications for urban spatial structure.”

1 See M.P. Sendbuehler, “Battling “the bane of our cities”: Class, Territory and the prohibition debate in Toronto, 1877” Urban History Review VolXXII, No.1 (October 1993): 30-49.
2 The first Temperance Society in Ontario was formed 10 June 1828 in Leeds County.
3 An anecdote from Morley Callaghan’s Strange Fugitive (1928): 94–5 illustrates the problem: “‘Say, I’ll tell you a story about pioneer stock and my grandfather,’ Harry said…‘The old boy was a real pioneer in these parts, only he died rather young. He used to be the skeleton in the family closet. He was a great drinker. My father once told me that he could drink more than six ordinary men, so he didn’t have an ordinary end.’ He told how his grandfather had been drinking nearly all day at a tavern a little way up Yonge Street, now the main thoroughfare. In the evening some one had offered to help him on the way home, but very dignified, he wouldn’t hear of it. He got lost in the dark on the way home and didn’t get home all night. They looking for him and found him all right. He had fallen into a horse trough, and too drunk to get out, was drowned.”
4 John McIntosh was son of John Sr., who pioneered a new crop of apples — the ‘McIntosh’ apple. The elder McIntosh had purchased the 1-1/2 acre Yonge/Queen St. lot from John McGill for $400. McIntosh was the chairman of the Reform committee at the time of MacKenzie.
6 The Family Compact was the group of elites that were given land by Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe in 1793 as a reward for relocating the capital from Newark (Niagara-on-the-Lake) to York (Toronto). Each was given 100 acre Park Lots about Queen Street.
7 Robertston (1893): 114.
10 The Dunkin Act was passed before the formation of the nation-state of Canada — it was
replaced with the *Scott Act* after 1869 (a Federal statute), but the debate continued to be referred to as pro- and anti-Dunkin.

13 Archives of Ontario (henceforth AO), RG 8-11-1, Provincial Secretary Branch Correspondence Files, 1870-1890 as cited in Sendbuehler (1993): 32.
14 *Grip* vol. 9 no. 10, 28 July 1877.
17 The exception was Virgin Lodge 328 which, as Kealey’s survey of 1872 suggests, only 48.3% of members were working class. Others, such as the Boyne Lodge 173 in 1885, was 83.7% working class, up slightly from 83.1% in 1878. Kealey (1980): 107-8.
19 Although this first eight-hour day law was passed in 1868, many (including the Department of the Navy) took this to mean there should be an appropriate reduction in wages. After negotiation an agreement was reached that pertained to government employees; employees of private companies were expected to negotiate their own contracts. By 1 May 1886, however, the eight-hour day had been passed to apply to all workers, although it was many years before this became accepted practice.
21 *Globe*. 29 August 1877.
23 The location of taverns was mapped based on the address given in the Toronto City Directory of 1881. I was not able to locate six taverns of the 193 listed in the Directory.
24 In 1871 Adam Crooks gained 53.1% of the vote to capture the seat. At no other time through the 1890 election did Toronto elect a Liberal (Grit) representative, indicating a strong tendency to vote Tory on provincial matters. Tories captured a higher percentage of the vote in every Provincial election across Toronto over this period. Federal results were more mixed (Tory/Grit) but the tendency pointed to widespread Tory support. Ontario and Canada, Parliament, *Sessional Papers* as cited in Kealey (1980): 330-6.
26 See Statutes of Ontario, 47 Vic. Cap. 34; *An Act to improve the Liquor License Laws* (1876).
28 City of Toronto Archives, Council Minutes, by-law no. 1795, Appendix, Item 10, *Respecting the Issue of Tavern Licenses* (1887) and by-law no. 1796, which limits the number of licenses to fifty (although it does not appear that this fifty was ever used as a limit).
30 Sendbuehler (1993): 44.
Judging from the reaction of Torontonians to newcomers, you would think that civic leaders thought the City would be immune to the problems that every great city had, including the influx of not only strangers, but of the strange. Perhaps a greater frequency of ‘insanity’ was a consequence of the increasing demands of a modernizing, industrializing and urbanizing society — but more likely the growth in lunacy was a production of the state’s increased intolerance for mental deviancy. Responding to this ‘new-found’ disease and entirely consistent with the tendency to treat deviants (such as criminals) as subjects of moral enlightenment, the state designed legislation and institutions to ‘deal with’ these ‘poor souls’. By the 1840s, the insane were distinct from the criminal; the Provincial Lunatic Asylum is a product of this distinction. Incarceration had given way to ‘asylum’, which in turn, would give way to ‘hospital’ and over time would be reduced to simply a ‘center’. This evolution of the Asylum in Toronto sheds light on the changing vicinity in which it was located and the state’s efforts to concentrate reform institutions removed from the City. Prior to the coming of industry, the area around the Provincial Lunatic Asylum was part of the Garrison Reserve — removed from the hustle and bustle of downtown Toronto, the Asylum was seen as an sanctuary for replenishment. The Asylum was a proud civic building, adorned with the best of intentions; its grounds were lavishly landscaped and would soon be joined by the Crystal Palace, a miniature version of Joseph Paxton’s famed London glass house. As those intentions gave way to the realization of its failure to ‘heal’ the vagrants, prostitutes and other lunatics in its care, the neighborhood retreated into a district of abjection. After the railroads arrived by the 1860s, industry moved in and other ‘corrections’ facilities joined the Asylum to create a district that would come to be seen as a ‘solution’ to the problems found elsewhere in the City.

In *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault traces some of the changing no-
tions of the insane over time — from the Renaissance’s relatively easy acceptance of the ‘lunatic’ to the brutal confinement of the eighteenth century to the moral reform of the nineteenth century industrial society. The Renaissance was a world removed to the couple hundred residents of the Town of ‘Little York’ at the turn of the nineteenth century. Instead, Toronto first dealt with the strange by using confinement. Indeed, a survey of gaols in Toronto before 1840 would yield a genuine motley crew: the unemployed, prostitutes, petty thieves, rapists, murderers and not to be forgotten, the depressed and the mentally troubled. By the 1830s, new thinking had begun to emerge to categorize these people, separate them and to solve each problem according to the latest scientific techniques. These ‘reformers’ did not operate merely on humanitarian grounds but rather because of practical considerations — in a society becoming increasingly industrialized (i.e. where population was increasingly concentrated), people recognized that lunacy was an ‘unpleasant condition’ which posed a threat to the order and productivity of society and of ‘progress’ itself.

Prior to this new era of reform, the mentally ill (as we now prefer to categorize such deviants) were viewed as morally defective, similar to criminals except lunatics were worse; lunatics were ‘demon-possessed’. They were sent to local jails to segregate them from the population at large. A new era of ‘asylum as reform’ emerged, where mental deviants could be transformed or at least their problems sufficiently repressed for them to be productive members of society. This shift from incarceration to reform can probably be traced to the opening of the ‘Retreat for the care of Insane Persons of the Society of Friends’ by William Tuke at York, England in 1796. The Retreat (which still runs today) was based on the Quaker belief that there is ‘that of God’ in every person, regardless of mental or emotional disturbance. In Ontario, these ‘reform’ efforts were instituted remarkably early considering the juvenile state of affairs in Upper Canada (i.e. Ontario) at the time of Toronto’s incorporation in 1834. As early as 1833, a Grand Jury in Upper Canada recommended the construction of a lunatic asylum but as Lavell notes, this was an empty gesture to signal that society was becoming concerned about the lunatics since no immediate action was taken. By 1835, a committee was established to study the possibility and the following year, Dr. Charles Duncombe produced a report advising the establishment of a lunatic asylum.

The (failed) Rebellion of 1837 — where the aristocratic state of government was questioned in favor of a republic — stalled these plans. By 1839 the Asylum Act was passed (See 04). As it became obvious that some time might pass before the establishment of a permanent institution, the Province moved to set up temporary quarters — the original Toronto jail on King Street (between Church and Toronto Streets) was used for these purposes starting in 1841. With a new-found interest in confining vagrants, two more branches needed to be quickly established — one in the east wing of the old Parliament buildings at Front and Simcoe Streets and another in a residence on the southwest corner of Bathurst and Front Streets. Shortly after, a ‘Temporary Asylum for Female Lunatics’ would be established at the lone Greek remnant of King College at Queen’s Park; these buildings were torn down in 1886 to make way for the new Provincial Parliament Buildings. These additional temporary locations indicated a pattern to literally ‘expel’ the insane to the periphery or beyond the City’s boundaries, as the boundaries of the City until 1846 were Queen (Lot) Street to the North and Bathurst Street to the West.

Despite this tendency to ‘abject’ lunatics out of the City (or perhaps because of this), the City of Toronto campaigned vigorously to have the Asylum located in Toronto. The Lieutenant Governor preferred a site in Kingston in connection with the Provincial Penitentiary, where land could be easily donated for this purpose; presumably, the connection with the punitive penitentiary system did not bother reformers at the time who were more interested in ‘reform’ as a way of efficiently handling the array of deviants than genuine humanitarian concerns. Regardless, the medical community intervened, arguing that insane persons should...
FIG. 9-1. PERIPHERAL LOCATION OF ASYLUM, 1851.
not be connected with the penitentiary but rather needed to be under the care of physicians. Toronto Mayor John Powell, in a letter to Governor in Chief R.H. Charles Poulett Thomson on 29 June 1840, pleaded the case why Toronto should receive this institution. Powell argued that the College of Physicians and Surgeons, established 11 May 1839 in Toronto, should be the connected with the Asylum and that the growing City of Toronto would have greater need because of the transient (and therefore ‘strange’) population. Powell reminded Thomson that his predecessor, Sir George Arthur had previously approved Toronto as the site but one of the members of the commission charged with finding a suitable site resigned and was replaced with ‘someone from Kingston’, who suggested it would be cheaper to build in connection with the Penitentiary which had opened in 1833. This campaign is confirmed by letters from John Macaulay (former owner of the land in the Ward) to John Kirby on 1 July 1840: “you will see that an effort is to be made to prevent the Lunatic Asylum from being removed from this place to Kingston.”

The precise location within Toronto seemed to be debatable, however, as a letter from Rev. William Macaulay to John Macaulay on 1 February 1840 attests: “they [Widmer and Wood, two prominent Toronto doctors] are in treaty with Small [possibly a member of the asylum committee] to build it on a bog,” presumably referring to the swampy site that eventually was given to the Province by the British Ordnance Department. Finally, in 1844, this fifty acre site on Toronto’s Garrison Reserve was granted by the British Military for the Lunatic Asylum, ending the debate over its location. The site was not especially generous — fifty acres was only half the size of a typical ‘Park Lot’ and less than 1/3 of the size of a typical farm lot. Moreover, several marshy streams ran through the area and the surrounding land would need substantial draining. Despite the inadequacies of the site, the City was happy to have the Asylum. The military was likewise self-interested; with anxieties over American invasion in the back of their minds, they stipulated that the complex should be designed to accommodate a defensive posture. In time, this stipulation faded but it may be possible that the military had in its mind a potential hospital in case of war.

John Howard’s Provincial Lunatic Asylum at 999 Queen Street West (subsequently termed simply ‘999’ by Toronto residents) began construction on 1 June 1845 and opened 26 January 1850 (Fig 9-1). Remarkably, when the Asylum opened it was the third largest such institution in North America, this despite Toronto having a population of less than 20,000. The Asylum was the largest non-military building in British North America and by far the largest in the City — four storeys and 584 feet long, set behind a massive sixteen foot high perimeter wall (reportedly ‘for the privacy of the patients’) and its tin dome could be seen from Oakville, 20 miles away (Fig. 9-2, 9-3). An American writer from Albany thought it was apt that the most important building in Toronto was the Lunatic Asylum: “the principal building in Upper Canada was for the reception of lunatics, something which was well suited to the inhabitants!” Perhaps this was so, considering the City’s size compared to other major North American cities. The Asylum was a major achievement for the fledgling City of Toronto; the laying of its cornerstone was a much-heralded event as an account by the British Colonist attests:

Led by the band of the 81st regiment, the large company slowly made its way out the Hamilton Road to the government military reserve. There, with a silver trowel presented by the building’s architect, John G. Howard, Chief Justice John Beverley Robinson ceremoniously spread the mortar to set into place the ‘corner stone of the first building in Western Canada for the reception of Insane and Lunatic Persons...’ Following an eloquent and heart-felt address by Robinson, the crowd responding with enthusiasm, gave three cheers for the Chief Justice, the band struck up ‘Rule Britannia’, and the great gathering dispersed.
The Asylum grounds reflected this pride. Having smoothed out the site’s irregularities and burying the few swampy creeks, work began on the landscaping in March 1850. Having visited several newly landscaped asylums in the United States, Howard naturally envisioned a proper setting for his work. By 1863, a perimeter walk and by the 1870s, lush plantings around the edifice had been completed by patients—a city guide in 1878 describing the Asylum as “enclosed [sic] in the midst of very fine grounds and flower gardens.”\(^{13}\) (Fig. 9-4). Flower beds, shrubberies, and mixed groves of evergreens and deciduous trees were planted and, after 1860, three cast-iron fountains were installed. By 1868 and 1870, two wings had been completed to accommodate the growth in population, indicating the aura of optimism about the potential benefits of the Asylum to society. In 1858, the institution had leased 75 additional acres immediately to the south of the grounds to increase the capacity of the Asylum’s garden; that same year, the Province began hosting its ‘Industrial Exhibition’ in various cities and a ‘Crystal Palace’ was constructed on this additional acreage (Fig. 9-5).

The Crystal Palace was located axially to the Asylum, centered on its impressive dome, suggesting the Province saw these two important buildings as part of a progressive district; visitors to the Exhibition were invited to walk around the grounds of the Asylum. The glass and cast-iron Palace, designed by Sir Sanford Fleming and Collingwood Schreiber, was derived from the larger London version designed by Joseph Paxton in 1851. It was built quickly—its cornerstone laid on 15 July 1858 and the exhibition opened the last week of September 1858, lasting two weeks. Torontonians were impressed; Sylvester, writing just after it opened, called it, “a worthy representative of the industry, talent and agricultural process of the province, and a magnificent monument of the zeal which has introduced civilization to this beautiful quarter of the globe…”\(^{14}\) Other accolades followed, attesting to its privileged status.\(^{15}\) The exhibition rotated between Ontario cities so the glass Palace was used for only two weeks every four years (1862, 1866, 1870, 1874 and 1878).

In his extensive *Landmarks of Toronto* (1898), Robertson remarked that, “though now surrounded by houses on all sides … the Provincial Lunatic Asylum, was, when erected, wholly in the country,” again illustrating a desire to keep lunatics at a distance from the City while at the same time celebrating their progressive reforms.\(^{16}\) This is confirmed by the superintendent’s comments in 1906: “Sixty years ago…its location was largely determined by the inhabitants of Toronto, who..."
did not foresee the future growth of the city. The site was then an excellent one, and the surrounding farm and grounds large enough to furnish employment for the patients. At that date the ward population was drawn largely from the agricultural classes. This desire to keep the insane at a distance was not simply because city leaders wanted them ‘out of sight’ but because there was a genuine belief that fresh air and the quiet of the countryside would be rejuvenating for the insane, following William Tuke’s famous Quaker farm retreat. ‘Criminals’ had now become ‘patients’ and rural existence was seen as part of the healing process. This shift from criminals to patients can be illustrated by two events which Foucault recounts in France: the ‘Great Confinement’ and the ‘Great Fear’.

The ‘Great Confinement’ resulted in over one percent of the Parisian population (the mad, the poor, the sick, the promiscuous, etc) being locked up for the health and safety of the rest of the population. Here, the basis for confinement was not scientifically determined but based on an emotional evaluation, principally defined as a person’s departure from reason (i.e. his/her ‘animality’). Set apart from the rest of humanity, even regarded as inhuman, the mad could not be transformed by medical intervention nor by moral reform but by discipline and punishment alone. The ‘Great Fear’ of the middle of the eighteenth century triggered the fear that madness could be spread from these ‘houses of confinement’, bringing madness under the gaze of medicine. Housing the insane together with ‘ordinary’ criminals, as was the practice in Toronto as late as 1841, would be seen as ignoring the economic and social factors that contribute to madness. Moreover, there seemed to be a conflict between ‘lunatic’ (synonymous with ‘lack of knowledge’) and ‘criminal’ (understood as the ‘knowledge of evil’). In particular, women lunatics defied logic, representing virtuosity and innocence in a ‘proper’ Protestant society but at the same time representing insanity. Classifying people (by scientific methods) according to their ‘misdeeds’ began to emerge as a means of establishing order and control. Recognizing the value of the poor to productive society, the asylum and the psychiatrist, became the moral device to transform – to normalize – the psychotic, veiled by their pseudo-medical pretensions. Separation of the sexes was particularly important and the Toronto Asylum was divided into east (female) and west (male) as directed by Attorney General J.A. MacDonald, who in 1867 became Canada’s first Prime Minister.

Sufficiently removed from the normative citizen (the rest of the City), 999 was a perfect Christian institution (Fig 9-7). In a brilliant (if not subversive) move, Christianity transferred Levitical notions of purity/impurity to an inside/outside dialogue – to the conscience of the individual: “there is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.” [Mark:15]. As with Christianity itself, the system of rules that defined ‘normal’ Canadian society could be internalized by fear and guilt under the prescription of the doctor (as moral and medical authority). If a patient could not be cured with drugs or other invasive procedures, he or she would be made to feel guilty for his or her abnormalities. Reason, if nothing else, would return
the patient to his or her useful place in society. The casting away of restraints in 1883 was the final move to create ‘subjects’ capable of self-discipline. Without restraints, conveniently, patients were able to work and many did – typically in the Asylum’s laundry facilities which had contracts with the adjacent Central Prison and Canadian Pacific Railway. The Asylum also prided itself on its garden, which produced most of the food for the inmates. By suppressing mental illness and being taught how to become a productive member of society, Victorian Toronto (at least the Asylum commissioners) convinced itself that mental illness could be ‘solved’.

However, the definition of mental deviance in Canadian society was highly subjective, even into the early twentieth century (See [19]). Thus, who was ‘institutionalized’ was also at the discretion of the police state which relied on obscure vagrancy laws and other behavioral controls. For example, prior to 1900, a quarter of women institutionalized at 999 were for ‘female trouble’ – childbirth, lactation, miscarriage, menstrual disorders, uterine disorders and other natural conditions seen as “the predisposing cause of insanity.” Specifically, prostitutes were confined as soon as their promiscuous behavior was discovered, as the ‘wondering womb’ represented a danger to oneself and to society. Likewise, menopausal women were confined due to their sometime erratic behavior – sometimes hysterectomies were performed to ‘alleviate’ problems thought to be caused by the womb. Abortion was also a central issue and a cause for confinement at 999 despite there being relatively little attention paid to it by social purists at the time. Women who found themselves unintentionally pregnant went to extreme measures to end their pregnancies – poisonous medications, sharp instruments, catheters and syringes. Anyone found causing a miscarriage ‘by any means whatsoever’ could be confined to life imprisonment. Seeking abortion was not only morally wrong in Victorian Toronto, but indicative of a woman’s mental defects.

A 1916 report broke down the reasons for confinement at 999 as follows: 25% for ‘dementia praecox’ (i.e. schizophrenia), 15% for manic depression, 10% for senility, 10% for involuntary melancholia, 10% for ‘general paresis’, 10% for exhaustion, 5% for epilepsy, 5% for ‘imbeciles’, 5% alcoholism and 5% drug problems. Homosexuality, naturally, was criminal. And masturbation, particularly among men, was cause for detention; as one Victorian scholar remarked, “it curtailed and eventually destroyed a man’s productivity; it sapped his vitality and at length rendered him idiotic.”

Reaume’s stories of patients at 999 also shed light on the reasons for their stay. Among them is Madge M, a 38 year old Catholic servant. She was single and had two children by different men. In 1904 the doctor at the York County gaol, where she was detained, begged the Asylum to take her in order to keep her from giving birth "to more unfortunates of her own kind to be a burden to themselves and the State." Sent to 999, she died there in 1916. Another patient, Marcia F was admitted in 1876 because she had frequent sex with different men. Worse: she liked it.
Marcia ‘spoke freely’ of her sex life and was ‘lacking in the usual womanly modesty and sense of shame’; she was ‘always crazy after men.’ Marcia spent 12 years at 999, dying at another asylum in 1918. James D was admitted in 1907 after his wife said he’d been “acting strangely ever since he began studying socialism.” Records do not indicate that his doctors found this irrelevant to his diagnosis: manic depression. He was released, ‘recovered,’ a few months later. Under such liberal definitions of lunacy, it is obvious why overcrowding became prevalent. It would seem that rather than industrial life manufacturing more ‘crazies’, it was the growing definitions of what constituted ‘strangeness’ that caused such a large ‘lunatic’ population. Control of the mind had replaced torture of the body.

Central to the control of the mind was the invention of the panopticon by Jeremy Bentham in 1787 – the physical placement of a guard in the center of a prison ward so that every move could be potentially observed. The idea was that the potential of surveillance would control human behavior in a wide range of institutions – prisons, asylums, hospitals, factories, etc. Although many prisons began to be designed this way, most North American Asylums, including the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane and the State Lunatic Asylum in Utica, NY as well as Toronto’s (Fig. 9-6), did not conform strictly to this architectural model. However, the principles of the panopticon were employed socially. Rather than direct observation, it was through categorizing and normalizing individuals that the state could produce a totalizing web of control.

Yet, the problems that the Asylum purported to solve did not go away; incidents of vagrancy continued, ‘women’ problems persisted and prostitution actually increased. Some thirty years after it had been built, the Asylum began to decline. By 1905, when Dr. Charles Kirk (C.K.) Clarke took over as superintendent, the area had completely transformed into a consolidated area of industry and corrections facilities. Confronted with overcrowding and years of building neglect, Clarke attested:
A large Asylum population requires suitable surroundings; plenty of breathing space in a quiet locality, where fresh air and restful conditions generally are obtainable. At Queen Street West, the antithesis of these requirements is the case. Instead of the desirable two or three hundred acres, some twenty-six acres are enclosed within the gaol-like walls; the days and nights are made hideous by electric cars on the one side, and railway traffic passes directly by the south wall, where a freight shunting yard is also located. Queen Street, one of the busiest thoroughfares in the city, is directly to the north. The smoke from the many trains and factories in the neighborhood pollutes the air. A more undesirable site for the insane could not possibly be selected.25

The Asylum’s neighborhood had been transformed from an area with lush grounds and a progressive Industrial Exhibition to an area dominated by rail facilities, factories and other correction facilities. Additional buildings, heavy pollution and poor maintenance combined to reduce the lush grounds to parking lots; by the 1970s, a new administration building masked Howard’s 1850 building (Fig. 9-8). This decline, in reality, started about a decade after the Asylum’s opening; through the 1850s, railways were given right of ways across the military reserve south of the Asylum – the Ontario, Simcoe, Huron railroad arriving in May 1853, the Great Western in December 1855 and the Grand Trunk in May 1856. Initially, they served to access the Palace Grounds but by the 1870s, industry began taking advantage of this amenity and invaded the area; by the 1890s, most of the City’s large manufacturing plants were locating within blocks of the Asylum.26 By 1861, a horse-drawn streetcar had open on Queen Street, stimulating development around the Asylum. In 1871, land was secured for the Central Prison immediately to the south of the Asylum (it was completed in 1874). Far from being a ‘reform’ institution, the Prison came to known as a place of ‘terror to evil-doers.’27 By 1880, another so-called reform institution, the Mercer Reformatory for Women, had opened. In 1888-9, recognizing its pastoral character had subsided, the Asylum sold 24 of its 50 acres to private development and again in 1898, offered part of its property for freehold sale.28 The progression of name changes reflects the changing role it had. By 1871, the Provincial Lunatic Asylum had changed its name to the ‘Toronto Asylum for the Insane’, as the term ‘lunatic’ dropped out of fashion. By the turn of the century, it had become the ‘Toronto Hospital for the Insane,’ reflecting the fact that the medical profession (and Dr. C.K. Clarke’s eugenics movement in particular) now dominated work at 999. From 1919 to 1966, it was known simply as, ‘Ontario Hospital’, dropping any references to mental deviance. The physical transformation of the area from a rural ‘retreat’ to a district of industry reflected a tacit acknowledgement that the faith in the Asylum to reform agents of vice had largely given way to the acceptance that insanity could not be properly ‘cured’. Instead, mental illness began to be viewed as a problem of the ‘feeble-minded’ and of an inferior ‘race’ of people.

Central to the Foucauldian machine of behavioral surveillance was the

belief that the future of the ‘race’ was at stake – the fear that lunacy could spread among the Anglo-Saxon majority. The cause: foreigners who were seen as genetically ‘inferior’ and prone to ‘feeble-mindedness’. It comes as no surprise that the superintendent of the Asylum from 1905 to 1911, Dr. C.K. Clarke, was a (if not the) leader of the eugenics movement. The aim of this movement was the emphasis placed on preventing the proliferation of feeble-minded citizens from ‘overwhelming’ society. Thus by locking up such people, the reasoning went, social order and a healthy ‘race’ would be preserved from ‘contamination’ by an unhealthy gene pool.”

The chief concern were prostitutes, who it would become known, spread syphilis, which weakened the mind. Unlike the Middle Ages, when sex was a bodily concern, the modern concern was with the intention behind sex. A wide range of ‘treatments’ were used over time. Various drugs, of course, were used to correct the mental faculties of patients, among them manganese chloride and arsphenamine (Salvarsan). Ironically, alcohol became a popular choice of doctors, as it has a calming effect on patients, although this was opposed by politicians who supported temperance (See 44). By the 1930s, patients were intentionally given malaria in an effort to relieve illness through induced fever. Shock therapy was in vogue around 1937. If that did not work, insulin therapy was used. And the barbaric practice of lobotomies was experimented with from 1945-55 at the Asylum.

Clarke’s eugenics movement was driven by widespread popular support. When immigration levels soared after the turn of the twentieth century, insanity, crime and vice became fused with the ‘question of the foreigners’. A creation of British scientist Francis Galton (cousin of Charles Darwin), eugenics was founded on the horrible notion that the human race (or more precisely, the ‘preferred’ of the human race) could be improved through better breeding. The movement was widely supported within the medical community as it was thought to advance their goals. In addition to doctors, women’s groups (Women’s Christian Temperance Union, National Council of Women, etc) as well as religious groups (Methodists, Presbyterians) and Aid Societies (Salvation Army, YWCA, etc) shared many of the same policies and goals of the eugenics movement. Surprisingly, the suffrage movement supported the cause – good Christian women fought for the right to vote as a counterpoint to increased numbers of immigrants whose ‘inferiority’ would pose a threat to the nation. It would seem that, given the choice between women and immigrants, the feeling among legislators was that at least women were ‘good Anglo-Saxons’.

Not surprisingly, the eugenics movement was intimately tied to religious rhetoric. The re-organization of the city itself – and the creation of a district of reform at Niagara (the area around the Asylum) was part of this – was central to the social and physical evils emerging in the Ward and other immigrant areas. Social purists used the comparison of Babel with New Jerusalem to highlight the danger: “Every city has been a Babylon, and every city has been a New Jerusalem; and it has always been a question whether the Babylon would extirpate the New Jerusalem, or the New Jerusalem would extirpate the Babylon."

Rev. G.C. Pidgeon likewise gave a sermon in 1898 on “Building the Holy City” based on the book of
Nehemiah which details the Jews’ rebuilding of Jerusalem and populating Israel by Jews alone; once the city is built and Law is declared, everyone of foreign descent is excluded from Israel (Neh 13:3). It is clear that from the position of the social purists and the eugenics movement, this would have been a comfortable solution for Toronto.

The Asylum was torn down in 1975 amid fervent opposition. In a painful reminder of how memory can overpower conservation, the chair of the University of Toronto’s Department of Psychiatry summed up his support for its demolition: “it was a visible reminder of a previous era of treatment of the mentally ill from which, thankfully, we have emerged.” It would seem that the memory of the many who died there was too painful to remember: 5,718 of the 22,475 people admitted up to 1940 died at the Asylum. Howard’s building was replaced with a rather institutional looking ‘campus’ and given its present name, the ‘Center for Addiction and Mental Health’ (Fig. 9-9). More importantly, its address was changed from the infamous ‘999’ Queen Street West to ‘1001’ Queen Street West; despite this, it could still not rid itself of its euphemism ‘999’. It seems that peregrines defined as ‘mental others’ could still be sent to ‘999’.
Canadian cities were larger than Toronto. Demographia.

British Colonist. 22 August 1846.


Alfred Sylvester, Sketches of Toronto (Toronto: Charles E Holiwell, 1858).

Robertson commented that it occupied, “a high and commanding position, having an excellent view of the harbor and lake and being adjacent to the Grand Trunk and Northern railways, it is easily accessible.” He proceeds to describe it: on its south side was an ‘elegant’ 32’ x 16’ entrance porch’. The walls were frosted glass with glass skylights. Its roof was wood covered with tin (like the Asylum’s Dome). It boasted cast-iron pillars and girders and was 256’ long and 144’ wide. It had an 1100 s.f. upper gallery space that overlooked the 2200 s.f. main, with four staircases provided to reach the upper level. It accommodated 8000 people and, according to Robertson, had, “an imposing appearance”. John Ross Robertson, Landmarks of Toronto, Volume 5 (Toronto: J.R. Robertson, 1908): 501-3.

Robertson (1898): 28. Robertson proceeds to illustrate that the only adjacent settlement (to the northeast) was the fifty acre homestead of Captain Alexander Shaw and apart from only a couple houses, “the whole of the rest of the land was either uncleared or cultivated as farms or gardens.”

Superintendent Dr. C.K. Clarke’s, Annual Report (1906).

According to Foucault: “Confinement is the practice that corresponds most exactly to madness experienced as unreason, that is, as the empty negativity of reason. By confinement, madness is acknowledged to be nothing.” Foucault (1964): 78.


Geoffrey Francis Reaume, “999 Queen Street West: Patient Life at the Toronto Hospital


25 Annual Report, Dr. C.K. Clarke, 1908.

26 For example, the Canada Car Co. had been in the area since the start of the Central Prison in 1874. The Massey Co. had located to King Street West and Strachan Ave. by 1879 and merged with the Harris Co. to form the Massey-Harris Co., expanding operations in 1891. The J. Inglis & Sons had located its plant to Strachan Ave. by 1884. John B. Smith had a large lumber yard opposite Massey-Harris along Wellington St. and the city’s Western Cattle market had been established at Walnut and Wellington by 1884.

27 This comment was made by one witness to a commission set up in the 1890s to study the Province’s penal system. See Peter Oliver, Terror to Evil-Doers: Prisons and Punishments in Nineteenth Century Ontario (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1998): 400.

28 See AO RG 4-32, MS6616, file no. 529: “Sale of Freehold Property in the City of Toronto by tender,” which advertises two parcels of land, the north side of King Street in the City of Toronto for sale. Parcel No. 1 – Bounded by King, Shaw, Defoe, and Crawford sts, frontage on King of 269ft, and extending back 419ft to Defoe St – 2-1/2ac. Parcel No. 2 – Bounded by King; Crawford, Defoe and Massey Sts, having a frontage of 134ft on King St and 419ft on Crawford St. These parcels were sold on 23 April 1898 to the Massey-Harris Co. for $30,000 and they were “anxious to get the transaction closed as soon as possible.”


33 As John Bentley Mays contends, there is almost nothing left of Howard’s edifice or its message, “but for the remaining walls east, west, and south. The place has a new look: ‘less one of asylum than of community college.’” John Bentley Mays, Emerald City: Toronto Visited (Toronto: Viking, 1994).
Throughout much of the nineteenth century, the urban ‘other’ was presented as a deviant – a problem with an individual whose practices departed from the established norms of the state, the market and civil society, principally due to personal weakness (drunkenness, sloth, personal immorality, etc). As the deviant became more visible in urban society, the state and civil society responded by establishing institutions (prisons, reformatories, asylums) and aid societies (temperance, religious) in order to reform or ‘correct’ the deviant’s personal deficiencies. By the turn of the century, however, the problem of these ‘others’ began to be seen as a problem of society itself – that is, a problem with the social environment. This shift from individual to societal is reflected in the emergence of the reform movement and the ‘Social Gospel’ at the turn of the twentieth century. In Toronto, previous institutions set up to conquer the problems of the individual (Central Prison and Mercer Reformatory) gave way to a broad movement that sought to apply Christian principles to social problems caused by industrialization and urbanization. While the Social Gospel movement attempted to create a ‘City of God on earth’, its efforts to promote reform (through legislation, scientific study and physical change) served only to secularize the city; such efforts to ‘police’ the city would, in turn, become important catalysts for urban change – catalysts that would also serve to drive the development of comprehensive ‘town planning’.

As early as 1831, reformer Francis Collins decried in his Canadian Freeman newspaper, “more shameless debauchery was never exhibited in Sodom and Gomorrah [sic], than is carried on in this town at present. Houses of infamy are scattered thro' every corner of the town - and one of them had the hardihood to commence operations next door to our office, in a house under the control of a Police magistrate! So besotted are some would-be gentlemen, that they crowded to it at noon-day and in open day on the Sabbath.”

This early concern for ‘moral
offenses’ reflects a society dominated by middle-class Anglo-Saxon values. By the end of the 1830s, the local gaol was so overcrowded with vagrants, prostitutes, petty thieves and lunatics that the Province decided to act upon a wealth of new theories coming out of England and the United States that pertained to the segregation and classification of criminals. Change was not, however, motivated by these overcrowded conditions but rather because health officials recognized that the mentally ill were a distinct class of people from ordinary criminals; in 1839, they passed legislation that would create a separate Asylum meant to ‘reform’ the Insane (See (04)). While this relieved the local gaols to some extent, the influx of destitute Irish immigrants throughout the 1840s renewed the call for more proactive measures by the 1850s. Sabbatarial legislation was introduced in 1845, making Sunday a day of rest (and not a whole lot else). Strict by-laws aimed at drunks, vagrants, and other persons guilty of unruly behavior began to emerge as a response to the deviant; as Oliver remarks, “municipal by-laws enforcing new standards of social behavior were part of a larger movement to assert social control.”

The ‘invention’ of these new social controls again caused the gaol population to swell – not necessarily because there was more crime but because society’s acceptance of deviant behavior had changed in the face of waves of poverty-stricken Irish immigrants. The founding of the town as a colonial outpost had entrenched a British, Protestant aristocracy as the dominant political power (known as the ‘Family Compact’) in Toronto. The Rebellion of 1837 – organized by largely rural native Canadians and American expatriates – was fresh in the minds of the British political powers, despite its failure. The Rebellion had failed due in large part to poor organization and not primarily from a lack of shared sentiment. With Toronto (and Ontario) politics still dominated by Tory elites, the arrival of thousands of rural Irish peasants during the 1840s, was understandably (at least from their perspective) viewed with suspicion by what remained of the upper-class. The conception of the ‘other’ seemed to be synonymous with what he or she could contribute to society – that is, worth was measure by your work ethic. The Irish poor, destitute and sickly, despite a common Anglo-Saxon heritage (albeit some were Catholics) departed from the Anglo-Saxon ideal as they could contribute little in the short term. Perceived Irish tendency to ‘favor the drink’ and congregate ‘as rowdies’ in the streets resulted in a high percentage of Irish in County gaols.

By 1854, mindful of the changing social fabric, senior Justice Robert Burns recommended fundamental change to the penal system in his report to the Provincial Secretary, calling for a system of ‘correction houses’ to reform the problematic elements of Ontario society. Central to Burns’ argument was that the “County Jails do not afford the means of employing [prisoners] at any useful or profitable employment” (Burns). The notion of ‘idleness’ was particularly distressing to an Ontario society with strong rural values and a deep commitment to a traditional work ethic. The existing system had a gaping hole; only criminals sentenced to terms more than two years would be sent to the penitentiary system while all others would be remanded to the local County jail. A new system of ‘intermediate’ prisons was necessary to bridge the gap between first-time petty criminals and more lengthy prison terms. Specifically, Burns and others were concerned about the rate of recidivism among the gaol population. To reformers, this pattern of crime represented a deficiency in the personal character of the criminal; as such, it should be possible to ‘correct’ these tendencies. As Burns had suggested, ‘useful or profitable employment’ could be part of the efforts to reform criminals; indeed, hard labor was thought of as punishment, but also provided training, an appreciation of hard work, and conveniently raised funds for prisons to subsidize the costs of their incarceration. With the colonies undergoing significant political change, Burns’ recommendation was politely put on hold until after the birth of the Canadian nation-state (1867).

It was within this context that in 1869, Prison Superintendent John Woodburn (J.W.) Langmuir, upon returning from a visit to Detroit’s industrial prison,
recommended the establishment of a similar institution in Ontario. The Detroit House of Correction was singled out by E.C. Wines and T.W. Dwight in their survey of institutions as a positive alternative to the primitive and punitive measures practiced elsewhere in North America – a new reform practice that shifted the focus from punishment to reform, as set out in the most important penal reform text, the Cincinnati Declaration of 1870. Unlike his Detroit colleagues, who contracted prison labor to private companies, Langmuir felt that labor and its products should be controlled centrally by the Province. Langmuir was impressed with the ability to run the prison like a business but, as it would become apparent, was less interested in the reform practices. By 1871, legislation had been enacted to construct a new Central Prison.

The area around the Provincial Lunatic Asylum in Toronto, as the former Military Reserve, was chosen as the 20 acre site for the Prison because of its easy accessibility, being adjacent to two rail lines. Construction was completed by prison labor from 1871-3 and supervised by prison staff; the ‘Grand Daddy’ of the Ontario gaol system, with its 100 foot center pavilion and side wings designed by Public Works architect Kivas Tully, opened in 1874 (Fig. 10-1). It was not the first of the Ontario goals, but it was by far the biggest – with a woolen mill, tailor shop, broom shop, furniture shop, shoe shop, twine shop, machine shop, blacksmith, greenhouses, kitchen, and bakery. The ‘Center Block’ of the prison contained administrative offices, Guard room, dispensary, library, and classrooms for night school (although this amenity was barely offered). Inmates were housed in the north and south wings of the facility in four tiers of cells (Fig. 10-2). The Chapel was built onto the south end of the prison in 1877 and still stands today in a much dilapidated state (part of the Inglis factory site) – the only remnant of the Central Prison (Fig 10-3,10-4,10-5). At its maximum, the Central Prison could hold 600 male inmates, and it was filled to capacity. The prison design was typical of its time and this description could have easily referred to Boston’s House of Correc-
Langmuir was delighted when the Canada Car Company (makers of railway cars) came forward to request prison labor at the outset. Interestingly, many of the most prominent business leaders in Toronto were on Canada Car’s board of directors, which reinforces the strong connections between industrial development and the social reform in the City. Within ten months, however, Canada Car filed for bankruptcy protection; the next 41 years that the Central Prison operated would be spent trying to make the industrial enterprise a success. It was not. Despite his efforts, Langmuir failed to achieve his grand vision of an industrial prison – the facility closed in 1915 after years of failed labor contracts, was used as a military holding facility through World War One and was finally demolished (except for the Chapel) in 1920.

The Central Prison was designed to strike fear into repeat offenders. Criminals in the County gaols were largely held on petty crimes, larceny and charges of ‘public order’ and ‘public morals’. In 1859, for example, of 11,131 held in the gaols, only 791 (7.1%) were for serious crimes. Prison records indicate that 36.7% of crimes were for larceny, 15% for vagrancy, 10.1% for assault and 7.5% for drunkenness. Despite the relatively moderate offenses, prison officials called for longer sentences because they could not adequately ‘reform’ them in such a short time; that is, they could not adequately train them for the high-skilled industrial work that they were contracted to do with sentences less than two years. That the prison was set up not for ‘reform’ but for profit is illustrated by its failure to offer education to prisoners until into the 1880s (a decade after it opened). Further, no funds were ever requested for a chaplain; Langmuir relied instead on volunteers to offer religious services. The Central Prison was not meant to reform young offenders but rather to forcefully punish repeat offenders – as Gondor-Berkovits remarks, “it was a place of idleness, sickness and human misery”.

The typical prisoner profile reveals that who was arrested for deviant activities was not random. Inmates were invariably low-class, to the tune of...
While many were unskilled laborers (47.1%), the surprisingly high number of skilled laborers (35.4%) suggests that prisoners with some skill were actively transferred from County gaols to further the industrial aims of the institution. Drinking was clearly targeted – prison officials noted that 77.9% of inmates were intemperate. Nor was the birthplace of offenders representative of the Canadian population. Canadian-born men were far underrepresented, while Irish, English/Welsh and Americans were highly over-represented.

The problem of deviant behavior was not limited to men. By 1868, of the 8,015 confined in local gaols, no fewer than 2,530 (31.6%) were women – ¾ on prostitution charges. Many of these women sought refuge in the gaols during the harsh winter months. For reformers, this was clearly unacceptable, and plans for a women’s reformatory began in earnest. Just as officials began their search for a location, the government fortuitously came upon a sum of $100,000 from the forfeiture of the estate of Andrew Mercer, who had died without a will in 1871. Despite a fight from his maid Bridget and her son Andrew (supposedly fathered by Mercer), his estate, together with a piece of property off Strachan Avenue in Toronto, reverted to the Crown. Conveniently, this land was adjacent to the Asylum, completed at 999 Queen Street West in 1850. With the Mercer land and money, typical Victorian institutions would be constructed in the name of reform: a training school for idiots, a hospital for inebriates, an industry reformatory for females and an eye and ear infirmary – all with the Mercer name. Architecturally, the Mercer Reformatory would reflect the differing attitude towards male and female ‘reform’. While the Central Prison was intended to punish and separate the repeat criminal from the rest of society, the Reformatory was meant to be a reform school to teach young girls their ‘proper’ place in Victorian society. A proper role model was important – widow of a former Tory Parliamentarian, Mary Jane O'Reilly played the role of mother-figure, genteel and upper-middle class. The Reformatory should, “externally, be as free as possible from prison appearance,” and should as much
as possible give a home-like appearance to assist the reformative process. Few photos exist of the structure which was completed in 1880, but Oliver describes it as having an attractive design with ornamental towers — easily taken for a hospital or educational institution (Fig. 10-6). The building was compact, three storeys with a raised basement, with 147 cells and rooms, 49 isolation cells in the basement and space for 50 in the separate Industrial Refuge for Juveniles for girls under 16 (See [22]).

As with the Central Prison, women at the Reformatory were not representative of the composition of the population. Crimes were less serious, yet were given longer sentences, perhaps illustrating the danger that wandering women posed to the morals of the city but also the sense that women could be 'cured' while men could only be punished. By the 1920s, less than 15% of inmates were being held on 'non-moral' offenses. Like Central Prison inmates, women at the Mercer Reformatory were almost entirely working-class (96%). While a good portion of inmates at the Prison were young, an even-higher percentage of inmates at Mercer were young — only 17% were over 30 years old, 43% were under 20 and until 1893 (when the Concord Industrial Farm opened far north of the city), the Industrial Refuge held girls as young as five for petty crimes.

Retaining portions of the Military Reserve proved fortuitous for the Province, as it allowed institutions with similar aims — to reform the behavior of individual deviants — to be concentrated into one district. This desire to concentrate the reform institutions was not due to any overlapping functions of the places but, by segregating such places from the middle- and upper-class residential neighborhoods, the state could be seen as addressing the problems of urban vice by removing them to a secluded district ('out of sight, out of mind'). It was no coincidence that this district had also become an emerging industrial area since the introduction of several rail facilities here starting in 1853. The market played its role as well. The working-classes, unable to afford home ownership in wealthier neighborhoods, were forced to settle in low-rent districts where land values were suppressed due to industrial activities. Without access to transportation, laborers also had to live in close proximity to their places of work (in this case, near in the Niagara district). Even after the limited street-car system began in 1861, it served the middle-class rather than working districts. Thus, the market worked in concert with the state to create a part of the city (Niagara) where the 'others' could be collected 'out of sight'.

With the reform (correction) institutions in place, public officials and civic society could campaign for stronger legislation in order to correct those who had gone astray. The net was widely cast. Running on a reform platform, the Superintendent of Mercer Reformatory’s Sunday-School program, William Howland was elected as Toronto’s first reform mayor in 1885. One of Howland’s first initiatives was the creation of the City’s Morality Department in 1886, as part of the Police Department (See [30]). The Morality Department symbolized a new era where deviant individuals were singled out on vague criminal charges and sent to the
reform institutions (Asylum, Reformatory, Central Prison). The city streets were the battleground for this new ‘war on morals’. The other (foreigner) was defined not in terms of race or ethnicity but rather according to the moral standards of ‘Toronto the Good’. ‘The Good’ were the political leaders and emerging aid societies who saw themselves as preserving good Christian values, a network of middle- and upper-class elites whose dependence on the efficient functioning of capitalist growth ensured the urban other’s marginal position. Two strategies emerged: the evangelical and social purity movement on the one hand and, later, the Progressive movement (in Canada known as the ‘Social Gospel’). The evangelical movement inherently saw (and accepted) the city as a place of vice – reform could come only by reforming the individual. However, after the turn of the century, the Progressive movement began to supplant this thinking. In the face of increased overcrowding as a result from rapid immigration, Progressives “took on the city as a social problem to be alleviated through rational management and social action.”

Through the 1880s, poverty was seen as a moral failing of the individual, caused by intemperance and vice. Rather than recognizing that women took to the streets for economic survival, social purists such as Howland instead saw prostitution as a weakness of character. The Morality Department consequently hired female officers to watch girls on the streets and in the city’s places of amusement. The Morality Department’s chief activity was conducting raids on suspected brothels, or, ‘houses of ill fame’. The official state policy – as advocated by political leaders such as Howland and other social purity activists such as the Christian aid societies – was to eradicate vice.

The City got two new weapons in the ‘war on vice’ in the two decades after 1890. In 1892, the Criminal Code of Canada (See [13]) was created to include the notion of ‘gross indecency’ and in 1908 the notion of the ‘juvenile delinquent’ was introduced (See [23]). In both cases, the terms were undefined, presumably who and what qualified was left at the discretion of the arresting officer. The Criminal Code was a windfall for social purists as not only did it target any sort of sexual behavior and youthful indiscretion, but also made begging a crime punishable by up to two years imprisonment (at the local Central Prison). Likewise it was declared criminal to “sell, advertise, publish an advertisement ...of any medicine, drug or article intended or represented as a means of preventing conception...”. The Criminal Code was used by police to arrest any girl who could not give good account of herself if apprehended on the city streets on the vague crime of ‘vagrancy’. Their punishment: a term at Mercer Reformatory. One problem: Mercer officials feared ‘madames’ who were arrested were recruiting at the place. By 1908, the policing power of the state widened further as the incredulous definition of ‘delinquent’ was applied to young girls and boys (under 18) on the streets. Special women’s and children’s courts were established to handle the additional workload. Often young ladies were sent to the Reformatory for appalling crimes such as frequenting dance halls, watching ‘dirty’ shows, and going unaccompanied to the beaches, or worse – being “sexually precocious”. Maynard’s study on sex crimes in the local courts is revealing: in 1910 there were just eight cases, in 1913 there were 29, by 1917 there were 59 but by 1922 the number had declined to less than in 1913. This increase reflected the greater scrutiny afforded to sex and ‘indecency’, which officers interpreted as any intimate act. Comparing crimes of ‘public morals’ offenses between men (at the Central Prison) and women (at Mercer) is revealing – 32.4% for women versus only 4.1% for men. Boys in need stole, while it seems, girls in need sold their bodies. Through work (laundry, sewing, shoemaking, gardening etc) young girls would be trained how to keep an orderly house; indeed, release from Mercer was often conditional on taking a job as a domestic servant, where a ‘lady of the house’ could keep constant watch over her wanderings.

The State was not alone in its efforts to define the urban ‘other’ as moral deviant; civil society played a major role as Church societies took up efforts to reform the individual. Social purists – a loose coalition of Protestant activists and
educators who set out to ‘raise the moral tone’ of Canadian society’ in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – used Toronto as their national base. The Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), started in 1874 and a national presence by 1885, reflected British middle-class values. Although their efforts centered on intemperance, their influence was felt on all aspects of the individual’s social life. The YMCA/YWCA, meanwhile, began in 1844 in England and had established branches in the United States and Canada by 1851. The YWCA on Elm Street in the Ward, like its brother organization, for example, sought to teach the working-class immigrants about proper middle-class values and provided a space for ‘healthy’ recreation (Fig 10-7). The YWCA building survived until the 1920s when Eatons bought it and replaced it with its factory buildings. The Salvation Army, with its headquarters on the corner of James and Albert Streets in the Ward, also committed itself to reform ‘those who had gone astray’ and remained there up until the construction of the Eaton Center in the late 1970s. Central Neighborhood House, initially located on the corner of Gerrard and Terauley Streets in the Ward until moving to a larger building at Chestnut and Elm Streets in 1919, similarly conducted courses in an effort to reform the individual (See [09]). If the Niagara district was populated with reform institutions set up by the State, the Ward was populated with reform institutions set up by civil society – in both cases, the presence of physical institutions in the neighborhoods sought to change the behavior of the people ‘on the ground.’

Progressive reform politics forced many of these non-profit agencies to abandon their social and racial purity overtones. As Carolyn Strange contends, “vice was not simply one more category of regulation; rather, it was the key to the Progressives’ sense that the city was out of moral order”. In contrast to the Progressives, who wanted to restructure the moral order of the city, there was another stream of thought that sought to ‘contain’ the danger. Police officers on the ground preferred to regulate houses-of-ill-fame (as Montreal had done) – in part, this was because they stood to lose their reputed cut from the vice industry if they did not contain prostitution within the brothels. More importantly, however, police recognized that vice was easier to control if it was concentrated in specific areas rather than spread across the city. The Ward, and Center Avenue in particular, was the city’s undeniable ‘red light district’; the Chief Constable warned that raids caused
“women of the town to seek the shelter of private lodgings in respectable localities instead of confining themselves to places where their presence is not objected to,” (i.e. the Ward). C.S. Clark, in his widely read text, Of Toronto the Good (1898), warned of the dangers of trying to stamp out vice by raiding brothels and called for their regulation. Clark’s objective was to scare ‘proper’ Torontonians into accepting the Progressive Movement — his famous statement about prostitution clearly over-exaggerated the extent of the problem compared to cities like Chicago and New York: “The whole city is an immense house of ill-fame, the roof of which is the blue canopy of heaven during the summer months.”

The Chief Constable’s concerns about working girls seeking ‘shelter in private lodgings’ would become central to the debate about apartment and tenement houses in the City (See 46). As the crack-down on brothels and on-street prostitution persisted, these activities retreated to the apartments and tenements that were beginning to dot the Toronto landscape. Vice could no longer be controlled but was now beyond the policing powers of the state. Single girls living on their own were seen as a reason for the drop in the number of bawdy houses. In response, progressives — mindful of the social problems that had been linked to tenements in New York — urged the wholesale prohibition of multi-family housing. Single-family homes, they insisted, would ensure moral purity. Advocates successfully petitioned to ensure tenement/apartment housing types were not constructed in residential neighborhoods.

Crime and vice in Toronto propagated the notion of the peregrine as criminal or deviant ‘other’. Prior to the Progressive era, reform efforts targeted the individual — by teaching the individual good practices he or she could be brought into productive society with a strong work ethic that characterized the Protestant way of life. During this time, institutions such as the Mercer Reformatory and Central Prison were constructed to ‘correct’ these individual flaws. The differences between the two institutions reflected the different positions of men and women in Victorian society — the repeat offenders who populated the Central Prison did not benefit from the ‘corrective’ intentions reformers began with. Instead, the Prison was meant to punish deviants, in the hopes that terror would alter their behavior; it did not and the prison was forced to close in ignominy. The Mercer Reformatory, however, was a model of Victorian reform efforts — the perception was that women, with longer sentences, could be taught their ‘proper’ place in society. Meanwhile, organizations ‘on the ground’ aimed at preemptively altering the criminal ways of the working-class by establishing institutions in the Ward district in order to educate and provide wholesome leisure activities. Problems of crime and vice that appeared in the Ward would be ‘solved’ by attacking the deviant at the source or by subjecting those deviants to the corrective measures of the state.
(Endnotes)

1 Francis Collins, *Canadian Freeman*, 1831.


3 See National Archives (NA), RGB Provincial Secretaries’ Papers, Justice Robert Burns to provincial secretary, 3 June 1854 as cited in Olver (1998).

4 The Province’s first penitentiary, Kingston Penitentiary, opened 5 June 1833.

5 In 1859, for example, of 6,586 people in the Upper Canada (Ontario) gaols, 1,558 (23.7%) were repeat offenders. Olver (1998): 404.


17 For example only 2.5% of Mercer crimes were against people versus 12.6% at the Central Prison. 20.4% were for crimes against property versus 55.7% at the Central Prison. 35.4% of sentences at Mercer were six months or less versus 26.8% at the Central Prison. Oliver (1997): 434-6.

18 A private venture, the Toronto Street Railway Co., opened the Queen Street line in 1861. Secondary lines did not begin to serve the working class areas until the 1880s. Electric service in 1893 helped to expand the system, however, wary of profits, the street-car company refused to expand the system beyond the limits of the city. With overcrowding rampant by the 1910s, the City began municipal street-car service, in 1910 forming the

<table>
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<th>Origin</th>
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<th>1881</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1901</th>
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<td>Canadian-born</td>
<td>3,010,803 (81.6%)</td>
<td>3,721,826 (86.1%)</td>
<td>4,189,368 (86.7%)</td>
<td>4,671,815 (87.0%)</td>
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<td>147,081 (4.0%)</td>
<td>169,504 (4.0%)</td>
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<td>203,803 (3.8%)</td>
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<td>Irish</td>
<td>223,212 (6.1%)</td>
<td>185,526 (4.3%)</td>
<td>149,184 (3.1%)</td>
<td>101,629 (1.9%)</td>
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<td>125,450 (3.4%)</td>
<td>115,062 (2.7%)</td>
<td>107,594 (2.2%)</td>
<td>83,631 (1.6%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>64,613 (1.8%)</td>
<td>77,753 (1.8%)</td>
<td>80,915 (1.7%)</td>
<td>127,899 (2.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>118,098 (3.2%)</td>
<td>55,139 (1.3%)</td>
<td>86,490 (1.8%)</td>
<td>182,538 (3.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compare these figures with the composition of the Canadian population at the time. Census of Canada.
Toronto Transportation Commission (which would become the current TTC) – the municipal vote had approved the measure by a referendum of 19,736 to 10,696.


20 Canada’s efforts were influenced by Britain’s Criminal Law Amendment Act (1885).

21 Both begging and the contraceptive laws persisted, remarkably, until 1972 – ceasing only because of the forceful and now-famous comments by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau: “The state has no business in the bedrooms of the nation”. Nothing could be further from the truth to the social purists in 1892.


25 C.S. Clark, Of Toronto the Good (Toronto: The Toronto Publishing Co, 1898): 102,106.
In early twentieth century Toronto, the single-family home was viewed as the only form of housing that could preserve ‘family’ values. For mainstream Toronto, the sanctity of ‘home’ and the preservation of moral values could not be achieved by sharing a roof with other families. No differentiation was made between apartments and tenements. Those that lived in either could not subscribe to truly British values. On the contrary, the confined spaces of apartments and tenements were viewed as a breeding ground for sexual promiscuity, ‘feeble-mindedness’, disease, crime, and a host of other unnamed ‘vices’. At the turn of the twentieth century, Toronto reformers observed with disgust the proliferation of railroad tenements in Manhattan. They responded by campaigning against the construction of all forms of multi-family housing. However, as the influx of immigrants and migrants caused an acute housing shortage in the immediate years before the First World War, the state conceded by allowing several apartment buildings to be constructed. There was a caveat: the state tightly controlled the location of these buildings in the urban landscape. The city passed by-laws to prohibit these buildings from intruding into the sacred space of the middle- and upper-class ‘residential districts’. The space of the city was segregated along the various ‘high’ streets that were typical of British towns. These major thoroughfares became the accepted places for tenements. This segregation represented a controlled ‘vice’ associated with the tenements, leaving the residential districts as ‘pure’ space. Efforts to quell the invasion of more urban forms of housing into neighborhoods reflected the larger urban/rural struggle taking place throughout the country. Well before large-scale efforts to ‘zone’ the city according to land uses, the efforts to control multi-family housing in Toronto divided the city according to social practices.

In 1890, Jabob Riis outlined in nauseating detail his disdain for the tenement houses that were the norm in Manhattan’s Lower East Side. These ‘railroad
Europe, on the other hand, crowd into older districts of the city and transformed the old ‘ward’ into a veritable ghetto.\textsuperscript{5} No self-respecting Imperial city should have the kinds of slums as the sinful cities to the south, so the logic went.

Toronto didn’t issue its first apartment building permit until 1899. Toronto’s growth up until the turn of the century was largely comprised of British immigrants, who favored single family dwellings. The few eastern European Jewish immigrants that began to trickle into the city after 1880 could not afford new apartments. Instead, the shanties of the Ward were affordable and well located. This remained the case after the turn of the twentieth century, when large numbers of poor immigrants arrived. The development industry was slow to respond to the housing shortage that began to emerge between 1900 and 1910. Contributing to this tardy response was the lack of construction labor in the city. The result was that little new housing was built even as the city became the receiving area for eastern and southern European immigrants. Thus, immigrants during this time were forced to take shelter in cramped shacks and boardinghouses. The growth of population together with the shortage of housing created slum conditions in areas such as the Ward and Niagara.

The 1904 ‘Great Fire’ contributed to the growth of these slums. In particular, construction companies shifted their interests to re-construct the devastated downtown retail district rather than construct new housing. City administrators actively encouraged the speedy recovery of the city’s main business enterprises. After the fire, the city wanted to take the opportunity to develop extensive building code revisions, to ensure such a conflagration did not recur. However, the city was booming. No time could be spared deliberating on the code revisions. Moreover, business leaders opposed any requirements which would be costly and slow the rebuilding process. The business interests successfully lobbied city officials; only minimal revisions were made to the code. Construction companies directed their limited labor forces downtown, resulting in little new housing construction in the

tenements’, so-called because the rooms were lined up like train cars, became symbolic of the evils of the North American industrial city. These buildings were a consequence of the extremely high land values in Manhattan and the city’s lot sizes, 25 feet wide by 100 feet deep. In the absence of city regulations, these long, narrow lots allowed landlords to construct buildings with little or no natural light or ventilation. In 1869, the City passed its first ‘Tenement-House Act’, which required over 46,000 windows be cut between interior rooms. By 1874, the city had removed all cellar apartments used by the so-called ‘cave dwellers’. In 1879, the conditions in the tenements were so bad that New York passed a regulation that required tenements to have air shafts of a minimal dimension. The regulation did not improve conditions. By 1901, the city began requiring true courtyards and running water in each apartment. By this time, however, there were over 60,000 tenements in the city. In his appropriately-named \textit{How the Other Half Lives} (1890), Riis quickly links these places of habitation to the practices of ‘foreigners’. Riis proceeds to detail the chief foreigners, with chapters on ‘Jewtown’, ‘Chinatown’, ‘The Italian in New York’, ‘The Bohemians’, ‘The Street Arab’, among others. For Riis, the evidence was clear: there were no true ‘Americans’ living in such conditions. He comments, “The one thing you shall vainly ask for in the chief city of America is a distinctively American community. There is none; certainly not among the tenements. Where have they gone to, the old inhabitants?”\textsuperscript{3} For Riis, the tenement was an injustice to the foreigner brought upon him by the self-serving landlord, creating slum-like conditions.\textsuperscript{4}

Riis’ text was a clear warning sign for a city like Toronto which was well behind New York in its development. In particular, civic leaders made the connection between non-British immigrants and slum conditions. The \textit{Mail and Empire} conveyed this sentiment when it proclaimed: “British immigrants as a rule try to find homes on the outskirts of the city, and in outlying communities, and as fast as they are able become homeowners. The immigrants from Russia and Central
years after the fire. By the time the downtown had been largely rebuilt, a few years later, the economy had cooled down significantly. New housing projects were no longer viable, so the lack of new housing continued until the end of the decade. Meanwhile, the flood of large numbers of poor immigrants exacerbated conditions in the center of the city. The few early apartment buildings in Toronto were almost exclusively intended for a new breed of upwardly mobile entrepreneurs (Fig. 11-1). By 1910, developers began experimenting with low-cost apartment buildings. Apartments were bad enough, but low-cost apartments sounded too similar to New York’s tenements for Toronto’s liking.

Yet slum conditions in Toronto did not occur in tenement conditions as in New York, but in the small shanties that lie behind the city’s main commercial streets, principally Yonge and Queen Street. These areas were the subject of intense scrutiny in Dr. Charles Hastingle’s 1911 Slum Report (See [29]). It was here, in the shanties, where dwellings were not equipped with running water, toilets or proper drainage. It was here, at the center of blocks and away from the gaze of civic leaders, that the worst conditions grew.

At the same time, despite the worst conditions occurring in the shanties, it was the emergent tenements that drew the most scorn. Despite the deplorable conditions of the shanty, it remained an image of ‘home’. The single family house, however run-down, still represented the ideal housing type because it represented village values. It was a single family in image only; the small quarters were often subdivided into multi-family units. Apartments, and tenements in particular, on the other hand, were a creation of the city. As an urban typology, the apartments were often looked upon as sources of immorality and vice. The argument was not veiled. For example, the March 1913 issue of the Canadian Municipal Journal declared:

The city is a peril to the nation. It has replaced the simple life with the intense struggle for existence. For the home it has destroyed, it has substituted the unspeakable flat and the yardless tenement. Vice and crime, greed and graft, pauperism and disease, flourish luxuriantly in the city. In short, the extraordinary development of the material element of life, without the corresponding knowledge of the moral and spiritual, has made the city a menace to our whole civilization.7

FIG. 11-1. TYPICAL EARLY APARTMENT BUILDING IN TORONTO, N.D.
The conditions in Toronto did not come close to approaching New York’s; for reformers, this salient fact was often overlooked. It was not the extent of the problem that worried the city’s elite, but merely the presence of conditions that, *prime facie*, appeared similar.

By the 1910s, the boardinghouse had become perhaps the biggest social institution for new Canadians. Thus, the attack on multi-family housing was an indirect attack on the social institution that held immigrant communities together. Efforts to limit multi-family housing conveniently allowed reformers to ‘Canadianize’ newcomers by promoting the form of housing that corresponded with their ideals of ‘home’, even though the early impetus was to improve sanitary conditions. Drawn to fellow countrymen through common language and customs, the boardinghouse became the locus of the various immigrant communities. In the Ward, Italians in particular relied upon boardinghouses as centers for the padroni (labor agents). Boardinghouses were typically owned by the labor agents. Often rooms were let above a grocer or other place of business. Zucchi outlines several of the earliest and most important in the Ward. It was clear that the intersection of Center Avenue and Elm Street was the heart of the Italian communities until the 1930s. By this time, the Italian communities shifted to the Grace/College Street area west of the Ward. As Zucchi argues, in the face of the challenges and prejudices of the new world, the various hometown loyalties would, over time, consolidate into a unified ‘Italian’ community that previously did not exist. The various paesani (villagers) saw in themselves more similarities than differences; the various Italians communities became one community.

For the Macedonians in Niagara, the boardinghouses along Niagara Street next to the Civic Abattoir performed a similar function (Fig. 11-2, 11-3). The Macedonians were among the most sojourning of the early immigrants to Toronto. At first, they saw Toronto as merely an opportunity to make a sum of money to return to their homeland in order to buy farms. However, the fall of the Ottoman Empire in
1913 came with the end of the Balkan War and led to even more oppressive Greek rule in Macedonia. This consequence persuaded men in Toronto that their futures were best served in Canada. By 1940, over 1200 Macedonian families lived in Toronto, one of the largest communities in Canada and probably North America.

In 1911, the reformers went to the polls in an effort to alleviate the overcrowding occurring in the boardinghouses in areas like Niagara and the Ward. The campaign centered on the annexation of North Toronto and a by-law to build a subway to outlying areas. The idea was that overcrowding could be solved by acquiring peripheral lands and constructing a transportation network that would allow immigrant workers to live, like their British counterparts, in the suburbs. The measure did not pass. Whether this was because of fear of contamination of the pure space of the suburbs or because the immigrant slums were not within the visible day-to-day routines of the majority of the populace, it cannot be said for certain. However, the aftermath of the 1911 Slum Report raised the consciousness of the population. Hastings' report examined labor wages as a possible explanation for the slum conditions but he concluded that at up to $3.50 a day, these were not poor men. Rather, conditions were because “their ideas of sanitation are not ours…. Small hotels and old and roomy houses are about to undergo the dangerous transformation into foreign lodging houses… Every effort is being made to familiarize our new citizens with our sanitary standards, and to notify them of our requirements, and then see that these are reasonably carried out.” Hastings went on to document how one dwelling in Niagara had four inches of water in the basement and one in the Ward had four feet of water. Moreover, one outside closet in Niagara had been cleaned only once in eleven years. Hastings laments the “lack [of] housing by-laws and city planning.” The overwhelming observation in districts like Niagara and the Ward was of run-down shacks (Fig. 11-4). Hastings' conclusion was unequivocal: apartments and tenements “should not be permitted. With hundreds of acres of ideal residential land surrounding our City, why should we permit “Home”, the most sacred word in our language, to be jeopardized by piling one dwelling upon another.” For Hastings and others, boardinghouses were equated to tenements and apartments, even though many of the boardinghouses were smaller rowhouses or shacks.

By this time, reformers viewed the problems of the city as a threat not only to particular social groups but urban society as a whole. The solution lay in environmental reform. Hastings' concentration on documenting the physical conditions of the immigrant communities was typical of the Progressive movement. Hastings' wholesale rejection of apartments was acted upon since his work, unlike previous social work, had quantified the extent of the problem. A few months after Hastings' report, the city moved to prohibit apartment and tenement buildings on all 'residential' streets (See [46]). This by-law did not prohibit the construction of apartments or tenements along major commercial streets, nor in slum districts such as Niagara and the Ward. Therefore, remarkably, despite the claim that they

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**FIG. 11-4. TYPICAL SHACKS, 205-209 ELIZABETH ST., 1937.**
were harmful to the health, sanitation and morals of the population, they were outlawed only in parts of the city where these conditions were not perceived to be a problem. The by-law, then, was effectively a defensive measure to protect the 'good' neighborhoods from the future contamination of multi-family housing. The press make this intent unambiguous. The Star, in an article on 6 October 1911 stated clearly: "We must have individual self-contained homes if we are to preserve our family life." This attitude reflected the position that the single-family house was a ‘home’ while the flat was distinctly not a ‘home’.

This perception was not unique to Toronto; in fact, reformist writers of the time in the United States campaigned against the flat on the grounds that it did not promote the proper (Protestant) values that the single-family residence instilled. For example, Andrew Wright Crawford, the editor of the City Planning Section of Philadelphia’s Public Ledger, remarked in 1914 that, “a flat does not have that sense of family life separated and shut off from all the world outside, that sense of peace and happiness and aloofness, and comfortable security, that the word ‘home’ brings to one that has known abiding place other than a flat.”

In fact, this problem of the ‘home’ was associated to the larger connections being made by reformers between housing and public health. This housing/public health debate would become foundational for the emergence of more public control of the physical environment, ultimately culminating in the city planning profession. For people like Crawford, the problem of the flat was twofold: on the one hand, they believed the physical environment had an impact on the ‘physique of the inhabitants’, yet according to Crawford, “room overcrowding and personal filth cannot be prevented by city planning”. These problems remained people problems: education, physical fitness and the standard of living of the people were to be blamed. While accepting the ‘people problem’, Crawford nevertheless was determined to advocate for a more rigorous system of comprehensive controls of the physical environment.

Crawford’s arguments were compelling. He compared quantifiable physical characteristics of various cities in relation to slum conditions. For example, he explained New York’s slum problems by noting the deep 100 foot depth of its lots (200 foot deep blocks), creating conditions that were internal to the block and therefore lacking light and ventilation, which were thought to improve health and sanitation. Philadelphia’s 50 to 75 foot depth lots (100-150 foot deep blocks) were better, he argued, because it ensured a larger portion of buildings would receive adequate light and air. Further, the width of streets was important: these should not be too wide because this would take away land that could be used for yards, but they should not be too narrow because this would not allow for enough light and air. Density targets (number of units per acre) also became important reform objectives. Ironically, Crawford argued against the expansion of transit as a panacea for central city congestion, for which Toronto reformers had campaigned.

Crawford was a contemporary of Hastings, so concerns about tenements were fluidly exchanged among professional circles. Underpinning their work were the efforts by the influential Lawrence Veiller, Deputy Tenement House Commission of New York a decade earlier. Veiller’s work marked one of the earliest shifts from seeing urban problems as the result of deviant groups (the criminal, the poor, etc) to seeing urban problems as the problem of the city itself. In his essay on
‘The Housing Problem in American Cities” (1905), Veiller declared: “The great social and political problem of the times is the problem of the city.” For Veiller, the tenement was the culprit: lack of sufficient light, fresh air, unsanitary and filthy conditions, overcrowding, excessive rents, no opportunity for ‘heathful play’ for children. These conditions led to intemperance and vice. Overcrowding became the catch-word to encompass the associated evils of the tenements; as Veiller remarked: “crowding is bad enough in its effect on the human race, but overcrowding is a word fraught with fatal significance.”

For Veiller, overcrowding was detrimental to native-born citizens, but particularly problematic in immigrant communities: “where it is a city composed of people from every nation, alien to our life in nearly every way, ignorant of our language and brought up under conditions, social and political, that are entirely foreign to the ones under which they are now living, the results are fraught with the most serious consequences to the community.” The association between foreigners and tenements grew with time. These areas were like a disease: “ultimately gangrene sets in and the offending portions have to be cut out with the surgeon’s knife”. Tenements weakened peoples’ moral standards. The solution was the regulation by the state of the type of buildings which may be constructed.

It is within the context of influential reformers such as Veiller and Crawford that Hastings and Toronto reformers operated. In addition to prohibiting multi-family housing in the residential districts of the city, the state engaged in two types of physical intervention: renovating and improving the existing housing stock on the one hand and experimenting with subsidized public housing, notably model homes, on the other. These ‘hands-on’ approaches, at least in the 1910s, were not common in the U.S. Veiller expressly rejected the notion that the state should engage in the construction and operation of tenement houses. Experiments in social housing were achieved through the Toronto Housing Company (See 1471).

The Toronto Housing Company was organized by industrialist Frank Beers, perhaps reflecting its role in providing for the efficient functioning of the capitalist city. This is further substantiated by the fact that the effort involved a partnership between the business community and the Canadian Manufacturer’s Association, with the Toronto Board of Trade, the Guild of Civic Art, the Local Council of Women (who were especially concerned about the welfare of working single mothers), and the Toronto City Council. This entity targeted areas considered ‘unsanitary’ that were documented by the Health Department in 1912. Between 1913 and 1918, over 1600 substandard houses were demolished at the call of the city’s health officials. In place of bad housing, they proposed ‘model’ houses. Combined with the housing shortage as a result of veterans returning from the First World War, the
Housing Company was viewed as a regrettable but necessary intrusion into the free market. As a way to increase density, yet maintain the ideal of individual homes, they drew upon the ‘semi-detached’ typology which was typical in Toronto (Fig. 11-5). This type of house, typically referred to as a ‘duplex’ in the United States, had one shared wall but outwardly appeared as one house because of the narrowness of the unit. Construction of this kind was undertaken by the Toronto Housing Company to provide workers’ housing close to places of employment, which by this time were primarily locating around the periphery of the city. The Housing Company served its purpose and by the late 1910s, its operations had been suspended.

Despite the demolitions and modest interventions by the Toronto Housing Company in the 1910s, slum conditions remained. By the 1930s, central city areas like the Ward and Niagara raised a flag to important politicians, including Lieutenant Governor Herbert Bruce. In 1934, he issued his report which called for more substantial government intervention (See [06]). This text led to more aggressive physical reforms. An inspection program was enacted to evaluate housing conditions. By 1939, over 9,000 homes had been inspected and over half were renovated or replaced. Typical was the renovation of a cottage at 22 Manning Avenue, one block away from Niagara Street, just north of Queen Street in Niagara. The inspection photo dated 22 April 1940 illustrates a house in devastating condition (Fig. 11-6). By 21 February 1941, the house had been substantially renovated and a family placed in the home (Fig. 11-7).

Efforts to control boardinghouses, tenements and apartments in Toronto reflected the fear of these distinctly urban housing prototypes. Social surveys such as the Hastings Slum Report in 1911 indicated the extent of the health problems associated with boarding situations. The idea that multiple families shared a home led to the conflation of shanty boardinghouses with tenements. While substantial efforts were made to renovate single family cottages, as the Manning Avenue examples attests, construction of multi-family housing was strictly controlled after
1912 despite housing shortages. They would only be permitted in areas where ‘vice’ was already present; the purity of the Anglo-Saxon residential neighborhoods would be maintained. Model homes constructed by the semi-public Toronto Housing Company replaced homes identified as substandard by the Health Department. These efforts reflected the current thinking in North America at the time: Riis’ exposé on tenements in New York (1890), Veiller’s connection between housing conditions and larger societal problems (1905) and Crawford’s call for renewed faith in single-family, low-density environments (1914) mark a progression towards greater state intervention to combat the evils of the boardinghouses, tenements and apartments. A corollary of these efforts was to ensure that the single-family ‘home’ remained the dominant form of housing in Toronto specifically, and North America more generally. By defining ‘home’ on largely rural, Protestant notions, the state engaged in a program to naturalize the immigrant masses whose foreign practices would otherwise accept living in the deplorable conditions of multi-family housing.

(Endnotes)
1 The difference between the two is probably a matter of scale and cost. Tenements were extremely small apartments, with fewer amenities, fewer windows and cheaper rent. Apartments, on the other hand, were more generous; in fact, many apartments, even in Toronto, were quite luxurious. These subtleties did not particularly matter to reform-minded bureaucrats. And Dr. Charles Hastings commented in his 1911 report on slum conditions: “The apartment house really belongs to the same class as the tenement.” City of Toronto Archives (henceforth CTA), Dr. Charles Hastings, “Report of the Medical Health Officer Dealing with the Recent Investigation of Slum Conditions in Toronto, Embodying Recommendations for the Amelioration of the Same,” City of Toronto (1911): 20.
5 Mail and Empire 5 July 1911.
6 The Fire destroyed fourteen acres of the City’s core – 220 businesses and $13 million in damages (1904 dollars). No lives were lost but more than 6,000 people were temporarily out of work.
7 Baptist Home Mission Board of Toronto as quoted in Canadian Municipal Journal (March 1913): 97.
9 For example, according to Zucchi, James Palma built his Glionna Hotel on Elizabeth Street in 1885 along with 11 other brick buildings, including the first Italian saloon. Michael
Basso established a grocery store on the northwest corner of Chestnut and Edward Streets by the 1890s. Albert Dini had an agency on York Street just south of the Ward after 1900. Each proprietor was an important actor in the labor scene.


15 Crawford (1914): 163.


17 Veiller (1905): 251.

18 Veiller (1905): 252.


20 The Department of Health documented individual houses that were deemed a public health hazard through a vast collection of photographs. See CTA, Department of Health Photo Collection.
One of the earliest forms of ‘zoning’ in Toronto was the separation of butchers and slaughterhouses from residential neighborhoods; these actions came some forty years before the City’s first official zoning by-law. By the 1910s, butcher shops had begun to spread off major thoroughfares into ‘residential’ neighborhoods. Trying to create competition with the meat industry’s monopoly, the City undertook the building of a Civic Abattoir in the Niagara district. More importantly, this decision to concentrate slaughtering in one place had several effects on the social and physical fabric of the City. Removing noxious practices from the residential neighborhoods led to a purification of the social space of the City. When the Civic Abattoir was located in Niagara in 1914, the area was already a renowned abject space: the Central Prison, Mercer Reformatory, the Lunatic Asylum were joined by numerous heavy industries. Due to the unpleasant working conditions, workers were almost exclusively immigrants who were excluded from more desirable jobs because of ethnic bias and a lack of skills. Since these workers could not afford grand dwellings nor transportation, the area immediately surrounding the abattoir became an immigrant receiving area, particularly for Poles, Ukraines and Macedonians. The congested conditions of Niagara’s boardinghouses emulated the unsanitary conditions in the Ward, the city’s most notorious ‘slum’. Ironically, by sanitizing the noxious ‘others’ (slaughterhouses) that were dispersed throughout the City, civic leaders created an abject zone where slaughtering, imprisonment, insanity and industry were neighbors with people who were themselves ‘others’. The placement of the Civic Abattoir in Niagara completed a series of failed social experiments. The resultant landscape reflects a continued effort to concentrate abject functions and abject ‘others’ away from the more ‘respectable’ parts of the city. Justified on the grounds of health concerns, the removal of slaughter from the residential neighborhoods also had the effect of concentrating immigrant ‘others’
Garrison Creek was the Lunatic Asylum, dating from 1850 (Fig. 7-7). Only the three railroads crossing the Garrison Reserve indicated the presence of settlement. Meanwhile, the reserve in the east end had been sold to private interests when the Parliament relocated to Simcoe Place on the western side of the city in 1828. Thus demand for industrial space close to rail facilities was largely met on this eastern reserve (the ‘Park’ Reserve). Following the general pattern of development in Toronto, the eastern part of the city grew more quickly. Only when the eastern reserve was filled to capacity did development proceed westward. Moreover, with Fort York and the new Garrison still serving a military function on the Garrison Reserve, the area remained largely undeveloped by the mid-nineteenth century. Industrial settlement of the Niagara area therefore did not begin in earnest until after the birth of the nation-state in 1867. Ganton’s description of the area in 1859 indicates a few fledgling industries: three lumber yards and two tobacco factories, one at Niagara and Adelaide and the other in the former Garrison Hospital on Tecumseth Street.

The U.S. Civil War, too, stimulated industrial production in Toronto, putting pressure on the government to make the Garrison Reserve available for development. Moreover, the National Policy of 1878 was a major impetus for industrial growth, stimulating domestic production (See (34)). Kealey’s study of industrial Toronto illustrates the trend: in 1878, there were 55 ‘factories’ in the City but by 1884, this number had increased to 91.³ The unique circumstances of the pattern of land ownership allowed, if not necessitated, the state to take a lead role in the creation of an ‘industrial district’ on the military reserves. With the government controlling the land on either end of the city and the aristocracy controlling land about Queen Street in their government-granted ‘Park Lots’, the space for industrial expansion was limited. With industrial growth tied to the growth of the nation after Confederation, the reserves could easily be converted into industrial zones and rail lines run across the city. Meanwhile, still cognizant of their own estates, private land-holders above Queen Street preferred to slowly sell off pieces of their away from the ‘pure’ space of the ‘home’ districts.

Besides ‘Toronto the Good’, Toronto’s most notorious nicknames have always been ‘Hogtown’ and ‘The Big Smoke’. ‘Hogtown’ stems from the days when Toronto was a center of the meat packing industry. Like Chicago, Toronto was centrally located on the Great Lakes and became a hub for the trade and distribution of agricultural products to and from its hinterland. Beginning with the arrival of the railways in the 1850s, this agricultural function merged with industrial practices. Areas with ample rail access quickly became attractive to industry and agriculture alike. It was this attraction of industry that brought about Toronto’s second nickname, ‘The Big Smoke’, on account of its many polluting industries. The railway companies, especially the Grand Trunk and later, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), were significant actors in this transformation. From the beginning, the railways had a special relationship to the government. For the fledgling nation, a cross-country rail connection was not only essential for economic purposes, but it was the primary means of settling the land. In fact, the provinces’ commitment to joining the nation was conditional on the federal government connecting them by rail.¹ In light of this promise of a cross-country railway, the Canadian government gave CPR exclusive rights to expropriate lands for rail corridors. While CPR might have been the biggest of the railways, it was by no means the earliest. In Toronto, the Ontario Simcoe Hudson (1853), Great Western (1855) and the Grand Trunk (1856) were the earliest. When the town was laid out in the 1790s, the British government held in reserve areas to the east (the ‘Park Reserve’) and west of the town (‘Garrison Reserve’) for ‘military and government purposes’. The area between the town and the harbor was also reserved for a ‘promenade or public purposes’. These reserves provided uninterrupted access across the entire front of the town. So when these railway companies argued their importance to the nation and the city, they were given permission to run their rails across the reserves.

In 1858, the Niagara area was largely sparse: the only building west of Garrison Creek was the Lunatic Asylum, dating from 1850 (Fig. 7-7). Only the three railroads crossing the Garrison Reserve indicated the presence of settlement. Meanwhile, the reserve in the east end had been sold to private interests when the Parliament relocated to Simcoe Place on the western side of the city in 1828. Thus demand for industrial space close to rail facilities was largely met on this eastern reserve (the ‘Park’ Reserve). Following the general pattern of development in Toronto, the eastern part of the city grew more quickly. Only when the eastern reserve was filled to capacity did development proceed westward. Moreover, with Fort York and the new Garrison still serving a military function on the Garrison Reserve, the area remained largely undeveloped by the mid-nineteenth century. Industrial settlement of the Niagara area therefore did not begin in earnest until after the birth of the nation-state in 1867. Ganton’s description of the area in 1859 indicates a few fledgling industries: three lumber yards and two tobacco factories, one at Niagara and Adelaide and the other in the former Garrison Hospital on Tecumseth Street.² The U.S. Civil War, too, stimulated industrial production in Toronto, putting pressure on the government to make the Garrison Reserve available for development. Moreover, the National Policy of 1878 was a major impetus for industrial growth, stimulating domestic production (See (34)). Kealey’s study of industrial Toronto illustrates the trend: in 1878, there were 55 ‘factories’ in the City but by 1884, this number had increased to 91.³ The unique circumstances of the pattern of land ownership allowed, if not necessitated, the state to take a lead role in the creation of an ‘industrial district’ on the military reserves. With the government controlling the land on either end of the city and the aristocracy controlling land about Queen Street in their government-granted ‘Park Lots’, the space for industrial expansion was limited. With industrial growth tied to the growth of the nation after Confederation, the reserves could easily be converted into industrial zones and rail lines run across the city. Meanwhile, still cognizant of their own estates, private land-holders above Queen Street preferred to slowly sell off pieces of their
land as residential development. These factors combined with specific desires to segregate noxious uses and immigrants who differed from themselves into these industrial areas.

With the British military withdrawn and the threat of American invasion minimal, the Garrison Reserve slowly began to its conversion, taking advantage of its easy access to rail. One of the first signs of industrial and agricultural uses was the City’s decision, in 1877, to locate its Western Cattle Market along Wellington Street, adjacent to the main bundle of railways on the Reserve, between Niagara Street and Strachan Avenue. That same year, the City acted on a growing fear that meat slaughtered at the City’s big markets, St. Lawrence in the eastern part of town and St. Andrews in the western part of town, needed to be more closely monitored. These fears were largely based on the emergence of a link between disease and unsanitary environmental conditions. To this end, On 7 May 1877, the Committee on Public Markets, the Committee on Licenses, the Board of Jail Inspectors and the Board of Health were amalgamated into the Committee on Markets and Health. From this time forward, the slaughtering of animals and the health of the population were linked. By 1883, the City had appointed a Medical Officer of Health, who was charged with the task of monitoring standards for the collection of blood and the sanitary slaughtering of meat.

In addition to the Cattle Market, companies that could not secure space on the eastern Reserve began locating their factories in the Niagara area. The 1884 map indicates some of these industries (Fig. 7-8): the Inglis & Hunter Machine Shop on Strachan Avenue, the Massey Manufacturing Company at Strachan and Wellington, and the Dominion Bridge Co. on King St. West. The Massey Company, which arrived in Toronto in 1879, quickly bought out the Toronto Reaper and Motor Co. and merged with the Harris Company in 1891, expanding their operations substantially. The Harris Company was a deeply rooted Toronto company and one of its heirs, Lawren Harris, would go on to become the leader of the influential Group of Seven artists. In 1876, the Massey Company represented Canada at the Industrial Exhibition in Paris and won acclaim for its products, subsequently receiving orders from around the world. Massey-Harris would in 1957 become the Massey-Ferguson company, one of the world’s largest farm equipment manufacturers. Two of the largest abattoirs, the Harris Abattoir and the Matthews-Blackwell plant at the foot of Bathurst, had also located in Niagara. Soon many smaller companies dotted the Niagara landscape.

By the 1880s, the separate town of West Toronto Junction began aggressively recruiting industry, specifically in the meat industry. Fortuitously located at the intersection of the northern line of the CPR and the northwest-bound Grand Trunk line, the ‘Junction’ soon established the Union Stock Yards to rival the City’s Western Cattle Market. Promoters saw the Junction as an ideal location for this noxious type of industry because “it stood apart from the city itself and its residents.” From 1888 onwards, for example, the Junction offered property tax exemptions for companies that located within the Junction, provided they employed a minimum number of people and that a certain percentage of their workers also lived within the Town. The nascent town of Toronto West Junction wanted to increase its tax base by attracting people to move there; attracting business with provisions to hire local labor ensured the town would continue to grow. These incentives applied to all types of industry. For example some of the companies taking advantage of incentives included: Canada Wire Mattress Co., Wilkinson Plough Co, Dodge Split-Pulley Co., Gasoline Engine Co Ltd, among dozens of others. By the late 1890s, those associated with the meat industry were particularly targeted for incentives. On 12 May 1898, West Junction council passed a by-law to exempt the ‘Western Stock Market Co. and kindred companies’ from tax “in order to “encourage and assist the establishment thereof, and of such kindred industries as the Company can induce to locate in the Town in connection with such market”. Under this arrangement 35 acres of land was exempt for 30 years. Moreover, the Town would
By 14 February 1910, City Council began serious deliberations on a civic abattoir, “thus doing away with the many slaughter house nuisances situate[d] in different parts of the city.” Over the next 18 months, the Board of Health undertook a study of the slaughtering houses throughout the city. On 7 December 1911, the Board presented its report to Council. The argument was clear: “most of these slaughter houses are for the most part in very unsanitary condition, and afford a nuisance to the neighborhoods in which they are located … steps must be taken forthwith to overcome this difficulty, by the erection of a public municipal abattoir.” They even suggested that it might be desirable to prohibit the sale of meat within the City Boundaries that was not slaughtered at the municipal abattoir, but there is no evidence this was ever pursued.

A mapping of the location of butcher shops and slaughtering houses in 1881 confirms the Board of Health’s desire to remove the slaughter houses from certain neighborhoods (Fig. 12-1). While it is clear that the vast majority of slaughtering houses were located along the City’s major thoroughfares such as Queen and Yonge Streets, there are signs of incursions into sanctified residential space even at this early date. By 1910, this process had reached more critical levels. The map of 1881 illustrates the location of the 139 butcher shops and 22 large abattoirs listed in the City Directory. By 1917, for example, this number had reached 498, comprised of 14 large abattoirs, 413 butchering shops and 85 retail outlets. The impact of the abattoir’s opening in 1914 had reduced the number of large abattoirs from 22 to 14 in three years. The number of butchering shops also fell.

By 1912, the City had decided to build the abattoir. Two sites were contemplated, both in close proximity to the Western Cattle Market on landfill where the Garrison Creek once flowed. Space around the Market was tight and the two sites represented the only plausible pieces of land. The first site considered was Stanley Park, between Wellington and King St. West. The idea was to situate the...
FIG. 12-1. DISTRIBUTION OF SLAUGHTER, 1881.
noxious uses along the southern part of the site, along Wellington, and ‘shield’
the facilities from the residential neighbors to the north with a park along King
Street. An indication of what city officials thought of the area is offered by Alder-
man Weston’s suggestion that Stanley Park was a “breeding place of criminals and
rowdies”. By the spring of 1913, the City had proposed $50,000 on turning the
north side into a playground with swimming pools, fences, shrubs and a library.
The Stanley Park site was favored by representatives of the Cattle Dealers as well,
because of its proximity to the Cattle Market and railways. Soon, a design by W.R.
Perrin of Chicago was underway and Mr. Perrin assured the abattoir committee that
an absolutely sanitary abattoir could be constructed, one from which all offensive
odors would ‘practically’ be eliminated. An article ran in the *Globe* in May 1913,
however, that suggested the beef trust was trying to interfere and stop construction
of the abattoir. A letter by the Harris Abattoir Co. to the Mayor and the Board of
Control on 2 September 1912 attests to this interference. Harris reminded the of-
ficials that they only bought from the Union Stock Yards and warned them that the
City Cattle Market was not suitable since it did not have the room to handle the
volume of cattle, nor was any land available in the neighborhood for the enlarge-
ment of existing plants. Harris proceeded to claim that the civic abattoir would
be ‘stranded in an isolated position’ since the packing trade was firmly entrenched
in West Toronto. Instead they recommended closing the City Cattle Market and
establishing their abattoir in the Junction.

The meddling of the large abattoirs convinced the City it was necessary to
act. The Harris Abattoir Co. even offered the City a free site in the Junction, which
was “dismissed in a word, as it was deemed a shrewd scheme to benefit the Harris
Company.” A second site adjacent to the Cattle Market, however, was eventually
chosen at the foot of Tecumseth Street. Why the Stanley Park site was abandoned
in favor of the Tecumseth site is unclear other than Alderman Dunn’s opposition
to it on the grounds of it posing an odor nuisance to neighbors. Support for the
idea grew from the many small butchers throughout the city. In particular, support among Jews was high because the civic abattoir would allow for greater control of kosher practices. On 22 March 1913, the City accepted the lowest tender to build the abattoir, $209,800. Perrin’s design for the Abattoir was largely functional but not without its grandeur, considering it was slaughterhouse (Fig. 12-2). The square stone building had eight bays per face with arched window openings on top. On each of the four corners were ‘towers’ with deeply set vertical window niches and triple-arched windows on top. By no means was the building merely functional.

The abattoir was an abject failure. Despite a tender of only $209,800, the building ended up costing about $450,000 after equipment was installed. Thus, it was already a money-losing venture. Moreover, its location was a hindrance to effective competition with Toronto West Junction. Despite support from the local retailers, many found it too inconvenient to do their slaughtering at the civic abattoir. The abattoir had a capacity of 500,000 killings per year. Yet the volume of slaughter never reached anywhere near capacity. In 1916, 94,382 killings were done (19% capacity). By 1917, this number had dropped to a scant 4,495 (less than 1% of capacity). The failure to pass regulations prohibiting slaughter elsewhere meant that the civic abattoir could not fulfill its intended function at capacity. This is not to say, however, that the City did not try to force butchers to use the abattoir. The 8 November 1919 issue of The Ratepayer, for example, asks, “Where is the small dealer to get his cattle slaughtered now that all small slaughter houses have been destroyed and licenses cancelled?” This suggests that the City had successfully destroyed some of the most noxious slaughterhouses spread throughout the city and had moved to cancel the licenses of some of the small retail butchers. Why the City’s practices did not eliminate even more of the local butchering places is unclear. By 1919, just five years after it opened, the City was contemplating the sale of the abattoir to private interests. Having lost $236,000 in five years, the City decided to cut its losses and sold the plant to the Harris Abat-
toir Co. which would amalgamate with William Davies to form Canada Packers. Canada Packers still owns the plant today and it remains in operation, its noxious odors a constant nuisance to the local residents for over 90 years. By 1925, the Western Cattle Market had closed and was replaced by a massive incinerator on the site. Known as the “Wellington Destructor”, the incinerator was one of the City’s two main garbage disposal units. Although not used today, it remains extant. To its immediate west is one of the City’s main Public Works depots, complete with heavy machinery and sand/salt storage. It is clear that Niagara remains a concentration of abject spaces and abject civic failures (Civic Abattoir, Lunatic Asylum, Central Prison, Mercer Reformatory).

Attracted by the meat packing industry, the railroads and other heavy industry, Poles, Ukrainians and Macedonians became the majority of the Niagara population. Prior to the arrival of the civic abattoir, Dr. Charles Hastings’ 1911 Slum Report indicated the immigrant nature of the population: his sample of households revealed a substantial immigrant presence, although it is unclear what percentage this represented of the total Niagara population. Hastings household breakdown was as follows: 38 Polish, 15 ‘Hebrew’, 11 Swedish, 10 Russian (probably Ukrainian), five Italian, four German, four Macedonian and one French.\textsuperscript{26} What is revealing about Hastings’ study is it does not give numbers of Anglo-Saxon origins, possibly suggesting that he was trying to make a link between the immigrant population and the sanitary problems found in slums. Moreover, Niagara, along with the Ward, were two of the areas that Hastings studied – in fact, all of the areas Hastings studied were considered ‘immigrant’ slums.

Invariably, the workers in the growing industrial Niagara area were immigrants. In particular, communities of Polish, Ukrainian and Macedonian workers were attracted by the close proximity to work. Macedonians were hired to do the unpleasant work of slaughtering that few others could stand. The Macedonians, perhaps more than other migrants, saw themselves as sojourners. The sole pur-
pose for being in Toronto was upward mobility back home. Therefore, they lived a spare existence, typically renting rooms in boardinghouses and were willing to accept jobs that others would not. The largest concentration of Macedonians was in the east end, around the old slaughtering businesses. As the Western Cattle Market in Niagara grew and abattoirs began to locate nearby, Macedonians moved to follow their jobs, thus establishing a second major Macedonian presence. Unlike the Ward, where buildings had little value compared to the value of the land, Niagara’s buildings tended to be worth more than (or at least equal to) the land itself. For example, two Macedonian boardinghouses at 131 and 151 Niagara Street had land values assessed at $829 and $821, yet each had buildings worth an estimated $800. This is not to suggest, however, that lodging in Niagara was of a high quality: indeed it was not. This poor quality of building stock is confirmed in the 1937 Public Works Department Inventory of substandard housing. In addition to many demolitions and renovations in the Ward, the Niagara area, especially Tecumseh and Niagara Streets, was targeted for renewal in the 1911 Slum Report (See [29]). Typical conditions were grim (Fig 12-3, 12-4, 12-5). Instead of high quality buildings, the equal value of land and building suggests that land in Niagara was not valuable, presumably because it was not as centrally located as the Ward. Moreover, the proximity to noxious industries and the abject spaces of the prison, reformatory and asylum suggest a negative impact on residential land values. This cheap land close to rail facilities propagated the conversion of much of the remaining residential land into industrial uses, which continued well into the 1920s.

The Ukrainian settlement mirrored the Macedonians. Ukrainians were slaughterhouse and railroad workers. Like the Macedonians, they accepted such work, thinking it was temporary. Unlike the Macedonians who wanted only to make money and return home, Ukrainians did not desire to return home. Rather, their temporary stay in Toronto was a step towards the Canadian frontier. The Ukrainians wanted to move to the Canadian prairies to settle on farms, so they could eventually bring their entire families to the new world. Many Ukrainians did just that and the Canadian West today reflects their heritage. By 1911, there were 2,500 Ukrainians in Toronto and when the First World War began, this number was 4,000. At the War’s end, some 9,000 Ukrainians called Toronto home. During the War, the War Measures Act required all men over 18 from specific countries to register and report regularly to police stations. This requirement forced many Ukrainians to stay in Toronto when they would otherwise have preferred to settle in the unpopulated West. Many ‘alien enemies’, as they were known, were interned at camps in the Canadian hinterlands: some 8,579 were interned, about 5,000 of whom were Ukrainians. These interns were used as forced labor by the state to develop some of the country’s infrastructure: Banff National Park, the logging industries in Northern Ontario and Quebec, steel mills in Ontario and Nova Scotia and mines in British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Ontario were among the enterprises fostered by forced labor. The programs were so ‘successful’ that internment continued two years after the end of the Great War. Even the Stanley Barracks in the New Fort York, just south of Niagara, were used as an internment camp during the war. The Ukrainians who were free settled in several parts of Toronto, at first in boardinghouses around York and King Streets, south of the Ward. As the community became more established, its center became the Bathurst/Queen Street area at the northern edge of Niagara.

The Ukrainian community was religiously diverse: 75–80% of the people were Ukrainian Catholics of Byzantine Rite (‘Uniates’), 15–20% were Catholics of Latin Rite (‘Latynnyky’) and a few were Ukrainian Orthodox (Byzantine Rite) from Bukovina and Central Ukraine. However, there was an acute shortage of Ukraine priests because of two factors: the Vatican had prohibited
married priests, which was the norm in the Ukraine, from leaving Europe in 1894, and the Canadian Roman Catholic hierarchy did not accept such priests among their ranks. Therefore, new Ukrainians in Toronto gravitated towards English-language Roman Catholic churches. One of the main churches they attended was St. Mary’s Church on Bathurst Street (Fig. 12-6,12-7), which had been home to the area’s destitute Irish Catholics since 1858. Others joined the Polish St. Stanislaus Church at 12 Denison Ave. (within a few blocks of Queen/Bathurst) in 1911. St. Stanislaus had previously been the Western Presbyterian Church since 1879. At this time the Poles and Ukraines were on good terms but as a result of the 1920 Polish-Ukraine war, the congregation was forced to split. Other important cultural institutions emerged in the Queen/Bathurst area: a presbytery was purchased at 821 Dundas Street West, another property was secured for a congregation at Ossington and Harrison Avenue and a congregation bought 146 Bathurst Street as a Kids Liturgy. In 1917, activist Paul Krat started his Free University at 516 Queen Street West. Therefore, the attraction of industry and subsequent settlement in Niagara resulted in a series of cultural institutions in the area.

The decision to construct a Civic Abattoir was first motivated by a stubborn desire on the part of civic leaders to thwart the loss of industry to West Toronto Junction, in order to create a competitive meat industry. However, it was soon viewed as an opportunity to concentrate the noxious slaughterhouses and butcher shops spread throughout the City into one place. The decision to locate in Niagara was obvious. By 1880, the City had installed a Central Prison, a Reformatory and Asylum. Moreover, the City created an early ‘industrial park’ by selling land to industries and constructing the Western Cattle Market in 1877. This abject space of the City contrasted with the ‘pure’ space of the residential communities, which were largely composed of the middle- and upper-class. Immigrant laborers were attracted to the area by the need for work: Macedonians, Ukrainians and Poles became the dominant ethnic groups in Niagara. Economic distress combined with low land values to create an area of boardinghouses that were of the poorest quality, creating the conditions of a ‘slum’ like the Ward. The Ward, however, was private land and the response by the state and civil society necessitated indirect means to control the ‘abject other’: by-laws, regulations and licensing were the tools of social control. In Niagara, however, the state owned the land. Social reform experiments, industry and noxious uses that were not desirable elsewhere could easily be concentrated in the abject space of Niagara. The abject was segregated.
from the pure. Conveniently, those immigrants whose practices were distinct from the dominant Anglo-Saxon hegemony would become a part of the abject space of the City. While the Ward today is the City’s main civic center and location of City Hall, Niagara remains largely ‘undeveloped’, although condominium projects have begun to surface. More typical is an urban fabric that remains much as it was in the 1920s: the Abattoir remains in operation (Fig. 12-8) and the building fabric remains in grim condition (Fig. 12-9). The Civic Abattoir story in Toronto illustrates the effectiveness of ‘zoning’ before zoning became not only the acceptable, but preferred, means of organizing the modern city. Separation of the abject ‘other’ from the pure ‘home’ had been achieved. The city had been cleansed.

(Endnotes)

1 New Brunswick and Nova Scotia joined Ontario and Quebec at Confederation in 1867. Manitoba joined in 1870 and British Columbia joined in 1871. British Columbia’s joining the Confederation, in particular, was conditional on a trans-continental railway being constructed within ten years. The railway got off to a rough start, however. A political scandal, called the Pacific Scandal, saw Hugh Allen, an industrialist and shipping magnate, pay off several Conservative politicians to secure the contracts. Sir John A. MacDonald’s Conservatives were forced out of government. The Liberal government which took over was less committed to the venture and by 1878 had started only a few rail projects. With the ten-year deadline near, the Tories regained power and quickly contracted with an American who advocated progress and profit over quality and safety. Chinese laborers were brought in to work cheaply and under dangerous conditions: at least 700–800 lost their lives, about 10% of the Chinese labor force. By 1880, the CPR syndicate was formed. The trans-continental was completed 7 November 1885.


5 City of Toronto Archives (henceforth CTA), RG 15, Committee on Markets and Health, By-Law 793 (1877).

6 Kealey (1980): 34.


8 The conditions varied company-by-company. For example, the Heintzman Piano Factory was exempt from property tax for ten years provided 50 employees lived in the Town (By-Law 14, 22 March 1888). This was later revised to stipulate that a minimum of 150
employees must be employed, 75% of which must live in the Junction (By-Law 525, 21 July 1902). Others, such as the Arts Good Manufacturing Co., were exempt if they employed over 50 men, 50% of whom were residents of the Town (By-Law 494, 9 August 1897). Some companies, such as the Dominion Showcase Co., were required to employ only 40 workers, with no conditions on how many lived in the Junction (By-Law 61, 11 March 1889).

9 Town of Toronto West Junction, Council By-Laws (1888-1903).

10 West Junction, By-Law 444, 12 May 1898.


12 Globe (22 June 1912): 16.


15 Toronto Public Library Virtual Reference Library Collection, York and Toronto City Directories, 1881.

16 CTA, RG3, File E1 citing 1917 Toronto City Directory.


20 CTA, Toronto Municipal Abattoir, RG3, File E1, Letter from Harris Abattoir Co. Ltd to Mayor, the Control of Control. 2 September 1912.


23 CTA, RG3, File E3, Board of Control Report No 7, Appendix A (22 March 1913): 418.

24 Mail 10 January 1919.

The preceding stories were intended to be semi-autonomous accounts of different aspects of what I generally call the *Civitas Peregrina*. Recall that *peregrina* refers to ‘foreign’ (in all its multiple meanings) while *civitas* refers to ‘city’. To this point I have been content to allow the particulars of the place to illustrate the kinds of concerns that I would contend are at the very heart of the modern planning system. If it is not readily apparent by now, one of the main goals of this text was to flesh out some of the earliest forms of social and physical planning, “planning before planning”, as it were. It is clear from the stories that the confrontation with various ‘others’ in the emerging industrial city created responses that would become important foundations for modern planning. The cases I describe draw upon Kristeva’s notion of abjection – that is, those peoples, practices and places that the state and civil society saw as ‘other’.

At the beginning of the text, I mentioned that the text had something of the character of an urban history – not a totalizing one, but with a particular focus. The focus of this text centers on what I have come to call ‘abject space’. In choosing to concentrate on the people, practices and places that the state and civil society considered deviant, I have outlined something of a theory of the origins modern planning practice. Of course, any history focuses on particular things while overlooking others. However, as Iain Borden contends, “the notion that history can or should be written ‘without methodology’ or ‘without theory’ is an absurdity.”

Thus, the choice, as Keith Jenkins maintains, is not whether history should be theoretical or not but “between a history that is aware of what it is doing and a history that is not.” To the extent that I’ve chosen to focus on the creation of ‘abject space’, I have disclosed my interest in certain things while omitting others. While I have been content to allow the reader to lose him or herself in the tangible ‘data’, it is time for full disclosure. Thus, in reflecting upon the preceding work, I might suggest there are some general principles, even theories, that become evident.

Perhaps the first disclosure is to admit the point of the text is not merely for historical interest. Eric Lampard’s oft-quoted call for a ‘new’ urban history in 1961 might be appropriate at this stage:

If the urban historian is to be more than a historian who happens to do his research and writing on the subject of cities, it will be necessary to show that the term ‘urban’ explains something in history that cannot be better explained by recourse to other frames of reference. In short, ‘urban’ must signify not subject matter alone but a scheme of conceptualization in much the same manner as ‘economic’ or ‘cultural’ history.

The point of this text, then, is to say something about cities by using historical evidence (versus saying something about history by using urban evidence). My intention has been to focus on what I have called ‘abject space’ because it would seem that these ‘objectionable’ places are where the planning mechanism has concentrated its efforts over the years. Initially, these places (taverns, brothels, slaughterhouses, etc) were associated with people and practices that were objectionable. I contend that the confrontation with ‘urban others’ and the subsequent battle for social order was fundamental to the planning establishment. Whether they were literally ‘foreigners’ or simply those that departed from the established social order (criminals, sexual deviants, mentally ill, etc), civil society and, later, the state, responded by creating institutions to re-constitute traditional values into the industrial city. Modern city planning became the mechanism to achieve this reconstitution. Initially, planning practice was almost exclusively limited to the City Beautiful movement: an aesthetic practice seeking to re-create community
through civic pride. Only later, especially after 1925, when the sociologists and planners held a joint conference, did the planning profession reconcile the social-control practices of earlier volunteer organizations with concerns for the physical environment.

While Toronto’s experiences are unique, there are important generalities that can be extracted out of the stories that say something about early North American cities in general. Various ‘movements’ appeared in Toronto and elsewhere; these movements – anti-prostitution, anti-saloon, women’s reform, Sunday school, charity organization, parks and playgrounds, housing reform, among others – were foundational to the development of the ‘professions’ of social work and planning (themselves becoming fused after 1925). Therefore, I might contend that the origins of modern planning lie within the confrontation with the abject spaces of the industrial city. What follows, then, outlines the salient discoveries from this study of Toronto’s abject spaces. Drawn from the Toronto experience, they also outline the trajectory from social and moral control to physical planning more generally.

Towards a Theory of Abject Space.

Although today planning is largely associated with the physical landscape of the city, the earliest concerns were with social planning. It is not surprising, then, that the earliest planning efforts were concerned with social – even moral – control. The first obvious trend that emerges in Toronto and elsewhere in North America is the tension between urban and rural values. As North America moved from an agrarian to an urban society, intense fear of change swept the continent. As cities grew, there emerged a common interest in controlling the behavior of the increasingly urban population. The feeling was that the city, despite obvious physical differences, should reflect the moral order of the village. That is, the urban population should be brought together as part of a collective community with shared moral and social values. In Canada, this village-ideal was reflected in the immigration policies of the time. As immigration and agriculture were the only Federally-led programs, it was the explicit policy to allow immigrants into the country who would ‘settle the land’. Urban settlers were not permitted entry.

The first campaigns of social order were issue-oriented and typically originated in the rural areas, as the anti-prostitution and anti-saloon campaigns suggest. Mark Twain’s famous words rang true for many of the earliest reformers: “Nothing so needs reforming as other people’s habits.” Public morals were indeed the biggest threat to society. It wasn’t simply the size, growth and changing demographics of the city that concerned traditionalists: the very interactions between people were changing from intimate face-to-face contacts to impersonal, anonymous relationships within the city. Of course, there was also value to these anonymous relations in terms of economic production but these discussions were subverted to the moral dilemma emerging in the city. This created what Simmel called a ‘blasé’ attitude among urban dwellers. This lack of sense of community within the industrial city led to vice and immorality in the eyes of village dwellers.

So how were these early social reformers’ concerns addressed? From the Toronto stories, it is clear that the state played little role, although the ownership of land (Park Lots vs. Reserve) played a key role. Even the churches had trouble overcoming the class divisions and religious preferences between Protestants and Catholics. Rather, volunteer organizations emerged that targeted specific ‘evils’. As Paul Boyer claims, these societies aimed to, “revive the power of shame through organized social disapproval”, thereby creating a “disciplined moral militia”. By 1828, the temperance movement had reached Canada to target the ‘liquor evil’. The temperance movement originated in the country and only in the second half of the nineteenth century did drinking become a major concern for urban dwellers. Concern in Toronto over the tavern as an institution began with the Sun Tavern and its discovery as the locus of the Rebellion of 1837. Thereafter, the tavern
was dangerous not only because of the inherent evils of the drink, but because of its position as a central political institution. Similarly, campaigns against the brothel came largely from those on the outskirts of town. However, these single-issue crusades were largely unsuccessful. Even in New York, where prostitution was growing rapidly, efforts to expose the associated ‘evils’ proved ineffective. In 1831, Canadian John R. McDowall released his Magdalen Report which led to the creation of the Magdalen Asylum in the notorious Five Points district of the lower east side. However, within years, support for the enterprise was withdrawn amid disinterest.

Despite the overwhelming similarities between Canada and the United States, there were a few differences. Some of the early responses to urban disorder in the United States did not play as important a role in Canada. For example, as early as 1816 in the U.S., the American Bible Society (ABS) had formed to ensure the distribution of the bible to counteract the move away from the church. By 1849, nearly six million bibles had been distributed, with every new immigrant receiving one. In addition to the bible movement, the tract movement was established to distribute texts that called for traditional values. First established in New York in 1812, the American Tract Society (ATS) emerged in 1825. These propaganda campaigns were largely absent in early Canadian society, presumably because of the nascent state of affairs in the fledgling colony.

The Sunday school movement, which first began in Philadelphia with the creation of the American Sunday School Union (ASSU) in 1824, also played an important role in U.S. society but was not a prevalent in Canada. The ASSU was formed because of the fear that foreigners who arrived in America would not attend church services. This fear also arose in Canada but over 20 years later when the wave of rural Irish peasants arrived in Toronto following the potato famine. Here, volunteer agencies such as the House of Industry and the Protestant churches assumed the role that the Sunday school movement had in the U.S. The greatest fear was for the ‘wandering child’, who could be tempted by the evils of the city. Both the ASSU in Philadelphia and the House of Industry in Toronto, then, offered ‘moral safety’ from the corrupting power of the city. While much has been made of the influence of puritan culture on early American life, the similarities between Canada and the U.S. suggest that it was not Puritanism, *per se*, that influenced policy but a more general Protestantism.

During this early period in both countries, problems of the city were viewed as problems with the character of individuals. Deviants needed to be transformed in character. Initially, mental deviants were treated the same as criminals, that is, locked up in jails. By the 1830s, new thinking evolved that categorized people according to their ‘problem’. Here, the state for the first time began experimenting with social planning. The Asylum, first born in England in 1796, became the accepted institution to deal with ‘lunatics’. Toronto, despite its small population, opened the third largest Asylum in North America in 1850 amid much fanfare. An air of optimism prevailed by mid-century: the problems of the city could be solved by the corrective measures of the state. Likewise, those with criminal tendencies were dealt with through punishment and incarceration. The law began to be viewed as a mechanism to deal with social order — for example, city by-laws prohibiting ‘vagrancy’ were introduced. With the rise of Irish immigration in the 1840s and the emergence of Toronto as a place of industry, the ‘evils of the city’ continued despite these early reform efforts. The law, it turned out, was not the panacea it seemed.

The failure of the issue-specific organizations to quell the tide of change caused reform-minded people to re-think their approach by the 1870s and 1880s. Rather than rely on strictly volunteer organizations, civil society moved towards full-time salaried ‘professional’ social work. During this next phase of reform, societal problems remained problems of the individual. However, rather than branches of the church and their associated proselytizing, new societies such as the YMCA and the Salvation Army emerged as independent professional aid
societies. Fundamental to the success of these institutions was the recognition that it was impossible to translate the subtle moral oversight of the village to the urban context. While the urban/rural tension and overarching Protestant ethics would remain, these organizations shifted their emphasis away from the sectarian towards the secular. Their ‘social work’ moved away from rural traditions towards more urban solutions.

This new approach to social planning relied on visitation as a means to directly connect middle-class ‘role models’ with those whose morals they were trying to elevate, resulting in the settlement-house movement. As the slum areas of the Ward and Niagara began to spread across their traditional boundaries, the middle-class of Toronto began to be concerned about the danger they posed to the larger society. Educational programs were launched to ensure newcomers adhered to the established hygienic and social standards of Anglo-Saxon society. Children were seen as the key to the betterment of urban life, as they had not yet the time to be corrupted by the evils of the city. Like the Asylum, their education emphasized uniformity, strict routine and exacting discipline. The Central Prison and Reformatory, too, were important institutions to correct the character flaws of children. Here, they would learn productive tasks so they could contribute to Victorian society.

Despite their insistence that the social evils were due to character flaws of the poorer classes, reformers began to recognize that their physical environment contributed to their condition. These early environmental factors, however, would only be seriously considered many years later with the Progressive movement. The YMCA, in particular, was concerned about ‘young boys’ in the city. By providing lodging and ‘wholesome’ recreation and leisure activities, the ‘Y’ sought to create an environment that would instill proper values. As Boyer argues, “although the ‘Y’ has long since subsided to a comfortably prosaic urban role..., it was once – like the Sunday school before it – perceived as a highly promising new social-control instrument.” Differences between the ‘Y’ and the Salvation Army existed. The ‘Y’, transplanted from England to Toronto in 1851, was financed largely by the wealthier citizens and targeted the middle-class male population as a preventative measure. The idea was to bring together isolated young men into an ‘association’ so they would be ‘delivered from temptation’. The Salvation Army, on the other hand, catered to the ‘the vicious and fallen and the criminal poor’ by attracting them by any means necessary: food, shelter, music, then providing them jobs and ultimately sending them out of the city to industrial farms. Fighting ‘dirt, disease and the devil’, the Army drew criticism because it departed so wildly from the tradition rural tactics of previous Christian aid societies.

With the birth of these new associations, the unit of reform had shifted from the individual to the level of the deviant group – the poor, the disenfranchised, the immigrants, among others. After 1880 and especially after 1900, these groups became increasingly different from the majority of the population. During the 1840s, with the arrival of thousands of Irish Catholics, difference began to be identified according to religion. The character of Toronto, however, remained largely Anglo-Saxon. With the industrialization of the city, thousands of migrants from the hinterland flocked to Toronto. These poor, rural unskilled laborers created another group that posed a threat to the social order of ‘Toronto the Good’. In this case, ‘otherness’ was defined along class lines. After 1880, with the arrival of Eastern European Jews, ‘otherness’ came to be seen along ethnic and racial lines. These newcomers were particularly ‘alien’: in dress, religion and mores. As the wealthy moved further away from the core of the city, facilitated by private streetcar companies, the city center became increasingly terra incognita for civic leaders. Such civic leaders were content to concentrate all the problems of the city – prostitution, gambling, drinking, poverty – into one area, the immigrant slums. Concentration was a double-edged sword: although it allowed the ‘respectable’ areas to remain free of contamination, concentration itself posed a risk because it created danger-
ous parts of the city. While the middle-class also found the slum useful as an outlet for their own vices, there was a fear that the concentrating these ‘evils’ in one place would eventually lead to spillage into the adjacent areas. Worse: these areas were in close proximity to the city center and the vital economic interests located there. Location, then, became a critical factor in the response to these urban others.

The differences between the location of the Ward and Niagara are therefore critical factors in how they were subsequently developed. Both areas were immigrant slums, located just beyond the original boundaries of the city. However, the Ward was located ‘in the path’ of the city’s north-south development. As such, market pressures as well as city ideals necessitated its removal. Niagara, on the other hand, was peripheral to the city’s growth, located on the western edge of the city. Problems in the Ward would come to be solved by social experiments in Niagara, the recipient of the Lunatic Asylum, Central Prison, Women’s Reformatory, Civic Slaughterhouse, among other noxious uses.

Land tenure was also a factor. Niagara was the former Military Reserve, thus in the direct control of the state. Although initially intended to be a wealthy district, the arrival of the railroads running across the reserve changed the character of the area. Lots were quickly subdivided from half acre estates to terrace housing to accommodate the expected immigrant laboring population. Conveniently located beyond the city limits, the Reserve was the ideal location for literally ‘abjecting’ the city’s deviants. Soon the Asylum, Prison and Reformatory gathered together on the Reserve. Over time, reserve land was sold to private industry. The entire area degraded into a mix of noxious industries, poor housing and reform institutions for the city’s unwanted. On the other hand, the Ward was held in private hands, having been granted to John Macaulay by Lieutenant Governor Sir John Graves Simcoe at the turn of the nineteenth century. Macaulay soon subdivided his property into small lots which were affordable by the city’s unskilled laborers. The ‘shantytown’ that emerged on the marshy land soon became the city’s most notorious immigrant slum. The state then proceeded over the next century to expropriate the valuable lands from private to public hands, replacing the immigrant area with more civic-minded uses (city halls, civic square, armories, hospitals, playgrounds, etc).

Not inconsequently, the volunteer associations quickly established their headquarters in the Ward by the late nineteenth century. The Salvation Army, for example, did more than any other religious group to adapt the moral outlook and social values of Protestant America to the immigrant areas of the late nineteenth century. By the turn of the twentieth century, ‘scientific’ methods were employed by these aid societies in order to understand the population they were trying to transform. These methods amassed great numbers of statistics although they continued to be subjective and based on traditional Protestant ethics (for example: is someone well conducted and industrious? Temperate and steady?). These quantified observations gave reformers the false sense that the social problems of the city were under control. During this time, individuals were no longer the unit of analysis but the deviant group itself.

The depression years of the mid-1890s made it clear that character flaws were not at the heart of urban crime and vice, but that the economic circumstances and the physical environment also played a major role. The success of organizations like the YMCA and the Salvation Army led to the creation of settlement houses such as Central Neighborhood House by the 1910s. Here, rather than making visits to poor families, reformers would take up residence within the immigrant district (in this case, the Ward). The social-control mechanism was more nuanced but class preoccupations remained. By this time, the physical transformation of the Ward was in full gear. Former churches had been converted to synagogues and many houses were converted to ‘cottage synagogues’. Kosher shops and Italian grocers multiplied across the Ward. Chinese laundries began dotting the landscape. Mass advertising – much of it in Yiddish or Chinese – plastered the
buildings and ‘foreign’ languages dominated its streets.

The new emphasis on environment was no less moralistic in attitude. Medical examiners such as Dr. Charles Hastings, while genuinely interested in improving the welfare of the immigrant communities, reinforced the connection between ‘foreigners’ and poor habits. Dirt, disease and poor morals became conflated in the minds of the Anglo-Saxon majority who had come to look upon the Ward and Niagara as symbolic of the dangers of industrial society. This ‘progressive’ era also marked a re-evaluation of the state’s role in urban affairs. Collusion between landlords, tavern-owners and, in some cases, prostitution with civic leaders meant one of the first objects of reform had to be City Hall itself. The election of reform mayor William Howland in 1885 led to the creation of the Morality Department that would police Toronto’s mores over the subsequent decades. Regulation, surveillance and censorship of movie houses, theaters, dance halls and parks were essential to ensure that proper social order was maintained.

The Progressives (or ‘the Social Gospel’, in Canada) argued that the physical space of the city needed purification. They had been buoyed by the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition that had transformed a swampy district of Chicago into a great ‘White City’. The City Beautiful movement was born with the notion that physical transformation would bring social order. For urban reformers, the 1893 Chicago Expo was more significant for its moral significance than its aesthetic implications. As Bostonian John C. Adams declared long after the Expo had finished: “The Great White City has disappeared but…we shall yet see springing into being throughout the land cities which shall embody in permanent form [its] dignified municipal ideals.”

Toronto followed suit. Within a decade the Toronto Guild of Civic Art had been formed with the beautification of the city as its goal. By 1909, a plan for its improvement had been presented. Within those plans was the explicit notion of eradicating the Ward in favor of a ceremonial civic square. Within a few years, the process of transformation which began as market succession prior to 1900 accelerated as the city expropriated land for civic purposes. By 1914, one piece of the new civic center, the Neo-Classical Registry Office, had replaced a block of Ward houses. Over time, the entire Ward would be replaced with a new civic square and various civic functions.

The Progressive era had two faces: a direct repressive (if not coercive) side and an indirect, environmentalist side. In both cases, it was the municipality, not charities, who needed to assume a larger role. In the U.S., these two approaches were evident in the work of two reformer friends from New York: Jacob Riis (environmental) and Theodore Roosevelt (coercion). Riis laments in How the Other Half Lives, that, “it is a dreary old truth that those who would fight for the poor must fight the poor to do it.”

Washington Gladden’s comments were typical: “A horror of great darkness rests now upon our cities…more powerful and more dangerous…an army of invasion…is assaulting in overwhelming force the citadel of every one of our municipalities… dire and imminent…the man who says that he is too busy to help in fighting these demons surely does not know what he is saying.”

The police and volunteer groups such as the Vigilance Committee kept close surveillance of the activities of the populace. These social control efforts worked in tandem with a consciously planned urban environment to ensure the proper moral order. There were both ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ environmentalists. On the one hand, a vast number of places and practices were targeted for elimination or control, each perceived to be associated with crime and vice. The list is dangerous places was diverse: Chinese laundries, slaughterhouses, taverns, massage parlors, brothels, theaters, Turkish baths, amusement parks, dance halls, cheap hotels, even ice-cream parlors. Each of these places represented a different threat: prostitution, disease, intemperance, promiscuousness, immorality, feeblemindedness. On the other hand, improvements to the landscape were envisioned including street widenings and provisions for more open space. The environmen-
talists moved on a number of fronts: housing reform, parks and playgrounds, public baths, children’s clubs, gyms and pools, and art initiatives were all employed to improve the physical environment of the poor. Substandard housing was pulled down, fixed up or, in Canada more than the U.S., replaced by initial forays into publicly subsidized housing. Sections of the Ward, for example, were pulled down in favor of the Elizabeth Street playground. More than simply providing sunlight and fresh air, playgrounds would provide a safe outlet for the natural instincts of children for fight and hunt. Under strict supervision, playgrounds could be a socializing influence and a means of fostering a community with a strong moral order. The rise of Frederick Law Olmsted and the park movement during this time also reflected the belief in the healing power of nature. By raising the standards of the environment, it was hoped individual mores would rise as well. By re-introducing the countryside into the city, it was possible to literally ‘shut out the city’. Again, this reflects a desire to instill village values in the city. As Boyer contends: “Whenever one probes the intellectual life of this period, one finds a fundamental shift of interest away from the individual to the group….This shift reflected not merely an interest in studying social groups, but also in controlling them through the benevolent manipulation of their physical and social environment.” The obsession with factual data and technical expertise completed this secularization of the social-control movement.

This secularization was evident in the changes taking place with the reform institutions. By the 1910s, prison labor had failed and the Central Prison largely demolished by 1920. The Women’s Reformatory, too, waned after the First World War. Inmates at the Lunatic Asylum became ‘patients’ as the asylum became a ‘hospital’. Sexual promiscuity and foreign immigration became rationalized by association with disease and ‘feeblemindedness’. Reformers shifted their terminology from ‘social purity’ to ‘social hygiene’. Tenements, too, became the target of reformers as the medical profession had linked the social ‘diseases’ (crime, vice, immorality) with improper light and ventilation. Moreover, having more than one family under the same roof did not fit traditional Anglo-Saxon values. Stricter building codes, model tenements and, most importantly, suburbanization (i.e. dispersal) emerged as means to counteract the ‘evils’ of the tenement. Despite the medical pretenses and apparent ‘scientific methods’ of the Progressives, fundamental village values had not entirely been shed. The desire to decentralize into suburbs, perhaps, reflected the desire to return to a more pastoral moral order.

Earlier in the text, I outlined three independent, but related concepts: Julia Kristeva’s notion of ‘abjection’, Georg Simmel’s ‘stranger’ and Robert Park’s ‘moral regions’. It is appropriate to return to those concepts at this stage. By now, it should be clear that the various stories of Toronto are an illustration of how abjection is a means of confronting urban ‘others’. In this sense, abjection is foundational to modern planning practice. It is instructive to recall Moruzzi’s explanation of Kristeva’s abject:

The subject abjests itself, and discovers itself in its own abjection; historically, the nation-state establishes itself through the convulsions of the body politic which rejects those parts of itself, defined as other or excess, whose rejected alterity then engenders the consolidation of a national identity.

Kristeva’s abjection moves from a concept that describes how individual identity could be formed to one that describes how collective identity could be formed. The collective battle to confront the evils of the industrial city in Toronto, as elsewhere, is the performance of abjection. The confrontation with those people, practices and places that were considered ‘other’ allowed the ‘body politic’ to discover the limits of its own social practices. In rejecting those parts of itself ‘defined as other or excess’, the histories of the various places I have written about
speak of the society’s own collective identity. This is the underbelly of the city and the underbelly of planning practice.

Robert Park and Modern Planning Practice.

This lineage can be traced to the emergence of sociology as a field of inquiry and the subsequent fusing of sociology with the nascent physical planning profession. I believe a path can be traced from Simmel and his ‘stranger’ to Robert Park and the Chicago School of Sociology. The Chicago School, in turn, has greatly influenced modern planning ever since social work and physical planning merged in the 1920s. Fairfield argues that “the origins of urban planning are to be found, at least in part, in a series of exchanges between planners and urban sociologists in the 1920s and early 1930s.” Thus, in re-examining the salient theories of this thesis, it is important to highlight Park’s influence in modern planning practice.

Park had an organic theory of society: he believed there was a moral order, a set of commonly held beliefs and opinions that held society together. What was needed was a methodology to uncover the essential facts of society and the laws that governed its development. For Park, sociology was that emerging methodology. For Park, human ecology was the study of what he called ‘natural areas’ and the human interaction found within them. By ‘natural’, Park meant the gathering of people with similar values in close proximity. The modern city, however, in Park’s eyes, relied more on secondary forms of interaction like newspapers, schools and state agencies than on personal, one-on-one contact. The segregated ghetto areas, largely comprised of immigrants or migrants, were an exception. Here, human interaction still relied on primary relations that were breaking down under the pressures of invasion, competition and succession. Park believed that reliance on these village-like primary relations was detrimental to urban life. The South Side of Chicago became a laboratory to explore the problems of southern blacks adjusting to the ‘great city’; Park came to see them as peasants unprepared for urban life. The race riots that erupted in 1919, in particular, allowed Park to consolidate his belief that the ‘stranger’, unlike Simmel’s, was a marginal character. For Park, the ‘crowd’, as epitomized in the race riots, could not be expected to be an effective agent for change. Rather, the ‘public’, which were the elite in Park’s eyes, could be a positive force for reconciliation. Park’s views of the ‘stranger’ were less than enthusiastic; according to Park, the city was “full of junk, much of it human, … men and women who, for some reason or other, have fallen out of line in the march of industrial progress and have been scrapped by the industrial organization of which they were once a part.”

Therefore, Park’s sociology fit the aims of the physical planners – that is, the efficient functioning of the modern city. As the Illinois Commission of Race Relations (ICRR) commented in its review of the 1919 riot, better race relations were critical so that “an indigestible mass of irrationally excluded persons would not clog the efficient processes of economic enterprise.” The two schools of thought came together with the 1925 meeting of the American Sociological Society on ‘the City’ which Park and his colleagues organized and which planners from the Regional Plan of New York and Its Environ attended. The sociologists laid out a theory of urban life that allowed the physical planners to deal with the social implications of their environmental imperative. Park’s position supported the widely held belief by that time that the modern city was more than a collection of individuals; rather, like Simmel’s “Metropolis and Mental Life” (1908), the unit of analysis was the social group. The problems of the city, then, resulted from the poor adjustment of those foreign to the new urban society. Park makes this explicit when he declares: “many, if not most, of our present social problems have their source and origin in the transition of great masses of population – the immigrants, for example – out of a society based on primary group relationships into the looser,
freer, and less controlled existence of life in great cities... All the problems of social life are thus problems of the individual; and all problems of the individual are at the same time problems of the group.”

The earliest of reformers sought to remove the deviant individual from the group and subject him or her to elevating effects of the institution. For Park, the challenge of the industrial city was to understand the group itself and reshape it as a means of controlling individual behavior. This social control of the new masses could then be done indirectly by manipulation of their environment. Park recognized that community was itself not a function of spatial proximity but rather “from a community of interest established through mental life and communication.”

The negotiation of space in the city was common among sociologists and physical planners. This interrelation between social control and space was unequivocal in Park’s presidential address at the 1925 conference entitled “The Urban Community as a Spatial Pattern and a Moral Order”. Park and Burgess’ now-famous diagram of concentric zones radiating outward from the central business district (CBD) reflect the hierarchy of urban space that corresponded to this moral order (Fig. R-1). Park acknowledged that the first zone away from the CBD, the ‘zone in transition’, was a neglected and sometimes abandoned region which often become the first point of contact for immigrants. For Park, the spatial organization of the city reflected the “importance of location, position, and mobility as indexes for measuring, describing, and eventually explaining, social phenomena.”

Park lamented the typical political practice of trying to aggregate communities from components that were ‘incompatible’. In particular, he begrudged that

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FIG. R-1. PARK/BURGESS CONCENTRIC RINGS.
social statistics could not be collected on the basis of the individual communities but were typically done according to Ward or other political entities. At the 1925 conference, planners acknowledged Park’s contention that the proper unit of urban growth should be the neighborhood group. By the end of the decade, planners had fully adopted the Chicago School contention that group consciousness was important in creating urban communities. One important planner who attended the 1925 conference was Clarence Perry. Unquestionably, Park’s influence on Perry resulted in his concept of the ‘neighborhood unit’.

The ‘neighborhood unit’ marked a radical paradigm for planning practice. Drawing from the sociologists work, the planners accepted that the problems of the modern city resulted from a lack of cohesive community at the neighborhood group level. The solution would be to recreate village conditions in the modern city by bringing together a homogeneous group of people and uniting them around a set of neighborhood services. While the sociologists did not agree with imposing village values in the modern city, they agreed that the basis for reform would be bringing together like-minded groups into neighborhood units. In effect, the sociologists advocated separating people according to their class, using social distance as a means to ensure social order in the city. ‘Neighborhood unit’ planning advocated the separation of commercial and residential districts because families “wish to live away from the noise of trains, and out of sight of the smoke and ugliness of industrial plants.” The neighborhood unit concept worked well with prevailing attitudes towards the slum and the influence of environment on behavior. Soon, the concept would be used to justify replacement of slums with ‘planned units’. In a few short strokes, Park and the Chicago School had contributed to the program that would become widespread: urban renewal.

As Fairfield reminds us, however, “exploring the connections between physical environment and social behavior, the sociologists had helped city planners think in new ways about social problems and to devise plans that appeared to promote social adjustment and social stability….What they had failed to do was to analyze critically the economic and political forces that had made the ideal of community problematic in the first place.”

Early notions of Judeo-Christian thought (in Leviticus) stressed the im-
The New Testament shifted this system of demarcating judgments to the level of the individual. As North American society moved from rural to urban, there was increased crime and a 'weakening' of morals. As the case of Toronto illustrates, reformers initially thought the solution was to target deviant individuals. After several unsuccessful attempts to rid the city of crime and vice this way, reformers became focusing their attention on deviant groups. Civil society responded by targeting such groups with aid programs. Still, problems in the industrial city persisted. By the turn of the twentieth century, the Progressives advocated that reforming the physical space of the city would elevate the city's morals. Despite the changing techniques, the goal remained the same: to instill a dominant set of morals, drawn largely from Christian values and rural life, upon the urban population. As the population became increasingly diversified due to immigration, the proselytizing was replaced with more secular approaches to assimilation. By the 1920s, sociological and physical approaches were reconciled into a system of comprehensive planning. From that point, urban problems would be dealt with not by imposing social values but by segregating people, practices and places that were not 'compatible'. Wholesale changes to the physical landscape to ensure like-minded people co-existed resulted in the neighborhood unit concept. The legacy of the social and physical segregation of these ideas is well known. Today, cities such as Toronto continue to cope with urban problems. If Toronto's experiences are unique, then this text has been, at best, an interesting exploration of some of the stories that impacted its transformation from a British town to a multicultural city. However, if Toronto's experiences can be generalized, perhaps the greatest lesson to learn is that cities are necessarily imperfect. It seems probable that cities need not only wonderful public spaces, high quality housing and amenities but they need the 'other' parts of the city as well. In the *civitas peregrina*, it is the abject spaces of the city that hold the potential to negotiate difference.

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(Endnotes)

4. Moral comes from the latin *mores*: the accepted usages and common behavior patterns of a people.
5. See Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (1908).
15. Some background on Park might be useful at this point. After a year at Harvard, Robert
Park moved to Germany where he completed his dissertation, *The Crowd and the Public*, in 1904. Park’s work led him to Auguste Comte, one of the founders of sociology. What was needed was a methodology to uncover the essential facts of society and the laws that governed its development. For Park, sociology was that emerging methodology. According to Fairfield, “like Simmel, whose work he admired, Park would show how the forms of social interaction, as distinct from the interests of social actors, shaped individual and group action.” He continues: “whereas Simmel, whose work provided an important basis for Park’s, had warned that the study of the forms of interaction must be supplemented by the study of economic and political interests and of power, Park developed a science of social change that focused exclusively on formal interaction.” Park’s misreading of Simmel’s ‘stranger’ obscured the degree that political and economic power influenced all social life; Park was concerned exclusively with social interactions at the group level. Park’s interests led him to become active in race relations, working with Booker T. Washington in educating black Americans. It was at the 1912 Tuskegee ‘International Conference on the Negro’ that Park met William I. Thomas, a University of Chicago sociologist. Thomas convinced Park to come to Chicago and arranged for him to teach a graduate course called ‘The Negro in Chicago’ in the fall of 1913. Through this work, Park published, in 1916, “The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment” and outlined his research program for the study of human ecology.

The South Side could have easily been Niagara - a working-class neighborhood adjacent to the stockyards. In 1886, Eastern and Southern Europeans were brought in to break up the eight-hour day movement, driving older German and Irish immigrant further south. In 1894, southern African-Americans were brought in as strikebreakers, which antagonized black-white relations. The housing shortage in the area further created tension between blacks and whites. On 27 July 1919, with conditions critical, some blacks at the only beach open to them at 25th street demanded to use the whites-only beach at 29th street. A riot ensued that lasted five days and ended with much bloodshed.
INDEX
TOOLS AND MECHANISMS FOR PLANNING

[02] Advisory City Planning Commission (1928)
[03] Animals, Restrict from Running at Large, W Toronto By-Law 16 (1888)
[04] Asylum Act (1839)
B [05] British North America Act (1867)
[06] Bruce Report on Housing Conditions in Toronto (1934)
[07] Bureau of Municipal Research (1914)
C [08] Canada Citizenship Act (1946)
[09] Central Neighborhood House (1911)
[10] Chinese Immigration Act (1885)
[12] Contagious Diseases Act (1865)
D [14] Department of Colonization & Immigration, CPR (1893)
[15] Dirt or Filth on Streets, Prohibit West Toronto City By-Law 28 (1888)
E [16] Expropriate Lands to Widen Streets, By-Law 7120 (1914)
[17] Empire Settlement Act (1922)
F [18] Factory, Shop and Office Building Act, Amendments (1914)
[19] Female Refugees Act (1897)
G [20] Guild of Civic Art, Toronto (1897)
I [21] Immigration Act (1869)
[22] Industrial Schools Act (1874)
J [23] Juvenile Delinquents Act (1908)
L [24] Laundries, Chinese, Regulate Location of, Toronto By-Law 57 (1911)
[25] License Taverns – West Toronto, By-Law 11 (1888)
L [26] License and Regulate Laundrymen, By-Law 41 (1902)
[27] Liquor License Act – “Crooks Act” (1876)
[28] Lord’s Day Act (1906)
M [29] Medical Report on Slum Conditions (1911)
[30] Morality Department, Toronto (1886)
[31] Moral and Social Reform Council of Canada (1909)
N [33] National Housing Act (1949)
[34] National Policy, The (1878)
O [35] Orange Order, The (1830)
[36] Official Plan, Toronto (1943)
P [37] Prevent Erection of Laundries, Butcher Shops, etc By-Law 5437 (1910)
[38] Prevention of Cruelty to and Protection of Children, Act for (1893)
[39] Public Morals, Preservation of, West Toronto By-Law 29 (1888)
[40] Privies, cesspools, drains, Regulation, West Toronto By-Law 31 (1888)
R [41] Railways Agreement (1925)
[42] Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration (1902)
S [43] Sanitary By-Law (1904)
[46] Tenement or Apartment Houses, Prohibit, Toronto By-Law 6061 (1912)
[47] Toronto Housing Company (1912)
V [48] Vigilance Committee, Toronto (1911)
Z [50] Zoning By-Law, First in Toronto (1952)
Acquire lands for Playgrounds, Toronto By-Law 5487 (1910)
This by-law was the first to expropriate lands for municipally-run parks and playgrounds. Of the first three implemented in 1911 (Elizabeth, O’Neill and St. Andrew’s), one, the Elizabeth Street playground, was in the Ward. A newspaper clipping from the Central Neighborhood House attested: “This is the playground of most of the little Jews and Italians of the city. These little ones of the foreign-born constitute one of our greatest social problems. It is important to us that they have opportunity, out in the open, under careful supervision, to fight the influences that come to them from the overcrowding in which their parents persist or are forced into. The playground is the true melting pot in which all the little foreigners are fused into Canadians.”

Advisory City Planning Commission (1928)
Commission was set up to provide consultation from the city’s ‘planning professionals. Its role was not legislative but made recommendations to City Council and the Board of Control. In a story in the Star on 2 February 1928, Mrs. J.W. Bundy, an advocate of the commission, said in introducing the commission: “during the 1927 jubilee celebrations we were looking at the past; today we are looking to the future.” The story proceeded to claim that “Toronto was a horrible example of town planning.” The local council of women, in particular, supported the adoption of the commission. The body was not under the new Town Planning Act but was embedded within city by-laws. A Star article on 26 May 1928 quotes the Mayor McBridge as saying the commission will make a plan for the improvement of the city as a whole but also for individual improvements such as the University Ave. extension. According to the mayor, the commission would provide input on: “street widenings, the city’s sky line, the zoning of the city for business, industrial and residential purposes, annexations of territory and ultimately the drafting of a general plan for the whole city.” The Commission would be appointed for three-year terms. In 1942, the Commission was effectively turned into the Toronto Planning Board.

Animals, Restrict from Running, W Toronto By-Law 16 (1888)
Enacted 22 March 1888 in West Toronto, this by-law restricted all animals from running at large within the town limits. This was one of a series of by-laws aimed at controlling the use of urban space. It was received as class legislation by the low-income residents of the town who relied on animals for food.

Asylum Act (1839)
Statutes of Upper Canada, 2 Vict, Chap 11 (1839): 32-36. This act provided for the establishment of a Provincial Asylum to care for the insane. After years of discussion, the Act allowed the province to begin the search for a suitable site. After considering a location at the Kingston Penitentiary, a 999 year lease was granted on 287 acres on the Military Reserve in Toronto for the sum of a penny per year (ironically, the Asylum’s address would be 999 Queen Street West and it would become known as ‘999’). Fifty of the acres were dedicated for the Asylum.

British North America Act (1867)
The act established the Dominion of Canada by the union of the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and gave the Canadian government the right to pass laws. Although any changes to the constitution still had to be approved by the British government, the BNA gave the Dominion greater autonomy. Although Canada received
space echoed the work done 20 years earlier by the Toronto Housing Company.

The impact of the Bruce Report (and Bruce's lobbying) was substantial. The federal government responded with the Dominion Housing Act (1935), the Home Improvement Program (1936-40), and the National Housing Act (1938). Bruce's reconstruction scheme for Moss Park materialized much later, and in a much different form, as Regent Park North. By 1939, over 9,000 houses had been inspected, with over half either renovated or replaced.

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**Bruce Report on Housing Conditions in Toronto (1934)**

At a luncheon celebrating the city's 100th anniversary on 6 March 1934, Lieutenant Governor Herbert A. Bruce shocked the audience by calling attention to the misery found in Toronto's slum districts. He called upon a plan “that would recognize the inalienable right of every man and woman and child to decent and dignified and healthful environment.” City Council accepted his challenge and by the end of the year had presented the Bruce Report, which called on all levels of government to help solve the chronic problems of housing quality and supply.

This report identified two slum areas in the City of Toronto: the Ward and Moss Park (in the east end). The agenda included repairing or demolishing unfit dwellings and building publicly owned and subsidized rental housing. Bruce also proposed a program of slum clearance and reconstruction which used a child-centred approach to design. The case study was Moss Park, where a link existed between poor housing conditions, limited recreational opportunities, and juvenile delinquency. New row houses and low-rise apartments were placed around a large central playground and other open spaces. This integration of home- and play-space echoed the work done 20 years earlier by the Toronto Housing Company.

**Bureau of Municipal Research (1914)**

The Bureau of Municipal Research (BMR) began around the beginning of the First World War in order to provide a supposedly non-partisan agency intended to educate the voting public about issues of civic importance. The BMR was modeled after New York’s BMR, which began in 1907. The BMR conducted research on behalf of the citizenry. Its board included some of the city’s top business leaders. Despite its claim of independence, the BMR represented the business interests of Toronto. One of its goals was to ensure the efficient functioning of the modern city. Topics of interest included the ‘slum’ problem, corruption of politicians, health and welfare issues, tax considerations and citizen participation. Its primary mode of disseminating knowledge was through the ‘tract’, a pamphlet that was short, easy to read and easy to produce and distribute. The audience was the ‘common man’.

For example, a report issued on 13 March 1914 entitled “Do you care how the other fellow is housed?” extolled the problems of overcrowding in the slums. Similar to Dr. Charles Hastings Slum Report, they report that of 714 ‘lodging houses’ in Toronto, 546 were overcrowded.
Their concern was less connected to the health of that segment of the population but the potential inefficiencies it caused for the functioning of the city. It concluded: "Unless a definite step is soon taken the consequent increase in crime and immorality will prove very expensive to the city." Another report issued 1 April 1914 entitled, "Is the solution to the housing problem a civic duty?" suggested that the state should play a role in providing adequate housing for its workers.

The BMR actively solicited citizen feedback: they ran a 'help-your-city-suggestion-box' program where citizens anonymously made recommendations on how to improve the functioning of the city. These were collected and published by the BMR.

A report published 31 July 1919 entitled, "The making of citizens. Education in citizenship story no. 2" published citizens comments criticizing the immigrant population: "If the alien (enemy or otherwise) is to continue in our midst, as he likely will, I would suggest the adoption of a very definite plan of compulsory education for him, whether he is young or old, in English and in the manners, customs, and institutions of our country." The BMR continued its work until the 1990s.

Canada Citizenship Act (1946)

Prior to 1946, Canada was in the unusual position of being a nation without citizens. The vast majority of Canadians believed that the Second World War had truly confirmed Canada as a sovereign nation and they wanted the rest of the world to recognize the country's recently won status. For that to happen, however, the remaining emblems of colonialism had to be removed and the symbols of independent nationhood substituted.

The deplorable state of Canada's naturalization laws added a note of urgency to this mission. Not only was there no such thing in law as a Canadian citizen; there were also ambiguities in the Naturalization Act of 1914, the Canadian Nationals Act of 1921 (it provided a definition of "Canadian nationals," a requirement for Canadian participation in the League of Nations and membership in the International Court of Justice), and the Immigration Act of 1910, the three pieces of legislation that dealt with citizenship. The result was unending confusion and embarrassment. There were other anomalies. Married women, for example, did not have full authority over their national status. Classified with minors, lunatics and idiots "under a disability," they could not become naturalized or control their national status as independent persons, except in very special circumstances.

The act (otherwise known as the 'Former Act'), enacted 26 June 1946, was the first time the Canadian citizen was defined as distinct from the British subject; Canadians no longer carried British passports. Canada became the first Commonwealth state to create a class of citizenship separate from Britain. The measure was brought before parliament by Paul Martin Sr., father of Paul Martin, who as of May 2003, was the leading candidate to assume the Prime Minister's role in February 2004. To become a Canadian citizen the prospective candidate was required to have legally gained admission to Canada, have five years residence prior to application, bear evidence of a good character, have adequate knowledge of either French or English (or twenty years residence), have 'adequate' knowledge of the privileges and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship, and to make a statement of intention to reside permanently in Canada. Privileges for British subjects remained intact under this new Act. British citizens who had completed the five year residency requirement at the passage of the Act automatically became citizens of Canada, and retained
their voting rights and old age pensions. These rights for British residents remained in place until the 1980s. Obtaining Canadian citizenship under this new Act enabled Canadian citizens to sponsor relatives in Europe. In the late 1940s, therefore, Canadian citizens could legally sponsor any immigrant to whom he could ensure employment in agriculture, lumbering, or mining. Section 2 of the Former Act defined “alien” as a person who was not a Canadian citizen, Commonwealth Citizen, British subject or citizen of the Republic of Ireland. The first certificate was issued to Prime Minster William Lyon Mackenzie King on 3 January 1947, along with other notables such as famed photographer Yousef Karsh.

Central Neighborhood House (1911)

The Central Neighborhood House (CNH) was created as the result of a series of studies by a dozen Victoria College (University of Toronto) students who studied the Ward in the opening decade of the twentieth century. It remains in operation today, although it has moved from its original location at 84 Gerrard St W in the Ward. Its mission statement is as follows: “The basis of Central Neighborhood House is the community. We work with people to improve the quality of each stage of life, especially for those with few opportunities. Our programs and services enable us to listen, respond to and advocate for the needs, interests and aspirations of diverse and changing populations.”

Programming and social reform efforts have formed the foundation of CNH’s work in all the neighborhoods it has served. By working closely with families and residents over the years, CNH has been able to identify and address developing trends and issues affecting the evolving community. Today, CNH offers a wide spectrum of programs and services and remains committed to improving the quality of life of people in the community. For example, in 1913, the CNH opened its first baby weight station and milk depot. By 1915, it had opened its first Settlement music school. After moving to 25-27 Elm St in 1919 (still in the Ward), it opened a nursery school in 1924.

Chinese Immigration Act (1885)

This act was intended to limit Chinese immigration to Canada by charging every immigrant a head tax of $50, a large sum of money in 1885. The move followed Australia’s head tax of £10, which dated from 19 November 1857. The head tax prevented all but a few wealthy Chinese from having their families join them in Canada. It would take the newcomers years of hard work and saving just to repay their own head tax loans. It was only after the head tax loan was repaid then they could save for the return trip. It is no surprise the immigrants were generally married at a later age than their stay-at-home counterparts. Another feature of the act was the requirement that no more than one Chinese immigrant could be carried aboard a shipping vessel for every 50 tons of cargo. This meant that a 300 ton ship could carry only 6 Chinese immigrants. Failure to pay the head tax would result in arrest, a one year sentence and a fine of $500. The goal was to make a limited supply of Chinese labor available for Canadian industry but to restrict and constrain the competitiveness and the way of life of the Chinese. The impact was immediate: Chinese immigration fell from 1200 in 1885 to 212 in 1886, an 82% reduction. These measures reflected the strong anti-Chinese sentiment in the country. For example, in 1882, Prime Minister John A. MacDonald called the Chinese “a semi-barbaric, inferior race”, and “machines with whom Canadians couldn’t compete...” By 1900, when immigration jumped to 400, the head tax was amended to $100. By 1903, Chinese immigra-
tion reached historic levels of 4000 people, prompting the government to raise the head tax to an astronomical $500 – equivalent to two years’ wages. Other legislative measures aimed at the Chinese, including restrictions on property-holding and occupational choice and, above all, on political rights in the form of disenfranchisement legislation, further confined their lives.

The head tax proved effective, yet many Chinese still came to Canada. The 1923 Act abolished the head tax in favor of absolute exclusion. Canada was far behind other nations in its hostile treatment of Chinese immigrants. As early as 1882, the United States passed its Chinese Exclusion Act. In 1901, Australia had passed its Immigration Restriction Act, better known as the White Australia policy. The exclusion was effective: between 1923 and 1946, when it was repealed, only 25(!) Chinese immigrants came to Canada.

Civic Square/Federal Avenue Plan (1911)
With the extension of the City Beautiful Movement from Europe to North America in the late 19th century, Toronto’s Financial District became the focus of civic improvement schemes. In 1905, the Guild of Civic Art financed a plan that laid out a series of ceremonial boulevards between Front and Queen Streets, west of Bay Street. The Civic Improvement League proposed a scheme by John Lyle in 1911 to develop “Federal Avenue”, running north from Union Station (then in the planning stages) to a ceremonial square where Toronto’s New City Hall now stands. Lyle was a member of the Improvement League for a brief time until he resigned to become its Architect. His Beaux-Arts training in Paris, eight years’ recent experience in New York and taste for formal planning were evident in the plan. The route followed the line of present-day Sheppard Street that runs west of and parallel to Bay Street between Adelaide and Richmond Streets. After World War I, as the Financial District expanded west of Bay Street, the Graphic Arts Building (1913) at 73 Richmond Street West was designed to flank the planned Federal Avenue. By the time the aptly named Federal Building (1922-1923) and Concourse Building (1928) were in place, plans to reorient Federal Avenue as Cambrai Avenue were blocked by the development of buildings along the proposed route. Construction activities were curtailed during the Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II. After the war, increasing prosperity resulted in infill and redevelopment in the Financial District.

Contagious Diseases Act (1865)
The Contagious Diseases Act (CDA) was designed to protect military men from venereal diseases. The statute authorized the detention of diseased prostitutes for up to three months at certified hospitals. The fact that the soldiers were equally guilty of spreading venereal disease was overlooked by this law, as they were not subjected to mandatory treatment like the prostitutes. It may never have been enforced since no hospitals were ever certified to detain diseased prostitutes. The statute expired in 1870. However, during the First World War, alarming reports surfaced, which claimed that a full twelve per cent of all illnesses among Canadian soldiers serving overseas in the war were accounted for by venereal diseases. It was asserted that the main culprit in the spread of venereal disease was the prostitute. A second Act was passed that picked up some of the intent of the CDA. New legislation was enacted in 1917 to deal with the perceived crisis of the 1910s. The Defence of Canada Act was amended and contained a number of provisions to control venereal disease. The Act made it an offence for “any women infected with venereal
disease to have sexual intercourse with a member of the armed forces, or to attempt to solicit a serviceman for sexual purposes”. Ontario launched a Royal Commission on ‘venereal diseases and feeblemindedness’ that continued to pursue contagious diseases. The recommendations in the report called for sweeping and draconian powers for public health officials including the power to enter any house where they suspected a person infected with venereal disease may reside, and to remove and detain individuals for treatment.

First comprehensive criminal code of Canada. Sections especially important included:

PART V SEXUAL OFFENCES, PUBLIC MORALS AND DISORDERLY CONDUCT

Offences Tending to Corrupt Morals.
167. (1) Every one commits an offence who, being the lessee, manager, agent or person in charge of a theatre, presents or gives or allows to be presented or given therein an immoral, indecent or obscene performance, entertainment or representation, (2) Every one commits an offence who takes part or appears as an actor, a performer or an assistant in any capacity, in an immoral, indecent or obscene performance, entertainment or representation in a theatre.

172. (1) Everyone who, in the home of a child, … indulges in habitual drunkenness or any other form of vice, and thereby endangers the morals of the child or renders the home an unfit place for the child to be in, is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years.

Disorderly Conduct.
173. (1) Every one who willfully does an indecent act (a) in a public place in the presence of one or more persons, or (b) in any place, with intent thereby to insult or offend any person, is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

179. (1) Every one commits vagrancy who (a) supports himself in whole or in part by gaming or crime and has no lawful profession or calling by which to maintain himself; or (b) having at any time been convicted of an offence … is found loitering in or near a school ground, playground, public park or bathing area. (2) Every one who commits vagrancy is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

PART VII DISORDERLY HOUSES, GAMING AND BETTING

Gaming and Betting.
201. (1) Every one who keeps a common gaming house or common betting house is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, (2) Every one who (a) is found, without lawful excuse, in a common gaming house or common betting house, or (b) as owner, landlord, lessor, tenant, occupier or agent, knowingly permits a place to be let or used for the purposes of a common gaming house or common betting house, is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

Bawdy-houses.
210. (1) Every one who keeps a common bawdy-house is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, (2) Every one who (a) is an inmate of a common bawdy-house, (b) is found, without lawful excuse, in a common bawdy-house, or (c)
as owner, landlord, lessor, tenant, occupier, agent or otherwise having charge or control of any place, knowingly permits the place or any part thereof to be let or used for the purposes of a common bawdy-house, is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

Procuring.
212. (1) Every one who (a) procures, attempts to procure or solicits a person to have illicit sexual intercourse with another person, whether in or out of Canada, … is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years.

Offence in Relation to Prostitution.
213. (1) Every person who in a public place or in any place open to public view … (c) stops or attempts to stop any person or in any manner communicates or attempts to communicate with any person, for the purpose of engaging in prostitution or of obtaining the sexual services of a prostitute is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction, (2) In this section, “public place” includes any place to which the public have access as of right or by invitation, express or implied, and any motor vehicle located in a public place or in any place open to public view.

Department of Colonization & Immigration, CPR (1893)
The Canadian Pacific Railway was the chief vehicle for settling Canada’s unpopulated West. After the completion of the cross-continental railway in 1885, the company moved to facilitate settlement through its Colonization and Immigration department. The CPR Colonization Office began to make “ready made farms” complete with a small house and barn to get people settled faster. Literature promising the wonders of the Canadian West was distributed throughout Europe. The campaign brought settlers from Russia, Romania, Scandinavia and Germany, among others. The volume became so great that the CPR acquired an Atlantic fleet of ships to bring the newcomers. In 1923, president of CPR Sir Edward Betty claimed they spent $64.6 million on settling 100,000 prairie farms which was “very much in excess of like Government expenditures during the same period.”

Dirt or Filth on Streets, Prohibit, W Toronto By-Law 28 (1888)
This by-law, enacted 29 May 1888, established penalties for throwing garbage in public space. It “prohibited from throwing or placing any dirt, filth, carcases of animals, or rubbish of any description of a filthy nature, on any street, road, land or highway”. These measures were an attempt to create a more orderly urban environment and contain the emerging threat of diseases associated with filth.

Expropriate Lands to Widen Streets, By-Law 7120 (1914)
This was a typical by-law which was enacted perhaps hundreds of times to allow the city to expropriate certain private lands on the front of properties in order to widen streets. It was widely believed that by widening streets, the city would improve air flow and light. Insufficient air and light were believed at the time to be major contributors to disease and ‘feeblemindedness’.

Empire Settlement Act (1922)
This act was a government scheme for settling 3,000 families from the United Kingdom in Western Canada. Canada and England entered into an agreement to advance funds sufficient for the settlement of these families.
upon farm lands in Canada which are ready for occupation. These farms were to be located in established districts, and within reasonable distance of a railway. There would be houses on the farms and the government promised further loans (up to 300 pounds) for the purchase of livestock and equipment.

[18] Factory, Shop and Office Building Act, Amendments (1914)
By 1914, Chinese laundries were springing up all over Toronto. Businesses need employees, and the government became concerned about the corrupting influence Asian men might have on white women. The Ontario Factory, Shop and Office Building Act was amended in 1914 to prohibit 'orientals' from employing white women. The fear was that laundries were a front for the 'white slave trade', an underground network of foreign-born 'pimps' who forced single white women to work as prostitutes. The Act was careful not to imply the direct connection between the Chinese and prostitution. The act states simply: "no Chinese person shall employ in any capacity or have under his direction or control any female white person in factory, restaurant or laundry."

[19] Female Refugees Act (1897)
Enacted in 1897, the law allowed females aged 15 to 34 to be jailed for "incorrubility" for such behavior as public drunkenness, promiscuity or pregnancy out of wedlock. The act was not repealed until 1964. In 2002, Velma Demerson launched a lawsuit against the Ontario government for her imprisonment under the law. Demerson says she was in pajamas one morning in 1939 when police burst into the home where she lived with the Chinese man, Harry Yip, she was in love with. She was questioned by a social worker about her morals and then sentenced to a year in a reformatory. Demerson, who was pregnant, gave birth while in detention. Her child was taken away until her later release. The Supreme Court ruled that Ontario is immune from lawsuits stemming from incidents prior to 1964. On 7 January 2003, Velma received an official apology from the Ontario government.

[20] Guild of Civic Art, Toronto (1897)
The Guild was initially formed to promote the arts in Toronto. By 1904, the Guild had become active in the promotion of civic art at the city-scale – that is, urban design. Born out of the City Beautiful movement that followed the 1893 Columbian World Exposition in Chicago, the group consisted of some of Toronto’s elite businessmen. For example, its president was Edmund Burke, general manager of the Canadian Imperial Bank. The 1904 Great Fire had provided the Guild with an opportunity to propose such a dramatic plan for the downtown. In 1905, they had launched a major planning study. By 1909, the Guild had presented a plan for the improvement of Toronto and by 1911, had proposed a series of targeted initiatives in the downtown core, including the Federal Avenue project. The Guild hoped to improve traffic, modernize the core, and give the drab city some pretenses of grandeur.

[21] Immigration Act (1869)
Canada’s first immigration legislation reflected a laissez-faire attitude. Rather than have specific classes of immigrants, most requirements were at the discretion of the officers in charge. In particular, paupers and destitute immigrants could be denied entry. Built into the statute was the provision of restricting immigrants that posed a threat to public health. The 1869 Immigration Act required masters of sailing vessels to
post a three-hundred-dollar bond in order to secure the landing of any person who was "Lunatic, Idiotic, Deaf and Dumb, Blind or Infirm" and therefore likely to become a public charge.

The Immigration Act of 1906 was the first definition of ‘immigrant’. It also barred a broad spectrum of individuals and increased the government’s power to deport certain classes of immigrants. It also decreed the amount of “landing money” immigrants needed to have in their possession on arrival. The 1906 act significantly increased the number of categories of prohibited immigrants and officially sanctioned the deportation of undesirable newcomers. As conservative parliamentarian Frederick Monk noted: “"We should exercise more prudence in the choice. What is fifty years in the life of a nation? It is nothing; and in building up our nation we should aim to have the best kind of men, men who would be prepared to maintain here the institutions of a free people. I do not at all agree with the principle that our one ambition should be to fill up the country." Such sentiment was balanced by the more Liberal policies of people like W.M. German: “The United States wanted to fill up their country with people and they did so; we want to fill our country with people.... Let the people come. They may not in all cases be desirable but we will endeavor to lead them in the proper paths and make them desirable when we get them here.”

The Immigration Act of 1910 conferred on the Cabinet the authority to exclude “immigrants belonging to any race deemed unsuited to the climate or requirements of Canada.” The Act also strengthened the government’s power to deport individuals, such as anarchists, on the grounds of political and moral instability. It passed an order-in-council, for example, requiring immigrants of Asiatic origin to have $200 in cash at the time of landing, a formidable sum in 1910, when the average production worker in Canada took home only $417 in annual wages. Another order-in-council required that all immigrants arriving in any season other than winter have on them $25.

The draconian measures of the 1910 Immigration Act were expanded in 1919, at the height of social unrest in Canada (Winnipeg had a prolonged General Strike in 1919). The notorious Section 41 made it possible for the government to deport a naturalized citizen, or almost anyone not born on Canadian soil, on account of subversive political beliefs. The Act also added new grounds for denying entry and allowing for deportation (e.g. constitutional psychopathic inferiority, chronic alcoholism and illiteracy). Section 38 allowed Cabinet to prohibit any race, nationality or class of immigrants by reason of “economic, industrial, or other condition temporarily existing in Canada” (unemployment was then high), because of their unsuitability, or because of their “peculiar habits, modes of life and methods of holding property”.

[22] Industrial Schools Act (1874)
The Ontario Industrial Schools Act of 1874 provided for the creation and operation by school boards of residential industrial schools to which a broad range of neglected and dependent children could be admitted by court order. Yet the Act did not provide for a network of day schools to which vagrant, poor and neglected children attending school as a consequence of compulsory education could be sent, as many had demanded. Nor did it provide for involvement by private philanthropists or cooperation of school boards. Industrial schools never did become the primary mechanism for dealing with neglected children, but instead replaced the reformatories. For neglected children the government adopted the cheaper alternative proposed by the children’s aid movement: foster home care...
administered privately under government supervision.

[23] **Juvenile Delinquents Act (1908)**

The JDA applied to young people over the age of 7 and up to a maximum age set by each province. The JDA treated young persons in trouble with the law as misdirected and misguided children, rather than young adults who were legally responsible for their actions. There was no emphasis on accountability or on the protection of society. The JDA continued in force, with only minor amendments, for the better part of the century.

...the care and custody and discipline of a juvenile delinquent shall approximate as nearly as may be that which should be given by his parents, and that as far as practicable every juvenile delinquent shall be treated, not as a criminal, but as a misdirected and misguided child and one needing aid, encouragement, help and assistance. - Section 38 of the Juvenile Delinquents Act

The determination of whether or not a delinquency had been committed was made informally and sometimes without due process. The Act was guided by the principle of attending to the best interests of the child and had the power to declare youths to be in a state of delinquency for violating the criminal code of Canada as well as a host of provincial or municipal statutes and bylaws. Certain behaviours such as incorrigibility, sexual promiscuity, and truancy could also be declared delinquent. Available sentencing options included suspension of disposition, adjournment sine die (no penalty), fines, probation, placement with Children's Aid Society, and indeterminate commital to training school. Sentencing did not necessarily fit the crime. An individual who violated a minor provincial statute could be sentenced to training school for an undetermined length of time if the judge thought it necessary to reform his or her delinquent condition.

[24] **Laundries, Chinese, Regulate, Toronto By-Law 57 (1911)**

This by-law was typical of the time. It permitted the police to make regular inspections of laundries. It also allowed the medical officers to make sanitary inspections of the premises. Further, the appearances of the building were regulated.


Enacted 1 May 1888 in West Toronto, this by-law limited the number and location of taverns and shops by requiring licenses. This was a typical example of this kind of by-law. Initially, no shop licenses were permitted. Only two tavern licenses were permitted (costing $200 each, to be paid to the Ontario government). On 20 September 1888, this was amended upward to three licenses (by-law 39). By 6 May 1889, an amendment was passed which required taverns pay an additional $200 to the town in addition to the Ontario fees (by-law 77). On 10 February 1890, four tavern licenses were permitted (by-law 116). On 22 February 1892, a new provision was passed: taverns were required to have at least 12 hotel rooms, three sitting rooms and stables. In this amendment, the number of licenses was increased to five (by-law 258). However, this was repealed a week later (by-law 261).

[26] **License and Regulate Laundrymen, By-Law 41 (1902)**

By 1901, there were 96 Chinese laundries in Toronto. The local press goaded health authorities into targeting the “dirty laundries.” As a result,
the city government passed by-law No. 41 in June 1902 to “license and regulate laundrymen and laundry companies and for inspecting and regulating laundries.” Toronto was not the only city to have such a by-law. Back in 1900 Vancouver had already passed by-law No. 373 prohibiting Chinese laundrymen from using mouth water to spray clothing while ironing. In 1903 Kamloops city government declared Chinese laundries a public nuisance and forced a Chinese laundryman, Ah Mee, to sell his property. Then in the next few years, Calgary, Lethbridge and Hamilton followed suit and later induced several provinces, such as Ontario, to pass similar anti-Chinese laundry acts.

[27] Liquor License Act – “Crooks Act” (1876)
Crooks Act takes power to grant tavern licences away from Ontario municipalities and transfer it to a provincial board. Act is intended to preserve in the municipality, peace and public decency and repress drunkenness and disorderly and riotous conduct.

[28] Lord’s Day Act (1906)
The purpose of the Federal 1906 Act was to encourage citizens to reserve Sunday for religion and family (Ontario had passed a similar law a decade earlier). The municipal police made sure that sports and recreational facilities stayed closed on Sunday, while turning a blind eye to elite private clubs. This law further hindered the sports and leisure activities of the working classes at a time when the six-day work week was common. For a while, it also restricted the growing entertainment industry, including professional sports, and renewed the struggle to eliminate blood sports (cock fighting, bull baiting, etc.) and boxing, events accompanied by betting, drinking and public disorderliness feared by public authorities and the local religious elite. The Act was the result of intense lobbying by the conservative Lord’s Day Alliance group. It prohibited a wide range of activities, in addition to recreation: selling or purchasing goods or real estate, carrying out any work, business or labor for gain, or employing a person to do so, providing or attending “any performance or public meeting, other than in a church, at which any fee is charged, directly or indirectly,” conveying passengers if such travel was related to amusement or pleasure, even eating ice cream.

[29] Medical Report on Slum Conditions (1911)
Widely read report by Chief Medical Officer Dr. Charles Hastings on the housing and social conditions in three of Toronto’s notorious slums: Cabbagetown/Moss Park to the east, the Ward in the city center, and Niagara in the west end. The Report described physical conditions that were so bad that they constituted a “public nuisance, a menace to public health, a danger to public morals and, in fact, an offense against public decency.” Hastings was careful to categorize the houses; in the Ward, for example there were: 100 filthy houses, 42 overcrowded rooms, 26 dark rooms, 64 vacant houses, 63 tenement houses, 13 common lodging houses, 97 rear houses, and 108 houses unfit for habitation.

Interestingly, Hastings was fascinated by the correlation between physical conditions and the nationalities of the residents. In the Ward, he noted the following breakdown: 1207 ‘Hebrew’ families, 180 Italian, 32 Polish, 25 German, 9 Chinese, 8 Colored, 7 French, 3 Armenian, 2 Macedonian, 1 Swedish, 1 Greek, 1 Assyrian. Notably absent were the statistics on those of Anglo-Saxon descent.

Lack of water supply was documented: 7.8% of houses in the
Ward had none while in Niagara it was 6.7%. The connection between overcrowding and disease was made apparent to Hastings: he compared the inner-city ward of St. Mary’s in Birmingham (UK) and its death rate of 331 per 1000 with the suburban garden city of Bournville (outside of Birmingham) and its death rate of just 65 per 1000. In Toronto, he feared that “Infected people are mixing up with citizens in the large hotels, crowded street cars, crowded theatres and public buildings generally, and hence become a menace not only to themselves but to the municipality generally.”

**Morality Department, Toronto (1886)**

A creation of reform mayor William Howland, the Morality Department was charged with the task of overseeing the mores of ‘Toronto the Good’. Staff Inspector David Archibald was appointed by Howland to head a special police squad whose task was to “combat cruelty to animals, women, and children, and to oppose gambling, prostitution, Sabbath-breaking, and unlicensed drinking.” This unique squad initiated the closure of brothels, prosecuted the operators of illegal drinking establishments, and reduced by a third the number of licensed saloons. It also introduced programs to curb the abuse of women and children.

**Moral and Social Reform Council of Canada (1909)**

An umbrella organization derived from the Methodist Church’s Temperance, Prohibition and Moral Reform Department (1902) and the Presbyterian Church’s Board of Moral and Social Reform (1907). These organizations were a part of the greater ‘urban reform movement’ that sought to make cities in North America “healthy, moral and equitable” (Rutherford 1984, p437) and concerned itself with municipal government reform, sanitation, immigration, and moral reform.

**Municipal Act Amendments, December (1912)**

Section 583 of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1903, c. 19, as amended up until December 1912, stated:

10. For preventing or regulating and licensing exhibitions held or kept for hire or profit, theatres, music halls, bowling alleys, moving picture shows where vaudeville performances are introduced and other places of amusement and for prohibiting the location of any of such places of amusement, or a particular class of the same, on any street or section of street to be named in the by-law.

**National Housing Act (1949)**

The 1949 amendment to the NHA was the first provision in Canada for publicly constructed housing, making Canada one of the last countries in the western world to institute a social housing program. However, between 1949 and 1963, only 12,000 public housing units were built (an average of 850 units a year). Some have argued that the low levels reflected not incompetence but intentional inactivity: in essence, the 1949 NHA amendment was taxpayer-funded public relations campaign aimed at addressing criticism of the federal government’s inaction on meeting severe rental housing needs among low-income households.
National Policy, The (1878)
Policy set forth by the governing Tories to protect Canadian industry from U.S. and British companies which lead to their election in 1878. For example, the shoe industry: in 1850s, the import tariff stood at 12.5%, by 1859 raised to 25%. Lowered in 1866 but raised to 17.5% in 1874 and back to 25% in 1879.

Orange Order, The (1830)
A Protestant Irish Society that promoted solidarity. Overwhelmingly conservative (Tory) and typically working-class, they often rioted against the City’s Catholics (25 times in 22 years from 1867-1892). First Orange lodge was started in 1830 in Brockville by Ogle Gowan. After 1859, Orange lodges were forbidden to meet in hotels, taverns or saloons. Gowan promoted benevolent functions over the traditional militaristic aims of the Order in Ireland. Members were committed to four duties: 1) To uphold the principles of the Christian religion, 2) To maintain the laws and constitution of the country, 3) To assist distressed members of the order, and 4) To promote other ‘laudable and benevolent purposes’ consistent with Christianity and constitutional freedom. Twelve lodges were formed during the 1830s in Toronto, 17 in the 1840s, 15 in the 1850s; by 1860, they had been consolidated into 20.

Official Plan, Toronto (1943)
In 1942 the City of Toronto Council appointed an Advisory Planning Board to “advise council on any and all matters connected to the use and development of land within adjacent to the City so as to provide for the greatest convenience, health and well-being of the inhabitants and economic advantage to the citizens and the community at large.” A Master Plan was prepared in 1943 that outlined ambitious transportation improvements through a grid of superhighways, redevelopment of the inner city (including Regent Park, the country’s first public housing project), and the creation of a series of greenbelts separating suburban communities. The Plan was not approved by council. The City’s first Official Plan was approved in 1949. It was more practical than the 1943 Master Plan, and concentrated mostly on public works and the proper distribution of land uses. In the 1950s the approach to planning was more realistic than futuristic; the first parts of the subway system, and the Gardiner and Don Valley expressways were constructed. Little attention was paid to urban renewal until a 1956 Urban Renewal Study.

Prevent Erection of Laundries, Butchers, By-Law 5437 (1910)
This is an example of scores of such by-laws. They were particular to specific streets. By-law 5437 pertained to Hillsboro Ave, but other by-laws were enacted for many other ‘residential’ districts. The by-law prevented “the erection and use for stables for horses for delivery purposes, laundries, butcher shops, stores, manufactures, blacksmith shops, forges, dog kennels, hospitals or infirmaries for horses, dogs or other animals, of any building on Hillsboro Ave”.

Commonly known as the Children’s Protection Act, this act laid the groundwork for child welfare in Ontario. With this legislation, children’s aid societies became, in 1893, semi-public agencies with the legal power to remove children from their homes, supervise and manage children in municipal “shelters” and collect monies from municipalities to cover the maintenance costs for wards. Societies at this time gained the status
and prerogatives of legal guardians. It was the result of agitation by J.J. Kelso, president of the Toronto Children’s Aid Society and the Toronto Humane Society.

This by-law, passed 29 May 1888, was a typical assortment of restrictions aimed at maintaining the village morals. It prohibited serving liquor to minors or servants. No ‘indecent writing, picture or drawings’ could be displayed in any public places. Profanity was prohibited in the presence of women or children. Of course, public drunkenness was outlawed. Moreover, it was a crime to engage in “any disorderly conduct in any street or highway or public space or at any public meeting”. Gambling houses were prohibited in this by-law. Prostitution houses (houses of ill fame or bawdy houses) were also prohibited. No public nudity or bathing between 6am-9pm was permitted. Naturally, mating horses in public was outlawed. No loitering in streets, highways or public spaces was permitted: “any person so found loitering or idling about the streets, highways, hotels or other public spaces, without having any employment or other visible means of support or be able to give a satisfactory account of themselves, shall be deemed a vagrant” and subject to penalties.

[40] Privies, cesspools, Regulation of, W Toronto By-Law 31 (1888)
This by-law stipulated that exterior privies or privy vaults must be at least 15 feet from any dwelling 30 feet from any well, and have minimum dimension of three by four feet and must have a door. No sinks, cesspools or private drains were permitted. It also required that all household garbage be destroyed on the premises. Enacted June 19, 1888 (West Toronto Junction).

[41] Railways Agreement (1925)
This agreement was reached to bolster the settlement of farms to the West. This was a contractual agreement between the federal government and two major rail lines, the CPR (Canadian Pacific) and the CNR (Canadian National), to “recruit, transport, and place in Canada agricultural families, farm laborers and domestic servants.” Representatives from these two firms were to search for farm workers in Eastern and Central Europe. The railways gained due to the sale of steamer and rail tickets to the immigrants. Also, both companies owned significant tracts of land that they could sell to prospective immigrants. Just two years earlier, the government had separated immigrants into preferred and non-preferred; although Eastern and central European workers were non-preferred, the government recognized the need to settle the West.

[42] Royal Commission on Chinese/Japanese Immigration (1902)
The 1902 Royal Commission was more a result of a large increase in the Japanese population than continued dissatisfaction with the “Chinese Problem”. Fear that the entire Asian population was going to overtake the European population, and dislike and fear of Chinese culture and traditions were instrumental in driving this Royal Commission. The Commission was bigoted: as Robert Bruce Farwell of Revelstoke said, “[T]hey [Chinese and Japanese] are in every sense a most undesirable class of immigrants; they retard the progress of the country, and keep good immigrants from coming in here; if they were not here, white men would take their places”. Likewise, Smith Curtis says, “[T]he Orientals are physically and mentally an inferior race, and if allowed to come into the country without restriction,… the white race would be driven our [sic] or be degenerated and degraded”. Even Presbyterian Ministers, such as
Rev. W. Leslie Clay did not welcome them: “I would say Canada would be strengthened by exclusion of the Chinese race. It has a tendency to deter white immigration. They depress wages, which tends to lower the standard of living. They reduce the ability of others to purchase. They ignore our religions [sic] services. They create a laxity of sentiment and feeling and the social evil is likely to increase. I think they are injurious in present numbers”. The Commission recommended raising the head tax to $500, which the government did two years later.

[43] **Sanitary By-Law (1904)**
Passed 22 February 1904, the city’s sanitary by-law was intended to address the growing health concerns in the city’s poor districts. The by-law required all houses to have a supply of drinking water. Under the by-law, any tenant could apply to the Board of Health to determine if the sanitary conditions of their dwelling were sufficient. If it was not, then the owner must pay for the inspection and would be compelled to install proper facilities (article 8). If the dwelling was up to the standards determined by the Board of Health, however, then the tenant had to pay for the inspection. Separate provisions were made within the act that dealt with slaughtering (article 12). Here, all slaughtering activities needed to be given a permit. No animals (except dogs and cats) were allowed with 75 feet of the house or within 25 feet of a public place (article 13). Fines ranged from $5 to $50 (article 42).

The Temperance Act of 1864, commonly called the Dunkin Act, regulated the sale of liquor in Ontario. This act recognized the principle of license but also conferred power on municipalities to prohibit the sale of liquor and the issue of licenses locally. A by-law prohibiting the sale of liquor and the issue of licenses might be submitted to a vote of the electors on the initiative of the municipal council. (Hallman) The law allowed any Municipal Council in Ontario to prohibit “…the retail sale of intoxicating liquors in townships and smaller localities if the majority of the electors within the municipality declared in favor of the law.”

[45] **Temperance Act, Ontario (1916)**
The Ontario Temperance Act was passed in 1916 thanks to the Committee of One Hundred whose sole purpose was to get Prohibition passed. After a huge demonstration occurred at Queen's Park in Toronto with 15,000 marchers and 3 truckloads of petitions that contained 825,572 signatures (out of a total population of 2.5 million) on 4 April 1916, Bill 100 was passed unanimously (This was similar to a bill that had already been passed in two other provinces). Bars and taverns closed down but distilling continued as the federal government controlled it. The act stipulated that no establishment could stock or sell any alcoholic beverage above 2.5% alcohol content. All bars, clubs and wholesale liquor outlets were banned. This act took effect Saturday, 4 September 1916 at 7pm. The manufacture of liquor by licensed companies and the importation and exportation of liquor were safe as this fell under federal jurisdiction. However, popular opinion was strong in the urban areas. New “standard hotels” popped up to service patrons. They were strictly regulated and served the 2.5% but they had to provide food, water conveniently located, and lavatory facilities for both men and women. Corruption began, as many did not agree with the government. Breweries and distilleries were upset that their businesses were being destroyed without compensation. To fight back many breweries continued to make the 9% beer (the standard) and
liquor to sell to the standard hotels. The owner would hook up a special
draft line and when there were no inspectors, the real thing was served.
This attracted many of the old regulars. In 1927, Ontario opened the first
liquor store in Toronto, ending the 11 year Prohibition in the province. To
this day, all retail beer and liquor are sold by the state-run Liquor Control
Board of Ontario (LCBO) and Brewer’s Retail (‘The Beer Store’).

[46] Tenement or Apartment Houses, Prohibit, By-Law 6061 (1912)
This is an example of a typical anti-apartment/tenement by-law. Enacted
on 13 May 1912, this by-law targeted the area around the Ward. Not
surprisingly, no restrictions were made at the core of the Ward – only
along its periphery. This by-law prohibited the “erection of apartment or
tenement houses, and of garages to be used for hire or gain, on certain
streets”: Agnes (only @ University), Armory (only @ University), Eliza-
beth (only above College), Edward (only @ University), Elm (only @
University), Osgoode (only @ University), and University Avenue itself
(Queen to College). Thus the only provision in the Ward was along Uni-
versity Avenue. In 1912, there were 17 pages of prohibited streets, each
with 30 streets per page. With apartments and tenements prohibited on
over 500 streets, none were in Niagara or the Ward (except at University).
Apparently, it was not tenements per se that were problematic, but rather
tenements that infringed upon ‘good’ residential neighborhoods. Despite
the restrictions, by 1931, there were about 20,000 apartment units in
Toronto.

[47] Toronto Housing Company (1913)
With the return of veterans and the increase in immigration following
World War I, overcrowded and deteriorating housing conditions emerged
as a serious problem. As a result, the City made its first great foray into
social reform, extending public controls over formerly sacred private
property rights.

[48] Vigilance Committee, Toronto (1911)
The Vigilance Committee, a volunteer organization spearheaded by evang-
elical leaders, encouraged its members to report all ‘frivolous young
girls and boys likely to be easily enticed into wrong doing.’ Located in
the Temple Building (Bay and Richmond Streets), only a couple blocks
south of the Ward, the committee was well positioned to undertake its
work. Coming to and from the Vigilance Committee’s office, members
would have been unable to miss the many boys hanging out in and around
the nearby theatres. The committee reminded the attorney general that
while minors were prohibited from entering ‘nickel-shows’ and ‘moving
pictures’ unless accompanied by an adult, ‘these same minors can freely
gain access to a theatre where a burlesque company is giving a risqué
performance and there, in a smoke-beclouded atmosphere, both hear and
see things extremely detrimental’.

This was a report presented by the Bureau of Municipal Research in 1918
as an exposé on conditions in the Ward. The subtitle to the report is tell-
ing: “A Report on Undesirable living conditions in one section of the City
of Toronto – ‘the Ward’ – conditions which are spreading rapidly to other
districts.” The undercurrent of this report is that the physical deterioration
associated with the city’s foreign quarters might spread to other districts
if it is not stopped. The report takes the form of a survey. Statistics are
presented that document the type and quality of buildings. Land values
are also explored, comparatively between 1909 and 1916. In particular, the BMR is concerned with overcrowding. The self-proclaimed purpose of the report is, “by an intensive study, to bring home to the citizens the real meaning of ‘the ward,’ its cost in money and lost civic efficiency, and the necessity of preventing the spread of such conditions.”

Zoning By-Law, First in Toronto (1952)
This was the first time comprehensive zoning was officially used. Of course, as this text illustrates, measures to ‘zone’ the city according to different uses was on-going through piecemeal general by-laws and ideas about the social and moral order of the city. As with all zoning by-laws, the Toronto zoning by-laws set regulations for the development of land including: permitted uses, maximum lot coverage density, minimum lot frontages, setbacks, height, and the requirements for open space and parking, among other matters. The authority for the enactment of the Zoning By-law is derived from the Provincial Planning Act. This Act allows municipalities to regulate the use of land and set standards for most forms of development.
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**Slaughtermen + Butchers (Fig. 12-1)**
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Chinese Laundries (Fig. 5-6)
I. Primary Sources.

A. Archives.

Archives of Ontario.
- RG 3-14, Premier Mitchell F. Hepburn Newspaper Clippings.
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Front City of Toronto Archives (henceforth CTA). Fonds 1498, Item 16.
Fig. X-1. By author. GIS data provided by University of Toronto Map Library.
Fig. X-2. Sabiha Ahmad, University of Michigan. http://www.umich.edu/%7Erisotto/home.html. Original drawings by Charles Booth.
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Fig. X-10. By author. CAD data provided by City of Toronto.

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Fig. 1-13. By author. Map underlays provided by Toronto Virtual Reference Library. http://vrl.tpl.toronto.on.ca.
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Fig. 1-18. By author. Map underlays provided by Toronto Virtual Reference Library. http://vrl.tpl.toronto.on.ca.
Fig. 1-19. By author.
Fig. 1-20. By author.
Fig. 1-21. By author.
Fig. 1-22. By author.
Fig. 1-23. By author.

Fig. 2-2. Courtesy of Rick Bebout, Toronto.

Fig. 2-3. Courtesy of Rick Bebout, Toronto.

Fig. 2-4. CTA. E.R. White Photographic Collection, Item 156.

Fig. 2-5. CTA. E.R. White Photographic Collection, Item 499.

Fig. 2-6. CTA. E.R. White Photographic Collection, Item 503.

Fig. 2-7. Glenn McArthur and Annie Szamosi, William Thomas Architect 1799-1860 (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1996): 89.

Fig. 2-8. Central Neighborhood House as reproduced in Robert F. Harney and Harold Troper, Immigrants: A Portrait of the Urban Experience, 1890-1930 (Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold Ltd., 1975): 134.

Fig. 3-1. Toronto Virtual Reference Library. http://vrl.tpl.toronto.on.ca.

Fig. 3-2. Toronto Virtual Reference Library. http://vrl.tpl.toronto.on.ca. Overlays by author.

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Fig. 3-4. CTA, Armories.

Fig. 3-5. CTA, William James Photographic Collection, Item 323A.

Fig. 3-6. Helen & Henry Goldenberg Family Collection as reproduced in Robert F. Harney and Harold Troper, Immigrants: A Portrait of the Urban Experience, 1890-1930 (Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold Ltd., 1975): 88.

Fig. 3-7. Original map by Dr. Charles Hastings, “Report of the Medical Health Officer Dealing with the Recent Investigation of Slum Conditions in Toronto, Embodying Recommendations for the Amelioration of the Same,” Report of the Medical Health Officer, 1911. Edited by author.


Fig. 3-9. Globe, 11 December 1952.


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Fig. 4-2. John Ramsay, Palaces of the Night: Canada’s Grand Theatres (Toronto: Lynx Images, 1999).

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Fig. 5-3. By author. Data by Census of Canada, 1871-1971, 2001.


Fig. 5-5. By author. Maps underlays by Toronto Reference Library.

Fig. 5-6. By author. GIS data provided by University of Toronto Map Library. Locational information by City of Toronto Council Minutes, CTA.

Fig. 5-7. CTA, Department of Public Works, Housing Photos, Item 171.

Fig. 5-8. CTA, Department of Public Works, Housing Photos, Item 250.

Fig. 5-9. CTA, Department of Public Works, Housing Photos, Item 178.

Fig. 5-10. CTA, Department of Public Works, Housing Photos, Item 252.

Fig. 5-11. CTA, Department of Public Works, Housing Photos, Item 212.
Fig. 5-12. CTA, Department of Public Works, Housing Photos, Item 256.

Fig. 5-13. Archives of Ontario (henceforth AO), F1075, H852.

Fig. 5-14. United Church Archives as reproduced in Robert F. Harney and Harold Troper, Immigrants: A Portrait of the Urban Experience, 1890-1930 (Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold Ltd., 1975): 190.

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Fig. 6-2. CTA as reproduced in John Zucchi, Italians in Toronto: Development of a National Identity, 1875-1935 (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988): 69.

Fig. 6-3. Toronto Reference Library. Overlays by author.

Fig. 6-4. Bureau of Municipal Research, “What is the Ward Going to do with Toronto?” (Toronto, 1918): 38.

Fig. 6-5. A. Rose, Regent Park, A Study in Slum Clearance (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958).*

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Fig. 6-9. Telegram (29 July 1944), CTA, Series 361, Subseries 1, File 566.

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Fig. 7-1. Original map by Bonnycastle as reproduced in CTA, Isobel K. Ganton, “The Development of the Military Reserve, Toronto, 1792-1862”, unpublished (April 1975). Edited by author.

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<td>Fig. 7-13</td>
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<td>Women’s Christian Temperance Union.</td>
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<td>Fig. 8-2</td>
<td><em>Grip</em> 9 (10) 29 July 1877, McMaster University, William Ready Archives and Research Collections, Bengough Papers as reproduced in M.P. Sendbuehler, “Battling ‘the bane of our cities’: Class, territory, and the prohibition debate in Toronto, 1877,” <em>Urban History Review/Revue d’histoire urbaine</em> Vol. XXII #1 (October 1993): 37.</td>
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<td>Fig. 8-3</td>
<td><em>Grip</em> 9 (15) 1 September 1877, McMaster University, William Ready Archives and Research Collections, Bengough Papers as reproduced in M.P. Sendbuehler, “Battling ‘the bane of our cities’: Class, territory, and the prohibition debate in Toronto, 1877,” <em>Urban History Review/Revue d’histoire urbaine</em> Vol. XXII #1 (October 1993): 45.</td>
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<td><em>Grip</em>, 6 May 1876, McMaster University, William Ready Archives and Research Collections, Bengough Papers as reproduced in M.P. Sendbuehler, “Battling ‘the bane of our cities’: Class, territory, and the prohibition debate in Toronto, 1877,” <em>Urban History Review/Revue d’histoire urbaine</em> Vol. XXII #1 (October 1993): 34.</td>
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<td>John Ross Robertson, <em>Landmarks of Toronto</em> Vol. 5 (Toronto, 1908): 502.</td>
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<td>Fig. 10-1</td>
<td>Peter Oliver, <em>Terror to Evil-Doers: Prisons and Punishments in Nineteenth Century Ontario</em> (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1998).</td>
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<td>Fig. 10-2</td>
<td>Roger Hall et al., eds., <em>Patterns of the Past: Interpreting Ontario’s History</em> (Toronto and Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1988).</td>
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Fig. 10-3. Courtesy of Rick Bebout, Toronto.

Fig. 10-4. Courtesy of Rick Bebout, Toronto.

Fig. 10-5. Courtesy of Rick Bebout, Toronto.

Fig. 10-6. Roger Hall et al, eds., Patterns of the Past: Interpreting Ontario’s History (Toronto and Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1988).*

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Fig. 11-2. City of Toronto Archives as reproduced in Robert F. Harney and Harold Troper, Immigrants: A Portrait of the Urban Experience, 1890-1930 (Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold Ltd., 1975): 65.

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Fig. 11-4. CTA, Department of Public Works, Housing Photos, Item 183.

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Fig. 11-6. CTA, Series 4, Subseries 33, Item 688.

Fig. 11-7. CTA, Series 4, Subseries 33, Item 759.

Fig. 12-1. By author. GIS data provided by University of Toronto Map Library. Locational information by Toronto and York City Directory, Toronto Virtual Reference Library. http://vrl.tpl.toronto.on.ca.


Fig. 12-3. Dr. Charles Hastings, “Report of the Medical Health Officer Dealing with the Recent Investigation of Slum Conditions in Toronto, Embodying Recommendations for the Amelioration of the Same,” Report of the Medical Health Officer (1911): 5.


Fig. 12-5. Dr. Charles Hastings, “Report of the Medical Health Officer Dealing with the Recent Investigation of Slum Conditions in Toronto, Embodying Recommendations for the Amelioration of the Same,” Report of the Medical Health Officer (1911): 11.

Fig. 12-6. By author.

Fig. 12-7. By author.

Fig. 12-8. By author.


Rear CTA, William James Photographic Collection, Item 1091.
The literature on early planning history tends to document the ‘progress’ made at the turn of twentieth century through the scientific study and rationalization of urban space. Through a detailed study of two areas in early immigrant Toronto, another side of planning’s history is told: the stories about the relationship between social control and the transformation of the city. Toronto is particularly relevant as it has undergone rapid social change through the twentieth century, from an almost exclusively British colonial town to one of the world’s most ethnically diverse cities.

Two areas form the basis for the study: the Ward and Niagara. While the Ward originated as land given as ‘Park Lots’ to aristocracy as gifts for relocating to the nascent town, Niagara originated as a Military Reserve. Thus, the Ward’s development was the function of the market, while Niagara was largely state-controlled. Ten groups of places form the nexus for the stories, forming a broad spectrum of institutions: abattoir, asylum, boardinghouse, church, city hall, playground, prison, synagogue, tavern, and theater. Each story focuses on a particular form of social or moral problem in the city and traces the response by the state and civil society. The stories document the responses to perceived ‘others’ in the emerging industrial city – concepts of ‘other’ based on race, ethnicity, class, health, religion, sexuality, lifestyle, even the choice of housing. In tracing the efforts by the state and civil society to control the social values and morals of the population, something of a ‘pre-history’ of planning is illustrated.

The creation of new institutions, new planning mechanisms and new comprehensive ‘plans’ resulted in the simultaneous consolidation of ‘other’ people and practices into undesirable areas (Niagara) and the dispersal of the same where they existed in more vital parts of the city (the Ward). The study situates the specific responses in Toronto within the larger movements taking place throughout North America – movements that formed the basis for the origins of the modern planning system. The study hypothesizes that the confrontation with the ‘abject other’, that is, those peoples, practices and places that departed from the social norm, was foundational to the modern planning system.