

TOLLKEEPER' S WALKING TOUR No. 4

Northeast Corner of Davenport and Bathurst

FUNDRAISING AND PUBLIC EDUCATION TOURS FOR
THE RESTORATION AND OPERATION OF
THE TOLLKEEPER'S COTTAGE

Sponsored by the
**COMMUNITY HISTORY
PROJECT**
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Tollkeeper's Tours are designed as a series and no tour duplicates information given on other tours.

BATHURST STREET

First called Crookshank's Lane, a dirt path led from Crookshank's house at Front near Peter street, through his Park Lot, up to his Farm Lot 26. As Seaton Village grew, it continued northwards, but did not push above the escarpment until 1915, In 1870 it was named for Henry, 3rd Earl of Bathurst, Secretary for War and the Colonies.

YORKVILLE & VAUGHAN PLANK ROAD

The right-of-way for this route is still visible around the bottom of the northeast corner of Davenport and Bathurst, between the fence and the sidewalk. The route began at Yonge and Bloor, followed Davenport, went up the escarpment, veered west just south of St. Clair, joined Dufferin and continued on to the boundary line of Vaughan Township - a distance of more than twelve miles.

HILLCREST SCHOOL

Built 1905 to replace SS 25 Seaton Village, it was first a four-room red brick building designed by John Ellis. Some children from the old school were sent to Huron Street P. S. Many additions were made, the second one in 1921, and the third in 1980. The school has a very active Parents' Council, and is celebrating its centenary in 2005.

HILLCREST HOSPITAL

History begins here in 1884 when a lovely young woman, Kate Evans, was visiting from Liverpool and learned that a woman patient had been discharged from the General Hospital with no place to go and was found frozen to death the next morning. Kate began a series of extraordinarily large donations to build a convalescent hospital called *Hillcrest* and George Gooderham gave an acre of his lands at the corner. Deed restrictions attached to the donations mean that the facility must be a hospital forever.

DAVENPORT

In 1793, Ensign John McGill on the staff of Lt-Gov Simcoe was granted Farm Lot 25 FTB of 200 acres. By 1797 he had built his small frame house on the edge of the escarpment and named it *Davenport*. Access to the house was from the road that took the name of the house, up the swale which Bathurst Street eventually followed. McGill died and, in 1821, the Farm Lot was purchased from his widow by Col. Joseph Wells. Wells tore down the house, and built a bigger one on the same site but kept the name. 120 steps led from Davenport Road to the house. Divided among his heirs, the property north of Davenport eventually came under the control of Wells' granddaughter who lived in the house until her husband went out west. The last of the land was sold in 1913, and the house was demolished.

LENWIL

E. J. Lennox (1855-1933) was the architect who designed the old City Hall and copied with Henry Pellatt's enthusiasms as he designed Casa Loma. Lennox bought three acres from Wells' granddaughter, Nina Wells de Pencier, and in 1915 built this house on the lot. The original address was on Davenport Road. There were 21 rooms in the original house with one, a baronial hall, two storeys high. After Lennox died, the property was purchased by an American businessman, followed by a period of vacancy, then conversion to a multiple dwelling. In 1949, it was purchased by the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate of Christ the King, teachers and nurses. The Sisters sold off the Davenport frontage and built the west wing. The property was listed on the City's Inventory in 1973.

CASA LOMA

Henry Pellatt purchased land from Nina de Pencier and began his elaborate plans. Construction began in 1909 with the lodge, intended as a summer cottage, then the beautiful stables were built at a cost of \$200,000. In 1910, Pellatt had made a trip to Europe and came back filled with ideas for his castle which had 98 rooms when finished in 1913. A Major-General in the Queen's Own Rifles, Pellatt raised and equipped the regiment for service on World War I. Bank failure forced Pellatt to abandon his castle in 1923; its contents were sold in 1924. It was designated in 1973, still owned by the city but leased to the Kiwanis Club.

THE BALDWINS & SPADINA

Farm Lots 23 and 24 came to be owned by the great Baldwin Family, mostly by inheritance. Dr. William Warren Baldwin designed and built *Spadina* in 1818, and when it burned down, he built a second house with the same name on the site. The Baldwin accomplishments and philanthropy are formidable. They had a burial plot, *St. Martin's Rood*, on the property, and had preserved a log cabin dating from the French Regime. The Hon. Robert Baldwin built a cottage as a study, and it is the only Baldwin building still on the property. When the Hon. Robert died, the estate lands were broken up for the first time, and *Spadina* was purchased by James Austin who tore down the Baldwin house and built the present house on the same site in 1866. Austin's heirs sold off much of the land and, later, donated the house to the city which restored and designated it in 1987.

SPADINA STEPS

The present steps replace an earlier wooden staircase, and commemorate the end of the battle over the Spadina Expressway. From the top of the steps one can gain a proper sense of the height of the escarpment.

ARDWOLD

In 1905, John Craig Eaton purchased the old farm called Ravenswood from Anne Austin Arthurs. The old

house was torn down and *Ardwold* was built on the site in 1911 with its street address given on Davenport Road. In 1936, the property was divided and the house torn down.

THE TOLLKEEPER'S COTTAGE

This rare wooden building once stood on the road allowance of Bathurst at Davenport where it served as No. 3 Tollgate on Davenport Road from around 1835 until 1892-3 when it was sold and moved off-site to serve as a house. It is the *only* early tollhouse known anywhere in Canada, and is one of only four buildings known in Ontario to be of vertical plank construction. It was designated by the City of Toronto September 2003.

As the local history group for the area, the Community History Project undertook to salvage, relocate, and restore the Cottage to serve as a museum devoted to the history of roads and the 19th century tolling system, and as a facility for the community. The Cottage is being restored to its earliest state, and furnished to 1861 when the largest family of a tollkeeper lived in the building.