

SUBURBAN DILEMMAS, ONTARIO, 1853-1897

SUBURBAN DILEMMAS
THE DEVELOPMENT AND AMALGAMATION OF ONTARIO SUBURBAN
MUNICIPALITIES, 1853 TO 1897

By

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BA (Hons), MA

A Thesis
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

McMaster University

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (2004)
(History)

McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Suburban Dilemmas: The Development and Amalgamation of Ontario Suburban
Municipalities 1853 to 1897

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NUMBER OF PAGES: ix, 250

ABSTRACT

In the second half of the nineteenth century the six Ontario suburban communities of Yorkville, New Edinburgh, London West, London East, Parkdale and Brockton were incorporated. In general suburbanites opted for incorporation because their increasingly urban concerns were not being met by the governance of the rural townships of which they were a part. Although the municipal status of these suburbs lasted for varying periods of time, and only overlapped briefly in the early 1880s, they had much in common. All six municipalities attempted to develop as alternatives to the cities they neighboured. Suburbanites and their local governments worked hard to create local identities and, at least for a time, stave off amalgamation with the neighbouring cities, which were increasingly anxious to expand their boundaries. All the while the suburbs were forced to balance the development of infrastructure and the need to keep taxation low in order to keep their communities viable and attractive locations for householders and businesses. The creation and maintenance of expensive infrastructure was often poorly handled, and led to massive expenditures and soaring suburban debts. This fiscal chaos within the suburbs ensured that the amalgamation question would be much debated by both suburb and city. While the ratepayers of each of the suburbs ultimately endorsed amalgamation, they did so only after what were often long and protracted debates. If anything, the struggle over amalgamation illustrated that suburban solvency and responsibility had to be weighed against questions of suburban agency and independence.

Acknowledgements

Firstly I would like to thank the Ontario Government and McMaster University for providing me with financial assistance throughout my studies.

During the course of my research I have benefited from the help and professionalism of the archivists and other staff at several archives. My thanks is extended to the staff of the J.J. Talman Regional Collections at the University of Western Ontario, as well as the staffs at the Archives of Ontario, the City of Ottawa Archives, the City of Toronto Archives, the Toronto Research Library, and the National Archives of Canada.

To my supervisor Dr. Ken Cruikshank I owe much thanks for his professionalism, tolerance, advice, and humour. He has consistently aided me on my progress through my doctoral studies guiding me through my comprehensive examination and as the thesis slowly evolved and took shape. Similarly I am indebted to the other members of my committee namely, Dr. John Weaver and Dr. Richard Harris. To both I extend my sincere thanks for their advice, constructive criticism, and encouragement throughout the process. There have been many other professors and mentors who have helped me along throughout my academic career, namely Dr. Richard Rempel at McMaster and Dr. Roger Hall, Dr. Ian Steele, and Dr. Keith Fleming of the University of Western Ontario for early encouragement. To other members of the faculty and staff in McMaster's Department of History goes my thanks for the help and encouragement they have provided. Our Graduate Secretary, Wendy Benedetti has been instrumental in helping me out of more than one payroll muddle, and helped me with the complicated forms that often seemed to be the bane of my graduate life.

To one group in particular I owe a deep debt of gratitude. Dan Gorman, Ken Macmillan, Rhonda Hinthner, Michelle Vosburgh, Angie Graham, Erika Dyck, Heather Nelson, Wendy Churchill, Dave Leeson, Neil White, and other ‘fourth floor personalities’ have been excellent colleagues, informal advisors, but most of all the finest of friends. These people have shared in the ups and downs of graduate school life, and congregated in CNH 434 to discuss world issues, historical subjects, post-modernism, elections, and more seriously *The Muppet Show*, *The Friendly Giant* and *Mr. Dressup*. They have laughed and commiserated with me over countless bowls of soup, chastised me for my over indulgence in apple juice and shared cottage weekend respites at Port Franks. These are things not soon to be forgotten.

My siblings, Brad, Janine, and Paula, all of whom are younger and more settled in their life’s work, are to be thanked for humouring their big brother in his seemingly endless educational endeavours. I wish also to acknowledge the memory of our brother Jeffery, who I never really came to know, but of whom I think often. To my grandparents, Poppa and Nanny, or as they are known in wider circles, Russell, and the late Jean Dunham, I owe so much. Indeed it was Nanny’s stories about growing up London West that sparked my early interest in this suburb. Similarly my other grandmother, Edna Stott, though by now robbed of so much by the fog of Alzheimer’s, goes similar thanks, for in my moments of worry she often confidently asserted, “Oh, you’ll do alright.” They have all been wonderful supports and I do not hesitate to say amongst my very best friends. Lastly, and most importantly, I need to thank my parents, Glenn and Lynne, without whom none of this would have been possible. To them I owe the best accolades. Their love, encouragement and example have been sustaining influences in everything I have

done. It is for these reasons that this dissertation is dedicated to them.

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Introduction

During the late 1990s the municipal map of Ontario was altered profoundly under the aegis of Mike Harris' Progressive Conservative government. Previous Liberal and New Democratic Party governments had tinkered with reforming municipal structures in the province on a case by case basis. During the election campaign of 1995 the Conservative's platform made only vague references to the need to rationalize local governments and services to avoid expensive duplication.¹ Following their landslide victory, however, the Conservatives embarked upon a dramatic reordering of Ontario's municipalities. Emphasizing the savings and lower taxes to be had by reducing the number of local governments and local politicians, the government launched a program of restructuring. As municipal governments have no constitutional protection and are ultimately subject to provincial authority, old township governments, some dating back to the mid-nineteenth century, and newer towns, cities and villages were either advised or forced to amalgamate into larger corporate entities.² A conspicuous and contentious battle was fought over the amalgamation of the five cities and one borough that constituted Metropolitan Toronto.

¹ Andrew Sancton, "Reducing costs by consolidating municipalities: New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Ontario," in Canadian Public Administration 39 (Fall 1996), 278; Jon C. Teaford. City and Suburb: The Political Fragmentation of Metropolitan America, 1850-1970 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 1. In his study Teaford blamed the continued divisions between cities and suburbs for "inefficiency, confusion of authority, and disparity in shouldering the burdens of the metropolis."

² Robert J. Williams and Terrence J. Downey, "Reforming rural Ontario," in Canadian Public Administration 42 (Summer 1999), 160-161, 186-187. Following the election of the Conservatives in Ontario 200 municipalities were eliminated across the province through massive municipal restructuring, the majority of which were rural; Alan Rayburn. Place Names of Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), xxxi-xxxii; Kenneth Woodside, "An Approach to Studying Local Government Autonomy: The Ontario Experience," Canadian Public Administration 33 (Summer 1990), 212; Derek Hum et al., "Fiscal Imbalance and Winnipeg: A Century of Response," Urban History Review 15 (October 1986), 137; Anwar Hussain Syed. The Political Theory of American Local Government (New York: Random House, 1966), 61-63. In the United States local government was enshrined in the American governmental framework, which lauded divided sovereignty and saw local government as safeguarding local interests.

Beginning in 1996 the government began the process that, in the face of massive protest, resulted in the formation of the “megacity” of Toronto on January 1, 1998.³ Caught in the midst of this jurisdictional restructuring bid to eradicate costly municipal duplication of expensive services were many other suburban municipalities in Ontario. The forced amalgamation of the cities of Hamilton and Ottawa with their outlying suburbs also created local furors, and as Ontario headed into an election contest in the autumn of 2003, the question of undoing these mega-cities resurfaced.⁴

While the scale of Ontario’s municipal restructuring after 1995 was unprecedented, the issue of amalgamation was not, especially where suburban governments were concerned. The metropolitan government framework that the Harris government dismantled in the 1990s had been put in place four decades earlier to solve the jurisdictional and fiscal problems that had plagued Toronto and its suburbs throughout the 1930s and 1940s. During the 1880s and then again in the first decade of the twentieth century, Toronto had unilaterally annexed or negotiated amalgamation with some thirty communities on its borders, mostly during periods of tremendous

³ Roger Keil, “Governance Restructuring in Los Angeles and Toronto: Amalgamation or Secession?” in International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 24 (December 2000), 765-767. A plebiscite in Metropolitan Toronto in March 1997, showed that seventy-six percent were against the merger; Julie-Anne Boudreau, “Megacity Toronto: Struggles Over Differing Aspects of Middle-Class Politics,” in International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 23 (December 1999), 771-772. Part of the rationale behind the government’s merger of Metropolitan Toronto was to disentangle and ultimately eliminate the two tiers of government inherent in the metropolitan system which would reduce costly competition between the municipalities “thus increasing accountability to taxpayers.”

⁴ Rayburn, xxxii; Glenna Matthews, “The Los Angeles of the North: San Jose’s Transition from Fruit Capital to High-Tech Metropolis,” Journal of Urban History v. 25 (May 1999), 471. Matthews, not unlike the Progressive Conservative Government in Ontario, argued that the retention of independent municipal organizations could provide for inefficiencies and inequalities within a metropolitan area. Matthews used the case study of San Jose, California where municipalities had joined to form the larger city on the condition that some twenty-four school districts would be permitted to retain their independence. It was a compromise that Matthews argued led to stark inequalities within San Jose’s fragmented educational system; Hamilton Spectator, September 6, 2003.

growth and prosperity. By 1911, the prevailing attitude within the city had been that further expansion was too costly as the provision of services to outlying areas placed too great a burden on city ratepayers. As a result, a series of incorporated townships, villages, and towns sprouted up in Toronto's immediate vicinity. During the Great Depression, many of these outlying municipalities became insolvent and came under provincial supervision. In the 1940s, attempts to plan for regional development and the massive post-war population boom were continually foiled as suburban municipalities were either unwilling or unable to contribute to integrated projects. As a result, the provincial government introduced the 'federation principle' by which the thirteen Toronto area municipalities were placed under an umbrella Metropolitan Council, which looked after regional issues, while preserving local autonomy for residual matters. Despite localized protest, the system was restructured in 1967 as the thirteen municipalities were reduced to Toronto and its five boroughs.⁵

Concerns over the political fragmentation of urban areas was not exclusive to the twentieth century, nor for that matter were the attempts to consolidate urban areas under larger municipal governments. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, similar arguments and discussions existed as cities eyed their neighbouring suburbs as the best hopes for expanding their land area, tax base, populations, and ultimately their prosperity. Jurisdictional divisions had

⁵ Timothy J. Colton, *Big Daddy" Frederick G. Gardiner and The Building of Metropolitan Toronto* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 53-55, 61, 70, 176. As Colton explained "[t]he remarkable thing about these revisions [in 1967], in view of all the disputation that preceded them, was 'the virtual absence of public dissent.'" Part of this subsequent quiet Colton attributed to increasing boredom shown toward municipal politics on the part of the local citizenry. Colton also argued that the reduction of the number of municipalities from thirteen to six, lessened the impact of the Metropolitan form of government as it came to be dominated by suburban politicians at the expense of those in old Toronto. The population in the suburbs was twice that of Toronto.

led to the emergence of an uncoordinated and irregular patchwork of municipal services. Cities such as Ottawa worried about the loss of ratepayers and revenues to suburban fringe, while the suburbs struggled to construct and sustain expensive city-like services.⁶ The consolidation of cities and suburbs was viewed as the best means of ensuring the continued prosperity of urban areas and governments in Ontario and in North America at large.

This study examines the development and amalgamation of six of Ontario's incorporated suburban municipalities during the period 1853 to 1897. The communities of Yorkville, New Edinburgh, London East, London West, Parkdale, and Brockton, were by no means the only suburbs that emerged during this period. They constituted the first order of Ontario's incorporated suburbs, emerging as corporate entities during the boom years of the province's municipal formation between 1853 and 1881.⁷ As Toronto, London and Ottawa grew so too did developments in their immediate hinterlands, as people and businesses located beyond the urban boundaries. Farmland in the surrounding townships was gradually subdivided and sold off to householders. Communities such as London South and the Toronto suburbs of Seaton, Riverside, and Davisville all developed from the 1860s onward. However, these communities remained

⁶ Bruce S. Elliot. The City Beyond: A History of Nepean, Birthplace of Canada's Capital 1792-1990 (Nepean: City of Nepean, 1991), 132-133; Jon C. Teaford. The Unheralded Triumph: City Government in America, 1870-1900 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 5-6. Teaford explains that during the late nineteenth century cities in the United States coped with an unparalleled influx of thousands of new residents while attempting to provide infrastructure and services to the ever spreading settlement. At the same time they were attempting to pay for all of these improvements while "satisfying demands for moderate taxes and fiscal conservatism."

⁷ Elizabeth Bloomfield, et al., Urban Growth and Local Services: The Development of Ontario Municipalities to 1981 (Guelph, Ontario: Department of Geography, University of Guelph, 1983), 13. Of the 388 urban (villages, towns, and cities) municipalities to emerge in Ontario by 1979, fifty-five percent of them were incorporated between 1850 and 1890.

unincorporated until annexed by either London or Toronto. In total about six suburban municipalities emerged in Ontario between 1887 and 1894. These municipalities and their dates of incorporation included the Toronto suburbs of Toronto Junction (1887-1909), East Toronto (1888-1908), and North Toronto (1889-1912), the Ottawa suburbs of Ottawa East (1890-1907) and Hintonberg (1894-1907), and the Barrie suburb of Allandale (1892-1897). Other suburban municipalities emerged after 1900 and included such places as the Village of Burlington Beach (incorporated 1907) which was annexed by Hamilton in 1957. However, these communities obtained municipal status in the late 1880s or 1890s after most of the first order of municipal suburbs were amalgamated with the neighbouring cities. Similarly, these municipalities remained independent well into the twentieth century.⁸ Unincorporated suburbs were excluded as this study focuses on the ways in which municipal status was used by suburbanites to direct the development of their communities.

The six suburbs in this study only coexisted for the short period between Brockton's incorporation in 1881 and Yorkville's amalgamation with Toronto in 1883. However, they had much in common as they attempted to develop as alternatives to the cities they neighbored, while balancing the development of infrastructure and the need to keep taxation low. Similarly, all six suburbs were the first areas targeted for amalgamation by all three cities. These suburban municipalities emerged during a period of tremendous social and political change. Their province was transformed from the overwhelmingly agrarian Canada West to increasingly industrialized Ontario in the new Dominion of Canada. Between 1853 and 1897 railways

⁸ Bloomfield, 20-30.

revolutionized trade and settlement patterns, and spurred on massive industrial development, and helped to accelerate the pace of urbanization throughout Ontario.⁹

A number of suburban municipal or community studies concentrate upon a single case study while others have examined the emergence of different suburbs around a particular city.¹⁰ This study looks at six suburban municipalities that neighboured three Ontario cities. The comparative approach allows an examination of emergent trends and patterns that can be overlooked in more narrowly focussed studies. The analysis of six suburbs associated with three different cities in the province of Ontario allows for an analysis of both the diversity of experience and the commonalities, especially given that all were governed by the same municipal laws, which provided jurisdictional uniformity.

These six suburbs were often incorporated in the face of apathetic urban and rural neighbours or as a result of attempts to arbitrarily annex them. Incorporation and municipal status provided these communities with the apparatus and ability to foster and develop local identities. At the same time, suburban governments worked toward building their municipalities as alternatives to the cities they neighboured through the provision of expensive infrastructure and services, while attempting to keep low rates of taxation. Many suburbanites argued that the amalgamation of the suburbs and cities was inevitable, with many even claiming that it was a

⁹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁰ Paul-Andre Linteau. The Promoter's City: Building the Industrial Town of Maisonneuve 1883-1918, trans. Robert Chodos, (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1985); Ann Durkin Keating. Building Chicago: Suburban Developers and the Creation of a Divided Metropolis (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1988); Michael H. Ebner. Creating Chicago's North Shore: A Suburban History (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988).

desirable final outcome. However, there was a sense that there was an optimum time for that occurrence. In a province where municipal governments enjoyed no constitutional safeguards, the examples of the six suburbs in this study strongly suggest that local government was meant to persist as long as it served the interests of the local ratepayers, and pitted questions of suburban solvency against questions of agency and local identity. The desire of many suburban officials and residents alike to safeguard their communities and a semblance of their autonomy was evident in the tenacity with which these issues dominated the amalgamation negotiations in the 1880s and 1890s.

The suburban municipalities that were incorporated and ultimately amalgamated in Ontario did not develop within a vacuum. The historical literature on similar developments in the United States, Great Britain and even Australia help to paint a better understanding of these communities. Similarly an emerging body of work on Canadian suburbs of the period, with a special emphasis on those that developed around Montreal, all lend themselves to coming to terms with the Canadian suburban experience. Yet for all of the work that has been done on the nineteenth century suburb, little has been done to come to a proper understanding of both the experience and place of the incorporated suburb in Ontario's historical development.

The etymology of the word suburb is relatively clear, derived from the Latin word *suburbium* which combined words meaning below or "near to" and "city." The Oxford English Dictionary defines suburb as referring to "an outlying district of a city, especially a residential one."¹¹ Many scholars have found "how stubbornly the concept defies definition." The problem

¹¹ Concise Oxford English Dictionary, rev. ed. (2002), s.v. "suburb."

is not at all eased by the fact that many differing sorts of places receive the moniker of suburb, ranging from independent cities in a metropolitan area, to much smaller and unorganized subdivisions on the urban-rural frontier.¹²

The study of suburbs is nothing new. In the last four decades geographers, political scientists, and historians have written a great deal about the historical development of suburbs in North America.¹³ Beginning in the 1960s historians such as Sam Bass Warner and historical geographers like David Ward in studying the impact of streetcars explored the emergence of suburbs in the nineteenth century. They defined suburbanisation as the process by which old city centres increasingly became zones of industry, commerce, and low-income housing, while the suburbs became the primary zone of residential development.¹⁴ Gregory H. Singleton said that while the American wilderness, villages, towns and cities were viewed as part of the natural order “[t]he suburb, by contrast, is seen as a social mutation . . .”¹⁵ Others like Henry C. Binford

¹² Kenneth T. Jackson. The Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanisation of the United States (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 4-5.

¹³ Jackson; Richard Harris and Peter J. Larkham, eds. Changing Suburbs: Formation, Form and Function (London: E & FN Spon, 1999); Robert Fishman. Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia (New York: Basic Books, 1987); Henry C. Binford. The First Suburbs: Residential Communities on the Boston Periphery 1815-1860 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

¹⁴ Sam Bass Warner Jr. Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962; repr., 1978), 1-3, 21-29, 65, 153-154; David Ward, “A Comparative Historical Geography of Streetcar Suburbs in Boston, Massachusetts and Leeds, England: 1850-1920.” Annals of the Association of American Geographers. 54 (4) (December 1964), 477-489.

¹⁵ Gregory H. Singleton, “The Genesis of Suburbs: A Complex of Historical Trends,” in The Urbanization of the Suburbs, Louis H. Masotti and Jeffery K. Hadden, eds. (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1973), 29-32, 36-37.

and Robert Fishman furthered work on suburbs in the nineteenth century.¹⁶ Works of larger scope such as Kenneth T. Jackson's 1985 work Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States also helped to dispel assumptions that suburbs were a post-World War II phenomenon.¹⁷

While much work has established the prevalence of suburbs in the nineteenth century, many of these studies have reinforced the idea that suburbia remained largely middle-class until well into the twentieth century.¹⁸ Subsequent scholars have argued that the North America suburb was characterized by an early influx of working class, although such studies have concentrated on the first half of the twentieth century.¹⁹ Other work has helped to explain the fact that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries business, industry, and the working class increasingly sought out suburban spaces.²⁰

By their very nature suburban corporations created a patchwork of municipal governments. As a result scholars also emphasized the political fragmentation of cities that has

¹⁶ Henry C. Binford. The First Suburbs: Residential Communities on the Boston Periphery 1815-1860 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), xiii, 1-7; Fishman, x, 51-62, 199-200.

¹⁷ Jackson, 11, 287-288.

¹⁸ John R. Stilgoe. Borderland: Origins of the American Suburb, 1820-1939 (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1988), 1, 5; Graeme Davison, "Australia: the First Suburban Nation?", Journal of Urban History 22 (November 1995): 51, 54, 65; Bennett M. Berger. Working-Class Suburb: A Study of Auto Workers in Suburbia (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960). v-vi.

¹⁹ Richard Harris, "American Suburbs: A Sketch of a New Interpretation." Journal of Urban History 15 (November 1988), 98-99; Richard Harris. Unplanned Suburbs: Toronto's American Tragedy 1900 to 1950 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1996), xii-xiv; 1-20; James Borchert, "Residential City Suburbs: The Emergence of a New Suburban Type, 1880-1930." Journal of Urban History, 22 (March 1996), 283-286, 303-304.

²⁰ Robert Lewis, "Running Rings Around the City: North American Industrial Suburbs, 1850-1950." Changing Suburbs: Foundation, Form and Function, Richard Harris and Peter J. Larkham, eds., (London: E & FN Spon, 1999), 146-167; Robert Lewis. Manufacturing Montreal: The Making of an Industrial Landscape, 1850 to 1930 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 255-256.

resulted from suburban autonomy. By examining the roots and repercussions of municipal autonomy for suburbs, they have explored the contentious battles that surrounded attempts by cities to consolidate metropolitan areas. Similarly, they have also investigated the process and motivations by which suburbs have attempted to thwart annexation and retain their autonomy.

Jon C. Teaforde attempted to confront what he deemed to be the chronic political fragmentation of large American metropolises. Responding to the recent trend towards increasing urban decay he noted that “Twentieth-century municipal limits are not simply lines on a map; they pose formidable barriers to equity and to cooperation within the metropolitan region.”²¹ Initially Teaforde set about examining the development of legal frameworks within which individual suburban communities had both sought and retained municipal independence. He continued by tracing the recurrent failure of central cities to consolidate municipal government in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Teaforde argued that despite the growing disparities between the central cities and peripheral suburbs, Americans continued into the 1970's “to guard jealously the rights and privileges of their local communities.”²² Teaforde contrasted the American system with the British. In Britain, the central government increasingly intervened in municipal matters, and was the ultimate arbitrator in municipal reconstitution, whereas in the United States “the locality was the determining unit, and the parts decided the nature of the whole.”²³ By looking back into the patterns of suburban development in the latter

²¹ Teaforde, City and Suburb, 1.

²² Ibid., 185, 186.

²³ Ibid., 64.

half of the nineteenth century, Teaford traced the increasing permanence of suburban governments and the politically fractured metropolis, a result, Teaford argued, of “many state legislatures abandoning forcible annexation and yielding decision-making authority to the local unit.”²⁴

In order to get to the bottom of what lay at the root of this localism in American suburbs, historian Ronald Dale Karr examined the resistance of suburban communities to metropolitan consolidation with his case study of Brookline, Massachusetts. Conspicuous because of its relative affluence, in 1873 Brookline openly rejected annexation to Boston. Karr discovered that while the community was not without supporters for the amalgamation bid, these proponents tended to be individuals who owned large tracts of land in the community, and were therefore largely dismissed by those wishing to maintain Brookline’s autonomy as “a pack of land speculators. . .” In the end the community retained its independence as the annexationists were unable to persuade a majority of the voters that amalgamation with Boston was in Brookline’s best interests.²⁵ While Karr’s work went some way in illustrating the historic roots of metropolitan fragmentation, its concentration upon an upper class municipal corporation tells but part of the story, ignoring, as it does the resistance of less well-off suburbs that also remained independent of cities.

Ann Durkin Keating’s Building Chicago: Suburban Developers and the Creation of a Divided Metropolis attempted through the example of a case study of Chicago, to come to terms

²⁴ Ibid., 5-31, 62. Jackson, 138-156.

²⁵ Ronald Dale Karr, “Brookline Rejects Annexation, 1873,” Suburbia Re-examined, ed. Barbara M. Kelly (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 103-110.

with “the emergence and early evolution of suburbs and their government . . .”²⁶ Keating completed a systematic examination of the development of suburban government. She claimed such governments were unique hybrids, developed by those peripheral residents who clamoured for independence from the rural and county governments which were unable to supply their infrastructure needs. Therefore the attainment of self-government was an attempt by suburbs to secure some of the benefits of city services without sacrificing their political autonomy.²⁷ Indeed, she argued, the emergence in the latter half of the nineteenth century of these politically independent municipalities on the outskirts of cities such as Chicago heralded the arrival of the modern suburb.²⁸ An underlying theme that permeates Keating’s treatment of the suburb is her assertion that the so-called ‘homogenous subdivisions’ or ‘planned suburbs,’ developed as a result of suburban government intervention to become part and parcel of the suburban experience by the dawn of the 1920s, far in advance of the post-World War II Levittowns.²⁹ While Keating provided a fascinating study of the complex evolution of suburban governments, in certain areas her work seemed unfortunately vague. In her discussion of annexation she concluded that “[e]ven in retrospect, it is difficult to evaluate the annexation issue clearly.” Keating further conceded that a whole range of factors, frequently specific to the locale in question, came into play making generalizations about how municipal amalgamation was accomplished and

²⁶ Ann Durkin Keating. Building Chicago: Suburban Developers and the Creation of a Divided Metropolis (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1988), 1.

²⁷ Ibid., 7.

²⁸ Ibid., 120.

²⁹ Ibid., 7-8, 121, 126.

perceived by outlying communities difficult.³⁰

More broadly based studies shed only marginal light on the processes of amalgamation or annexation of suburbs. In Crabgrass Frontier Jackson devoted a chapter to the “Rise and Fall of Municipal Annexation.” In general terms Jackson outlined how in the nineteenth century marked the highpoint of annexation in the United States, when most large cities gobbled up the suburbs on their boundaries. He further explained how a combination of improved suburban services, a liberalization of laws allowing a greater rate of suburban incorporation, and growing class and ethnic divides between cities and suburbs dramatically slowed the rate of annexation in the twentieth century. In fact, American suburbs incorporated as a way of thwarting annexation by cities.³¹ In his study of Boston suburbs from 1815 to 1860, Binford came to similar conclusions about the motivations that lay behind both annexation and the growing trend of suburbs to resist it.³²

While the number of annexations in the United States slowed in the early twentieth century, the matter in Canada, and more specifically in Ontario, was different. In the context of Ontario, municipal amalgamations during the late 1800s were largely the product of local bargaining between the concerned municipalities, although the provincial government could intervene and force consolidation, which they would increasingly do throughout the latter half of the twentieth century.

³⁰ Ibid., 107.

³¹ Jackson, 138-156.

³² Binford, 9-11, 224-228.

David B. Hanna studied the unincorporated 'terrace housing' developments of the upper-middle class outside of Montreal in the 1850's and 1860's.³³ Walter van Nus' 1984 study of Notre Dames de Grâces, examined an incorporated community on the outskirts of Montreal. The primary focus of the work was on the role played by suburban government in the development of the community in its progression from an outlying village and then town to its final annexation to Montreal in 1910. In the work, van Nus did develop some analysis of the methods employed by the town's government to attract the influx of Notre Dames de Grâces' middle-class population. Inevitably, however, the focus upon the role of government in this process did little to illuminate the social and economic dynamics that the middle-class inhabitants played in the community or what influence or views these people may have shared over their community's eventual absorption by Montreal.³⁴

The study of suburbanisation in Ontario has been undertaken by sociologists and geographers, who have greatly enhanced the understanding of these processes during the twentieth century. That having been said, however, there has been relatively scant attention paid to Ontario's nineteenth-century suburban municipalities.³⁵ Work on these communities has been

³³ David B. Hanna, "Creation of an Early Victorian Suburb in Montreal," Urban History Review, 9 (October 1980): 38-64.

³⁴ Walter van Nus, "The Role of Suburban Government in the City Building Process: The Case of Notre Dames de Grâces, Quebec, 1876-1910," Urban History Review, 13 (October 1984): 91-103.

³⁵ Larry McCann, "Suburbs of Desire: The Suburban Landscape of Canadian Cities, c. 1900-1950," Changing Suburbs: Foundation, Form and Function (London: E & FN Spon, 1999), 111-145. This essay dealt with the increasing municipal regulation of subdivisions in the first half of the twentieth century as they became increasingly middle-class as well as being "free of non-residential activities." This was in sharp contrast to the more haphazard and less regulated patterns followed by earlier nineteenth century suburbs.

limited to antiquarians and a few unpublished studies by students into specific case studies.³⁶

There is a general lack of understanding of the early suburb in the context of Victorian Ontario. Certainly historical studies emanating from the United States, Great Britain and even closer to home in Quebec all lend some understanding and explanation of the suburban experience. Yet while these studies shed some light on suburban municipal development, independence and finally amalgamation or annexation, they cannot explain the complexities of the experience in Ontario, a jurisdiction governed by different social, economic and political realities.³⁷ Similarly, while various studies in other contexts have highlighted the examples of particular types of suburbs, few have bothered to look at differing types of suburbs in the same provincial context.³⁸ While studies on upper middle class dormitory communities have become particularly plentiful, generally little has been done with more working class or industrial counterparts in the same area. While these studies can be independently valuable, the ability to contrast the developmental processes in suburban municipalities of very different forms in the

³⁶ Sandra Moore, "Yorkville, 1808-1883" (Unpublished BA Thesis, Department of Geography, University of Toronto, 1968) 1-46; Ian Christopher Ross, "London East, 1854-1885: The Evolution, Incorporation, and Annexation of a Satellite Municipality," (Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Department of History, 1977), iii, 14; Mary Frances Mallon, "The Village of Brockton," York Pioneer, 71, no. 2 (Fall 1976): 1-11; Greg Stott, "The Maintenance of Suburban Autonomy: The Story of the Village of Petersville-London West, 1874-1897," (Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Department of History, 1999), 1-6; Greg Stott, "Safeguarding 'The Frog Pond': London West and the Resistance of Municipal Amalgamation, 1883-1897." Urban History Review. 29 (October 2000), 53-63; Ron Brown. Toronto's Lost Villages (Toronto: Polar Bear Press, 1997), 60-63, 80-81; Nick and Helma Mika. Places in Ontario: The Name Origins and History Part III N-Z (Belleville, Ontario: Mika Publishing, 1983), 30.

³⁷ Bloomfield, 12. The 'Baldwin Act' of 1849 which allowed for municipal incorporation governed -- with modifications-- Canada West and then Ontario for over a century. Similar legislation in other provinces was not passed until much later. Nova Scotia passed such an act in 1888, New Brunswick in 1896, and Quebec in 1902.

³⁸ The closest attempt at this sort of study in the United States would be in Michael H. Ebner's study of Chicago's northern suburbs that sprang up along the western shore of Lake Michigan. However, while each of these communities had their own unique identity and development pattern, save for some ethnic differences they were generally residential suburbs catering to various strata of the middle class and upper classes. Ebner, 133-160.

same political unit, such as Ontario, provides a broader and more complex yet coherent understanding of suburban development.

As Ontario towns and cities developed and their populations pushed beyond the corporate boundaries, suburbs began to emerge. Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, as these communities on the urban periphery expanded so too did the demands of the inhabitants for certain controls and services. As a result when they reached the requisite population, communities like London East and Parkdale opted for municipal incorporation. Lasting for various periods of time, these same suburban municipalities were generally annexed or amalgamated by or with their larger urban neighbours. The process of municipal amalgamation, like the communities involved, was unique to each specific case. A study of the development of these suburban municipalities in nineteenth-century Ontario allows historians not only a distinctive perspective from which to gauge the process of the province's urbanisation, but it lends itself to better understanding the inhabitants of these early peripheral settlements.

A study of nineteenth-century suburban municipalities relies upon a varied list of sources. A fair collection of official documentation produced by the municipalities themselves still exist in various archives in London, Ottawa and Toronto. These holdings contain important documents relating to the day-to-day running of the various municipal entities. Council minute books, collectors' rolls, and compiled bylaws, exist along with collections of ephemeral documents related to the issuing of debentures, notices of important council business and other matters that were part and parcel of municipal life in the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, for the historian in the early twenty-first century, not all relevant documents have survived, nor are the list of

surviving records necessarily consistent across the board for all six municipalities in this study. Whereas there exists a more-or-less complete run of council minutes for the village of Yorkville between 1853 and 1883, equivalent records for other suburbs have not survived. Minutes for the Parkdale council for the years 1882 and 1883 have been lost, although other municipal records help to fill in the gap. Ottawa's suburb of New Edinburgh has a complete set of municipal minutes up until 1883, after which the records appear to have been lost.³⁹ While speculation and hearsay claims that the council minutes for both London East and London West do exist deep within some uncharted vault of London's City Hall, repeated inquiries and searches by at least two historians have failed to uncover them.⁴⁰ For both of these municipalities, however, a complete record of municipal bylaws remain available.

Where official records were grievously absent, recourse was had through other contemporary materials. While council minutes for New Edinburgh during the crucial amalgamation debates of the 1880s appear to have been lost forever, the records of Ottawa City Council help to fill in the gaps. Similarly, the local press has proven to be an invaluable source in attempting to glimpse the viewpoints of New Edinburgh's elected officials during this contentious period. Indeed, contemporary newspapers are also important sources for helping to

³⁹ AO RG 19-142, Box 822, New Edinburgh Village Financial Returns, 1879-1887. A series of letters written after New Edinburgh's amalgamation with Ottawa in 1886 suggest that former village officials did not know the whereabouts of their former municipality's records. A search at the City of Ottawa Archives in 2001 confirmed that New Edinburgh's records for the years 1883 to 1886 have been lost.

⁴⁰ A visit to London City Hall in 1998 failed to turn up the council minutes for either London East or London West, although in both instances municipal bylaws were preserved. After presenting a paper on the village of London West for the London and Middlesex Historical Society in London in May 2003, however, I was informed that the records in question did exist and were buried somewhere in a city vault. They were apparently microfilmed in the 1970s or 1980s, but city staff have subsequently mislaid both the originals and the microfilms.

gauge local activities and opinions. In the instance of London's suburbs, throughout much of the 1880s both the Free Press and Advertiser regularly reported the goings on in both of the city's municipal suburbs. Both papers also reported on the meetings of council and attempted to record the opinions and views of various named and unnamed suburbanites with regard to contentious questions such as amalgamation. Toronto newspapers also bore witness to developments within the suburbs, although often less consistently than the London papers.

The first chapter of this study examines the diverse origins of the six Ontario suburbs in question. Some of these communities (New Edinburgh and Yorkville) grew up around either milling sites or tollgates, while others (Parkdale and London East) emerged as residential communities developed along the urban-rural frontier. This chapter explains the development of these places during their earliest manifestations. It also accounts for their emergence as independent municipal entities between 1853 and 1881. The second chapter looks at issues of community identity and identity formation, by examining the ways in which suburban councils attempted to forge locally based institutions and symbols that defined local autonomy and local attachment. It also examines the way in which suburban councils and suburban residents defined themselves against the pervasive 'other' that was the city they neighboured.

Almost from the moment of incorporation, suburban councils were interested in improving the quality of life within their municipalities. By and large suburban residents were both interested and concerned with acquiring improved infrastructure that would not only enhance the quality of their lives, but make their communities attractive to further residential and business development. As a result, suburban municipal councils expended vast resources on

local infrastructure to attract further development, broaden the tax base, and in turn allow for the completion of these expensive developments. As the third chapter explains, these projects incurred massive debt, and left suburban finances in a shambles. As a result of the often poor fiscal management, the fourth and final chapter, looks at the ultimate amalgamation of the suburbs by the neighbouring cities.

The study of Ontario's nineteenth-century suburban municipalities indicates the problems faced by these communities as their very existence was complicated when questions of pragmatic fiscal concerns were pitted against those of identity and autonomy.

Chapter One

Diverse Origins: The Development and Incorporation of the Suburbs

In 1881 the council of Parkdale, Ontario happily endorsed a publication celebrating their three year old corporation entitled, The Parkdale Register. Pleasantly situated on the shores of Lake Ontario, which boasted “a refreshing coolness that is lacking in the close and sultry city . . .” of Toronto, Parkdale’s council was eminently proud of its situation. There seemed much to venerate as the village looked back at its rapid development, and an incorporation that was achieved in the face of no less than three concerted efforts by Toronto to annex the locality. As the piece further explained, Parkdale was “exceedingly picturesque, being surrounded by a landscape that possesses all the varying attractions . . . and the diversified scenery of an undulating expanse of fertile country, wooded, watered, cultivated, and adorned with attractive homes.”¹ Parkdale was certainly not an anomaly in nineteenth century Ontario, as five other suburban municipalities emerged during the period, each lauding their own attributes and attracting those who preferred life on the urban periphery.

¹ John G. Scott. The Parkdale Register Containing A History of Parkdale From Its Incorporation to the Present Time (Toronto: Bengough, Moore, & Bengough, 1881), 1, 4.



Figure 1. Photograph of the western end of Parkdale looking west from the east side of Wilson Park Road in June 1887. This view clearly shows the rural or park-like setting celebrated by the people of Parkdale. Toronto Public Library: T 12713.

Table 1.1

Ontario Suburban Developments, 1853-1897

Suburb	Incorporated	Key Events	Amalgamated
Yorkville	1853	Town Hall begun 1860. Waterworks incorporated 1875.	1883 with Toronto
New Edinburgh	1866	Town Hall/School built 1867. Linked to Ottawa Waterworks 1878	1886 with Ottawa
London West (Petersville)	1874 (named changed to London West in 1881)	1883 Flood. Construction of breakwater throughout the 1880s and into the 1890s.	1897 with London
London East	1874 (town status 1881)	Town Hall begun 1883. Waterworks begun 1884. Not completed.	1885 with London
Parkdale	1879 (town status 1886)	Town Hall begun 1886. Waterworks begun 1881	1888 with Toronto
Brockton	1880	Waterworks discussed in 1883. Never started.	1884 with Toronto

Sources: Bloomfield, 20-30; Parkdale Register, 6, 8; Laycock, 16-17, 49-50; Yorkville Directory, 15; Hutcheson, 15; Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Carleton (Including City of Ottawa) Ontario (Toronto: C.H. Belden, 1879; reprint Port Elgin: Richardson and Hutchinson 1971); xxi; Ian C. Ross, "London East", 62-65, Ottawa Evening Journal, July 10, 1886; Brockton Council Minutes, March 27, 1883 and April 3, 1883.

Urban theorists have long debated the development patterns of cities and metropolitan areas. As Gilbert Stelter explained, most urban historians and scholars have viewed cities as entities, or as a "dependant variable" the very nature of which "are determined by large-scale economic, political and social forces as well as by thousands of

individual and corporate decisions.”² In the 1920s Harvard Economist Norman S. B. Gras in studying London, England theorized that in order to achieve metropolitan dominance a city passed through four stages of development beginning with its emergence as a market centre, through industrial development, its rise as a centre of communications, finally culminating in the city as a financial centre. Other academics have cautiously accepted this argument, but modified it for North America, arguing that in the context of the New World, urban development frequently occurred at a much faster rate, with many of the ‘stages’ occurring virtually simultaneously.³ While such theories might be applied to various aspects of metropolitan growth, suburban municipalities and their unincorporated counterparts prove to be problematic in that while they are in a sense independent of the urban areas they surround, their development cannot be so easily disengaged. Suburban places have generally been seen by their very nature to be outgrowths of larger urban development processes (in antiquity suburbs were generally composed of poor residents

² Gilbert A. Stelter, “The City-Building Process in Canada,” Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise ed.s., Shaping the Urban Landscape: Aspects of the of Canadian City-Building Process (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1982), 3.

³ Fred H. Armstrong and Daniel Brock, “The Rise of London: A Study of Urban Evolution in Nineteenth-Century Southwestern Ontario,” in F.H. Armstrong, H.A. Stevenson, and J.D. Wilson, ed., Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 84; Gilbert A. Stelter, “The City-Building Process in Canada,” in Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise ed., Shaping the Urban Landscape: Aspects of the of Canadian City-Building Process (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1982), 4. Stelter warned that accepting broad categorization as suggested by Gras “can become a dangerous operation . . .” given that such an approach often “violates the complexity of reality.” That having been said, however, Stelter suggested that such studies can help to illuminate broader trends and allows for comparative work in the city-building process. See also Leo Johnson, “Ideology and Political Economy in Urban Growth: Guelph, 1827-1927,” in Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise ed., Shaping the Urban Landscape: Aspects of the of Canadian City-Building Process (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1982), 30, 63-64; Frederick H. Armstrong, “Metropolitanism and Toronto Re-examined, 1825-1850,” in Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise, ed., The Canadian City: Essays in Urban and Social History (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1984), 57-69.

and illicit activities not tolerated in the city proper).⁴ Indeed it might be argued that the emergence of suburban developments beyond city boundaries is immaterial, and merely part of the same trend that existed within the city itself. However, as Gregory Singleton explained, very often the suburb has been viewed negatively as “a social mutation . . . [and] a parasitic growth on the urban body politic.”⁵ Certainly any explanation for the emergence of suburban municipalities in the nineteenth century is inextricably linked with the development of the city. It would be misleading, however, to assume that these communities did not have their own developmental course, to varying degrees separate from similar processes occurring across the municipal boundaries in the larger centres. Indeed Jeffery Hadden and Josef Barton have suggested that nineteenth-century suburbs emerged as a result of what many came to view as the ‘unnatural’ transformation of cities by mass industrialization. The suburbs emerged as an attempt “to re-create the pastoral rapport between man and nature . . .”⁶ In short, while it might be argued that suburbs emerged as natural extensions of the cities, it could also be argued that they developed as negative responses to the way in which cities had been developing.

As Robert Fishman explained in his study Bourgeois Utopias, the emergence of the modern suburb in the English speaking world of the late eighteenth and early

⁴ Kenneth Jackson. Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 16-18.

⁵ Gregory H. Singleton, “The Genesis of Suburbs: A Complex of Historical Trends” in The Urbanization of Suburbs, eds. Louis H. Masotti and Jeffery K. Hadden (Beverly Hills, California: Sage, 1973), 29.

⁶ Jeffery K. Hadden and Josef J. Barton, “An Image That Will Not Die: Thoughts on the History of Anti-Urban Ideology.” The Urbanization of Suburbs, 79.

nineteenth centuries was a watershed in urban development. The development of these communities was part of a cultural evolution amongst the upper and middling strata of society, which sought to make paramount growing middle class ideals about property and family, separating the domestic sphere from the world of business and creating a distinctive alternative between urban and rural settings. This cultural impetus that led to a flight to the urban/rural frontier was furthered by a strong economic incentive that saw inexpensive farmland transformed into homes and neighbourhoods for those who could not necessarily afford similar habitations within the cities.⁷

As cities grew, inevitably so did the amount of pollution and urban filth, most often attributed to the exponential use of soft coal. Victorian reformers were placing an increased emphasis upon issues of cleanliness and domestic harmony.⁸ This inevitably led to campaigns against the vice that lurked within the cities, which was seen to be made tangible by the grime of the urban experience. Householders soon began turning covetous eyes toward the urban periphery, constructing villas and cottages as domestic havens. They hoped to isolate their families from urban vice, and to indulge in a 'rural' life while still enjoying the benefits of employment and prosperity the city offered. This sense of having removed themselves from the moral and physical filth of the city was

⁷ Robert Fishman. Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 3-10, 12. Fishman noted that tremendous urban and industrial growth was also occurring in continental cities. However, while the English and North American bourgeois were fleeing to the urban periphery, the affluent French classes largely remained in the central city, while transporting workers to the periphery where industry was largely banished.

⁸ Christine Stansell. City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 34-35, 195-202.

manifested in the suburban residents' propensity for lighter colours when building their villas and cottages, a contrast to the necessary darker colours used in urban areas to mask and conceal the disfiguring effects of coal.⁹

Early work on nineteenth-century suburbs argued that these towns and villages on the urban periphery emerged as simple outgrowths of the cities which they surrounded buoyed by the expansion of populations beyond civic boundaries and aided by the creation and expansion of mass transportation works which encouraged a flight of mainly middle class residents to the urban-rural frontier. Other historians have argued that while such explanations went some way in explaining the development of those suburbs that emerged in the latter half of the nineteenth century, they were misleading and inadequate to properly explain the development of the suburbs that clustered around the edges of cities earlier in the century. As Henry C. Binford explained in his study of suburban Boston in the forty years leading up to the American Civil War, suburban communities emerged not as creations of the city or urban processes but as conscious creations of people living at the urban fringe. These people built their communities with the same goals as any other people developing locales in any other situation across North America. Only the unusual proximity of these communities to the cities they surrounded marked their development as significantly different from other more isolated communities, and gave them a peculiar set of issues dealing with self-definition and questions of

⁹ John R. Stilgoe. Borderland: Origins of the American Suburb, 1820-1939 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 102-103.

maintaining autonomy.¹⁰

The suburban communities that emerged in Ontario between 1840 and 1880 could easily be seen as a hybrid of the two major scholarly models explained above. Contrary to the post-World War II image of the suburb as a planned residential haven from the city, there was no single development pattern for nineteenth-century suburbs in Ontario. As a corollary, given the diverse origins of the suburbs, there was no obvious or inevitable path to suburban incorporation. Instead these communities emerged and developed on the urban periphery for varying reasons and at varying times. In some instances these suburbs developed around tiny collections of houses, shops and taverns to serve rural communities. These small settlements were often found at road junctions or mill sites. Still others grew up as the direct result of an urban population spilling over their corporate boundaries in search of cheaper land values on which to construct affordable housing. Spurred on by the interests of land speculators, both from within and without, all of these places – whether existing rural service sites, or emerging catch basins for urban overflow– gradually attracted residents in search of cheaper land and the virtues of life away from urban congestion and pollution. The emergence of urban transit systems after 1850 also aided the growth of these communities, leading to increasing

¹⁰ Henry C. Binford, The First Suburbs: Residential Communities on the Boston Periphery, 1815-1860 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 1-2; Harry Jebsen Jr., “Preserving Suburban Identity in an Expanding Metropolis: The Case of Blue Island, Illinois,” Old Northwest, 7 (1981): 127. Jebsen explained that “[s]uburbs have not always developed as a spin-off of urban population, for some have been independent communities slightly beyond the range of the central city, becoming suburbs when the city spread out and engulfed them.” Jackson, 76-86. The planned ‘garden’ or ‘romantic’ suburb only began to emerge in the United States in the 1850s and 1860s with Llewellyn Park, New Jersey and Riverside, Illinois, and did not become popular until the 1870s and 1880s. They were built largely as a reaction to the strict gridiron patterns that dominated urban developments across the continent; John Archer, “Ideology and Aspiration: Individualism, the Middle Class, and the Genesis of the Anglo-American Suburb,” Journal of Urban History 14 (February 1988): 214-253.

populations and ultimately to the emergence of these places as independent municipal entities. By and large the erection of suburban communities in Ontario into municipal entities between 1853 and 1881 came as a result of processes that attracted development at the urban frontier and increasingly friendly measures instituted by provincial authorities for municipal governance.

The suburbs that emerged in Ontario beginning in the 1840s developed more slowly than contemporary communities in either Great Britain or the United States. While the advent of railways in these nations led to the relocation of both people and factories to the outskirts of large urban areas, in Canada this movement was considerably restrained. Most suburban development occurred on the immediate urban frontier, and took on less cohesive patterns of settlement and development, attracting a diverse group of residents.¹¹

Tollgate Suburbs

Development on the fringes of Ontario's larger cities progressed in various ways, as householders began erecting their homes around existing tollgate communities, milling sites, or merely spilled across the urban boundary. In Toronto, development gradually pushed northward along Yonge Street toward the second concession road of York Township.¹² Since 1796 there had existed a tollgate at this junction, which throughout the early years of settlement marked the *de facto* southern terminus of Yonge Street.

¹¹ Larry McCann, "Suburbs of Desire: The Suburban Landscape of Canadian Cities, c.1900-1950." Changing Suburbs: Foundation, Form and Function (London: E & F.N. Spon, 1999), 114.

¹² G.D. de T. Glazebrook. The Story of Toronto (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 15. The original survey at York comprising ten blocks was made in 1793, and was generally referred to as the 'old town' after the addition of second survey in 1797, appropriately known as the 'new town'; Henry Scadding. Toronto of Old, ed., Frederick H. Armstrong (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1987), 220.

Travellers entering Toronto had to take a rather circuitous path south to enter the built city, through land that became a quagmire in the spring and autumn months, a situation that was not rectified until work commenced in 1802 to extend the roadway to Toronto's harbour.¹³ By 1808 a Pennsylvanian by the name of Daniel Tiers had established the Red Lion Inn on the eastern side of Yonge Street to cater to increasing traffic along the roadway.¹⁴ By the 1830s the Red Lion became a noted gathering place on the outskirts of Toronto, largely away from the scrutiny of established city authorities, which probably explains why supporters of William Lyon Mackenzie celebrated his 1832 electoral victory there. Nearly six years later when Mackenzie was leading his band of rebels in their ill-fated assault on Toronto, he personally oversaw the burning of the nearby home of the Queen's Printer, R.C. Horne. The area near the Red Lion was also sufficiently removed from the city to make it the perfect location for the York General or Stranger's Burying Ground, known colloquially as the 'Potter's Field,'-- the final resting place of all of those who did not accept or warrant interment in the Anglican burial ground around St. James' Anglican Cathedral in the city proper. The community at the junction of the second concession and Yonge functioned as most traditional suburban developments since antiquity. It was a repository of the dispossessed members of society, and a haven for peripheral and occasionally illicit activity not tolerated within the city proper.¹⁵

¹³ Ron Brown. Toronto's Lost Villages (Toronto: Polar Bear Press, 1997), 60; Scadding, 282-285.

¹⁴ Brown, 60; Scadding, 381.

¹⁵ Sandra M. Moore. "Yorkville 1808-1883," (Unpublished Senior Undergraduate Thesis, University of Toronto, Department of Geography), 4; Scadding, 186; Jackson, 16-18, 24, 29. The presence of the Potters Burial Ground within Yorkville's corporate limits did not sit well with village fathers who saw it as a potential health risk

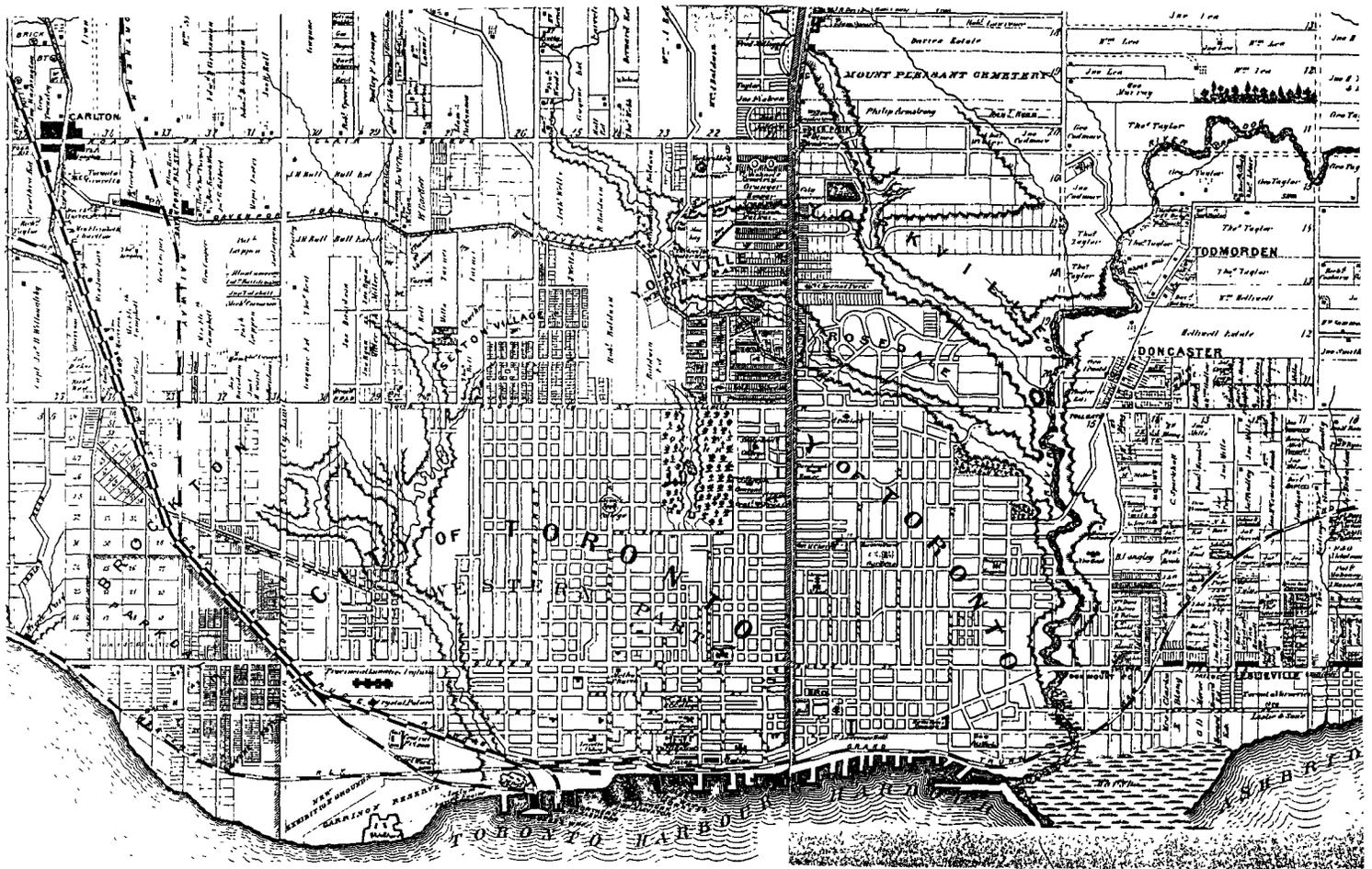


Figure 2: Map of Toronto and its suburbs, 1878. Parkdale and Brockton lay to the west of the city and Yorkville to the north. Historical Atlas of York County, Ontario, Canada (Toronto: Miles and Co., 1878), 34-35.

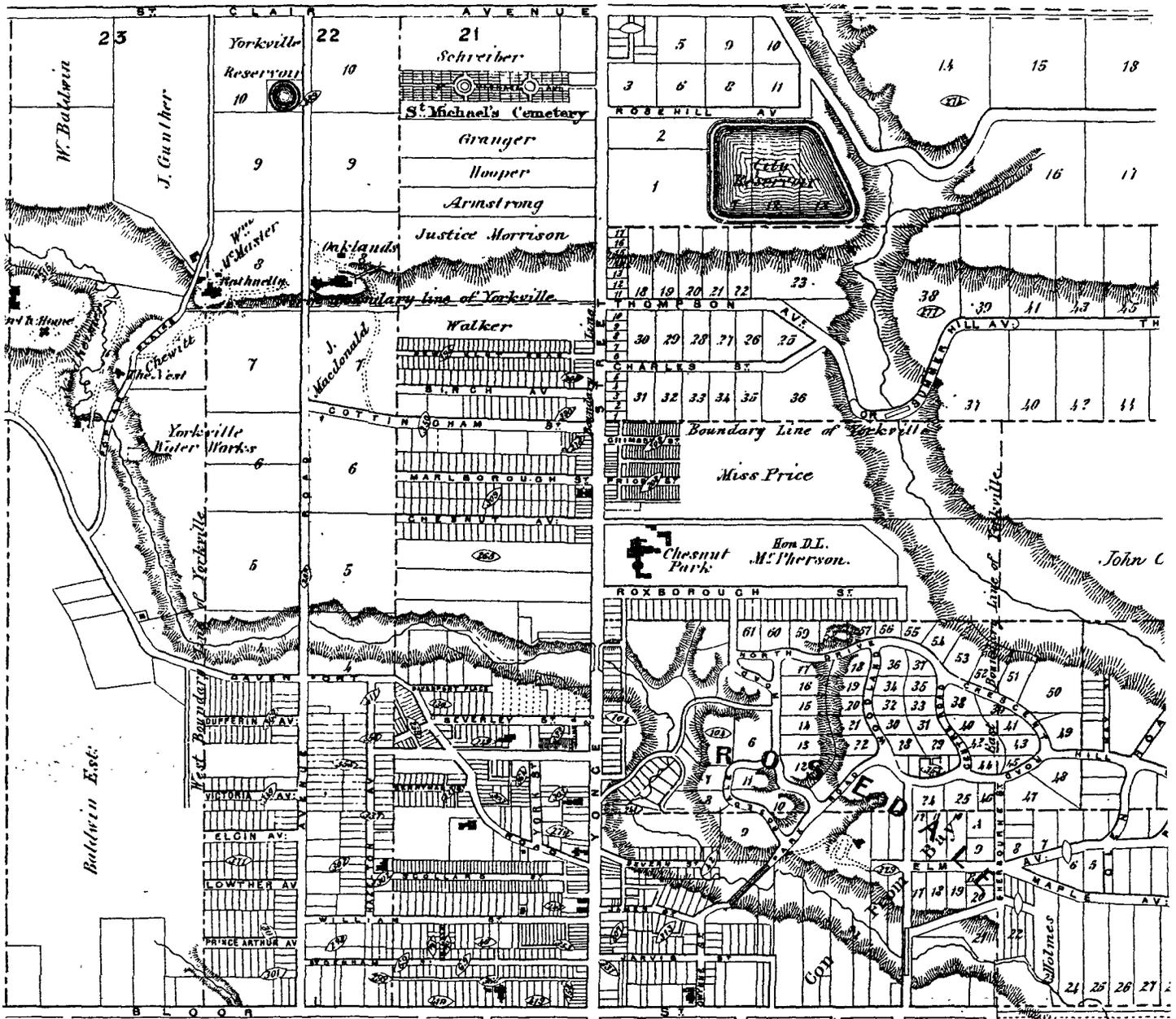


Figure 3: Map of Yorkville, 1878.
 Historical Atlas of York County, Ontario, Canada (Toronto: Miles and Co., 1878), 36.

Toronto continued to grow and prosper as the capital and largest city of Upper Canada. In 1830 Joseph Bloor, the long time proprietor of the Farmer's Arms Inn on King Street in Toronto, moved north to the second concession road, and built a brewery and distillery. By 1835, a small community had sprung up in the vicinity of the Red Lion, so that there were also some six residences, while John Severn built a second brewery in the Rosedale Valley.¹⁶ While more people moved into the vicinity of the Red Lion, none appears to have had more clout than Bloor, for by the 1850s the second concession road was commonly known as Bloor Street. While Toronto and the small crossroads settlement would remain separated by open 'scrub land' until the 1860s, Bloor and the Home District Sheriff, William Botsford Jarvis, another land speculator, began to subdivide their holdings into building lots in the 1840s. Sensing that the time for development north of Bloor Street had come, Jarvis began an omnibus service from Toronto's St. Lawrence Hall to the Red Lion Inn to make the properties more accessible and therefore increase their value to potential householders.¹⁷ Growth was slow and there were discussions as to what the settlement should be called. Names such as Bloorville were put forth, while Jarvis was partial to naming the community after his rural estate,

as well as an unpleasant blight within the middle of their community. Yorkville Council quickly dealt with the problem by passing bylaws to have it removed, although limits were placed upon the season during which bodies were disinterred. Yorkville, Bylaw 54, May 5, 1856. The citizenry of London 's eastern suburb of London East also faced similar problems as the Anglican Church had established St. Paul's Cemetery in the 1850s in what later became London East. In December 1879, London East Council passed a bylaw prohibiting the internment of the dead within their corporation, and gradually the bodies already interred at St. Paul's were transferred to new cemeteries developed to the southwest of London. London East, Bylaw 70, December 11, 1879.

¹⁶ Moore, 5; Scadding, 120.

¹⁷ Robert J. Burns, "William Botsford Jarvis," Dictionary of Canadian Biography: Volume IX 1861-1870 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 411; Moore, 13.

Rosedale. By the 1840s enough people settled upon the name of Yorkville, perhaps as a way of retaining the name that Toronto had shed in 1834.¹⁸

The erection of tollgates on Yonge Street had provided both an effective location around which a tavern and subsequent services had developed, catering in part to travellers and residents on the northern outskirts of Toronto. What emerged could easily be called a tollgate suburb. Toronto, as we will see, had several.

Despite Yorkville's modest growth in its earliest days, the pace of development increased dramatically into the 1850s as householders took advantage of its location. The influx of these residents transformed Yorkville from a marginal community into an increasingly middle class suburban ideal. The popularity of the properties to be found there was not surprising, and in 1861 it was explained that Yorkville's

suitability for places of residence must be admitted by all acquainted with the locality- with an even surface, with soil composed of a dry sandy loam -well adapted for the purposes of gardening, with street[s] . . . regular and cleanly kept, with beautiful Villas and their tasty well trimmed lawns with the convenience of an omnibus running every half hour between the Village and the St. Lawrence Hall Toronto . . .¹⁹

As the Yorkville Directory explained in 1876, Yorkville was blessed with air both 'pure and healthy' and had become a favoured place of abode "for those who prefer to live away from the noise, dust and turmoil of city life."²⁰

¹⁸ Scadding, 295-296. One group of residents at the junction of Yonge and Bloor, who all hailed from northern England, wanted to name the community 'Cumberland.'

¹⁹ Canada 1861 Manuscript Census, Yorkville, Canada West, preamble by J.P. Ball and T.H. Ball.

²⁰ Yorkville Directory 1876-77 DBW MFH F 1003.C5 no. 33658, 14.

Elsewhere in Toronto, further to the west, another tollgate community began to emerge on Dundas Street. North-west of Toronto the street crossed Dufferin Avenue and a tollgate was erected to collect monies from travellers entering or leaving the city. Under conditions similar to the Yonge Street tollgate at Bloor, a community began to develop, with the erection of a store, tavern, and, eventually, a post office. The community was frequented by 'long wagon trains' that moved between Toronto and Burlington Bay, and later served as a popular destination for city dwellers on rural driving tours. Descriptions of the early community remain sketchy, although by the time a Mrs. Larkin opened a store at this junction in the 1840s, it was said that her establishment was surrounded by a collection of about half a dozen houses and shanties, which one local landowner, Colonel Walter O'Hara had named Stoney Butler Village. As transportation increased between the settlement and Toronto, increasing numbers of landowners and residents worked as market gardeners (several families in Yorkville also grew produce for market).²¹ By 1852 W.H. Smith explained that:

A little beyond the third mile post on the Dundas Street you reach the first toll-gate. Here is a cluster of houses, three of which are taverns; and immediately beyond the toll-gate a village has lately been laid out called "Brockton."²²

²¹ Mary Frances Mallon, "The Village of Brockton," York Pioneer 71 (2), 1-2; C. Pelham Mulvany. Toronto: Past and Present (Toronto: W.E. Caiger, 1884), 258-259. O'Hara had arrived in the vicinity of Brockton in about 1831 and was considered to be on the earliest settlers in both the future villages of Brockton and Parkdale. Margaret Laycock and Barbara Myrvold. Parkdale in Pictures: Its Development to 1889 (Toronto: Toronto Public Library Board, 1991), 8; Sidney Thomas Fisher. The Merchant-Millers of the Humber Valley: A Study of the Early Economy of Canada (Toronto: NC Press, 1985), 97-98. The area immediately to the west of Brockton along the Humber River was dominated by the milling elite whose rural estates and milling establishments served not only the immediate hinterland, but Toronto as well; Yorkville Directory, 1876-77, 18, 37, 49.

²² W.H. Smith. Canada: Past, Present, and Future, 2 vols (Toronto: Thomas Maclear, 1851-2), 2: 745-6.



Figure 4: “Appii Forum or the Three Taverns, Dundas Street, Brockton” from a pen and ink sketch by William James Thomson (1858-1927), 1893. These three taverns formed the nucleus of the Brockton community from the 1840s and remained standing until the 1890s. Toronto Public Library, T 12535

Brockton was soon adopted as the name of the local post office and came to be applied to a larger area stretching as far north as Bloor Street and as far south as the shores of Humber Bay. The nucleus of the community at Dundas and Dufferin developed into an important service centre and served as the focal point of much social and economic activity immediately west of Toronto well into the 1870s. The construction of the Ontario, Simcoe, and Huron Union Railway in 1853 effectively bisected the larger tract of land southwest of Dundas, separating the village of Brockton from developments to the south along the lakeshore.²³ By 1871, the village boasted two houses of worship, St. Anne's Anglican Church and St. Helen's Roman Catholic Church.²⁴

With the inadequacy of concession roads, toll roads had emerged as a vital tool for transportation in early nineteenth-century Upper Canada, and been vital to the growth and prosperity of the province. With the proliferation of railways and the vast improvement of public roadways, toll roads became anathema to the public at large, and complaints levied against them were not in anyway unique to Brockton. The tollgate at Brockton on Dundas Street, which one magistrate called "a relic of barbarism" proved to be a nuisance to villagers who travelled into the city. As a centre of market gardening the fact that most village produce had to traverse the toll road raised the ire of many in Brockton. The result was that a group of villagers pooled their resources and paid \$700.00 so that the gate would be moved further west, with the implicit assumption that anyone living in

²³ Laycock, 9.

²⁴ Mallon, 4.

the village east of the gate would have free and untrammelled passage along Dundas into Toronto. The matter was hardly settled when the road was subsequently leased to a party who, notwithstanding the previous agreement, insisted on charging villagers half of the toll. Finally by late 1878 the new lessee demanded full tolls by all villagers. As one complainant explained, he had been made to “pay seven cents toll for an empty one-horse waggon that was only passing over three-quarters of a mile . . .” The matter would only be solved when the toll on Dundas was abolished in 1883, by which time Brockton had become a settlement of several hundred.²⁵

The development of tollgate communities as outlying service centres such as Yorkville and Brockton along major communication arteries was a relatively common occurrence near cities in Canada West, and it was around these early hubs that larger settlements gradually took hold. While Yorkville and Brockton shared similar origins, by the 1860s Yorkville had developed into a bustling residential suburb while Brockton remained a comparatively tiny centre dependant upon market gardening and taverns. By the 1850s such developments were occurring along the western boundaries of London, and eastern limits of Ottawa. Unlike either of Toronto’s ‘tollgate’ suburbs, each of these early developments tended to coalesce around milling sites, as well as owing much to the more active involvement of prominent local families in exploiting lands for residential use.

²⁵ Toronto Daily Mail, November 22, 1878, 4; Mallon, 2; Toronto Daily Mail, November 22, 1878; Globe, January 4, 1879; Toronto Daily Mail, January 4, 1879.

Milling Centres

While the two tollgate suburbs of Yorkville and Brockton did not lack wealthy benefactors, neither came to be so associated or even dominated by one particular family as did the suburbs of Petersville and New Edinburgh. Both of these communities emerged on the banks of rivers which both separated them from cities and provided them with prime locations for milling enterprises. Although London's development lagged behind that of Toronto, by the early 1840s, possessing a population of 2,000 it had emerged not only as an administrative and judicial seat, but as a burgeoning economic and cultural centre for the southwestern portion of the province. The arrival of railways in the 1850s guaranteed London's regional predominance. By then it had a population of over 10,000, and was incorporated as a city in 1855.²⁶

London could boast an extensive area of influence, stretching from Lake Huron to Lake Erie. The city's influence was most directly felt in its immediate hinterland as landowners began to see the value of their properties rise in terms of potential residential development. The North Branch of the Thames River served as both London's legal and physical western boundary, with the city perched on the high eastern bank, overlooking the low western approaches to the city. Permanent settlement on the western lowlands that faced London, actually predated development on the site of the city itself. A squatter named Joshua Applegarth had been commissioned by provincial authorities to begin a hemp plantation on the cleared and fertile flats in the very early 1800s, a venture he

²⁶ Armstrong, 63, 68.

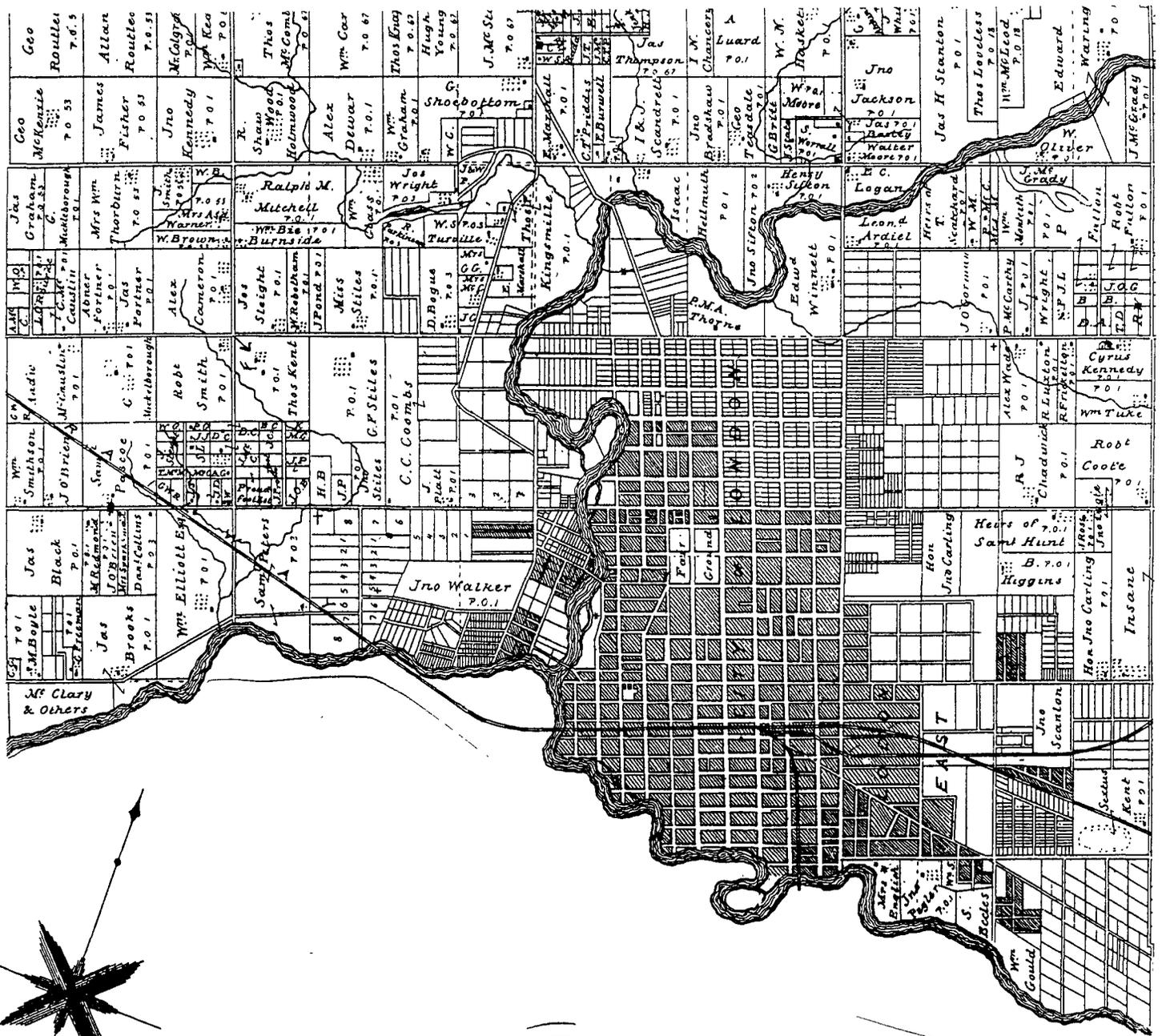
appears to have abandoned by about 1819.²⁷ Other developments arose on London's western frontier. There was a short-lived brickyard, and by the 1820s at least one prosperous farm owned and operated by John and Mary Kent.²⁸ In 1853, London butcher Samuel Peters had commissioned his nephew and namesake to design and build a rural seat on the high bluffs on the Thames's western bank on a large tract of land he had purchased several years earlier. The following year after having taken up residence at his country estate, Peters commissioned this same nephew to survey a 'village' at the western reaches of the Blackfriar's Bridge, which linked the western flatlands with London.²⁹

The development was undoubtedly a sound one for assessment records indicate that by 1857 some fifty-three individuals had purchased building lots in the survey, of whom thirty had already begun to establish homes there. Despite the depression of 1857, which initiated a dramatic and long term fall in local land values, the number of land holders on the flatlands continued to increase so that by 1862 they rose to approximately eighty. While development at Yorkville and Brockton outside of Toronto centred originally at tollgates, which had effectively created hindrances to free travel into the city, Petersville lay within a narrow band of land, bounded by the river and a tollgate to the

²⁷ Frederick T. Rosser. London Township Pioneers: Including a Few Families From Adjoining Areas (Belleville, Ontario: Mika Publishing, 1975), 20-21; Harriet Pridis, "The Naming of London Streets," Transactions, London and Middlesex Historical Society (1909), 26; History of the County of Middlesex, Canada (Toronto: W.A. and C.L. Goodspeed, 1889; reprint ed., Belleville, Ontario: Mika Studio, 1972), 1097-1098.

²⁸ History of Middlesex, 881; London Advertiser, November 18, 1884; Middlesex County Surrogate Court Register of Wills, v. 3, no. 169 (June 1858 to November 1860), 129-132, at J.J. Talman Regional Collections, DB Weldon Library, UWO.

²⁹ Samuel Peters, "Petersville/Bridgetown Map," (April 1854), J.J. Talman Regional Collections, U.W.O.; Nancy Z. Tausky. Historical Sketches of London: From Site to City (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1993), 50.

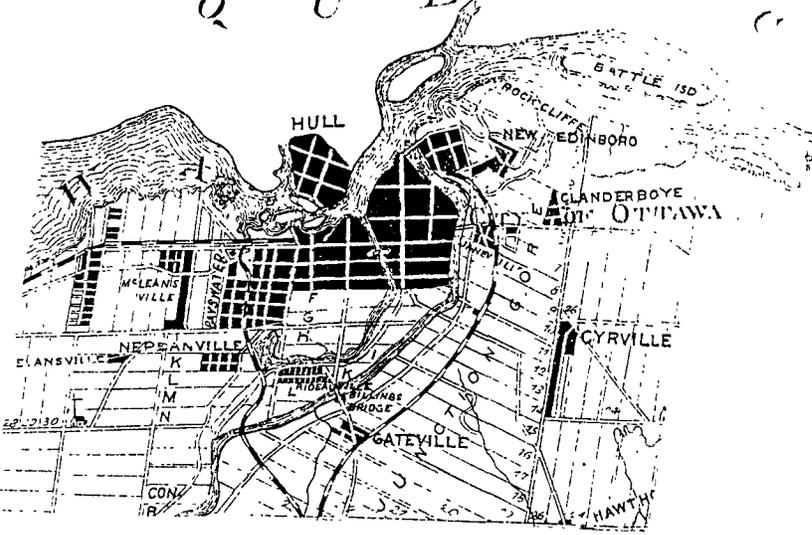


MAP OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF LONDON
 - Scale 60 Chains: 1 Inch

J. S. Randall

Figure 5: A map of London, Ontario (1878) and its immediate hinterland with the suburb of London East to the east and the suburb of Petersville (London West) to the west (it is not labelled on this map). *Illustrated Atlas of the County of Middlesex, Ontario* (Toronto: H.R. Page & Co., 1878), 30.

Q U E B E C



VILLAGE
OF
NEW EDINBURGH.

Being Part of Lots 3 4 and 5 Junction Gore
Township of Gloucester
Scale 10 Chs. to 1 inch.

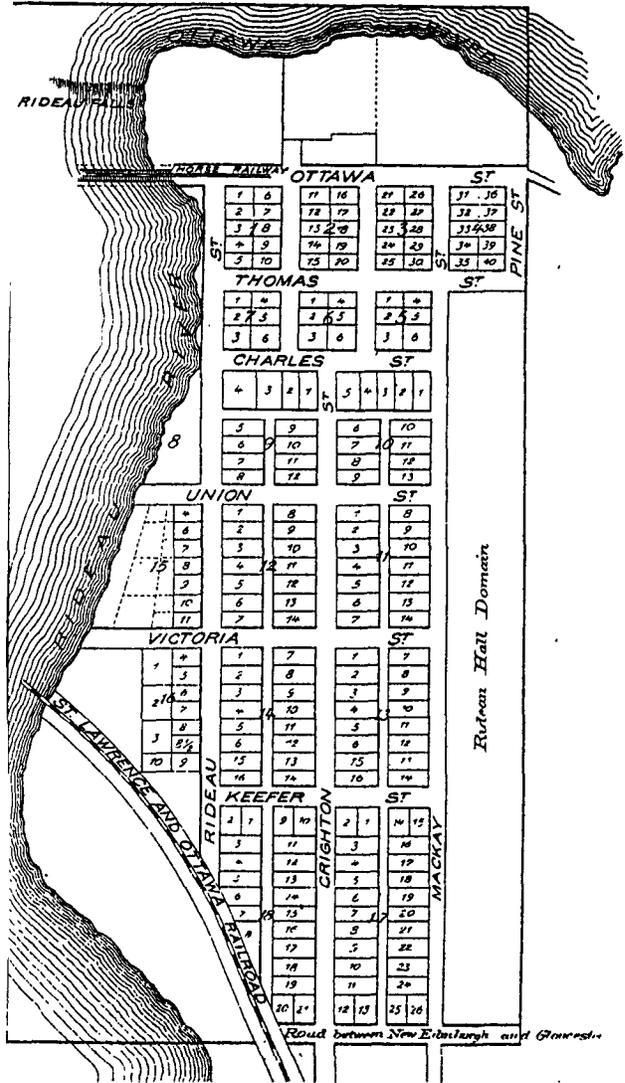


Figure 7: Maps of Ottawa and its immediate hinterland and the Village of New Edinburgh in 1879. Historical Atlas of Carleton County, Ontario, Canada (Toronto: H. Belden, 1879), 4-5, 29.

north. Consequently its residents could freely enter the city, unmolested by the need to pay tolls. The construction of first a grist and then a clothing mill starting in 1839, and the establishment of a distillery at the western end of Blackfriars Bridge furthered development on the western bank of the Thames leading to the subdivision of these lands into residential building lots. By the late 1850s, much of the land in the main and southern portions of the city proper had been settled and developed, leaving only the more distant northerly sections undeveloped. The existence of cheaper house lots just across the river from London's main business district proved enticing to many householders and possible speculators. By the 1860s favourable reports explained that "[t]he enterprising village of Petersville . . ." boasted a brick schoolhouse and the embryonic beginnings of local religious services in the form of a Methodist Sunday School. In 1871 the village had a population of 400.³⁰

Petersville was certainly not the only suburban community developed under the aegis of one specific family. In 1855, as the Peters family were establishing themselves outside London, the death of Thomas McKay at his rural seat east of Ottawa marked the end of the early development of a comparable community. Beginning in 1829, under the leadership of Lieutenant-Colonel John By, the government authorized the construction of

³⁰ Michael Doucet, "Speculation and the Physical Development of Mid-Nineteenth Century Hamilton," Shaping the Urban Landscape: Aspects of the Canadian City-Building Process, eds., Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1982), 177; London Township Assessment Rolls, 1857, 1862, St. George's Ward, reel M1614, "Samuel Peters Land."; Armstrong, "The Rise of London", 93; Petersville/Blackfriar's Neighbourhood Association. The Petersville Neighbourhood Project (London, Ontario: Blackapple, 1994), 12; London Advertiser, February 11, 1865; Lovell's Canadian Dominion Directory for 1871 (Montreal: John Lovell, 1871), 656; Benjamin S. Scott, "The Economic and Industrial History of the City of London, Canada From the Building of the First Railway 1855 to the Present 1930." (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Department of History, 1930), 224.

a canal which would link Kingston on Lake Ontario, and the mighty Ottawa River. The Rideau Canal was to see massive sums of both capital and manpower expended as it pushed its way across 200 kilometres of the virtually empty, malaria infested interior of Eastern Upper Canada. At the Ottawa River terminus, a headquarters and labour camp of transient workers was named Bytown, after the canal's overseer (a town that would become the City of Ottawa in 1855 with a population of close to 8,000).³¹ Among the hundreds that flocked to the canal site was stonemason and entrepreneur, Thomas McKay. While Ottawa grew and developed into a major logging and lumbering town, McKay had removed eastward to a large grant of land he had received beyond the Rideau River. While Samuel Peters and his family subdivided their lands and attracted milling and residential interests, McKay participated in his settlement's development more directly. In about 1832 he erected an extensive saw and grist mill complex, described by one visitor from Kingston in 1834 as "the best in Upper Canada . . ."³² In about 1843 McKay replaced his earlier mill with a large five storey stone structure. He soon followed up with a carding mill. By the time the District of Dalhousie was formed in 1842, McKay's settlement had "assumed a village air" and had a population which included many trades people, labourers, business owners and professionals who clustered around

³¹ Shirley E. Woods. Ottawa: The Capital of Canada (Toronto: Doubleday, Canada, 1980), 20-21, 31-33, 39, 40, 56, 119; Bruce S. Elliott. The City Beyond: A History of Nepean, Birthplace of Canada's Capital, 1792-1990 (Nepean, Ontario: City of Nepean, 1991), 132-133.

³² A.H.D. Ross. Ottawa Past and Present (Toronto: The Musson Book Company, 1927), 174.

the McKay estate, attracted mainly by its mills.³³ By 1850 McKay had christened his tiny settlement New Edinburgh. It was described as a 'stirring place' which regularly attracted nearly a hundred wagons from area farmers.³⁴

As with the early development of Petersville, New Edinburgh was 'intimately identified' with the family that established it. Having lost all of his sons at early ages, it was not surprising that McKay named most of the village streets after them, and similarly remembered his wife with the designation of one village thoroughfare as Crichton Street. McKay, his daughters and sons-in-law continued to dominate the affairs of New Edinburgh for years to come. They were largely responsible for its linkage to the larger world by railway in 1855. Pushed by local backers, the Bytown and Prescott Railway had been chartered in 1850, although construction did not begin until 1851. The president of the new company was McKay's son-in-law, John McKinnon, and it was due in large part to the clout of both McKay and McKinnon that the railway slowly made its way from Prescott toward New Edinburgh. When the last tracks were laid the first train, pulled by the locomotive the *Oxford*, arrived at the village depot amidst much fanfare on Christmas Day 1854, making New Edinburgh the *de facto* terminus of the line until the

³³ Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Carleton (Including City of Ottawa) Ontario (Toronto: C.H. Belden, 1879; repr. Port Elgin: Richardson, Bond and Wright, 1971), xxxi. The establishment of McKay's mills had been the major basis for the settlement. Many milling establishments throughout what would become Ontario sprang up in the interior areas to both spur settlement and serve the needs of the settlements that clustered about them. While these milling sites often had government backing, they were very much the enterprises of individual families, who tended to dominate the communities that grew up around their establishments. Fisher, xiii-xxiii; W.P.J. Millar, "George P.M. Ball: A Rural Businessman in Upper Canada," Ontario History 66 (June 1974): 65-77

³⁴ Ross, 174.

line was laid into Ottawa.³⁵

New Edinburgh owed at least as much to McKay and his heirs as Petersville did to Samuel Peters. Arguably, given their location on important rivers and their proximity to growing cities, both sites would have eventually attracted development without the intervention of the Peters or McKays. However, these individuals and their families helped to give shape and an economic impetus for the emergence of their respective suburbs. Situated on important rivers both suburbs gave rise to milling interests, although economically the Ottawa suburb came to be dominated by the milling complexes, in a way that Petersville was not. The chief of these industrial complexes was situated on Green Island in the Rideau River. Advertisements in Ottawa newspapers for the New Edinburgh Saw Mills and Sash Factory, abounded throughout the late 1850s, and when a catastrophic fire destroyed the McKay Grist Mills in January 1860, the cost to the owners after insurance was presumed to be \$30,000, while the temporary loss of employment to villagers was severe.³⁶ By 1866 the milling complex was of sufficient note for the

Ottawa Times to report:

We beg to remind our readers of the extensive Auction Sale, at New Edinburgh, of the large Saw Mills, cutting 14 million feet per season, stone Flouring Mills, making 200 bbls. Per day, and stone Cloth Factory, weaving 300 yards per day,

³⁵ Woods, 118; Ottawa Citizen, December 2, 1854 and December 23, 1854.

Nick and Helma Mika. Places in Ontario: Their Name Origins and History Part III N-Z (Belleville: Mika Publishing, 1983), 30; H.V. Nelles, "Thomas Coltrin Keefer," Dictionary of Canadian Biography Vol. 14 1911 to 1920 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 552-555. McKay's one son-in-law, Thomas C. Keefer (1821-1915) had married Elizabeth McKay in 1848, and following his father-in-law's death he managed the McKay estate. and consolidated his position by marrying his widowed sister-in-law Annie (McKay) MacKinnon in 1873 after the death of his first wife.

³⁶ Ottawa Union, January 18, 1860, 2.

with the whole water power of the Rideau river, upon a perpendicular fall of forty feet, and about twenty acres of the most valuable land with river frontage, wharves, slopes, &c., in and immediately adjoining the City of Ottawa . . .³⁷

In the same period, the village became a favourite picnicking ground for Ottawa based associations, such as the Saint Patrick's Literary Association which gathered "at the beautiful groves near New Edinburgh . . ." As one correspondent explained, once visitors reached these grounds "Coats, vests, hats, and much of the uniform of City life were cast aside . . ."³⁸ By 1871 a local Ottawa promoter described New Edinburgh as "a small village on the Gloucester side of the Rideau, which is rapidly growing into something closely approaching to a suburb of the city."³⁹ The fact that the government of the United Province of Canada first leased and then purchased Rideau Hall, the late home of Thomas McKay, for use as the official residence of the Governor General, was a boon to New Edinburgh. That the village could boast the residence of Canada's viceregal family was used by subsequent promoters who publicized this fact. An auction of other McKay estate properties at the end of June 1871, pointed out that fifteen of the villa lots in question sat on Rideau Terrace in close proximity to the Governor General's establishment. Lots situated right in the village of New Edinburgh were lauded as they

³⁷ Ottawa Times, June 27, 1866.

³⁸ Ottawa Union, June 22, 1859, 2 and July 6, 1859, 2; Sandra Gwyn. The Private Capital: Ambition and Love in the Age of Macdonald and Laurier (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1984), 97, 108. To celebrate Confederation on July 1, 1867 the Sunday School of St. Alban The Martyr Church had a picnic in New Edinburgh. The presence of the Governor General in the village was emphasised during the Fenian scare in June, 1866 when detachments of the militia were posted at the New Edinburgh railway station and at Rideau Hall itself.

³⁹ Charles Roger. Ottawa Past and Present: A Brief Account of the First Opening Up of the Ottawa Country (Ottawa: Times Printing and Publishing Co., 1871), 73. As a note of interest Charles Roger was also the author of the "Rise of Canada from Barbarism to Civilisation."

“front upon the grounds of Rideau Hall Domain . . .” As was later explained, the sale was generally a great success with many of the lots, most notably those close to Rideau Hall fetching ‘fair prices’ from individuals looking to build private residences.⁴⁰

Industrial Suburb

Yorkville and Brockton began as small services centres on the outskirts of Toronto, serving the travelling public and those who lived in the immediate vicinity. Both Petersville and New Edinburgh began as the private estates of prominent landowning families, and were spurred on by the emergence of locally based milling industries. All four of these communities gradually attracted the attention of householders looking to settle within close range of urban markets, without having to deal with the double yoke of high land prices and high taxes. These centres had formed the nuclei of growing communities on the urban periphery. While these small hamlets or crossroads settlements were transformed into viable suburban entities, a similar transformation was occurring in diffuse farming districts that lay at the edge of the cities. In these areas both householders and businessmen simply migrated across the legal boundaries of constituted cities to the lands in the immediate hinterland, where they transformed former farmland into high density residential communities. Gradually these various developments united to form identifiable communities in their own right, just as had the more nucleated settlements that had emerged around mills or tollgates.

While development was occurring on London’s western boundary, similar growth

⁴⁰ Ottawa Citizen, June 22, 1871, 3; Ibid., June 26, 1871, 3.

sprouted up along its eastern frontier as well. In 1854 London's first mayor, Murray Anderson, a tinsmith and iron founder built a brick house on lands he had purchased three years previously. Anderson was not alone in seeking a rural retreat east of London's Adelaide Street. That same year four other London householders constructed homes in the same area. The city's growth had been steadily moving along the surveyed streets toward its eastern boundary, and by the mid 1850s the value of lands in London township grew in value. Between 1861 and 1874 the number of land owners in the vicinity grew profoundly so that some thirty-three ended up owning fairly significant tracts of land, although by the end of the period in question only four actually lived on these properties. The rest were speculators counting upon continued urban expansion.⁴¹

Throughout the 1850s, most of the development was confined to an area surrounding Hamilton Road, and until 1865 most businesses on London's eastern periphery congregated here. In 1867 enterprising Londoner, Charles Lilley, set up a brick grocery business at the junction of Dundas and Adelaide Streets. In rapid succession Murray Anderson built a block of five stores, and other entrepreneurs quickly erected businesses in the same area. Given his pioneering status, Lilley incorporated the name "Lilley's Corners" into the brickwork of his corner store, and the name soon came into local parlance, as this centre became the virtual heart of London's growing eastern suburb. Education had early become a community focus. One school was built on

⁴¹ Ian Christopher Ross. "London East, 1854-1885: The Evolution, Incorporation, and Annexation of a Satellite Municipality." (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Department of History, 1977), 5-14.

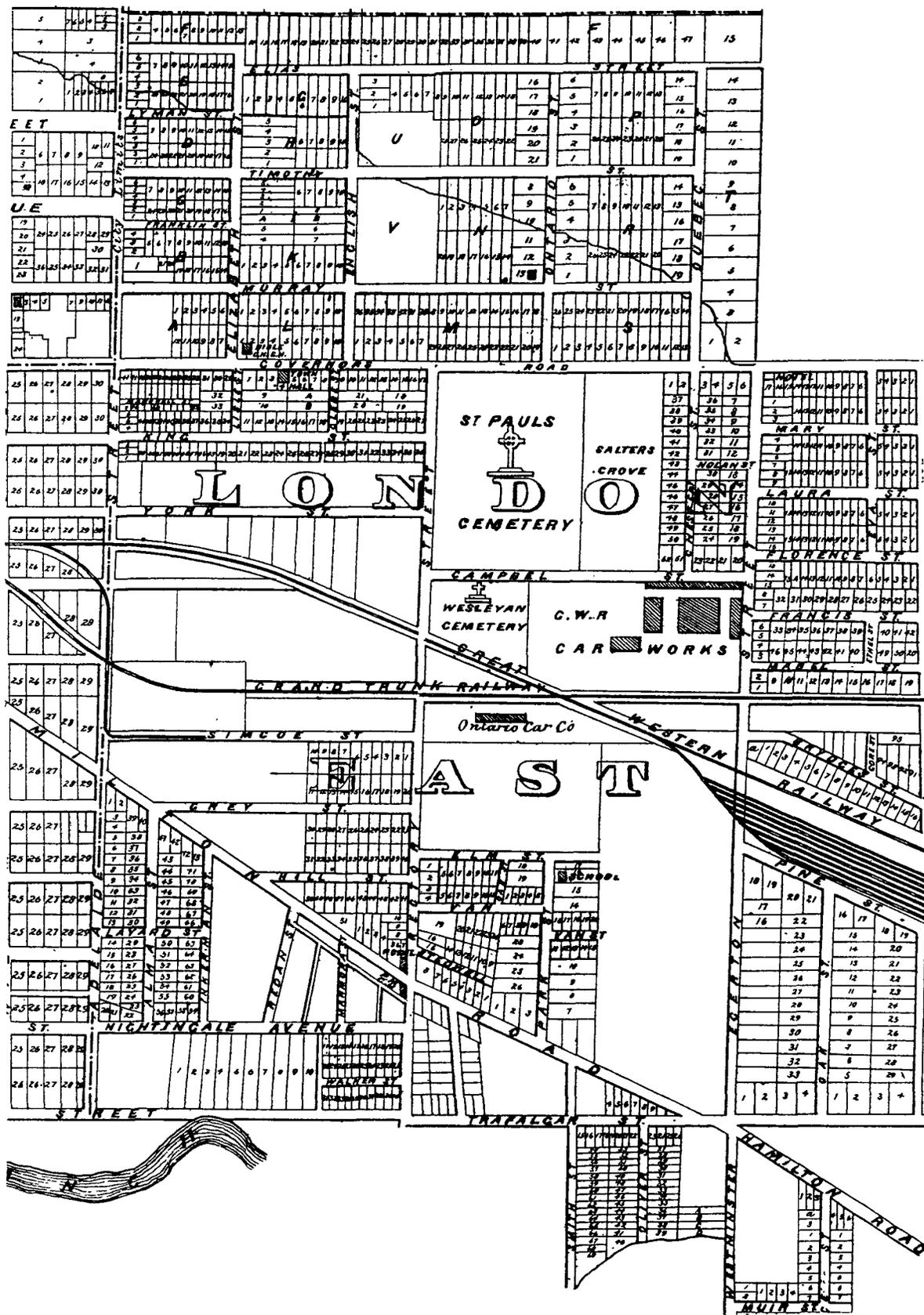


Figure 8: Map of the suburb of London East, 1878. Illustrated Atlas of the County of Middlesex, Ontario (Toronto: H.R. Page & Co., 1878), 57.

Trafalgar Street, predating most development in the community, while a second school was soon constructed between King and York Streets. A decade later the people of London East erected a brick school on Park Street for the astounding sum of \$4,000. By the early 1870s the village could also boast both Wesleyan Methodist and Anglican church buildings.⁴²

While London East increasingly attracted householders of various occupations and income levels, the most telling aspect of the community's development came in the form of industrial ventures. Within two years of building a house, Murray Anderson constructed a frame foundry where he employed about 100 men from London. The Grand Trunk Railway and Great Western Railway arrived in the 1850s and provided lucrative trading links with the developing oil wells of Lambton County. Local entrepreneurs William Spencer and Herman Waterman exploited these rail connections by constructing an oil refinery. Aided by London East's low taxes, its proximity to London capital and abundant rail connections, oil refining and other heavy industry soon located there, making the community the veritable hub of Canada West's nascent oil industry. The proliferation of oil refineries meant backward linkages that furthered local growth. A bustling cooperage trade was one early example, but there was more to come. In 1865 the Ontario Car Company, which constructed rail tankers for oil shipment, opened and came to depend upon Leonard's foundry for boilers and tanks. By 1868, there

⁴² Ibid., 15-16.

were some eight refineries located in London East.⁴³ The rapid emergence of these industries spawned the development of a parallel chemical industry by 1867, which produced in a month between fifty to sixty tons of acid for the oil refineries. The profitability of the industry was indeed telling, for when a chemical plant burned in September 1869, it was rapidly rebuilt to a much larger scale. By the close of the 1860s, the oil refineries and chemical companies covered an area of roughly fifty acres, and exported to markets as far away as Hamilton and Montreal. The explosion of industry to the east of London created massive employment, and many workers found cheap residences close to the plants in which they worked.⁴⁴

Much of London East's development occurred as residential and industrial development spilled across London's eastern boundary. To a certain extent the fostering care that industry received from landowners such as Anderson and Waterman reflected similar activities in Petersville and New Edinburgh. However, unlike these milling settlements, or even the tollgate suburbs of Yorkville and Brockton, London East did not spring up around any one dominant centre, nor did it owe the bulk of its development to any one particular family.

The continued expansion of London throughout the 1860s and 1870s had had much to do with the growth and development of suburbs on its eastern flank. Benefiting from ample connections to railways and the growing oilfields in Lambton County,

⁴³ Ibid., 16-18.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 18, 20.

London East added an increasingly vital industrial element to the economic makeup of London and its environs.

Real Estate Suburbs

While London East developed its industrial base, life in London's western suburb of Petersville tended to remain almost exclusively residential, claiming bucolic qualities to ensure growth. Nearly twenty years after Petersville began, owners of the land immediately south of the community began to see their own properties as possibly lucrative residential developments. Located at the very junction of the North and South Branches of the Thames, the lands had been more prone to flooding, and been left largely to the pasturing of cattle. The chief reason for the delay in developing the property, however, seems to have had little to do with a fear of potential flooding. Various proposals to construct a bridge to the southerly flatlands had been stillborn, apparently due to continual bickering between the City of London and the County of Middlesex. Finally, in 1872 various landowners managed to secure the cooperation of both city and county officials, and buttressed by private subscriptions, sponsored the construction of a \$5000 bridge. With a fixed link to London the community of 'Kensington' was hurriedly surveyed, and lots sold along its streets and avenues named almost exclusively for local tree species. Early inundations of spring flooding did not dissuade householders who snapped up lots described as "beautiful and convenient sites for suburban residences . . ."

Many householders were buoyed by predictions of Kensington becoming "a pretty and

wealthy suburb . . .”⁴⁵

Over the course of the nearly two decades that separated the development of Petersville and Kensington a notable change occurred in the way in which London’s western suburbs were marketed. While Petersville appears to have developed gradually, with no formalized real estate campaign, the emergence of Kensington in the 1870s typified a new move in North America toward developing outlying communities for a particular group of people. Like earlier American developments such as Garden City and Llewellyn Park, Kensington was developed for those householders who might transform the recently surveyed section into “a pretty and wealthy suburb . . .” Kensington’s development would be slowed by flooding early in 1873. However, by the early 1880s the population of Kensington had begun to surpass the older settled community at Petersville. In a relatively short period, the two communities of Petersville and Kensington, while retaining their separate identities, increasingly began to be viewed as a single entity. By the middle of the 1870s, while the name Kensington continued to be used, its place identity had largely been subsumed by its older neighbour of Petersville.⁴⁶

As was illustrated by the emergence of the coordinated efforts to develop Kensington, by the mid 1870s there emerged a more consolidated corporate agenda in the

⁴⁵ History of Middlesex, 368; Christopher L. Hives. “Flooding and Flood Control: Local Attitudes in London, Ontario 1790-1952.” (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Western Ontario Faculty of Graduate Studies, Department of History, 1981), 14. Until a deadly and destructive flood struck Kensington and Petersville in 1883, flooding of these lands was generally viewed as an inevitable natural process, which was more of a nuisance than a threat; London Advertiser, June 29, 1872 and April 7, 1873; London Free Press, April 8, 1873.

⁴⁶ A.S. Meaden, “Memories of My Boy-Hood Days in London: From My Arrival, As a Boy, in the Year 1872,” Western Ontario Historical Notes 9 (September 1951), 91-92; John Lutman. The South and West of London: An Historical and Architectural Guide (London, Ontario: Corporation of the City of London, 1979), 54; ; Jackson. 76-86.

development of suburban lands. This process seems to have become increasingly the norm amongst various developers as they pushed for a more unified approach to land development. By the mid 1870s, Toronto had long been moving westward toward the margins of Humber Bay. In about 1875, the Toronto House Building Association announced that it viewed the lands lying immediately to the west of the city suitable for residential development. It had purchased twenty acres of land, with the addition of a further ten to supplement its original tract. Certainly the lands in the area were not empty, as various families had purchased land from the original colonial grantees and developed their own farms and homes there in the 1820s and 1830s. In 1852, the Gray family of Yorkville purchased a farm not far from Humber Bay and in partnership with William C. Gwynne set up a series of nurseries catering to the city market. In the 1860s some of the landowners had attempted to subdivide their lands to entice further residential development. By decade's end these landowners had only managed to attract a handful of residents who lived and worked a dozen and a half scattered buildings.⁴⁷ With the forays of the Toronto-based building association, and some six other developments sponsored by local residents, the lands between the Northern Railway (as the Ontario, Simcoe, and Huron Union had been renamed in 1858) and Humber Bay rapidly began to fill.⁴⁸ In order to capitalize upon their new developments, the Toronto House Building Association built a sidewalk west from Toronto to cross their holdings "and proceeded to set forth the

⁴⁷ Parkdale Record, February 10, 1898; Laycock, 10.

⁴⁸ Laycock, 10.

merits of their new enterprise.” Within a remarkably short time the builders attracted a large number of new householders who purchased lots and work began on the erection of numerous homes, leading one commentator to explain six years later that “a community began to form.”⁴⁹ In 1880, Toronto surveyor Vernon Bayley Wadsworth and his wife Laura Ridout gave up their leased home on Richmond Street in Toronto and purchased a property on Tyndall Avenue in what came to be referred to as Parkdale. Wadsworth later explained that while the new suburb lacked many of the amenities and infrastructure of life in Toronto, these privations were eventually “obviated by an energetic Village Council . . .” and soon Parkdale enjoyed “all the advantages obtained in the larger cities.” A large number of their Toronto friends and neighbours joined the Wadsworths so that “in consequence we had a pleasant society about us.”⁵⁰

The Road to Incorporation

Rural township governments, dominated by farming populations, were mainly concerned with ensuring that roads and drainage were maintained, and that schools were constructed and supervised. They generally were not interested in, nor did they have the powers of taxation or the fiscal capacity for, providing for the types of services, such as sewers and waterworks that were developing in cities such as Toronto, Ottawa, and

⁴⁹ Scott, 1.

⁵⁰ AO F 163 Wadsworth Family Papers, MU 3077, B-I-2, Life History and Memoirs of V.B. Wadsworth, February, 1926, typed and leather bound manuscript, 21, 102. V.B. Wadsworth (1842-c.1940) had roots in Weston where his family had been engaged in the milling business. He was apprenticed to a surveyor and made extensive trips through Northern Ontario and the Canadian West. He formed a partnership with Charles Unwin and Harry J. Brown in Toronto, the firm produced maps and surveys. In about 1877 Wadsworth was hired by the London and Canada Loan and Agency Company, which was headed by Toronto’s onetime mayor Sir W.P. Howland. Wadsworth’s wife, Laura Ridout, was a granddaughter of the Honourable Thomas Ridout; for issues of middle and upper class views of nineteenth century suburban experience see Archer, “Ideology and Aspiration”: 214-253.

London. The emergence of suburban communities on the frontier between the urban and rural areas complicated matters, for while suburbanites flocked to build homes on cheaper land and enjoy the lower rate of taxation in townships, they also began to develop a hankering for city-based services, which went well beyond the purview of the township governments that represented them. Richard Harris and Peter Larkham wrote that “[t]he most effective form of community are those that possess their own governmental powers.”⁵¹

As Ann Durkin Keating explained in her study of suburban Chicago, by the 1850s the emergence of suburban government was no accident, but the result of demands made by an urban-minded people living on the rural-urban frontier. Keating noted that while rural governments frequently improved the representation of these suburban settlements on their councils, their ‘basic functions’ continued to be essentially rural in scope and function. The result was that suburban residents relied on private initiative to develop water, sewer and other services.⁵²

In the main, nineteenth-century Canadian suburbs remained unincorporated places, due to a reticence on the part of provincial authorities to grant municipal status to

⁵¹ Richard Harris and Peter J. Larkham, eds. Changing Suburbs: Formation, Form and Function (New York: Routledge, 1999), 11-12. See also Barry Salussolia, “The City of Burlington and Municipal Incorporation in Vermont,” Vermont History 54 (1986): 5-19. As Salussolia argued the emergence of urban municipalities in Vermont allowed for these municipalities to develop infrastructure and promote development in ways that rural governments, based upon the direct democracy of the New England town meeting could not. While township government in Ontario was not run in the same way as in Vermont, the erection of unorganized villages into municipal corporations did permit similar leeway in development potential.

⁵² Ann Durkin Keating Building Chicago: Suburban Developers & The Creation of a Divided Metropolis (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1988), 79-83.

communities that lay within the immediate hinterland of cities.⁵³ For the first half of the nineteenth century, municipal organization in Upper Canada (Canada West) had been a haphazard process governed by various pieces of legislation and Orders in Council. In 1849, a reform-minded ministry passed the Baldwin Act, which sought to enshrine a certain amount of governmental control at the local level, while making the process of incorporation more orderly and standardized. The Act was also meant to satisfy the masses, and politically motivated middle classes, and to achieve “a classification of grades of municipalities and a uniformity and standardization of their powers and procedures of government . . .”⁵⁴

Beginning with the incorporation of Yorkville in 1853, many outlying suburban communities took advantage of the new legislation to acquire municipal status, separating themselves from the townships that surrounded them. The 1850s and the 1870s were characterized by a dramatic rise in the number of municipal entities, dwarfing the numbers of urban municipal creations in the intervening 1860s. The relative prosperity of the 1850s helped to explain the jump in the number of incorporations. The 1849 Act maintained that once a community had a population of one thousand, it could be incorporated as a village. Nevertheless, numerous “small nucleated communities were content to remain unincorporated” and subject to governance by the rural townships in

⁵³ McCann, “Suburbs of Desire”, 116.

⁵⁴ C.F.J. Whebell, “Robert Baldwin and Decentralization 1841-9,” in Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Ontario: Essays Presented to James J. Talman. F.H. Armstrong, et al eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 48, 61-62; Elizabeth Bloomfield, et al. Urban Growth and Local Services: The Development of Ontario Municipalities to 1981 (Guelph, Ontario: Department of Geography, University of Guelph, 1983), 12.

which they lay. Other communities of similar size eagerly opted for incorporation, acquiring greater control over their local affairs and providing them with the power to raise the money to make local improvements and provide services. The revised Act of 1873 lowered the population threshold to 750, and permitted incorporation if a petition of one hundred eligible ratepayers and householders was presented before the respective county council. As a result there was a surge in the number of incorporations throughout the 1870s.⁵⁵

Under the old system of township governance suburban communities would not have been without representation. However, incorporation increased the number of elected officials responsible for the suburb and permitted them greater representation at the county level. In Ontario, the statutes governing municipal incorporation allowed for the division of townships into wards, each of which was entitled to elect one councillor to township government, which consisted of a reeve and four councillors. If subsequent assessments indicated that five hundred ratepayers possessed the necessary property qualifications to have the franchise, then one of the councillors would be made a deputy-reeve and would sit on county council, increasing the township's representation on the higher body. With the addition of any further five hundred qualified ratepayers, another deputy-reeve would be added to the municipality's representatives at the county level. Thus an unincorporated village could have a councillor representing their needs on the township council, and one or more voices on the county council. The attainment of

⁵⁵ Bloomfield, 13-14; Statutes of Ontario, 1873, 36 Vic., c. 48, sec. 8, p. 194-195.

incorporated status would guarantee that each village would have the same number of representatives on their village council as sat on township council. Village councils also had the same proviso which ensured that for every five hundred ratepayers who could vote, the village would have another seat on county council. The number of elected representatives that sat at the municipal and county level was directly linked to the village's population. Separated from the broader political and geographic township entity, villages would have greater representation, with increased powers of taxation, and the ability to develop local infrastructure.⁵⁶

While the general advantages of incorporation are clear, the specific motives of residents are not easy to discern. Some commentators at the time these events transpired and those writing later in the 1880s and 1890s believed that incorporation ran contrary to the interests of the adjoining cities and that these communities ought to have joined the city. At least two of the suburbs that chose to incorporate - namely Parkdale and Brockton - did so in the face of annexationist pressure from Toronto.⁵⁷ Suburban incorporation was in many respects a rejection of township governance. Brockton, Yorkville, Petersville, and New Edinburgh emerged as small centres on the outskirts of the city, servicing the needs of their inhabitants as well as those in the broader farming community beyond. At the same time, men like V.B. Wadsworth of Parkdale and others

⁵⁶ Statutes of Ontario, 1873, 36 Vic., c. 48, sec. 68, 69, p. 211-212.

⁵⁷ London Free Press, June 29, 1897. The time that the ratepayers of London West finally opted to join the City of London, the Free Press argued that the whole experiment in municipal independence had been a disaster and that the village should never have chosen that path but simply opted to join the city immediately. Such an overture does not appear to have been on the table at the time.

appear – at least in retrospect– to have made a distinction between their suburban communities and the neighbouring cities. Parkdale may not have begun as a nucleated centre on the urban periphery, like the tollgate or milling suburbs. However, it also acted as a link between the urban fabric of Toronto to the east, and the more pastoral and rural lands characterized by High Park and the farming areas of York Township to the west.⁵⁸

Most of the six suburban municipalities studied here put up a concerted effort to retain their independence and did not instantly surrender their independent status when amalgamation offers were made. This suggests that suburban dwellers had a deeper attachment to incorporation than many observers may have been willing to accept. In his examination of the emergence of neighbourhood identities in late nineteenth-century American cities, Alexander von Hoffman noted that for the average person living in the period, there was a deep and committed personal attachment to place, which was buttressed in neighbourhoods by a sense of common experience and a “localist orientation” prevalent in much thought and associations.⁵⁹ Like so many other similarly sized communities across the province, these six Ontario suburban communities elected

⁵⁸ Beyond the obvious the reliance the grist mills in particular had upon the farming population in the farming districts, these communities were also sites of commerce and supply depots for these same farming people. In the instance of Petersville it was noted that until the 1890s, people in southwestern London Township patronized the suburbs stores and other businesses, which were more readily accessible to them than the businesses located in central London. W.W. Judd, ed. Annotated Memoirs of Albert H. Dobson (1888-1969) Concerning His Life from 1888 to 1923 in London Township and Petersville, Middlesex County, Ontario, Canada (London, Ontario: Phelps Publishing, 1993), 1; Frederick Andrewes, “The West Side Some Years Back,” typed memoir, J.J. Talman Regional Collections, University of Western Ontario. The memoir noted that the construction of an iron bridge at Oxford Street “will make it better for farmers in going to Saunby’s Mill, or Cooper’s shop and Grant’s blacksmith shop, where they make wagons and buggies and do repair work.” Throughout the five paged typed manuscript Andrewes made references to “City folks” and made distinctions between the physical and legal entity of London West and the City of London; V.B. Wadsworth, February, 1926, typed and leather bound manuscript, 21, 102.

⁵⁹ Alexander von Hoffman. Local Attachments: The Making of an American Urban Neighborhood, 1850 to 1920 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), xv.

to form their own municipal entities, in a quest for self determination, and as a means of attempting to boost development. They sought to map a course that was distinctive from the urban and rural communities that surrounded them.

The process did not occur simultaneously in the various suburbs, given their varying degrees of development. Incorporation occurred about the time that the suburbs attained, or were projected to attain, the minimum population required for village status. The village of Yorkville, which had emerged and experienced rapid growth throughout the 1840s and early 1850s was the first to demand incorporation. At the time Yorkville ratepayers took this step, the future suburban municipalities were in varying degrees of development. Recognizable communities existed at both Brockton and New Edinburgh by the early 1850s, while Parkdale, London East and London West were only beginning to attract residents.

In the spring of 1852 there was a movement within Yorkville to gain incorporated status. Various unsubstantiated allegations surfaced in subsequent years charging that the village fell well short of the required one thousand inhabitants. Critics claimed that the village's population was likely only about 300. Enterprising villagers, bent upon attaining incorporation, allegedly listed names from the cemetery and enumerated a group of itinerant gypsies camping within the community. If the village population was technically too small, it was probably not far from the requirement, for by 1861 it had 1,570 inhabitants.⁶⁰ What prompted a desire to incorporate remains unclear. It has been

⁶⁰ Moore, 14; Canada 1861 Census Aggregate Data. Vol. 1, pp 500-501.

suggested that some ratepayers wished to assert their identities as being citizens of Yorkville and not merely second-class citizens on the periphery of Toronto.⁶¹ By the beginning of May, the village found itself designated as a separate municipality, gazetted by the Legislative Assembly. The Toronto-based Globe hardly found the move palatable, describing the village as “that little offshoot of Toronto . . .” so lately a meagre collection of taverns and stores. The Globe’s editor explained that Yorkville had “waxed populous and strong, and now takes upon itself the cares and responsibilities of villagehood.” As the paper continued in its rough appraisal of the situation, it noted that the sudden erection of Yorkville into a village begged the important question of whether or not it would soon be annexed by Toronto. As the editor explained, the city could hardly be expected to remain “cabin’d, cribb’d, confined” with its existing narrow boundaries. Once it had grown “too large for its garments” it was inevitable that it would require a slice of the surrounding township to accommodate this growth, and in time Yorkville would be swallowed whole. In the end it was presumed that Yorkville residents’ experiment in incorporation could only be viewed as an “apprenticeship to the higher and graver duties of citizens of Toronto . . .”⁶²

As in Yorkville, the residents of New Edinburgh sought incorporation long before they attained the required population of 1 000 (estimates later stated that the village could have had no more than perhaps 300 residents). Exactly what precipitated the move for

⁶¹ Moore, 15.

⁶² Globe, May 6, 1852, 218.

incorporation in 1866 is not explicitly discussed in contemporary accounts. The local media appear to have paid more attention to news of the sale of the saw and flouring mills on the McKay estate and the occasional sensation, such as a rescue made on the Ottawa River by a local resident, than to the incorporation question.⁶³ However, in late June, the Ottawa Citizen did report that Carleton County Council was advised by some of its representatives that the members of the legislature for both Carleton and Russell Counties should be notified “to watch over the interests of the County of Carleton, if any application is made for the incorporation of the Village of New Edinburgh . . .” and ensure that the boundaries of the village should be made to abut Ottawa’s easterly limits as closely as possible. Presumably, there was a fear that should the village not take in lands such as Green Island in the Rideau, such lands might be given over to the city and lost to the county forever.⁶⁴

There is one clue to the motives for incorporation. At the same time as the bill for incorporation appeared, the Provincial legislature was considering an Act to incorporate the “Ottawa City Passenger Railway Company.” This important transportation act and the act incorporating New Edinburgh both received Royal Assent on August 15, 1866. The incorporation of the railway company stipulated that the tracks would begin in New Edinburgh and run into Ottawa along various streets. Significantly, the Act provided that “Ottawa and the adjoining municipalities . . . are respectively authorized to make and to

⁶³ Ottawa Citizen, June 25, 1866; Ibid., June 26 and June 28, 1866. Canada 1871 Census, New Edinburgh; Bloomfield, 158. Five years after incorporation, New Edinburgh’s population was 596.

⁶⁴ Ottawa Citizen, June 25, 1866; Ibid., July 7, 1866, 2; Ibid. May 3, 1866. During this same period Governor General Viscount Monck took up residence at Rideau Hall.

enter into any agreements or covenants with the said company . . .” as they related to the maintenance of roads, sewers, waterlines, and of course rail lines that would be created or affected by the creation of the new service.⁶⁵ It seems likely, therefore, that the call for municipal status in New Edinburgh had much to do with the development of a street railway. Both the stables and headquarters for the transportation network were to be in New Edinburgh. Negotiations for the development of these works were to be conducted through the concerned municipal governments. For the majority of ratepayers and councillors of rural Gloucester township, the street railway would have seemed of little benefit or concern. In order to ensure that the best interests of the venture were paramount, it was probably felt best that the municipal council overseeing the New Edinburgh end of the operations should be devoted to ‘urban’ concerns.

The citizens of the newly formed municipality seem to have been imbued with a great sense of civic duty or ‘opportunism’ for the Ottawa Citizen explained that:

Nearly all the available men in the new municipality are candidates for civic honors. We understand there are no less than 17 in the field. If this new municipality is going to outdo Ottawa, it must keep down the taxes to a lower rate than obtains here.⁶⁶

Although it seems unlikely that anyone expected that New Edinburgh would ever surpass the neighbouring city, it may have been assumed that the community could expand and flourish beyond most expectations. The election was later described to have “passed off peacefully and with good results.” The Ottawa Times was pleased to announce that

⁶⁵ Statutes of the Province of Canada, 1866, 29 Vic., c. 106, 539-542; Ibid., 1866, 29 Vic., c. 81, 450-451.

⁶⁶ Ottawa Times, January 3, 1867.

Robert Blackburn -- one of the village's wealthier entrepreneurs-- was now Reeve.⁶⁷

Other suburban villages also seem to have come to the idea of incorporation. Outside of London, the two communities of London East and Petersville appear to have continued to grow under the governance of the predominantly rural London township. Reports emanating from the township at the dawn of 1874 hardly bespoke of internal rancour or discord, although the residents of the St. Lawrence's Ward into which London East fell, complained that their property taxes for 1873 had risen precipitously from those of 1872. Indeed the municipal contest of January 1874, was only made notable by the fact that one candidate for township council, Squire John Peters of Grosvenor Lodge, above Petersville, garnered some 856 votes, more than any other candidate in the township's municipal history. The support for a man so intimately tied to Petersville's development might be interpreted as a desire for better representation for Petersville itself. By the spring of 1874, residents in Petersville complained that monies were not being directed to needed infrastructure improvements in their community. A meeting of concerned ratepayers held in May 1874, at the Petersville Temperance Hall, demanded that their community be given their fair share of surplus funds. Certainly London township was not alone in this discussion and the neighbouring township of Lobo similarly attempted to spend the surplus by constructing bridges and gravelling roads, while also helping to pay down Middlesex County's debt. The mood amongst the ratepayers from Petersville was fraught with anger and frustration as they debated the best

⁶⁷ Ibid., January 9, 1867.

course of action within the framework of London township. After much discussion, one resident proposed that perhaps the villagers should look into the possibility of incorporation, enabling them to dispose of tax money as they saw fit. Complaints were soon raised about the ‘insecurity of property’ – presumably due to flooding– under the current system of governance, which ignored their interests. Despite the attempts by their township councillor to mollify them and explain that the surplus question would undoubtedly be put before ratepayers, the meeting had rapidly switched from discussing the means of influencing township council to what action had to be taken to form their own municipality.⁶⁸

In London East the clamour for incorporation was even more sudden. One commentator wrote fifteen years later that London East’s dispersed layout and persistence of low taxation meant that “not a whisper was heard in reference to incorporation, and affairs went on prosperously and harmoniously till 1874, when it seemed to strike London Easters all at once that they should be incorporated . . .” It seems hard to believe that everything passed off ‘harmoniously’. The local press, however, probably fails to indicate existing tensions and the relevant township records have not survived. It is impossible to say whether those who championed London East’s incorporation were spurred on by their compatriots in Petersville, or whether they arrived at their decision simultaneously, but while Petersville residents were complaining about the allocation of London township’s surplus, in London East the motivations for incorporation remained

⁶⁸ London Free Press, December 29, 1873; Middlesex County Council Minutes, April 10, 1874; London Advertiser, March 16, 1874; Ibid., June 5, 1874

ambiguous.⁶⁹

While the villages of Yorkville, London East, and Petersville were spurred to incorporate by internal considerations, the village of Parkdale opted for incorporation in response to a perceived threat from both the City of Toronto and a number of Parkdale ratepayers who felt that annexation to the city would be in their best interests. While the village had only existed for a few years, the question of its future municipal status had existed nearly as long, as villagers engaged in a continual debate about amalgamation.⁷⁰ Certainly there was a feeling in Toronto that annexation or amalgamation was the best outcome, allowing the city to link up with High Park, which lay to the west.⁷¹ As an editorial in the Globe explained:

Our correspondent, "A Resident," . . . acknowledges that he built in Parkdale simply to avoid the city taxes, while availing himself of city conveniences. He does not deny that he is a citizen of Toronto, that all his business is done in the

⁶⁹ History of County of Middlesex, Canada, 410; Ross, "London East", 28.

⁷⁰ AO GS 6482, York Township Minutes Books, 1872-1882; April 1, 1878, September 12, 1878, November 4, 1878, October 4, 1880, November 1, 1880, March 20, 1882. When Petersville (London West) incorporated in 1874 there was at least a hint of discontentment among suburban inhabitants with rural township government, apparently over the allocation of funds. The surviving township minutes for York Township in which both Parkdale and Brockton were situated (as well as the older suburb of Yorkville) shed very little light on any possible animosity or difficulties between the suburbs and township government. Indeed the minutes are devoid of references to the incorporation of either suburb, and passing remarks indicate that the township was willing to provide funds for the maintenance and construction of streets and sidewalks within both suburbs, even in the intermediary period between the adoption of incorporation and its actual implementation. The only possible hint of animosity between the township and suburb appeared at the April 1, 1878 meeting of York Township Council, when calls were made to forego building a new schoolhouse within Parkdale. Given that this statement was made just as the suburb was debating the merits of incorporation, it seems likely that the township was wary of expending township revenue on a work that would possibly be removed from its jurisdiction and thus benefit. By the end of March 1882, however, it seems that questions of school revenues had persisted even after both Parkdale and Brockton were independent, for York Township was then engaged in the "settlement of School Matters" between all three municipalities.

⁷¹ Laycock , 12-13.

city, and that but for Toronto Parkdale would never have had an existence . . .⁷²

Matters seem to have come to a head toward the end of June 1878. Two delegations were formed within Parkdale to lobby York County Council, one advocating incorporation, and the other that incorporation be forestalled. While these two delegations jostled, Toronto City Council passed a resolution to extend its western limits from Dufferin Street to the Humber River, which would include Parkdale. Taxation dominated the debates. Many of those who set up households in Parkdale had been attracted by low taxation. Similarly, there was a general fear that Toronto's government was rife with corruption, and that the city's water supply was unsafe. Those favouring annexation argued that it was hardly fair for villagers to expect to use Toronto's nearby services without contributing to its taxes. Those who lobbied for incorporation explained that they would maintain low rates of taxation, and still have access to Toronto's amenities. They argued that low taxes would be preserved by simply applying 'a frontage tax,' which would see that every rate payer would pay for local improvements in front of his or her own property, and avoid the higher taxes of Toronto where infrastructure and other improvements came from the general revenue.⁷³

The Globe championed the cause of annexation and argued that if Parkdale incorporated, it would drive a permanent wedge between the city and High Park. Arguing that the park was a great asset to the city, the paper continued that an independent Parkdale would foil attempts by the city to develop proper access. At the

⁷² Globe, July 1, 1878.

⁷³ Laycock, 12-13.

same time, the presence of a park so close to Parkdale's western boundary would enhance property values in the suburb, even though Parkdale would not contribute a cent towards its upkeep. While some village residents appear to have agreed, a majority favoured incorporation, a status granted to the community by York County Council that same summer [1878].⁷⁴

Although Brockton had been identified as a community for more than a quarter of a century before Parkdale, it lagged behind in both development and population. By 1871 only 150 people lived in the village.⁷⁵ The dramatic rise of population in western Toronto and in what came to be known as Parkdale, was an undoubted boon for the more northerly community. By the early 1880s the population of Brockton surged, surpassing the 750 required to attain incorporated status.⁷⁶ The timing of Brockton's spurt of growth was fortuitous. In the spring of 1880 some members of Toronto's city council began to propose an expansion of the city's western boundary. Apparently, various unnamed Brockton residents forwarded a petition to the council, asking to be annexed to the city in order to gain access to the city's municipal services. The rejection of the proposal by Toronto's council-- mainly on the grounds that the city needed to "consolidate and improve" lands they already possessed-- prompted a discussion of incorporation within the village. As the Toronto Daily Mail noted, "[t]he principal residents are interesting

⁷⁴ Globe, June 27, 1878, 2.

⁷⁵ Toronto Daily Mail, July 9, 1880. At this time it was said that for the market gardeners of Brockton "business allows them but little time to attend to educational matters."

⁷⁶ Laycock, 10.

themselves in the scheme, so that there is every likelihood of another suburban village rising on the western frontier of the city.”⁷⁷ While there does not appear to have been any massive groundswell of support for the venture, such as had emerged two years earlier in Parkdale, neither did the idea fade away.⁷⁸ By early September 1880, a census pinned the population of Brockton at 796, which seemed a guarantee that the village would soon “be vested with all the powers pertaining to a village.”⁷⁹ In the face of having yet another municipal suburb raised on its western boundary, a renewed attempt by Toronto City Council to annex its western suburbs emerged in September.

If the idea of being annexed had once been embraced by villagers, the mood had changed. An October meeting of ratepayers in “the district called Brockton” empowered two residents to sit in upon the city’s annexation committee and voice their opposition to the annexation proposal.⁸⁰ Others were dispatched to notify York County Council of the community’s desire to incorporate. A bylaw for incorporating Brockton was brought forward during the November proceedings of the county council. Debate revolved around various technicalities pertaining to land area and the inclusion of road allowances. The council was asked to make exceptional haste in passing the bylaw, for there was a

⁷⁷ Toronto Daily Mail, July 6, 1880 and July 19, 1880.

⁷⁸ Ibid., July 23, 1880; Ibid., July 24, 1880; Earlier in the month it had been noted that the number of cattle roaming the village’s streets had decreased to the great improvement of the community as a whole, Ibid., July 19, 1880.

⁷⁹ Ibid., September 10, 1880; Globe, November 19, 1880. A second census was taken by a committee appointed by York County Council in November, which found the population to be at 800.

⁸⁰ Toronto Daily Mail, September 21, 1880, October 8, 1880, October 22, 1880; Globe, October 2, 1880, and October 8, 1880.

genuine fear that should the village be denied the powers of incorporation “the city of Toronto would probably take measures to annex Brockton and other outlying villages, and thus gobble them up.” While the formal adoption of the bylaw was delayed while questions were put before various officials, villagers themselves were confident that the matter would be settled in their favour. Having virtually attained the right to incorporate their community, they set about ensuring the smooth transfer of authority to their new corporation. A meeting held in late November investigated whether a new council could be chosen by acclamation, so that an official body could back a petition being sent to the Ontario Legislature to attempt to have special legislation ensuring incorporation, given that the call for incorporation was so late in the year. Apparently, the calls for the creation of a council by acclamation were not met, and there were two names nominated for the position of reeve and no less than seventeen for the slate of four councillors.⁸¹

For every suburban village that opted for incorporation throughout the period, there were at least two or three that did not. Toronto was ringed with such communities, and even sported a large suburban population on the Toronto Islands. Villages, such as Seaton, situated midway between Yorkville and Brockton, were noted for their cheap real estate. Like their incorporated counterparts, they sported sizeable populations and community-based institutions.⁸² Certainly by the late 1870s there was an attitude within Toronto that acknowledged that the city could not “allow ourselves to be girdled round by

⁸¹ Globe, November 19, 1880 and November 29, 1880; Toronto Daily Mail, November 26, 1880.

⁸² Mulvany, 258.

incorporated villages, whose presence may by-and-by cause annoyance by absurd restriction, and disease by neglect of all ordinary sanitary precautions.” Similarly it was argued that a ring of municipalities would hinder Toronto’s development, promote bureaucratic entanglements, and allow residents who paid no Toronto taxes the benefits of Toronto’s parks and promenades.⁸³ Even in the case of London and Ottawa, there were suburban conglomerations that never opted for incorporation, and were essentially annexed by the neighbouring city. London South, for example, was a large sprawling settlement that attracted the patronage of London’s elites who chose the lower tax rates afforded by Westminster township to build their estates. Even after the suburb began to attract increasing numbers of householders from the middling and working strata of society, there was no grassroots call for incorporation. The unorganized community remained subordinate to the largely rural township until annexation was proposed. Buoyed by the promise of acquiring city-based infrastructure, the only stumbling block appeared to be a fear of taking on part of the city’s crushing debt. Negotiators promised London South a preferential rate of taxation, which cleared the way for annexation in May 1890.⁸⁴

One of the most instructive examples of a community that avoided incorporation was Riverside, on the eastern bank of the Don River, a district later called Riverdale.⁸⁵

⁸³ Globe, June 27, 1878, 2.

⁸⁴ John Lutman. South & West, 9-10.

⁸⁵ Globe, October 4, 1880. The name of the post-office was changed in 1880 from Don Mount to Riverside.

On 24 January 1884, some Riverside ratepayers met to voice their opposition to “certain parties” who sought the incorporation of Riverside. The meeting ended with a unanimous resolution that incorporation was not in the best interests of the village.⁸⁶ As it stood, the resolution was not sufficient to stay incorporation, as York County Council felt that they did not have the authority to abrogate the petition of those ratepayers interested in erecting the village. County Council advised that the whole matter be put before York Township Council -- the municipality of which Riverside was a part -- as a whole. At the meeting some ratepayers complained that their names had been affixed to the petition for incorporation without their knowledge by family members. One ratepayer complained that he had recently purchased property in the village with the understanding that incorporation was not then being considered. A supporter of the incorporation bid suggested that should the village attain municipal status, the value of property would increase. Another resident argued in favour of annexation to the city of Toronto, but cautioned that Toronto would hardly act without the consent of Riverside ratepayers. Another committee was then struck to represent those against incorporation before York Township Council.⁸⁷

Within a matter of days the news emanating from Riverside changed dramatically. A meeting held on 1 February 1884, illustrated a major shift in opinion. At the meeting, ratepayers argued that they could see only two prudent courses of action ahead for the

⁸⁶ Ibid., January 26, 1884, 10.

⁸⁷ Ibid., January 29, 1884, 6.

community: either incorporation or annexation. For reasons not entirely clear, the status quo of remaining a community under the aegis of the township was considered to be untenable. Given the vocal opposition that had arisen over the move to incorporate Riverside, annexation was the most likely and satisfactory outcome. A committee was struck to canvass ratepayers and submit a report in favour of annexation to Toronto City Council.⁸⁸

The mood within the province as a whole underwent a dramatic change by the early 1880s. While the 1850s had seen the number of 'urban' municipalities (villages, towns, and cities) rise precipitously, the 1860s had witnessed a significant drop off in the rate of incorporations, a pace that had picked up significantly again in the 1870s. A record eighty-four municipal incorporations occurred in that decade. As in the 1860s, however, the 1880s saw a marked decline in the number of incorporations.⁸⁹ The fact that Riverside's ratepayers seemed dead set against incorporation is perhaps telling. Yorkville had been amalgamated the previous year, and while residents of Riverside were locked in debate, they were undoubtedly influenced by news from Brockton about municipal corruption and insolvency.⁹⁰

The communities that came to be known as Brockton, Yorkville, and New Edinburgh emerged as tiny service centres or areas of industry. Petersville and New

⁸⁸ Ibid., February 4, 1884, 6.

⁸⁹ Bloomfield, 13.

⁹⁰ Globe, February 6, 1884, 8.

Edinburgh owed much of their origins to the speculations of notable landowners, men who had left the growing cities for settlement in rural retreats on the outskirts, and who foreshadowed the later influxes of householders following their lead. These men, Samuel Peters and Thomas McKay, who had played significant roles within London and Ottawa societies respectively, retained their links with these larger centres, while developing their own smaller communities on the urban fringe. While the origins of many of Ontario's early suburban municipalities certainly were an outgrowth of urban development beyond city boundaries, encouraged by eager developers and low property values and ultimately lower taxation, that is not the whole story. Other less utilitarian motivations and esthetic qualities came into play. While suburban municipalities have been generally ignored in the discussions of urban and metropolitan growth in the province, at least some historians have acknowledged that their emergence was a sign of the increased influence and development of the cities that they surrounded.⁹¹ While most of the suburban municipalities lacked what might be termed an overarching promotional literature, and frequently developed at varying times and under the auspices of different landowners and promoters, there was an underlying belief that life in outlying communities was different than in the cities. Communities like New Edinburgh had offered the citizens of Ottawa a convenient and bucolic setting for outdoor excursions and picnics. Similarly, promoters for Yorkville lauded the escape it offered from the stresses of life in Toronto. Londoners were informed that a householder could easily

⁹¹ Armstrong and Brock, "The Rise of London", 95, 96.

afford to purchased 'park and village lots' on choice lands in Petersville and Kensington, and resided a short distance from the city.⁹² The impetus to attain municipal independence frequently corresponded to a general increase in the number of municipal incorporations across the province. To borrow from Eric H. Monkkenon's work on urban police forces in the United States, *municipal incorporation in Ontario* was a result of "contagious diffusion." While local events might have contributed to the establishment of municipal status, more importantly it was spurred by the growing number of examples from cities on down. As cities, towns, and villages across the province incorporated, these examples promoted the same process in other areas.⁹³ To a certain extent it could be argued that the growth suburban communities experienced was seen as justification enough for incorporation. Some suburban communities like London East seem to have simply fallen into the process, while others like Petersville (later called London West) felt compelled to do so by a lack of understanding from the rural governments that controlled them. Most dramatically, the examples of Brockton and Parkdale illustrate that some suburban ratepayers felt that incorporation could stave off annexation to a city. Incorporated status seems to have been viewed as a bulwark against city absorption. Invested with the powers and authority of municipal government, the suburbs could go on to construct their own infrastructure and institutions as a means by which to maintain and further develop a separate suburban identity.

⁹² Yorkville Directory, 1876-77, 14; Parkdale Register, 1-4; Ottawa Union, June 22, 1859 and July 6, 1859; London Advertiser, June 29, 1872.

⁹³ Eric H. Monkkenon. Police in Urban America (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 54-55.

Chapter Two:

Constructing Suburban Identities

Between 1853 and 1881, the six suburbs covered in this study emerged in Ontario as official corporate entities with the powers that came with this municipal status.¹

Claiming that inhabitants found or forged common identifications or affinities that made them into viable communities with a common sense of belonging would be a leap in logic. However, while many suburbanites worked in the cities they neighboured, there was a concerted trend within the suburbs to create and conserve community identity.²

The incorporation of the suburbs did not begin this process, but it did help to give it shape, and local suburban governments worked in tandem with other community-based organizations to foster community identities.

Few of the residents of these six municipalities left discussions of their feelings on

¹ Richard Harris, "The Making of American Suburbs, 1900-1950s: A Reconstruction," in Changing Suburbs: Foundation, Form and Function (London: E & FN Spon, 1999), 95. Harris explained that traditionally Americans had viewed the act of incorporating suburbs as important to the identification as suburbs. The ability of these communities, with an incorporated basis, to provide services was important in defining at least one important form of suburb. Furthermore he noted that incorporation amongst suburbs "also facilitated the creation of distinct communities, setting the seal upon a nascent identity."

² The term *community* is problematic. As Raymond Williams explained that by the eighteenth century community came to have various meanings, ranging from a term meant to refer to people without rank, to one referring to "the people of a district" or "the quality of holding something in common, as in *community of interests*, *community of goods*." In a sense a hybrid form came to mean "a sense of common identity and characteristics . . ." In conclusion Williams explained that "Community can be the warmly persuasive word to describe an existing set of relationships, or the warming persuasive word to describe an alternative set of relationships." It seems that this is the most appropriate way to examine the meaning of community in the context of Ontario's nineteenth century suburbs, as suburbanites attempted to form internal relationships within the suburb, while at the same time showing themselves as an alternative to the broader community of the city. Raymond Williams. Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society Revised Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 75-76; A.P. Cohen. The Symbolic Construction of Community (London: Tavistock Publications, 1985), 11-12. Cohen illustrates the contradictions that the word *community* have presented to scholars, with various claims being made as to the efficacy of the term. Indeed it has been argued that modernism spelled the death of community, although at the same time Cohen pointed out that there has been an upsurge in its use with a return to "community consciousness - in such terms as ethnicity, localism, religion, and class itself . . ."

what it was like to live in their particular suburb. The absence of such testimony creates difficulties in assessing what attachments to place or community might have existed. While local politicians frequently lauded the benefits and virtues of their communities -- sentiments echoed in local promotional literature-- for the vast majority of suburban residents the record is silent.³ In his study of public life in the neighbourhoods of nineteenth-century Boston, Massachusetts, Alexander von Hoffman explained that people of the era “conceived of loyalty to place as a basic human emotion . . .” Although the United States became an increasingly urbanized society, the move to city spaces did not eliminate the community life that had flourished in rural areas. Localist sentiments were transferred to new, more urban neighbourhoods.⁴ At the same time not all residents of the suburbs came from rural areas. Those that moved to the suburbs from cities also helped to shape community identity, making it, at least partially, an urban process as well.⁵ As one historian of modern city culture explained, suburbanites “created [a] landscape, neither rural nor urban, where some people seemed to enjoy both city and country lives without experiencing the rigors of the latter.”⁶

Identification with place became an important theme in the development of community in nineteenth-century Ontario suburban municipalities. Beyond a mere

³ John G. Scott. The Parkdale Register Containing A History of Parkdale From Its Incorporation to the Present Time (Toronto: Bengough, Moore, & Bengough, 1881), 1-8; Yorkville Directory, 14-15.

⁴ Alexander von Hoffman. Local Attachments: The Making of an American Urban Neighborhood, 1850 to 1920 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), xv.

⁵ S.D. Clark. Suburban Society (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), 90-7.

⁶ Gunther Barth. City People: The Rise of Modern City Culture in Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 41.

affinity for geography, there were a series of processes and efforts toward community building that at times dominated village and town life at the public level, as local governments and citizens attempted to create within their municipalities groups and organizations that would provide for their citizens. Religious institutions, fraternal brotherhoods, literary societies and the like emerged and became a significant part of the suburban fabric. Similarly the people who came to live on the urban-rural frontier, came for varying purposes and from various backgrounds, crossing an entire spectrum of society with labourers, tradespeople, shopkeepers, professionals and wealthy business people living in proximity to one another. While the reasons that led to their settlement in suburbs were varied, there were certain commonalities in what attracted them. Life on the urban frontier afforded cheaper lands and rents, and often -- save perhaps for the instance of London East -- provided an escape from the noise and congestion of the city they bordered. At the same time it was in these very cities that many suburban residents found the source of their livelihoods be it through employment or markets.⁷ What all of these developments seem to suggest is that beyond pragmatic issues of securing housing at affordable rates, the residents of Ontario's six suburban municipalities sought to foster, or even construct, a community identity. Very often this construction of identity was done in opposition to the "other", in this case the cities the suburbs bordered.

Located as they were on the urban periphery, it was hardly surprising that for relatively protracted periods of time some of the suburban municipalities retained a

⁷ London Advertiser, March 15, 1880. In explaining the rapid growth of the city's suburbs it was argued that "People are beginning to get tired of paying high rents and taxes for the privilege of living in the city."

mixture of land uses, and provided a hybrid of urban and rural character. In Yorkville the retention of several larger rural estate properties meant that well into the 1870s the village had open spaces. To the north of the junction of Bloor and Yonge Street, the very heart of the village, Senator Sir David Macpherson maintained his expansive Chestnut Park, by which he deliberately helped to retain “the character of this charming suburb as a park-like residence quarter.” By the late 1870s much of the village’s northwestern corner remained unsubdivided, and was bordered to the north and west by the large estates of other prominent Toronto-based families such as the McMasters and Baldwins. Beyond even the landed estates, certain villagers operated dairies or market gardens within the western limits of the village. Even as Yorkville anticipated amalgamation with Toronto in 1883, the continuance of agricultural activities within its boundaries was attested to by a meeting of the *Yorkville Poultry and Pet Stock Association*.⁸ Outside London, in suburban London West, market gardening remained an important industry throughout the period of incorporation. The flood-prone lowlands bordering the Thames provided exceptionally fertile land, which coupled with the village’s proximity to London’s Covent Garden Market, made agricultural exploitation a certainty. Various families engaged in market gardening and established homes and fairly large garden plots in the village’s central section, between the two old constituent subdivisions of Petersville and

⁸ Stephanie Hutcheson. Yorkville in Pictures 1853-1883 (Toronto: Toronto Public Library Board, 1978), 18, 20 [pages not numbered]; Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of York (Toronto: Miles & Company, 1878. Reprinted Toronto: P. Martin Associates, 1969), ; Yorkville Directory, 1876-77, 18, 37, 49. Other dairymen also made a living in the village, such as Henry Answorth, but like Worthy and Riley he seems to have operated away from the central section of the village, north of Rosedale on Roxborough Street. John Astle, another gardener, also made his living to the west on Avenue Road; Globe, January 15, 1883.

Kensington, including the large twenty acre plot operated by the Leslie family.⁹

Brockton's market gardeners and small scale farmers formed a sizeable group within the village boundaries by the early 1880s. Similarly given its proximity to surrounding farms, rail lines and the important Toronto market, Brockton was home to a sizable abattoir owned and operated by John Mallon.¹⁰ While the mix of land uses marked the collision of rural and urban worlds –bucolic rural market gardens with more offensive urban slaughterhouses-- it also fostered something of an emerging suburban ideal, of life away from the increasingly congested urban centres.¹¹

While the usage of land within the suburbs remained diverse, the same could be said of the suburban populations. Diversity in the religious and occupational makeup of these communities seemed to mark them as distinctively heterogenous conglomerations, not unlike their urban counterparts. This internal diversity, however, made for a remarkable consistency in the composition of the six suburbs in this study.

By the early 1870s the oldest suburban municipality, Yorkville had a fairly heterogenous population, being home to wealthy businessmen and law practitioners,

⁹ A.S. Meaden, "Memories of My Boy-Hood Days in London: From My Arrival As a Boy, in the Year 1872," Western Ontario Historical Notes 9 (September 1951), 91-92; John Lutman. The South and West of London: An Historical and Architectural Guide (London, Ontario: Corporation of the City of London, 1979), 54; Nancy Z. Tausky. Historical Sketches of London: From Site to City (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1993), 70. In 1863 Alexander Leslie purchased a twenty acre plot of land on Centre Street in London West and operated his market garden here. Although the family gradually subdivided their property for housing developments, a large section of the property was maintained and operated as a miniature farm throughout London West's period of incorporation.

¹⁰ 1881 Canada Census, Brockton, 1, 2, 29. An Irish immigrant Mallon, his wife and eleven children boarded some five butchers and two household servants.

¹¹ Robert Fishman. Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia (New York: Basic Books, 1987), x.

artisans and ordinary labourers. Business magnate Senator William McMaster lived just beyond the village's boundary while men such as bookkeeper W.H. Mingaye and labourer Charles Mercer made their homes within the village proper. Yorkville had by this point established within its boundaries a mix of both residential and commercial interests, and had a sprinkling of industrial concerns with Moses Staunton's wallpaper factory on Yonge Street and the brickworks of Leonard Pears on Davenport Road. While the number of inhabitants in Yorkville continued to grow throughout its period of incorporation, the population within its boundaries remained on the move. As Michael Doucet demonstrated in his study of residential mobility in Yorkville, the labouring population continually changed their addresses within the neighbourhood so as to keep within a short distance of their ever-changing places of employment. The fact that many people moved only very limited distances suggested that ties to family and neighbourhood remained especially strong during the period.¹²

Religion, Class, and Place

Despite the fact that the six suburban municipalities could claim relatively diverse origins, by 1881 they possessed a similar ethnic makeup. Like the majority of Ontario's urban centres at the time, the populations were overwhelmingly of British origin, led by the English, followed by the Irish and the Scottish (see Tables 2.1 and 2.2). Interestingly enough, the two smallest municipalities, Brockton and New Edinburgh, departed from this distribution, with Brockton having a larger portion of the population claiming Irish

¹² Yorkville Directory, 15, 35, 37, 42; Michael J. Doucet. "Discussion Paper No. 4: Nineteenth Century Residential Mobility: Some Preliminary Comments," (York University Department of Geography, 1972), 49-50.

origins than English, and New Edinburgh having a population that was divided almost equally between the three groups.¹³

While the largely British background of most residents could suggest a uniformity, the religious divide suggests otherwise (see Table 2.3). The 1881 census showed that in four municipalities, Yorkville, Parkdale, London West, and New Edinburgh, the largest denomination was the Church of England, which mirrored the situation in both Toronto and London (see Table 2.4). In all but New Edinburgh, Methodists followed closely behind their Anglican brethren. Perhaps not surprisingly suburban communities were by and large Protestant, although in Brockton the Roman Catholic Church had the largest number of adherents.¹⁴ While the overwhelmingly common British origin of suburban residents might have been a possible source of community identity and unity, the religious diversity limited homogeneity. The establishment of different religious communities and more importantly church buildings did, however, help to attach members of different religious groups to the suburb as a place.

¹³ Canada Census, 1880-81, Vol. 1 (Ottawa: Maclean, Roger & Co., 1882); Information gathered from the Canada 1881 Census Aggregate Data. Vol. 1.

¹⁴ Information gathered from the Canada 1881 Census Aggregate Data. Vol. 1.

Table 2.1.

Ethnic Origin of Suburban Population, 1881

Suburb	Population	% born in England	% of English Origin	% born in Ireland	% of Irish Origin	% born in Scotland	% of Scottish Origin
Yorkville	4825	25	60	8	22	4	14
Parkdale	1170	21.5	51	9	27.5	5	18
Brockton	786	21	40.5	15	49	6	9
London West	1601	25	49	8	26.5	4	14.5
London East	3890	24	55	7	25	5	15
New Edinburgh	995	11	30.5	9	29	5.5	27.5

Source: Canada 1881 Census Aggregate Data. Vol. 1.

Table 2.2

Ethnic Origin of Urban Population, 1881

City	Population	% born in England	% of English Origin	% born in Ireland	% of Irish Origin	% born in Scotland	% of Scottish Origin
Toronto	86,415	17	40	12.5	37.2	5.1	16
Ottawa ¹⁵	27,412	5.3	17.9	8.7	33.4	2	10.7
London	19,746	16.6	43.6	9.6	30.7	5.4	18

Source: Canada 1881 Census Aggregate Data. Vol. 1.

¹⁵ In Ottawa 9,384 people claimed to be of French origin, constituted 34 percent of the population. In Toronto only 1.5 percent claimed French origin and in London only 1.1 percent claimed French origin. Canada 1881 Census Aggregate Data. Vol. 1.

Table 2.3.

Largest Five Religious Denominations in the Suburbs, 1881

	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5. %
Yorkville	CE 34	Meth. 31	Pres. 12	Bapt. 8	RC 8
Parkdale	CE 36.5	Meth. 30	Pres. 18	RC 8	Bapt. 4
Brockton	RC 39	CE 28	Pres. 18	Meth. 12	Bapt. 4
London West	CE 34	Meth. 33	RC 15	Pres. 9	Bapt. 5
London East	Meth. 36	CE 28	Pres. 14	RC 11	Bapt. 5
New Edinburgh	CE 31	Pres. 31	RC 17	Meth. 9	Luth. 6

Source: Canada 1881 Census Aggregate Data. Vol. 1.

Table 2.4

Largest Five Religious Denominations in the Cities, 1881

	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5. %
Toronto	CE 36	Meth. 19	RC 18	Pres. 17	Bapt. 4
Ottawa	RC 58	CE 18	Pres. 11	Meth. 8	Bapt. 2
London	CE 33	Meth. 25	RC 17	Pres. 16	Bapt. 4

Source: Canada 1881 Census Aggregate Data. Vol. 1.

In an age when organized religion provided much of an individual's identity, the church formed an important focal point in the suburban communities. The Anglican community in New Edinburgh coalesced around the establishment of St. Bartholomew's

in the late 1860s. Dogged by the financial strictures of a small congregation, St. Bartholomew's derived benefit from its proximity to Rideau Hall and its viceregal benefactors. Local commentators made much of the "small gothic building neat and unpretending . . ." being virtually in the Governor General's door yard. Lady Dufferin consistently referred to it as "our little church," and while she noted it was "very primitive" she explained that she and her family "like the service, and it is so much nearer to us than the cathedral." Not only did the church benefit from the regular attendance of the Dufferins, but prior to their departure in 1878 Lady Dufferin hosted a three day long bazaar at Rideau Hall to raise money to pay off the church's debt, an act which elicited a hearty thanks from local church leaders.¹⁶ Not surprisingly the founding MacKay family loomed large in the establishment of a Presbyterian Church in the village, with one of MacKay's own grandsons donating land for a meeting house, and many other family members heading off the list of subscriptions collected to support the fledgling church.¹⁷ The complicity of a community's first family in the foundation of churches was not limited to New Edinburgh, for in London West (formerly Petersville) the Peters family were instrumental in the founding of the village's two main houses of worship. By 1870 the Peters family had sold the trustees of the village's Methodist Church a plot of land for

¹⁶ Zita Barbara May. St. Bart's of the Village: Centennial of the Parish of St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church in the Diocese of Ottawa, Ontario, 1867-1967 (Ottawa: The Runge Press, 1967), 1-8; Charles Roger. Ottawa Past and Present (Ottawa: Times Printing and Publishing Company, 1871), 78; Ottawa Citizen, December 11, 1878; Perhaps no other village institution benefited more from the proximity of the Queen's representative than St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church, as it became the main house of worship for various Governors General and their families. Harriet Blackburn (Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava). My Canadian Journal, 1872-8 (London: John Murray, 1891), 45, 51, 381-383, 385. Ottawa Citizen, May 2, 1878, Ibid., June 6, 1878; Ottawa Free Press, January 7, 1880.

¹⁷ Margaret Bunel Edwards, ed. Highlights from MacKay's History (LoMor Printers, Ottawa: 1975), 1-15.

a pittance and apparently helped to oversee the erection of a building before the end of the year.¹⁸ London West's second religious institution, St. George's Anglican Church, emerged in the mid 1870s as a mission church that met in the village's schoolhouse until in the early 1880s a sanctuary was constructed on donated land at the edge of a field used by the Peters family to grow grain and pasture sheep.¹⁹

Of all of the suburbs, London East was by far the one most given over to industrial development. However, it did not lack local houses of worship, with the Methodists and Anglicans leading the way in the early 1860s. A consolidated Methodist Church emerged in the community by 1877 and within a decade had thirty-nine members. The religious makeup of this industrial suburb became increasingly complex, and contained a sizeable proportion of Roman Catholics and Presbyterians. One contemporary writer of the 1880s reported that "all the denominations are well represented in London East in the matter of churches."²⁰

Brockton's Irish Catholics made a concerted effort to build St. Helen's Roman Catholic Church, with the children from the local separate school turning out to help dig the trenches for the foundations while their elders provided manpower and machinery to

¹⁸ Empress United Church Centennial Committee. Empress United Church Centennial: 1870-1970 (London, Ontario: Empress United Church, 1970), 5; History of the County of Middlesex, Canada (Toronto: W.A. and C.L. Goodspeed, 1889; reprint ed., Belleville, Ontario: Mika Studio, 1972), 519; London Free Press, July 31, 1870.

¹⁹ History of Middlesex, 301; According to one memorial one of St. George's earliest ministers, Canon E.E. Newman, while "walking in the rear of the church" raised the ire of a particular ram who "thought him trespassing and had the effect of causing him to go to bed for a few days." Frederick Andrewes [?], "The West Side Some Years Back," (Unpublished typed memoir. J.J. Talman Regional Collection, D.B. Weldon Library, the University of Western Ontario), 3-4.

²⁰ History of Middlesex, 412.

help in the process. Brockton's Anglican and Presbyterian communities gradually worked to establish their own houses of worship, the latter of which had by the 1880s established an active choir and "Glee Club" which gave concerts to raise money for charitable institutions. By the mid 1870s Yorkville boasted eight established Protestant churches, including two Wesleyan Methodist sanctuaries on Bloor and Yonge respectively. By 1876 the local Brethren church was the only congregation that had yet to establish a meeting house of its own, and met instead at Yorkville's Temperance Hall on Davenport Road.²¹ By 1881 Parkdale had only existed as a sizeable entity for less than a decade, but it already acquired Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist churches. All three congregations had only emerged after 1877. After brief periods as mission churches of city based congregations, they had rapidly grown and become independent. The emergence of a Parkdale Presbyterian congregation may very well have been spurred by the community's own incorporation for the new municipality was only a few weeks old when it was reported by the Globe that "The Parkdale Presbyterians seem to have lost no time in commencing business after the permission granted by the Presbytery to form a church." While these three mainline denominations flourished, smaller Protestant groups established fledgling congregations throughout the 1880s including the Congregationalists and a group who formed a small New Jerusalem Church in 1881,

²¹ Mary Frances Mallon, "The Village of Brockton," York Pioneer 71 (2), 3-4; Globe, February 14, 1881, Globe, January 30, 1884; C. Pelham C. Mulvany. Toronto: Past and Present (Toronto: W.E. Caiger, 1884), 258; Yorkville Directory, 51-52; History of Toronto and County of York Ontario. Vol. 2 (Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, 1885), 39.

meeting regularly in a local hall.²²

In all the suburbs, the churches functioned as centres of religious and social activities. The differing dominations created different focal points within the suburbs. On one hand, churches seemed unlikely to foster a collective identity, and forced local government to use other means to establish a broader community sense. On the other hand, the very fact that these churches were established within the suburbs helped to attach the members of the various religious communities to the physical community around them.

Occupationally, an examination of a ten percent sample indicates that the majority of householders in the suburbs found skilled, semi-skilled, or unskilled employment in 1881 (see Table 2.5 and Table 2.6). In industrial London East the proportion sat at seventy-two percent while in London West sixty-nine percent of householders fell into

²² Margaret Laycock and Barbara Myrvold. Parkdale in Pictures: Its Development to 1889 (Toronto: Toronto Public Library Board, 1991), 43-44; Globe, January 18, 1879; Parkdale Register, 8; Globe, January 20, 1879. Shortly after being permitted to form a congregation it was explained that Parkdale's Presbyterians were actively searching for a site to build their church.

Table 2.5

Occupational Distribution of Heads of Households, 1881

	unskilled	semi-skilled	skilled	clerical	business	professional	private means	number
Yorkville	13%	16%	11%	13%	23%	9%	16%	94
Parkdale	14%	29%	19%	10%	10%	0%	19%	21
Brockton	38%	15%	8%	8%	0%	8%	23%	13
London West	31%	25%	13%	13%	6%	0%	13%	32
London East	28%	30%	14%	3%	11%	6%	8%	79
New Edinburgh	22%	33%	0%	17%	17%	0%	11%	18

Source: Occupational classification was taken from Peter G. Goheen, Victorian Toronto 1850 to 1900: Pattern and Process of Growth, Department of Geography Research Paper No. 127 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970), 229-230. Sources 1881 Canada Manuscript Census, Yorkville, New Edinburgh, London East, Petersville (London West), Parkdale, and Brockton. The data was gathered by using a ten percent sample of the households in each of the suburbs. The sample includes every tenth household beginning with the tenth household in the manuscript census. A tally of the total number of inhabitants in each of the sampled households worked out to be a tenth of the entire population of the suburbs.

Table 2.6:

Occupation Distribution of Sample Households, 1881

	unsk i-ll ed	semi- skilled	skill- ed	cleri- cal	busin- ess	profess- ional	private means	num- ber
Yorkville	24%	15%	13%	15%	17%	7%	9%	177
Parkdale	22%	22%	16%	13%	6%	9%	13%	32
Brockton	53%	9%	12%	6%	9%	3%	9%	34
London West	23%	36%	19%	11%	4%	0%	8%	53
London East	24%	29%	19%	7%	11%	5%	5%	110
New Edin- burgh	23%	26%	13%	16%	10%	6%	6%	31

Source: Occupational classification was taken from Peter G. Goheen, Victorian Toronto 1850 to 1900: Pattern and Process of Growth, Department of Geography Research Paper No. 127 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970), 229-230. Sources 1881 Canada Manuscript Census, Yorkville, New Edinburgh, London East, Petersville (London West), Parkdale, and Brockton.

this category. In New Edinburgh, Brockton, and Parkdale between fifty-five and sixty-two percent of heads of households worked in the same category. Only in Yorkville did heads of households working in unskilled to skilled work fall below fifty-percent.

However, when factoring in multiply wage-earning households the proportion in Yorkville rose to fifty-two percent. Factoring in all income earners in the sample shows that the percentage of such employment rose in four of the suburbs. In Parkdale while sixty-two percent of household heads found skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled work, only

sixty percent of all wage earners did so. In London East the percentages for heads of households and all income earners remained the same at seventy-two percent.

A certain amount of ambiguity surrounds the category of those households headed by those surviving on undisclosed or 'private' means. Included in this category were households headed by gentlemen and widows. Not surprisingly, when other wage-earners were factored into the calculations, the proportion of those on private means fell in all six suburbs, suggesting that those households had alternative sources of income (in New Edinburgh one household headed by a widow contained a carpenter, a machinist, a moulder, and a painter).²³ Not all widows were listed without employment, however, and at least two London East women who had lost their husbands were listed as tailors in their own right. In both instances these women headed households of five people where they were the sole breadwinners. Plenty of other suburban women found employment as dressmakers, milliners, servants, governesses, and confectioners, although they were not listed as heads of a household. The percentage of households with more than one wage earner varied greatly. With fifty-one percent Yorkville had the highest number of households having more than one wage earner. Given the fact that London East was the most industrialized and had seventy-two percent of its working population in skilled, semi-skilled, or unskilled positions, it is a bit surprising that the census sample indicates that this suburb had merely twenty-eight percent of households having more than one income.

²³ 1881 Canada Manuscript Census, New Edinburgh, household 120.

Table 2.7:

Percentages of Multiply Wage-Earning Households in 1881

Yorkville	New Edinburgh	London East	London West	Parkdale	Brockton
51%	33%	28%	41%	38%	46%

Source: 1881 Canada Manuscript Census for Yorkville, New Edinburgh, London East, London West, Parkdale, and Brockton.

While it is relatively easy to come up with rudimentary breakdowns of the religious, ethnic, and occupational compositions of these communities, it is another to assess how it was that these people came to live in the peripheral world of suburbs. Common sense would generally suggest that the majority of suburbanites were an urban people of moderate means who had sought the advantages of cheaper property beyond the boundaries of the city. To a certain extent this certainly holds true. In his study of early nineteenth-century suburban Boston, Henry Binford explained that very often the people who chose to inhabit suburbs had no urban background at all and were not refugees from the dirt, congestion, and inflation of the city. Many people came to suburban areas from rural areas as the pace of industrialization and agricultural improvements drew or drove more and more people toward manufacturing centres. As Binford explained, the populations of these 'fringe' areas showed a mix of urban and rural traits and it was "[t]he particular circumstances of each village, not its place along some simple rural-urban

continuum, [which] shaped its population.’²⁴ An analysis of the origins of suburban residents in nineteenth century Ontario would be difficult and prolonged, given that the majority of people left few records.

A look at contemporary local publications that celebrated their communities and local history can shed at least some light on the origins of Ontario’s suburbanites. The samples that are to be found from biographical sketches contained within these works are hardly representative of the broader communities, given that they tend to focus on local businessmen, established professionals, and wealthy farmers and land owners. While the text might be more aptly described as hagiography than biography, the sketches shed at least a little light upon the paths that brought a few residents to Ontario’s suburbs. The Parkdale Register which appeared in 1881 indicates that men such as builder J.T. Coatsworth and engineer G.G. Pursey, a promoter of a local Mechanics Institute, were either born in or lived for a time in Toronto before removing to peripheral Parkdale, while others like Parkdale’s first reeve Major John Gray or pharmacist G.A. Devlin had their start in the more northerly suburb of Yorkville before moving to Toronto’s westerly suburb. Still others such as Mrs. M.A. Waters and Charles G. MacBeth came directly to Parkdale from places such as the city of Guelph or rural West Gwillimbury to pursue business interests.²⁵

In both London East and London West, the population seem to have had a similar

²⁴ Henry C. Binford. The First Suburbs: Residential Communities on the Boston Periphery 1815-1860 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 50.

²⁵ Parkdale Register, 16, 18, 20, 24

mix of origins. Builder Peter Toll arrived in London's eastern suburb after a stint with the British Army. Charles Lilley, one of London East's mayors and active businessmen, grew up on a farm near Caledonia, and moved to London East after a brief stint in neighbouring London. One of London East's earliest residents was Murray Anderson who had come to the suburb after serving in London as that corporation's first mayor. Barrister W.H. Bartram settled in London West after a peripatetic youth in such places as Toronto, Sandwich, Chicago, and London itself, while his wife, Mary J. Barker, had been born and raised across the river in the city. The situation in New Edinburgh may have been somewhat different, given that this community had sprung up around a series of milling installations and was at least for a time an economic centre in its own right. Many of its inhabitants had therefore developed businesses and occupations that served the immediate rural hinterland. Contemporary accounts suggest that many of its most notable citizens had lived within the village some twenty years prior to its incorporation in 1866.²⁶

Given the divergent size and situations of the six suburban municipalities, differences which were only compounded by a host of issues surrounding the political and social development of each of them, there was a marked similarity in the very diversity of the people who lived there. Even given the fact that the largest of these municipalities in 1881, Yorkville, was nearly five times the size of both the diminutive villages of New Edinburgh and Brockton, the similarity in the population breakdowns gave them a certain shared experience.

²⁶ History of Middlesex, 712, 725, 883, 887, 1026-27; Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Carleton (Including City of Ottawa) Ontario (Toronto: H. Belden and Co., 1879; rpr. Ross Cumming ed., Port Elgin, Ontario: Richardson, Bond and Wright, 1971), xxi.

Between 1871 and 1881 the populations of Toronto, London, and Ottawa increased at rates of thirty-five, twenty, and twenty-one percent. In real numbers the population increase in the cities far outstripped growth in the suburbs, but given their relative sizes, rate of growth in the cities was less than in some of the suburbs during the same period. During this same period, Yorkville's population more than doubled from 2 203 to 4 825, a growth of 119 percent. During the same period, 1871 to 1881, the village of New Edinburgh, grew by sixty-seven percent. Even London West, which had incorporated as Petersville in 1874 with just over 1 000 inhabitants, grew in five years by forty-six percent, a rate that outstripped both Ottawa and London during a longer period. In contrast to London West, London East and Toronto's Parkdale experienced what can only be described as nearly exponential growth throughout the period of their incorporation, while given its relatively brief period of municipal autonomy, Brockton's greatest population boom occurred only after it had been annexed by Toronto. During these early decades of growth, as the populations of the suburbs surged ahead, and groups developed local religious institutions, local officials attempted to create and hone local identity.²⁷

Building an Identity

The role played by village government in buttressing the identity of the

²⁷ London Advertiser, June 6, 1874; Canada 1881 Manuscript Census, Petersville, Ontario; Canada 1891 Manuscript Census, London West, Ontario; Elizabeth Bloomfield, et al. Urban Growth and Local Services: The Development of Ontario Municipalities to 1981 (Guelph, Ontario: Department of Geography, University of Guelph, 1983), 150-166; Canada 1881 Census Aggregate Data, Vol. 1. While the suburbs generally enjoyed substantial rates of growth throughout their years of incorporation certain events could seriously inhibit growth. A catastrophic flood in 1883 caused London West's population growth to slow considerably. Growth had been set at thirty-one percent between 1874 and 1881, but slowed to slightly over sixteen percent between 1881 and 1891.

communities cannot be underestimated. While the motivations that lay behind the process of municipal incorporation were both diverse and at times unclear, the role of suburban government in the process of community formation was vitally important. New village councils attempted to create loyalty to place. Beyond the lure of low levels of local taxation and the hopes of acquiring important infrastructure, there seems to have been little to bind the citizenry together. As we have seen, they were occupationally and religiously divided. In virtually every instance in the years following incorporation there was a concerted effort to build upon fledgling institutions in order to create a sense of place and allow suburban inhabitants to more closely identify with their neighbours. The role of suburban government in this process was paramount. As Walter van Nus explained in his study of Notre Dames de Grâces in Quebec, suburban governments “could take decisions which continued to shape development long after annexation.” The same could be said for decisions involving the creation of community identity, and in many instances the creation of important municipal centres such as community halls and schools would continue to be the focus of the local community long after suburbs had been annexed to the cities they bordered.²⁸

In most instances newly formed suburban governments set about creating village

²⁸ Walter van Nus, “The Role of Suburban Government in the City Building Process: The Case of Notre Dames de Grâces, Quebec, 1876-1910,” *Urban History Review/Revue d’histoire urbaine* 13 (October 1984), 91-103; Laycock, 50; Stephanie Hutcherson, *Yorkville in Pictures*, 3; Brockton Council Minutes, March 24, 1884; Barbara M. Posadas, “Suburb Into Neighborhood: The Transformation of Urban Identity on Chicago’s Periphery—Irving Park as a Case Study, 1870-1910,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 76 (1983), 175. Even after annexation to Chicago the residents of Irving Park “built a vigorous public life, considerably stronger than its counterpart in the days of secluded autonomy within the township.” The closer the city came the more the people attempted to create a civic and neighbourhood identity.

seals, which while necessary for the certifying of bylaws and other council business, also acted as potent symbols of the communities they represented. At the very first meeting of Parkdale council a final design was submitted and accepted by the members of the council after finally substituting a maple tree for “the dagger in hand”, which was felt to be more representative of the suburb’s bucolic situation. By the early 1880s, however, the village had, if only unofficially, adopted the prudent and solid, if not stirring motto of ‘Progress and Economy’²⁹ to counteract any notions that this garden-like municipality was opposed to development. Twenty years earlier when Yorkville’s council oversaw the completion of the suburb’s town hall, it opted to have a crest that celebrated some of the village’s earliest industries and trades, as well as their earliest councillors. By 1860 a carved crest was displayed on the town hall. Yorkville’s symbol was quartered to show a brick mould and the letter ‘A’ for Thomas Atkinson a local brick manufacturer, a plane with a ‘D’ for local builder James Dobson, an anvil with a ‘W’ for early councillor James Wallis who worked as a blacksmith, and a beer cask and the letter ‘S’ for local brewer John Severn. In the centre of the crest appeared the head of a cow with the letter ‘H’ standing for Councillor Peter Hutty, one of Yorkville’s prominent butchers. With a beaver resplendent on the top, the crest became a noted symbol of the village, an indication of the village’s economic base, and undoubtably an attempt to symbolize the villager’s hard work. The

²⁹ Parkdale Council Minutes, January 20, 1879; Parkdale Register, 8; Toronto Globe, January 20, 1879. The Globe had initially reported that Parkdale’s seal had gone through at least one previous incarnation with “several professions of the members of the Council are represented in the design . . .” The maple tree was in fact to honour nurseryman John Grey, while scales represented a local barrister, a pen for a local bookkeeper, a book for a bookseller, and a bull’s head to represent the butcher who sat on council.

crest was later copied for a flag to celebrate Confederation in 1867.³⁰

Like other suburban municipalities London East's council sought a seal that would symbolize the community's strengths and set the tone for continued growth and success. The circular seal bore the words "London East Municipality," with the telling profile of a "Steam Boiler and Engine" and the motto "We Advance" beneath the locomotive. The fact that the village council opted to call the community the London East Municipality instead of the Village of London East, suggests that they had grand hopes and plans that their community would grow rapidly and attain higher municipal standing.³¹

Brockton made short work of creating a seal as the very first meeting of the village's council ordered the preparation of the corporation's seal. In sharp contrast to Yorkville and other municipal seals where "the professions of the respective Councillors. . ." were front and centre, Brockton's council opted for a seal incorporating a profile of General Isaac Brock with the words of "Intelligence, Industry, and Economy" to accompany the term corporate seal around the edge. This choice was heavily influenced by the fact that amongst Brockton's residents and benefactors were military historian and Canadian imperialist George Taylor Denison and Alexander Muir. The latter had written the "Maple Leaf Forever."³²

³⁰ Hutcheson, 18.

³¹ London East Bylaw 18, May 19, 1875 "To adopt a Corporate Seal . . ."

³² Toronto Globe, January 20, 1881. Mallon, 1; O.A. Cooke, "Frederick Charles Denison," DCB v. 12 243-246; David Gagan, "George Taylor Denison," DCB, v. 10, 224-225; David Gagan. The Denison Family of Toronto 1792-1925 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1973), 32-43. The Denison family long held title to vast tracts of land west of Toronto and Frederick Charles Denison was an alderman in Toronto and was instrumental in having College Street extended westward, linking his family's property holdings with the city. His father, George Taylor Denison 2nd spent much energy subdividing his property into profitable park lots; History of Toronto and County of

The village of London West, having come through its battles over the naming of their municipality in 1880 and 1881, necessarily replaced its original corporate seal, a nondescript impression that bore the municipality's name and the date of the village's incorporation. Emboldened by a new identity and grand hopes for the future, the new council settled on an auspiciously optimistic motto that acknowledged past struggles, but hopefully anticipated better days with "Per angusta ad augusta," ("Through narrow things to great things").³³ The plan to alter the village's name "from Kensington and Petersville to the appropriate and comprehensive one of 'West London' . . ." led to a flurry of petitions that championed the cause. Many had long argued that the name of Petersville seemed more indicative of a small outlying village, than an enterprising suburb of a large Ontario city.³⁴ As Kenneth Jackson explained in his study of suburbs many residents wanted a name to "protect an image of dynamic growth . . ." while ensuring that a community's name "suggested connections with a metropolis or aspirations to urban

York Ontario vol. 2 (Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, 1885), 39. C.L. Denison was a farmer who served on York Township council and was a member of the Governor General's Body Guard; Toronto Globe, January 9, 1884. Alexander Muir was for a time master of Brockton's school. He became village clerk just before Brockton was amalgamated with Toronto.

³³ Village of Petersville and London West. By-Laws, Numbers 1-340, 1875-1897. City Clerk's Office, City Hall, London, Ontario. The imprint of the seal can be found throughout the bylaws.

³⁴ London Advertiser, June 4, 1874, June 5, 1874, November 29, 1880, December 2, 1880. Long after Samuel Peters had the village of 'Bridgetown' laid out in 1854 he and his family had continued to play an important role within the community that eventually bore the name of Petersville. They were instrumental in the establishment of both an Anglican and Methodist church within the community and well into the 1880s annually bequeathed a gold medal to the top student in the village school. Ibid., January 1, 1879, February 12, 1881; Mary Byers and Margaret McBurney. The Governor's Road: Early Buildings and Families from Mississauga to London (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 282.

greatness.”³⁵

Perhaps it was inevitable that the announcement that the village’s reeve W.H. Bartram was seeking to change the corporation’s name caused an uproar. Delegations attempted to sway the ratepayers to change the name, others to retain the existing one.³⁶ When election results were tallied in January 1881, the majority of ratepayers voted in favour of the name of London West and confirmed Bartram’s place as their reeve, leaving the bitterly opposed William Smith out in the cold. Several last ditch attempts were made to thwart implementation of the new name, but in the end the change of name passed through the Ontario Legislature and received Royal Assent. It was thereafter “hoped that all parties will bury the hatchet and work together for the best interests of the village.”³⁷ Despite the angry rhetoric and bitterness, at the end of 1881 at least one commentator attempted to gloss over the divisions this symbolic change had created, assessing that

³⁵ Kenneth T. Jackson. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanisation of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 46; It seems that controversy over nomenclature was not merely limited to London West, for the citizenry of London East expressed some indignation over the adoption of the name of ‘Ealing’ for the community’s new post office in 1880. As one commentator explained the opinion of some was that “it sounds something like a cross between a sentimental poem and a new remedy for ringworm.” *London Advertiser*, June 1, 1880.

³⁶ *London Advertiser*, December 9, 1880; December 14, 1880; December 18, 1880. Some of those ratepayers who opposed the change of name worried that the costs involved in altering statutes, village accounts and other matters would be unnecessarily expensive. *Ibid...*

³⁷ *Ibid...*, January 4, 1881; January 10, 1881; January 15, 1881; February 7, 1881. Matters did not die down immediately for while Bartram was in negotiations with the Post Office Department one of London West’s new councillors, Peter Grant, resigned, leaving an opening on council. William Smith assumed that since he had run in the 1881 election and placed below Grant, he would be elevated to a position on council. Bartram, undoubtedly motivated by the deep animosity that existed between Smith and himself, rejected Smith’s claim and called for a new election to fill the vacant council seat, which saw John Evans victorious (Evans had at one point supported Smith in his struggle to retain the name Petersville). William Smith protested and threatened litigation, causing Evans to follow Grant’s lead and resign. Smith took the matter before the courts and won an injunction against the village and after a long series of court battles he succeeded in suing the corporation of London West for damages: *William Smith v. Petersville*, 28 Ontario Chancery 599, 599-605 (1881).

“With the exception of an occasional breeze ruffling the surface, the municipal sea of London West . . . has suffered little trouble from disturbing elements.”³⁸ The adoption of a new and hopeful village seal, coming on the heels of such a major debate, was very much imbued with a sense of a troubled past, and high hopes for less tumultuous future. For the elected representatives of the various suburbs, the corporate seals were meant to satisfy not only legal requirements, but to also act as a means of distinguishing their municipalities from all others.

While the creation of distinctive symbolism was an early concern of suburban councils, so too was the development of corporate centres or public buildings that would both serve the elected councils and the larger suburban population. Town halls or municipally-sponsored meeting places emerged in significant numbers in the later half of the nineteenth century, especially after the passing of the Municipal Act of 1849. These buildings provided a location for the transaction of municipal business, and a gathering place for the larger population. Symbolically these edifices expressed both civic pride and local prosperity.³⁹ As symbols of municipal independence, it has been argued that “[f]ew buildings represent their communities as eloquently as the town hall.”⁴⁰

In 1852 the government of the United Province of Canada passed the controversial Municipal Loan Fund. Largely the work of co-premier Francis Hincks, the fund sought to

³⁸ London Advertiser, December 31, 1881.

³⁹ G.E. Mills, “Antecedents and Influences: The Root Forms of Canadian Municipal Hall Design,” in Town Halls of Canada: A Collection of Essays on Pre-1930 Town Hall Buildings (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1987), 13

⁴⁰ Dana Johnson, “‘For Generations to Come’: The Town Hall as a Symbol of Community,” in Town Halls of Canada: A Collection of Essays on Pre-1930 Town Hall Buildings (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1987), 199.



Figure 9: This image looks in a northerly direction along Yonge Street north of Bloor, the very heart of Yorkville. The tall building in the centre is Yorkville's Town Hall, constructed earlier in the decade. Toronto Public Library, T 12906

promote railway building within the province by making credit more readily available to the railways. The bill authorized the government to sell debentures to borrow funds, which it in turn lent to municipalities to invest in railways.⁴¹ By allowing the municipalities to borrow on the province's credit, it was assumed that municipal contributions to railway and infrastructure improvements would create investment and wealth that would in turn help pay back to the fund. The act was meant to shift the onus of railway construction from the central government to municipalities, but it also allowed municipalities to construct and develop whatever infrastructure they saw fit. Municipalities of all sizes soon began to borrow money not only for railways but also for community monuments, waterworks and town halls.⁴²

Undoubtedly buoyed by the Municipal Loan Act, Yorkville was the first suburban municipality to contemplate the erection of a suitable town hall or "corporation buildings" for their village. Beginning in August 1854, village council passed a series of bylaws to raise loans for the purchase of property and construction of a municipal building. By the close of 1860 work had begun. The building was to have space for various village functions and places to accommodate the village fire department and lock-up.⁴³ Built in the Flemish style Yorkville's town hall, in the tradition of many English civic

⁴¹ William G. Ormsby, "Sir Francis Hincks," in The Pre-Confederation Premiers: Ontario Government Leaders, 1841-1867, J.M.S. Careless, ed., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 173.

⁴² Marc de Caraffe, "'With Our Tax Money': The Thorny Problem of Town Hall Construction," in Town Halls of Canada: A Collection of Essays on Pre-1930 Town Hall Buildings (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1987), 173-175; Bloomfield, 53.

⁴³ Yorkville Bylaw 30, August 18, 1854; Bylaw 46, April 12, 1855; Bylaw 53, May 29, 1856; Bylaw 89, January 30, 1861; Bylaw 91, March 18, 1861.

establishments, contained in its lower levels apartments for private shops which would give the building multiple purposes and provide needed rents to help with its upkeep. Other than the police office and magistrate's room to the rear of the building, most public business was transacted in the council chamber, public auditorium, and related rooms on the second floor.⁴⁴ A quarter of a century later, when the village was amalgamated with Toronto, the hall continued to play an important part in the community life of what became St. Paul's ward. Yorkville's old town hall retained its importance as a public hall and site of a library and fire station.⁴⁵

The erection of a Town Hall in London East came belatedly to the corporation. Initially the various councils appear to have rented quarters in a hall owned by the London Street Railway, although by early 1881 there was considerable disquiet over the rents charged. A committee was struck to negotiate better terms or seek alternate space. This debate emerged at a time when the village had attained a population of 3,890, which led local officials to have their community promoted to the status of a town in 1881. Various councils then "began developing the facilities a town might be thought to require." While they laboured to raise and maintain funding for a town waterworks, the council also sponsored the construction of a town hall on Dundas Street, just inside the corporation boundary. Construction began in September 1883, and was completed in June 1884. The building had a mansard roof and central tower, both features proclaimed style and prosperity. One trouble with London East's town hall was its timing, for while the

⁴⁴ Hutcheson, 15; Town Halls of Canada, 23-24, figures 7-8.

⁴⁵ Hutcheson, 3.

municipality had been buoyed by grand hopes in 1881, within three years the community had been beset by numerous unforeseen setbacks as its industrial base was eroded and its much touted public works came to be an added burden.⁴⁶

In New Edinburgh in the weeks after the village achieved municipal status it was quickly realized that suitable quarters would be needed for transacting public business. A committee was duly struck to approach the village school board to allow the council to make use of the old school building. The school board agreed to the council's proposal, provided that the council supplied its own light and paid an annual stipend of one dollar to cover firewood. Shortly thereafter, however, village officials opted to construct a building that would serve as both a school and a town hall for \$1,200. The new structure served this dual purpose until 1875 when a new school was built. At that juncture, council allowed New Edinburgh's chapter of the Orange Order to use the building with the proviso that the village council would have the undisputed right to the Hall "should necessity require their doing so."⁴⁷

While public funds established town halls in Yorkville, New Edinburgh, and London East, the villages of Brockton, Parkdale, and London West also sought provision for suitable accommodation for their council. In each instance, at least for most of their

⁴⁶ London Advertiser, March 15, 1881. At this meeting Deputy-Reeve Peter Toll announced that cheaper quarters might be rented in Hicks Block until such time as the new school building was completed where "there would be some splendid rooms to meet in . . ."; Nancy Z. Tausky and Lynne D. Di Stefano. Victorian Architecture in London and Southwestern Ontario: Symbols of Aspiration (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 293.

⁴⁷ New Edinburgh Minutes, January 28, 1867, and February 25, 1867, February 8, 1876; County of Carleton, xxi; Ottawa Free Press, January 31, 1883. The Hall was used for other community based events throughout the latter portion of the New Edinburgh's stint as a municipal entity.

incorporated history, they rented space in privately owned halls.⁴⁸ Villager Robert Worm assisted Brockton's council by permitting them use of quarters in his new premises.⁴⁹

Community groups frequently approached their respective municipal councils to seek the use of their municipal offices for particular meetings or special events. For example, the Brockton Oddfellows petitioned for and were granted use of the council chambers in February 1882.⁵⁰

Parkdale's council led a peripatetic existence, meeting in various local halls for many months after incorporation. By 1881 village council had taken up residence in a new building, sharing the ground floor with a shoe manufactory and the village fire brigade. The village offices consisted of a council chamber, rooms for committee work, a vault for the storage of village papers and books, as well as the local lock-up for indigents and transgressors of the public peace. Shortly after occupying these new quarters it was explained that "[t]he Council Chamber is fitted up with every convenience suitable to the purposes for which it is used, and is elegantly but not extravagantly furnished." Complete with a chandelier, crimson upholstered furnishings and the elaborately carved chair for the

⁴⁸ Brockton Bylaw 17, September 6, 1881.

⁴⁹ Brockton Council Minutes, March 24, 1884. Two years earlier Worm had approached council to say that the Public Hall above the council chamber needed better support so two ornamental posts needed to be installed in the council chamber itself. Council gave its consent so long as the work of the council was not disrupted. Brockton Council Minutes, March 20, 1882; Brockton Council Minutes, January 23, 1882. At this meeting of council it was estimated that it would cost \$784 to properly furnish the council chambers. When after much bitter wrangling and recriminations Brockton council faced dissolution in 1884 the problem of what to do with the rented quarters of the village offices became of concern. Worm complained that once Brockton ceased to be a village the hall he had built for use of council would become redundant and difficult to rent for any other purpose. As a result, Brockton's council formally petitioned Toronto City Council to ensure that the property would be purchased by the city and continue to be maintained as a fire and police station as well as serving as a public hall and free library for the residents of the former village.

⁵⁰ Brockton Council Minutes, February 13, 1882, February 27, 1882.

reeve, the chamber was “arranged with a regard for good taste and utility.”⁵¹ Much debate erupted by 1885 when various members of council attempted to rescind the lease on the council’s chambers and make the move to the new quarters of the local Masonic Lodge. With the purchase of property and the approval to construct a new fire hall in 1886, plans were made to design a building that could accommodate the needs of council. After much haggling and debate an architect was hired and work commenced. The new municipal building cost ratepayers over \$14,000. It opened early in 1888, just a few months before the municipality merged with Toronto.⁵²

Due to a massive increase in the school-aged population in 1878, the ratepayers in London’s western suburb footed the bill for a two-storey school building in the north end of the village. Mindful of not overburdening ratepayers with the construction of another costly edifice, council made a deal to rent space from local businessman, Daniel Collins. In the summer of 1878, Collins constructed on the village’s main thoroughfare, Blackfriars Street, what local papers described as “an elegant public hall . . . with three commodious stores . . . and rooms for societies on the top.” The village council of Petersville-London West met in this building for some ten years. With Collins’ death in 1888, difficulties emerged and the council did not renew its lease. By this time, the council had become embroiled in localized controversy. London West’s council was attempting to secure money to construct a major addition to the large Ann Street

⁵¹ Parkdale Register, 6, 8

⁵² Laycock, 49-50.

schoolhouse, which would include a council chamber and fireproof vault for the village books. Ostensibly the move was taken so that the village council and school board could consolidate their holdings, and forgo paying hefty rents for leased quarters. London West was in dire fiscal shape, with mounting debts due largely to falling property values and increased expenditures on dykes to protect property from flooding. In order to meet the costs of this new construction, the school board and village council conspired to close a smaller school in rented quarters in the southern portion of the municipality, annoying many southern residents. Acrimonious debate and a series of lawsuits and injunctions followed. In the end the council was permitted to construct its addition, while the school board was ordered to keep the second school open.⁵³

Almost as soon as they were constituted and had established for themselves the important legitimizing symbols of corporate seals, the various suburban municipalities sought to secure accommodation for their councils. Beyond the practical necessity of finding quarters from which councils could enact bylaws, these centres, whether municipally owned or leased, acquired a larger significance. In the instance of Yorkville and London East, these buildings were meant to showcase civic pride, and remind ratepayers and neighbouring communities that these suburbs were viable municipal entities. The rented quarters of other communities were often in the most commodious and visible buildings available, monuments to local suburban prowess, even in the face of

⁵³ London Advertiser, August 10, 1878 and December 13, 1878; *Allenby v. London West Public School Board*, Chancery Court (Middlesex County); Court Records; B312: J.J. Talman Regional Collections, UWO; London Advertiser, January 2, 7, 18, 1889, June 30, 1888; London Free Press, January 1, 1889, March 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 1889; London Advertiser, July 9, 1890.

increasing debt and fiscal chaos. The existence of these buildings or failed attempts to build such premises, often in the waning days of the municipalities, suggests that suburban councils attempted to construct a sense of pride in the local municipality. In the face of predictions that their municipalities would be only short-lived experiments in local self-government, suburban councils attempted to develop an independent community identity. Municipal buildings were the most tangible legacy of this process.

While the erection of the suburbs into municipal entities and the development of symbols and municipal halls formed the trappings of community, councils frequently helped further other institutional developments. Even when the direct support of councils was absent, the proliferation of fraternal societies within the suburbs continued to help link people to the local space. Residents in most of the six suburban municipalities early on developed local societies, which frequently mirrored similar institutions within the neighbouring cities. Often these organizations were helped along by municipal officials. For example, Yorkville's Temperance Society held meetings in the town hall while the local militia company used municipal property for their training exercises.⁵⁴

It certainly seems that a suburb with incorporated status was viewed by local officials and residents as being on a higher plane than smaller unincorporated places. Incorporation was grounds for celebration. During the reeveship of Samuel Wickson in the 1870s a group of residents and ratepayers attempted to enlist the support of Yorkville's reeve and other community members to establish a brass band within the

⁵⁴ Globe, June 8, 1878 and June 24, 1878.

village. Those spearheading the campaign explained that “Yorkville is far behind the times in so far as a Brass Band is concerned. When Eglinton and Davisville, unincorporated villages have efficient Brass Bands it is time Yorkville was waking to its sense of inferiority in this respect so that our public demonstrations may assume a more cheerful aspect.”⁵⁵

A similar partnership between the councils and broader communities also extended to more intellectual pursuits. In Parkdale, the creation of a Mechanics’ Institute was heralded by a number of citizens in 1880 and “Money was subscribed and books purchased.” While little had been done to provide for permanent quarters within the village by 1881, it was predicted that it would soon “be an established fact” given the “great deal of literary, artistic and scientific culture in Parkdale, and the tastes of the community demanding intelligent gratification . . .”⁵⁶ By January 1884, with help from village fathers, the Mechanics’ Institute had become firmly established and provided educational lectures and discussions that contributed to the community’s intellectual life. Journals based in Britain and large American centres were made available in the ‘free reading-room.’ Parkdale residents also enjoyed a total of some 850 books in the library, and the appointment of an evening caretaker had managed to establish “a much greater

⁵⁵ “Yorkville Brass Band” handbill, University of Western Ontario, DB Weldon Library, DBWMFH F1003.C5 No. 46562. While the handbill is not dated internal evidence places it during the reeveship of Samuel Wickson, who headed Yorkville’s council from 1878 to 1880 and then again in 1882; The band managed to at least make a foothold within the village and apparently set out to elicit funds from Yorkville’s propertied elite. In May, 1880 the band called upon the apparently ailing David Macpherson and following a musical serenade and worthy address, the proprietor of Chestnut Park made a ten dollar subscription toward the band’s fund. Toronto Mail, May 17, 1880.

⁵⁶ Parkdale Register, 14.

degree of order and propriety than was the case previously . . .” allowing Parkdale residents “the full advantages connected with the establishment.”⁵⁷ While not all six suburbs established libraries, Brockton, like its older more established counterparts, had a Literary Club, the emergence of which appears to have been seen by villagers as indicative of maturity. One such club in London West was seen as an opportunity “to show the denizens of the city . . .” what mere suburbanites could “do in the way of entertainment.”⁵⁸

Fraternal organizations and secret societies seem to have been as much a part of suburban life as the mechanics’ institutes or municipal halls they inhabited. As early as 1872 the New Edinburgh chapter of the ‘Good Templars’ had fast outgrown its rented quarters in the village schoolhouse and therefore had begun “erecting a hall in that flourishing village . . .” In addition to a temperance society, a common association of the time, New Edinburgh had a chapter of the Loyal Orange Lodge which in November 1883, hosted “a concert, social and hop” at the village school house to commemorate Guy Fawkes Day.⁵⁹ By 1876, Yorkville boasted seven brotherhoods or friendly societies, including a chapter of the Foresters, Knights of Pythias, and the Prince Arthur Lodge of the Orange Young Britons society. Other suburban communities also had their own collection of local fraternal organizations. London West was home to some four such

⁵⁷ Toronto Globe, January 10, 1884, January 30, 1884.

⁵⁸ Globe, January 26, 1884; London Advertiser, March 13, 1880.

⁵⁹ Ottawa Citizen, July 6, 1872; Ottawa Free Press, January 16, 1883; Ibid., January 31, 1883; Ibid., November 6, 1883.

institutions like King Solomon's Lodge, the Maccabees Jabel's Tent, a chapter of the Ancient Order of the Foresters, and the Hammond Temple of International Order of Good Templars. While the first three organizations catered exclusively to the male inhabitants of the village, the Hammond Lodge was opened to members of both sexes, and like so many other organizations was devoted to the principle of abstaining from alcohol. In the first half of the nineteenth century, many of these lodges or institutions had been likened to little more than more formal associations that promoted a round of socializing "not much different from tavern culture". As the decades advanced, however, these "lodges became increasingly interested in respectability . . ." which ensured that increasingly alcohol was banned from lodge events.⁶⁰

Along with fraternal organizations and social clubs, sport played a role in the development of suburban society. The message of moral reformers who promoted sport as a means of projecting and developing the virtues of discipline and loyalty, was not lost on suburban residents.⁶¹ By the early 1880s Parkdale boasted active lacrosse and cricket clubs, while sport played a key role in galvanizing the community of suburban London West. Skating rinks frequently served as gathering points for villagers and city dwellers

⁶⁰ Yorkville Directory 1876-77, 52-53; Lynne Marks, "Religion, Leisure, and Working Class Identity." Labouring Lives: Work and Workers in Nineteenth-Century Ontario, ed., Paul Craven (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 309; City of London and County of Middlesex Directory for 1881-1882 (London: London Publishing Co., 1881), 77, 78, 79; London Advertiser, February 7, 1874, December 1, 1881, February 1, 1882, December 22, 1880, November 20, 1880; Alvin J. Schmidt, Fraternal Organizations: The Greenwood Encyclopaedia of American Institutions (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980), 146-148, 211-212; Marks, 308-309.

⁶¹ Morris Mott, "One Solution to the Urban Crisis: Manly Sports and Winnipeggers, 1900-1914," Urban History Review 12 (2), 57-70. Although Mott deals with Winnipeg in the early twentieth century, he notes that such trends had been largely imported from late nineteenth century Ontario. See also Nancy B. Bouchier, For the Love of the Game: Amateur Sport in Small-Town Ontario, 1838-1895 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003)

alike. The Tecumseh baseball team played in the appropriately named Tecumseh Park in the village's south-eastern corner, and provided a major focal point for the village and neighbouring city. Similarly, the attention of the village could often be focussed on planned footraces, which pitted notable villagers against city based competitors.⁶²

Readers of the Ottawa Free Press throughout 1883 would have been treated to reports "Sporting Intelligence" which emanated from the eastern suburb of New Edinburgh, including reports of baseball played at "Keefer's Field" as well as accounts of a suburban "foot-ball club . . . known as the Favorites."⁶³

Municipal Policy

While suburban government provided support to the emergence of various community-based institutions within their municipal boundaries, they had a more direct hand in the shaping of the suburban identities, by means of municipal policy and bylaws. Despite turnovers in their membership, councils consistently seemed to have the well-being of their municipalities at heart. As far as questions of identity were concerned, the municipal councils of the suburbs worked throughout the periods of incorporation to define the values and characters of their communities, by attempting to regulate the behaviour and values of their ratepayers and inhabitants. Very often these measures were meant to exclude what were considered to be disruptive and unpalatable elements of life

⁶²Toronto Mail, June 1, 1880; Ibid., September 27, 1881; Pat Morden. Putting Down Roots: A History of London's Parks and River (St. Catharines, Ontario: Stonehouse Publications, 1988), 45-47; London Advertiser, August 3, 1882, February 25, 1865, January 6, 1879, January 10, 1881, January 1, 1879, January 6, 1879, January 18, 1879. The attention paid to the London Tecumseh team only increased when they won the International Association baseball championship in 1877.

⁶³ Ottawa Free Press, July 16, 1883, November 6, 1883.

found in the neighbouring cities. If nothing else, such measures worked to contrast their communities with their urban neighbours, and reflected and shaped suburban values.

New Edinburgh and London West spent much time and energy in wrangling over the state and maintenance of bridges. Vital to their existence, bridges frequently came to dominate meetings of the village councils as they entreated both the neighbouring cities and their own superiors on the county councils to improve bridge structures, and thus sustain important economic links to the neighbouring urban world. The rhetoric and frustration apparent in communications and statements made by various village councils suggest that from their point of view bridges were of greater concern to the villages than to the city. While the councils of New Edinburgh and London West acknowledged that the bridges provided the economic lifeblood needed to sustain their communities, they also helped to bring into sharp relief the differences between suburban and urban worlds. There was a certain irony in the way the suburbs rejected the high taxes and the perceived moral decrepitude of the cities and yet ensured that the suburbs were connected to the economic prowess of these urban areas. This apparent hypocrisy had not been lost on those Toronto residents who had argued against Parkdale's incorporation in 1878. They had argued that the suburb would benefit from its proximity to the city without having to contribute to its upkeep.⁶⁴

London West villagers complained of the apparent ineptitude or indifference their city counterparts brought to bridge maintenance. In 1880, the city had dumped loads of

⁶⁴ Globe, June 27, 1878.



Figure 10: A view of London West (circa 1880) looking west from London. This shows the northern part of the Petersville section of the suburb, with the Methodist Church and Ann Street School visible in the top right hand corner. This image clearly illustrates how low-lying much of London West was and how susceptible it was to flooding by the Thames River. J.J. Talman Regional Collections, UWO, RC 40795.



Figure 11: A view of New Edinburgh looking east from Ottawa with the Rideau River in the foreground. The Horse Railway Bridge is visible at the extreme left. The photograph was taken between 1878 and 1883. William James Topley, photographer. National Archives of Canada, C-082303.

gravel on the Ridout Street approaches to the bridge. A “useless expense, as the first heavy rain will wash it all down the hill and into the river,” complained one village correspondent.⁶⁵ The bridge that linked Ottawa and New Edinburgh also was the source of friction as the village and city authorities argued over maintenance responsibilities. In February 1867, it had been ascertained that the bridge crossing the Rideau to Green Island was relatively safe, though minor repairs were needed. In 1868, village authorities had ordered work to commence in repairing the span that lay closest to their corporation. “The undecided question of who is responsible for the maintenance of the bridges over . . . [Rideau] river has been one of no small annoyance to the general public, who must trust themselves to very dilapidated structures while the divers Councils are debating whose duty it is to make the repairs.”⁶⁶

While the bridges provided the suburbanites of London West and New Edinburgh access to their respective cities, these fixed links also had the undesirable effect of providing access to the suburbs by undesirable elements from the cities. In London West, complaints were often made about the loitering youths who congregated on bridges, peppering their speech with “rude remarks” that offended self-respecting suburbanites. Matters moved to the boiling point and as one reporter warned “[t]he first thing these youths know they will be floating in the river.” Complaints were levied about “city roughs” who congregated on the “bridge[s] to indulge their circuses.” New Edinburgh’s

⁶⁵ London Advertiser, June 4, 1880.

⁶⁶ New Edinburgh Minutes, February 25, 1867; Ottawa Citizen, July 17, 1868.

western boundary, the Rideau, during the heat of Ontario's summers, proved quite popular with members of both the urban and suburban communities looking for refreshment. Not all the attention was welcomed by suburban councillors or their constituents. At the end of July 1878, New Edinburgh's clerk Thomas Tubman was directed by council to ask the Federal Department of Public Works to close their Bathing House situated on the river, which was "becoming a place of resort for bad characters . . ."⁶⁷

Questions of jurisdictional responsibility – no matter how trivial– could complicate relations between suburb and city. In late July 1884, with the heat of summer at its height, residents of both London and neighbouring London West were disturbed to see that the carcass of a dog had washed up in the shallows of the Thames below the much traversed Dundas Street footbridge. Complaints were lodged with the two corresponding authorities and while officials within both the city and suburb conceded that it was "not a very pleasant sight to the pedestrians . . ." neither side would assume responsibility for the animal's proper disposal. One indignant news correspondent demanded that "[t]he two Health Inspectors should proceed to the spot and measure the distance . . ." and once and for all determine in whose jurisdiction the deceased canine lay and therefore establish which municipal council was ultimately responsible for its disposal. Whether either council took heed of the injunction is not recorded.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ New Edinburgh Council Minutes, July 26, 1878.

⁶⁸ London Advertiser, July 30, 1884. Three years earlier complaints that been levied against "The pestilential odors arising and floating about on the village air from a cow stable . . ." Ibid., August 12, 1881.

Suburban councils were regularly engaged in the process of safeguarding the ratepayers and citizenry within their boundaries, by imposing bylaws to regulate the behaviour of those who lived, worked, and passed through their communities. Initially, beyond issues of establishing procedures and regulating the collection of tax monies, Yorkville's first council appears to have been concerned with ensuring that dogs were licensed and 'immoderate driving' was discouraged within the corporation's limits. By 1854 the council attempted to establish bylaws governing the establishment of taverns and temperance establishments. The regulation of everything from the licensing of cabmen and butcher shops to the prevention of disinterring bodies from the local burial ground during specific seasons came under the scrutiny of the council in the early years of its existence.⁶⁹

If the bridges were portals for vile city influences menacing both London West and New Edinburgh, the other suburbs had to contend with equally problematic city-based influences. Although every reeve of a village could act as a Justice of the Peace, the Municipal Act of 1873 specified that only towns and cities could create police forces. An amendment made the following year allowed villages hitherto exclusively reliant upon county constables to "appoint one chief constable, and one or more constables . . ."⁷⁰ London East appointed a chief constable in 1876 while its counterpart of London West never did, and continued to rely upon the county constables until

⁶⁹ City of Toronto Archives, RG 100, Series I, Yorkville Bylaw 3, April 21, 1853; Bylaw 9, May 19, 1853; Bylaw 24, February 23, 1854; Bylaw 25, May 5, 1854; Bylaw 54, May 5, 1856; Bylaw 59, October 6, 1856.

⁷⁰ Ontario Statutes, 36 Vic., c. 48, 29 March 1873. Under the statute villages could establish lock-up-houses; *Ibid.*, 37 Vic., c. xvi, March 24, 1874.

annexation in 1897. In the meantime suburbs attempted to control nuisances and crime by all methods available to them.⁷¹

Yorkville in particular remained vigilant. Many villagers and council members became indignant early in 1855 when Toronto City Council granted a tavern license to one Joseph Millwood (or Millward), who had situated himself in the city, not far from Yorkville's southern limits. The chief complaint was that Millwood had previously owned and operated a tavern in Yorkville itself but had failed to get his license renewed in 1854, and while it is not stated, it seems that Millwood had not endeared himself to village patricians. In a tersely worded petition Yorkville council complained that Millwood's second enterprise was an even greater nuisance as it was "far distant from the City Police and out of the control and jurisdiction of this council." Aware of the limitations of their position, however, the council merely asked that in future Toronto City Council be wary and not grant Millwood any such license. In July 1854, the village council rejected the petition of "a company of performers styled a Circus or Hypodrome [sic]" to perform within the village of Yorkville for the entire year 1854. At a subsequent meeting of council one councillor made it known that he would initiate a process to prevent circus troops and gamblers from infiltrating the village.⁷² Suburban councils

⁷¹ Ian Christopher Ross, "London East, 1854-1885: The Evolution, Incorporation, and Annexation of a Satellite Municipality," (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Department of History, 1977), 39-40; Petersville-London West Bylaws.

⁷² Yorkville Council Minutes, July 27, 1854, August 18, 1854, November 13, 1854, February 15, 1855. Indeed there seems to have been some collusion between Yorkville Village Council and the residents of what was then northern Toronto, for the latter also forwarded an angry petition to city council demanding that the offending tavern, open to all hours of the night, be closed and no license be given to the proprietor again. As it was the Toronto based petition complained that Millwood's tavern was a "place of resort for young and old . . . addicted to intemperate habits . . ." and was "nothing more than a gambling house." Globe, February 21, 1855. As to the

laboured to maintain law and order and imposed standards of public decency within their communities. As the registered complaints of suburban officials and residents suggest, very often the greatest threats to the public peace and order came from the cities.

Yorkville council was not alone in its worry about problems leaking across the urban-suburban frontier. The Thames River provided London West with a slightly less permeable barrier than Bloor Street offered Yorkville. However, a quarter century after Yorkville's run in with Joseph Millwood, the inhabitants of London West seemed convinced of the fact that proximity to London meant corrupting influences. As far as many of the village's more upstanding citizenry were concerned, their village streets were too often the stage upon which various acts of vice and violence were played. Like so many of their contemporaries from across the province, the root of the problem was intemperance. This view and concern was certainly not lost upon the members of London West's early councils which set about to eradicate, or at least severely limit, immorality in the homes and villages of their community. Throughout 1876 council passed a series of bylaws that sought to curb the immoral excesses within the corporation's limits. In May it was resolved that anyone keeping a "house of ill fame . . ." or other disreputable establishment, most notably within the realm of prostitution, would be liable for a fifty dollar fine or a term of no less than ninety days in prison. A subsequent bylaw for "the suppression of Vice, Intemperance, Immorality, Sabbath-breaking and other immoral and indecent acts . . ." was also enacted in an

question of circus troops, by the end of 1865 a bylaw was passed that sought to formally provide regulation and licenses for "Exhibitions of Wax Works Menageries Circus riding and other such like shows usually exhibited by showmen . . ." Yorkville Bylaw 122, October 5, 1865.

attempt to curb undesirable behaviour among villagers and any disreputable elements who chanced to cross over from the city. Even the adoption of such a stringent set of bylaws did not insulate the village from these problems, and complaints were frequently brought for vagrancy and for intemperance or other disorderly conduct.⁷³

While New Edinburgh's first council was predominantly concerned with establishing issues of procedure and decorum, it too began to attempt to regulate the behaviour of its citizens and those who happened to cross over into their village. In February 1867, the council resolved that anyone found guilty of breaking New Edinburgh's bylaws would be forced to pay a fine of no less than five shillings and no more than five pounds or no more than twenty days in the jail. The council passed bylaws regulating local taverns and public houses, and worked to stamp out the 'dumping of nuisances' within the village. By the middle of 1868, New Edinburgh's council became concerned about the difficulties that arose from the free ranging of livestock along the main thoroughfares, leading the body to pass a bylaw which compelled the erection of fences to keep in livestock, made allowances for the creation of local pounds for wayward animals, and generally prohibited animals from freely roaming within the village's

⁷³ London Advertiser, March 20, 1880, December 5, 1881, August 20, 1880; Petersville By-Law 17, May 22, 1876 and By-Law 21, December 4, 1876. London City Hall; Eric H. Monkkenen. Police in Urban America: 1860-1920 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 87-88. Monkkenen wrote that in the late nineteenth century "police acted as agents of class management . . ." The chief targets of this 'management' were those belonging to the "dangerous class" who comprised "the faceless mass of people who made up the nation's paupers, tramps, and criminals." The perception of those in the upper echelons of society was that the "dangerous class" represented a challenge or threat to social order; John C. Weaver. Crimes, Criminals, and Courts: Order and Transgression in a Canadian City, 1816-1970 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 49. Weaver explained that "Vagrancy served nicely for a century as a vague charge with which to harry strangers and the poor."

boundaries.⁷⁴

The village of London East, given its largely industrial nature, was not a protector of moral purity; rather the city of London regarded it as a grubby incubator of vice and immorality. London East's council permitted a larger number of drinking establishments, allowing over twenty licenses, possibly to serve some city clientele. However, bylaws during the first year of incorporation attempted to discourage the creation of bawdy houses and activities of 'ill-fame'. While officially discouraged, they flourished within the village, even after London East appointed a chief constable in February 1876, and then established a small police detachment in February 1882.⁷⁵ Attempts were made to regulate "booths, tents, stalls, and other places or vehicles for the sale of edibles and beverages at times of public gatherings" and to control "exhibitions of wax work, menageries, circus riding and other likes shows."⁷⁶ Despite these attempts by London East's council to curb the excesses of filth and moral vice, however, the municipality acquired a poor reputation in London. In March 1881, at least one prospective London East resident called attention to "fallen white sisters" whom he had observed while attempting to locate a home for his family. Decrying these "vile sinks of inequity" he demanded suppression of these houses. A year later another report explained that:

Mayor Lilley has announced that in future he will dismiss all persons brought before him charged with the offence of keeping disreputable houses in his town.

⁷⁴ Minutes of the New Edinburgh Council, 1867-1881, City Archives Reference Services Ottawa, Reel 71, February 25, 1867; *Ibid.*, July 6, 1868. .

⁷⁵ Ross, 39-40.

⁷⁶ London East Bylaws, 23, 24, 25.

London East may now look for a rapid increase of the population. Disorderly house keepers have an uneasy time of it here, and London's suburb might prove to them a haven of rest.⁷⁷

Residents of nineteenth-century suburban entities often perceived themselves as having the ability “to prescribe a sense of moral order among their suburban neighbors . . .” However, suburbs like London East, while attempting to control the morals and activities of their inhabitants, also were aware of, and perhaps slightly more tolerant, of businesses and activities that contravened moral regulation, but provided economic boons to their community. In his study of Chicago's North Shore suburbs, Michael H. Ebner explained that crusades based upon a sense of moral superiority failed to gain footholds in the face of differing ethnic, religious, and class divisions. Ebner explained that the working-class suburb of Gross Point gained a seedy reputation as a result of its large number of taverns. However, the municipality was able to concentrate its taxation solely upon these flourishing saloons – which attracted clientele from neighbouring suburbs -- and therefore direct its own development and support vital infrastructure without having to tax ordinary residents or their property. It was the very zeal of social crusaders in a nearby affluent suburb and their condemnation of all manner of drinking establishments which had encouraged and even guaranteed the profitability of

⁷⁷ Undated clipping (circa August 2, 1882) and Letter to the editor of the London Free Press, circa March, 1881. Charles Lilley Scrapbook, 1859-1890. J.J. Talman Regional Collections, B 5584 No. 71; London Free Press, May 29, 1880. A Mr. Colville brought a complaint before the authorities accusing a Hermann Dappar and ‘Susie’ of keeping a house of ill-fame in London East. Fred H. Armstrong, “East London Madam Had Moxy, Money,” London Free Press, December 1, 2003, C4. Armstrong wrote on the career of bawdy house owner and entrepreneur Esther Arscott (1842-1903), who battled with Mayor Charles Lilley and others over her businesses.

these institutions in Gross Point.⁷⁸ In a similar fashion, having helped to largely banish industrial development to their eastern suburb, the city of London also helped to encourage the emergence of less savoury cultural institutions, which were so abhorred by various crusading residents of both municipalities.

Municipal governments frequently resorted to hire nightwatchmen, constables or create police forces of their own. In Brockton the council appointed both a constable and a nightwatchman in the summer of 1881, while by the same period the village of London West had accepted the services of a private detective agency to police the community's streets. This move received much praise and as a result of this initiative the force became "the terror of evil-doers in London West."⁷⁹

While suburban municipalities raised funds for local infrastructure and to enforce the social harmony of their communities, they were also faced with costly health and sanitation violations. By the 1870s many North American municipalities were faced with growing populations and increasing pressures upon resources, and began to regulate their populations.⁸⁰ Certainly communities such as London East and Yorkville erected locally-based boards of health to deal with issues of public health. London East's board attempted to ban slaughterhouses, and, no longer wishing to be the city's burial ground, closed St.

⁷⁸ Michael H. Ebner. Creating Chicago's North Shore: A Suburban History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 133-136. While the largely Anglo citizens of Evanstown, Illinois preached about the importance of temperance and the maintenance of order, their neighbours in the predominantly German-Catholic suburb of Gross Point encouraged the development of taverns and saloons, claiming that such institutions were part and parcel of their cultural identity.

⁷⁹ Brockton Bylaw 15, June 27, 1881; London Advertiser, August 23, 1881.

⁸⁰ Maureen Ogle. All the Modern Conveniences: American Household Plumbing, 1840-1890 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 4-5

Paul's Anglican Cemetery and had the remains exhumed for reburial west of the city (Yorkville had closed the Potters Burial Ground in 1856 as it was deemed to be both a health risk and an unseemly presence in a thriving village). To a certain extent the issues these boards attempted to address were linked with eradicating moral problems, and appear to have been viewed as indicators of the community's well-being, which would be reflected in the identities of the suburbs. Disposal of nightsoil perplexed municipal officials and residents alike. Shortly after its incorporation in 1867 New Edinburgh's council circulated handbills which promised a twenty dollar reward for information leading to convictions of those who were leaving deposits of unspecified "nuisances" around the village.⁸¹ In early 1885 London East's Mayor Charles Lilley learned of "some evil disposed person having deposited night soil on the commons near Egerton street south . . ." and immediately put the matter before the town constable.⁸² In March 1879, shortly after incorporation, Parkdale's village council was asked if the appropriate "steps had been taken with the view of disinfecting the deposits of Nightsoil in the Western part of the village . . ." By council's next meeting the reeve was presented with a requisition to "call a Public meeting for the purpose of discussing the merits and demerits of the Dry Earth Closet system."⁸³ For municipalities attempting to attract new residents and hold

⁸¹ London East Bylaws, 2,14, 25, 26, 39, 94; Sandra M. Moore. "Yorkville 1808-1883," (Unpublished Senior Undergraduate Thesis, University of Toronto, Department of Geography 1968), 4; Yorkville, Bylaw 54, May 5, 1856; New Edinburgh Minutes, July 29, 1867.

⁸² London Advertiser, January 7, 1885.

⁸³ Parkdale Minutes, March 5, 1879 and March 19, 1879; Globe, February 5, 1884. To combat the problem of improperly disposed of nightsoil Parkdale's council accepted the tender of R. Berry to regularly collect the waste but added that it was imperative "that all who have any such for removal should notify the village clerk." The problem of the improper disposal of nightsoil also seemed to have perplexed members of Brockton's council for by

themselves to a higher standard than their urban neighbours, the perception that they were combatting problems of physical and moral pollution was important.

Whatever they might have felt at the time, suburban officials were not alone in their preoccupation with safeguarding the physical and moral well-being of their communities, as similar crusades existed within the cities. Nevertheless, in working to eradicate these public menaces suburban officials and residents, whether consciously or not, were defining themselves against the cities they neighboured, and thereby heightening a particular suburban identity, an identity that many suburbanites attempted to cultivate and enhance. The situation in London East was certainly more complex. An industrial suburb that sanctioned the proliferation of drinking establishments and turned a blind eye to bawdy houses, London East none-the-less attempted to safeguard the well-being of its inhabitants and develop its distinctive identity.

The emergence of suburban municipalities beginning in the early 1850s was followed by increased population growth, and perhaps naturally by the increase in the number of institutions, both religious and social, that served the needs of the growing communities. Coupled with concerted efforts by municipal councils to create town halls and corporate seals, the promotion of other organizations helped to give a focus to community life and forge new, stronger suburban identities. Even as these internal developments occurred, suburban governments attempted to deal with their urban

the end of 1883 a group of villagers headed by Robert Smith petitioned council insisting that their elected officials pursue "some steps to prevent the deposit of night soil within the municipality." Brockton Minutes, December 3, 1883; Globe, October 14, 1882. It was reported that during proceedings before magistrates in Yorkville "John McNamara and John Henderson, both market gardeners in the township of York, in their evidence stated that they used night soil as manure in their business."

neighbours, often attempting to insulate their own communities as much as possible from the less desirable urban influences. Through attempts at moral regulation and the safeguarding of public virtue, the suburbs fostered an increasing sense of suburban separateness. At the same time, all of these activities aimed at promoting the suburbs, suggested that for the people who held elected office, and even the broader body of ratepayers and residents, suburban identity was important. Municipal governments had been both major focuses and promoters of local identities and the community building processes.

Chapter Three:

Suburban Dilemma: City Expectations and Suburban Resources

On the evening of December 23, 1884 a large number of London East ratepayers met in their newly built town hall to allow “Council an opportunity of giving an account of their stewardship during the year . . .” It had been an eventful year, one that had taxed the fiscal resources and morale of the municipality over the construction of a waterworks. Beyond the financing of the waterworks, other expenditures had been exceedingly high. The municipality ran an increasing debt as it attempted to cope with maintaining local infrastructure and the completion of the town hall which had cost far more than estimated. With a debt of over \$60,000, ratepayers worried about the municipality’s viability. The town’s incumbent mayor, Charles Lilley, explained that he had always championed London East’s independence from the City of London. The ratepayers had recently rejected an agreement to tap into the city’s waterworks and called for the construction of their own system. While he committed himself to the wishes of the voting public, Lilley noted that an independent scheme seemed ‘visionary’. He warned it was surely “the highway to bankruptcy.” The Advertiser explained that Lilley now looked upon amalgamation with the city as the salvation of the town . . .” and the solution to its desperate financial situation.¹

The granting of municipal status to unorganized suburbs on the urban fringe effectively transformed these conglomerations of homes and scattered businesses into

¹ London Advertiser, December 24, 1884.

corporate entities that had their own demanding sets of powers and responsibilities, including the development and maintenance of local infrastructure, provision for local education and community development. Not surprisingly, given these new obligations, one of the major preoccupations of suburban governments during the nineteenth century was to make their communities more attractive for potential householders and businesses. Lower taxes and cheaper real estate attracted people of moderate means to the suburbs, where home ownership was much more possible than in the cities of Toronto, Ottawa, and London. While these basic factors helped to guarantee initial development, suburban governments realized that to maintain growth, they needed further incentives. These villages and towns faced the dilemma of supplying services such as water, public transportation, and even gas to their inhabitants to keep pace with their urban neighbours, without substantially increasing the rate of taxation that made their communities attractive in the first place.² New residents and businesses would help to increase the tax base and further enable the suburbs to supply coveted services.³ To promote the growth of their communities and to safeguard their independence, suburban governments faced increased debt and financial chaos. This financial crisis in turn discouraged local ratepayers and undermined the credibility of suburban municipal governments, helping pave the way toward amalgamation with urban neighbours.

² London Advertiser, March 15, 1880. In discussing the growth of London's suburbs it was explained that "People are beginning to get tired of paying high rents and taxes for the privilege of living in the city."

³Richard Turkington, "British 'Corporation Suburbia'" *The Changing Fortunes of Norris Green, Liverpool.* in Changing Suburbs: Foundation, Form, and Function (London: E & FN Spon, 1999), 65.

The Vexed Matter of Transportation Links

Most suburban councils of the time sought to improve the transportation network that linked their communities with the broader world, most notably the cities they neighboured. The better the transportation links to the city, the more likely it was that the suburb would attract residents and businesses. Brockton, Parkdale, Yorkville, London West, London East, and New Edinburgh councils passed the requisite bylaws that permitted the opening of new streets as development increased. The pressure to do so came not only from within the suburbs themselves, but from the cities. As the Globe explained in 1880, Toronto had expended some \$136,381 on road maintenance within the city limits throughout 1879, which it claimed to be the “most important . . . item in our civic expenses . . .” The editorial explained that while “[t]his sum is not large enough to give us uncommonly decent roadways . . . it will doubtless seem a formidable sum to our suburban friends.”⁴

Beyond merely opening thoroughfares, councils were responsible for their continued maintenance, although it was clear that this was not always carried out with vigilance. In the first year of its incorporation, Yorkville’s council dealt with the extension of both William and Sydenham streets and borrowed some £ 750 so that it could complete plank sidewalks and make “other needful improvements . . .” Winter provided its own set of headaches, forcing the council to pass a bylaw ordering that accumulated snow and dirt be removed from village sidewalks to permit passage by

⁴ Globe, October 9, 1880.

pedestrians. The village was continually having to deal with street drainage.⁵ The concerns of Yorkville's council were hardly different in the fall of 1878 than they had been in 1853. Between October 28 and December 23, 1878, the council passed a total of five bylaws issuing debentures which enabled them to construct drains or sewers, with costs amounting to \$8115.⁶

While Parkdale residents made much of the fact that their council had succeeded in opening four miles of roadway in the first year of corporate existence, in general the suburb, like Yorkville, was continually derided for the state of its roadways. It became something of a joke that the self-proclaimed 'Flowery Suburb' boasted abundantly blooming weeds on all but the most travelled sections of its streets. Other complaints indicated that in spring Parkdale's roadways deteriorated into a muddy clay gumbo. Streets became virtually impassible to most horse drawn traffic.⁷ Matters improved to a degree as first village and then town council opened up more streets and constructed more sidewalks. Some development, however, was hindered by the fact that the corporation worked on a frontage tax system, a vestige of the municipality's rural past. The majority

⁵ Yorkville Bylaws 12, 14, 18, 19, 21, 29, August 25, 1853, November 3, 1853, December 8, 1853, December 29, 1853, December 22, 1853, May 18, 1854. Yorkville Bylaw 49, October 18, 1855 was passed to "enable the Municipal Council . . . to widen that part of Gwynne Street, being north of Jarvis Street, also for grading, levelg, James Street and Gwynne St. respectively, etc."

⁶ Yorkville Bylaws 376, 377, 378, 379, 384, 385, October 28, 1878, November 18, 1878, December 23, 1878.

⁷ John G. Scott. The Parkdale Register Containing A History of Parkdale From Its Incorporation to the Present Time (Toronto: Bengough, Moore, & Bengough, 1881), 2; Toronto Mail, April 17, 1880 and July 31, 1882 as quoted in Margaret Laycock and Barbara Myrvold. Parkdale in Pictures: Its Development to 1889 (Toronto: Toronto Public Library Board, 1991), 15-16; Stephanie Hutcheson. Yorkville in Pictures 1853-1883 (Toronto: Toronto Public Library Board, 1978), 3. It was explained that even after three decades of incorporation the streets of Yorkville "were unswept and badly paved . . ." while it was further noted that what little watering was done to keep down the dust was confined almost exclusively to Yonge Street.

of ratepayers on a particular street had to approve of roadway improvements before action could be taken. Some concerned ratepayers, anxious to keep the level of taxation low, tried to forestall improvements, creating headaches for both councils and their city neighbours. By the late 1880s, Parkdale had begun to spend money to pave major thoroughfares with cedar block. By the end of 1888, the town had more than fifteen miles of paved streets.⁸

Not only did the proper maintenance of roadways promote growth and reduce the complaints of local ratepayers, but they could also protect municipal funds. When accidents on municipal roadways resulted in injury, complainants pressed damage suits. Yorkville for instance had to deal with the suit launched by the solicitors of Mary Falvy who was injured during a fall on what she termed a 'defective sidewalk' on Avenue Road in February 1882.⁹ The threat of poor maintenance was not lost on London West's correspondent for the London Advertiser who reported on the unfortunate accident of widow Mary Long who broke her arm after falling on a village walkway when walking on Christmas Day 1880. The whole matter "was solely due to the disgraceful condition of the sidewalk."¹⁰

The maintenance of passable roadways and sidewalks was part of a larger transportation imperative for the suburbs. As the viability of the suburbs was often based upon proximity to cities, the ability of suburbanites to travel between their homes and

⁸ Laycock, 16.

⁹ Toronto Evening Telegram, May 12, 1882.

¹⁰ London Advertiser, December 27, 1880.

city-based employers was essential. One of the keys to maintaining the viability of the suburbs was seen as the procurement of railway linkages, as well as the importance of connecting to the growing city-based street railways.¹¹

New Edinburgh had early on received the benefits of a railway link, even before the Ottawa and Prescott Railway pushed its way into Ottawa itself. The existence of railways to the west of Toronto had facilitated the emergence of Parkdale as an independent municipality in 1879. The municipality was bisected by a series of railways including the Northern Railway, Great Western Railway, Credit Valley Railway, and Grand Trunk Railway. They provided a major economic stimulus to the emerging community and a means of connecting its residents with the wider world.¹² The two major railway arteries formed roughly along an east-west axis, bordering along Parkdale's north-eastern frontier and skirting along the shore of Humber Bay, effectively separating lakeshore properties from the village's main section. As the population of Parkdale increased so did the call by suburban authorities for improved rail service, so that beginning in the late 1870s the various railway companies, in a state of continual mergers, constructed railway stations and regular service with stations further to the west, but most importantly with Toronto's Union Station. After the Grand Trunk had consolidated its control over both the Great Western and Northern Railways in 1882 and 1884, Parkdale's council succeeded in ensuring that the railway provided suburban

¹¹ Christopher Armstrong and H.V. Nelles. Monopoly's Moment: The Organization and Regulation of Canadian Utilities, 1830-1930 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 127-129.

¹² Shirley E. Woods. Ottawa: The Capital of Canada (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1980), 118; Laycock, 9.

commuters with a Toronto bound train in the morning and two return trains in the early evening.¹³

Railways were generally viewed as vehicles of growth and prosperity, and for the suburbs acted as lifelines for commerce, industry, and trade. London East's council passed a bylaw in the summer of 1877 so that the Great Western Railway could construct a branch rail line to connect various oil refineries within the municipality. Railways also brought headaches to the suburbs. In London East, bisected by two major railways, future mayor Charles Lilley complained early in 1880 that some of the major railway crossings in the municipality were in bad shape. Council demanded the railways rectify the situation.¹⁴ Similarly while the railways through Parkdale proved a boon to growth, they also provided a series of difficulties. Queen Street was arguably the community's most significant thoroughfare, providing important links to Toronto. The difficulty was that as the number of railways and the amount of related traffic grew, there were increased concerns about the safety and frequent inconveniences afforded by the level crossings, especially at the multi-track crossing at the junction of Queen Street and Parkdale's eastern boundary of Dufferin Street. Not only was there a danger in crossing these lines, but frequently traffic was held up by trains that stopped along this important junction. At least one contemporary explained that Parkdale's growth was seriously

¹³ Laycock, 23; A.W. Currie. The Grand Trunk Railway of Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), 218, 279.

¹⁴ London Advertiser, March 25, 1880; London East Bylaws, 54, July 23, 1877.



Figure 12: London East was very much an industrial suburb. This image (circa 1880) shows the London Petroleum Barrel and Atlantic Petroleum Works in the suburb. J.J. Talman Regional Collections, UWO, stock photo file, 41430.

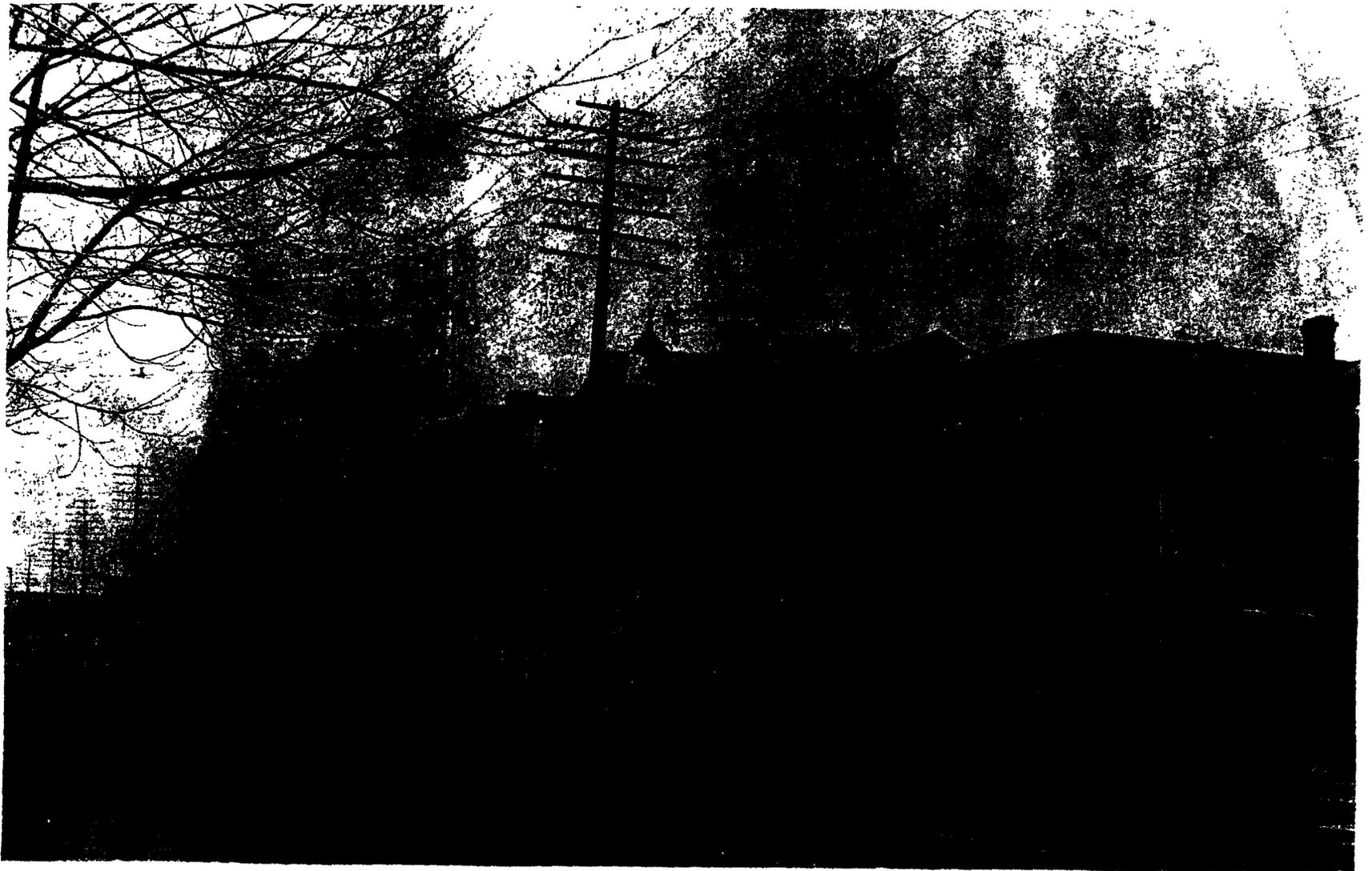


Figure 13: This photograph was taken at what might be termed London East's main business intersection and its western boundary. The image looks in an easterly direction along Dundas Street from its junction with Adelaide Street which separated the suburb from the City of London to the west. The block of buildings on the right were built by Charles Lilley who was a suburban businessman and who also served as one of London East's mayors. J.J. Talman Regional Collections, UWO, Leonard Album, 80907.

inhibited and the value of its property limited by the lack of a safe alternative crossing.¹⁵

The matter so perplexed both Parkdale council and its counterpart in Toronto that early in 1883 the Ontario Legislature passed legislation allowing the two municipalities to construct a subway or tunnel that would effectively maintain the flow of traffic between the two municipalities and eliminate the dangers of multiple railway lines.

Within a matter of a few months, however, Toronto City Council refused to support the venture financially, although a significant portion of the proposed subway lay within its boundaries. Despite having lost its partnership with Toronto, Parkdale opted to continue the project alone. Completed by 1885, the Queen Street subway was immediately dogged by complaints from other parties, including Toronto's council, which feared that the required closure of a section of Dufferin would seriously harm surrounding areas. Having incurred the considerable debt of \$20,000 for the project, Parkdale's council soon came under fire for the subway's wretched state, caused by the rain, mud, and the spewing of coal and oil by the trains. So anxious were travellers to avoid the quagmire under the tracks that many risked the level crossings. Even before the new tunnel was opened, Parkdale was plagued by debt, an inability to have the railway companies foot any part of the bill and the wrath of affected property owners who sought compensation for damages and property devaluation. An attempt was made by a so-called 'Parkdale clique' to force Toronto into contributing some \$10,000 toward the construction of the subway by applying pressure through the Ontario Legislature. In the

¹⁵ Laycock, 20-21; Pelham Mulvany, Toronto: Past and Present (Toronto: W.E. Caiger, 1884), 257.

view of the Globe it was “[o]ne of the most impudent measures submitted to the Local Parliament this session . . .” The situation caused a number of ratepayers to demand that Parkdale seek amalgamation with Toronto. As it was, Toronto refused to entertain such a notion, given its fears over the suburb’s incredible debt and its apparent inability to explain or outline its finances.¹⁶

While many of Ontario’s suburbs sprang up along important railway lines, which linked them to the neighbouring cities and centres even further afield, the importance of more localized rail transportation also became a chief preoccupation for suburban councils. As Sam Bass Warner demonstrated for Boston, one of the earliest impetuses for suburban growth was the accessibility to the urban frontier afforded by streetcars. Certainly the commencement of omnibus service between Yorkville and Toronto in 1849 provided a substantial boon to Yorkville. While transportation systems such as the Yorkville omnibus came about to aid the growth of nascent suburbs, they generally did not precede development altogether.¹⁷ Street railway systems within Canada had emerged in the 1860s to serve cities such as Toronto and Montreal. While the public’s expectations of these privately owned companies were high, the business imperative of

¹⁶ Laycock, 21-22, 31-32; Globe, February 14, 1884.

¹⁷ Sam Bass Warner. Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978), 21-29, 65, 153-154; Hutcheson, 2; David Ward, “A Comparative Historical Geography of Streetcar Suburbs in Boston, Massachusetts and Leeds, England, 1850-1920,” in Annals of the Association of American Geographers 54 (4) 477-489. Ward explained that American and British cities tended to grow at different rates, with differing patterns of development. He explained that American streetcar systems were generally privately owned and geared toward the major expansion of housing and business development, and therefore usually extended beyond built-up areas to encourage suburban growth. In contrast British streetcar systems tended to be built by public authorities to connect people with parks and cemeteries, and led to a trend whereby most development tended to ‘fill in’ vacant lands closer to the urban centre.

profits meant that development often “fell woefully short of public expectations.” Street railways simply could not cater to the needs and desires of patrons and still turn profits for their owners.¹⁸ While developers and suburbanites clamoured for the extension of street railways into their communities, such linkages often came after prolonged discussions and much rancour. The city-based companies frequently ignored these calls, forecasting that the extension of their services into the suburbs would overextend their resources and would not make sufficient returns on investment. Gradually the suburbs learned that securing linkages to the street railway companies would require much bargaining over protracted periods.¹⁹

While both Brockton and Parkdale were bisected by the lines of major railways, Yorkville was left untouched by such railway development. By the 1870s, the village was linked with Toronto’s street railway, which had regular service at five minute intervals between Yorkville’s town hall and St. Lawrence Hall in Toronto “afford[ing] every facility for easy access to the busy centres and places of interest within the city.”²⁰ In 1873 interested entrepreneurs in and around Yorkville proposed building the Yorkville

¹⁸ Armstrong and Nelles, *Monopoly’s Moment*, 34.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 156, 188-189. By refusing to expand their operations into the suburbs, street railway companies ran the risk of encouraging competition to spring up on the urban fringes, which occurred in Toronto to a limited degree in the 1890s. The only way by which the street railways were forced to expand their services, however, generally came through the increasing pressure and regulation of the cities, although this did not generally occur until after 1900. When the Toronto Railway Company refused to extend its services beyond Toronto’s 1891 limits, the city finally forced the company’s hand by inaugurating a civically owned line in 1910. After much complaint and calls for increased regulation in 1906 Ontario created the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board to regulate relations between municipalities and railways.

²⁰ Yorkville Directory, 14; Toronto *Evening Telegram*, January 24, 1882. Although the service between Yorkville and Toronto was regularly spaced it was explained that “[t]here is considerable complaint among passengers who have no place to wait in Yorkville for the street cars.”

Loop Line Railway which would create a major transportation link in the vicinity of the village. The new company ambitiously hoped to form a fixed rail link between the Grand Trunk and the Northern Railway, while extending a line into “Yorkville . . . with power to connect there with the Toronto Street Railway . . .” and even further to the boundary between York and Scarborough Townships. As the decade progressed, however, the development lagged and subsequent attempts to revive interest in the venture flagged.²¹ Reports of proposed railway construction in Yorkville caused something of a sensation when, early in 1882, the Ontario and Quebec Railway purchased the property of a local milkman for \$11,000. As the Toronto Evening Telegram explained, with the proposed railway running through the village “property in this neighbourhood is on the boom.”²²

There was a link between the erection of New Edinburgh as a municipal village and the incorporation of the Ottawa Street Railway, for the latter’s headquarters was in Ottawa’s eastern suburb.²³ The positioning of the terminus of the street railway in New Edinburgh was a major benefit for the village, and provided employment as well as fixed public transit into the heart of Ottawa. To a certain extent, the location of the terminus at New Edinburgh was not surprising, given that the president of the street railway was none other than T.C. Keefer, Thomas McKay’s son-in-law. As a beneficiary of the vast

²¹ Statutes of Ontario 36 Victoria, c. 77, 471-481. Of the seven men who petitioned the Ontario Legislature for the company’s incorporation, two came from neighbouring York Township, three from Toronto itself, one from St. Catharines Township, and one from the Eastern Ontario town of Prescott. They counted amongst themselves two civil engineers, one physician, one barrister, a bank manager, and two men labelled simply as ‘esquire.’ ; Statutes of Ontario 42 Victoria, c. 72, 233-234.

²² Toronto Evening Telegram, January 23, 1882.

²³ Statutes of the Province of Canada, Vic. 29-30, c. 106, “An Act to incorporate the ‘Ottawa City Passenger Railway Company’”, 539-42

McKay estate, Keefer ensured that the railway provided not only New Edinburgh with connections to Ottawa, but also ensured that the further flung sections of the McKay estate would eventually be serviced, giving rise to future developments further to the east.²⁴ The impact of the street railway was important in that New Edinburgh became an important transportation centre. By 1878, of the village's fifty-seven horses, some thirty-four were the property of the street railway company. New Edinburgh also possessed a ferry link with Gatineau Point in Quebec across the Ottawa River.²⁵

Other suburban municipalities realized the importance of securing connections with the urban street railways, although these linkages did not come easily. In the industrial suburb of London East a connection to the London Street Railway was of great importance in helping to transport its workers to and from the various factories that dominated the village, and also provided ready access for the residents of the city to the various businesses that flourished within the eastern suburb. Shortly after the village was incorporated in 1875, London East's council passed a bylaw that provided that important concessions and privileges were granted to the London Street Railway in order to attract the company to extending lines into the village, although this agreement was

²⁴ Ian Drummond, Progress without Planning: The Economic History of Ontario from Confederation to the Second World War (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1987), 176-177. In subsequent years rail lines were extended eastward giving rise to the villages of Rockcliffe Park and Britannia Beach; Armstrong, Monopoly's Moment, 85-87. The Ottawa Street Railway had suffered through the 1880s and had been threatened with competition by a municipally run street railway. While the company had managed to make ends meet by serving Ottawa's mercantile and government elites, it had failed to expand into the less affluent sections of the city. By 1890 Ottawa council began in earnest to control and shape street railways in the city and "marked the arrival of the street railway in Canada."

²⁵ Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Carleton (Including the City of Ottawa) Ontario (Toronto: C.H. Belden Co., 1879; reprint Port Elgin, Ontario: Richardson, Bond and Wright, 1971), xxxi.

subsequently modified as the link was made.²⁶ The residents of London West had long anticipated that their community would be joined to the London Street Railway (LSR), although the village's council does not seem to have been approached about the matter until 1893. At that time, the Everett-Moore Syndicate which owned the LSR negotiated a thirty year lease with the municipality to have its services extended into the village. A line was soon constructed from the Kensington Bridge in the southern portion of the village along Dundas Street and up the village's western boundary at Wharncliffe Road, up to Oxford Street and then back down. The service was hampered, however, by London's refusal to give the syndicate permission to build a fixed link to the city's tracks. As a result, passengers who travelled from London West on the street railway had to disembark as soon as they crossed the river and walk three or four blocks eastward to board city street cars. As London West's incumbent reeve explained, the matter was complicated by the fact that "there were three parties to fight – the city, the street railway, and the county." The city eventually provided permission for tracks to link the two systems in 1897 when London West seriously contemplated amalgamation with London.²⁷

Suburban municipalities were preoccupied with building and securing improved transportation links to cities. Debates over the opening of new streets and avenues provoked heated exchanges amongst elected officials, and inspired ratepayer petitions.

²⁶ London East Bylaw 12, April 21, 1875, and Bylaw 28, October 6, 1875.

²⁷ John Lutman. The South and West of London: An Historical and Architectural Guide (London, Ontario: Corporation of the City of London, 1979), 55; London Advertiser, December 29, 1896.

While the largest single sums of municipal revenues were generally spent upon larger projects such as waterworks, the constant application of local revenues to road work and maintenance was vital to maintaining growth, by accommodating further development, and providing access to city-based markets and employment. Beyond the question of mere roadways and sidewalks, came the particularly suburban concern about securing linkages to railways, not only to attract local business investment, but to ensure that both current and prospective citizens would be able to comfortably travel into the neighbouring city, which, despite attempts at economic diversification within the suburbs, remained the primary *raison d'être* for these peripheral communities.²⁸

In Parkdale attempts to maintain both road and rail links proved to be problematic, leading the municipality to construct costly subways, with long-term fiscal and political repercussions. The continual battle to maintain passable and convenient transportation links could be compromised by municipal boundaries and inter-municipal conflict, such as beset London West's bid to secure a fixed link between street railway systems. While both urban and suburban residents may have been most often aware of the grand public schemes and expenditures which strapped suburban municipalities, the problems associated with transportation served to both aid and complicate the role of suburban government and finance throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. The continual quest to improve vital connections between suburb and city complicated attempts to keep the suburb a separate municipal entity.

²⁸ Larry McNally, "Roads, Streets, and Highways," Building Canada: A History of Public Works, Norman Ball, ed., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 33-35.

Peripheral Industries

The suburban municipalities of Ontario contained a mixture of business interests, which not only provided employment for the local population but also an important source of tax revenue. As Robert Lewis explained in his study of industrializing Montreal suburbs in North America, industry began to migrate to the urban periphery in the second half of the nineteenth century as sizable operations sought new locations and wished to avoid the increasing conflicts between labour and capital that had become part and parcel of the urban fabric. In the instance of Montreal, the move of industry to “greenfield sites” on the edges of the city commenced in the 1840s and continued to remain important to industrial development well into the 1890s²⁹ As Ann Durkin Keating explained in her study of suburban development outside Chicago, nineteenth century industry was attracted to areas on the urban periphery, given the cheaper value of land, and the increased transportation links with major cities afforded by the increasing numbers of railways. Similarly, while industry brought development and tax money, it also attracted resident industrial workers.³⁰

London East was acutely aware of issues surrounding business and industrial development. The entire basis of the community hinged upon retaining heavy industries such as oil refining and boxcar construction, as well as numbers of smaller

²⁹ Robert Lewis. Manufacturing Montreal: The Making of an Industrial Landscape, 1850 to 1930 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 255-256; Robert Lewis, “Running Rings Around the City: North American Industrial Suburbs, 1850-1950,” in Changing Suburbs: Foundation, Form and Function, Richard Harris and Peter J. Larkham, eds (London: E & F.N. Spon, 1999), 146-163.

³⁰ Keating, 20-23.

manufacturing interests. While nineteenth-century suburban development is often characterized as being driven by an exodus away from the noise and pollution caused by urban industrialization, the fact that London proper banned the erection of industries such as oil refineries for example, provided an impetus for London East's growth.³¹ While the municipal affairs of London East might well have been dominated by business and industrial elites exemplified by individuals such as Charles Lilley and Isaac Waterman, there was no ignoring the fact that the vast majority of the community's inhabitants came from the middling and working class strata of society. Various councils throughout its period of incorporation tended to give leeway to various industries and did little or nothing to address the fact that many industries were "constantly spewing noxious pollution upon the community . . ."³²

The importance of industry to London East's economy was underscored in March 1880, when William Duffield came before council to request a tax exemption for his gasworks. Deputy Reeve Charles Lilley championed Duffield's cause and reminded others on council that they "had given their word that exemptions should be made to any new industry starting in the village." Reeve Isaac Waterman countered that while such was the case it had to be remembered that exemptions were given in proportion to the number of employees, noting further that "it was well known that gas works need hardly

³¹ Kenneth Jackson. Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 69.

³² Ian Christopher Ross. "London East, 1854-1885: The Evolution, Incorporation, and Annexation of a Satellite Municipality." (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Department of History, 1977), 40.

any men to run them.” Duffield acknowledged that while he only employed eight men he had great plans for expansion within London East along the major village thoroughfares and “contended that the erection of the works were a great boon to the village in reducing the price of the gas bill.” Council agreed with Duffield’s case. A bylaw was passed that May exempting the gasworks from municipal taxation. Other industries secured exemptions over the years, including the Bennett Furnishing Company and the London Steel Works.³³ Municipal bonusing was an accepted practice in nineteenth-century Ontario. By waiving taxation for set periods of time or lowering rates charged by various public utilities, municipalities vied with each other in enticing industry to locate within their boundaries. As Paul Maroney explained in his study of Kingston, municipal bonusing peaked at the end of the century.³⁴

Between 1876 and 1885, the number of small enterprises in London East, both commercial and industrial, rose from forty-two to eighty-eight. However, while this growth seems to have paralleled the population growth in the suburb, “the number of businesses which actually survived . . . was very small.” Given poor credit ratings and a lack of capital, many of these businesses folded after only a few years.³⁵ The

³³ London Advertiser, March 25, 1880; London East Bylaw 77, May 14, 1880; Bylaw 103, July 5, 1882; Bylaw 153, December 31, 1884. .

³⁴ Paul Maroney, “Municipal Bonusing in Kingston, Ontario, 1873-1914,” Ontario History 85 (June 1993), 119; Elizabeth Bloomfield, “Municipal Bonusing of Industry: The Legislative Framework in Ontario to 1930,” Urban History Review, 3 (February 1981), 59-76. Bloomfield examined Ontario’s legislation covering the municipal bonusing question. Beginning in 1868 municipal governments were permitted to grant tax exemptions to manufacturers for increasing periods of time. Providing funds to railways was extended to other industries, although since municipalities were often forced to borrow money for this purpose, a vote by ratepayers had to be obtained (there was no provision for voting on tax exemptions until 1899).

³⁵ Ross, 44-46.

predominance of the major oil refineries in London East had emerged in the wake of the discovery of oil in neighbouring Lambton County in the late 1850s. As London passed bylaws prohibiting the erection of refineries within its boundaries during the late 1860s, a large number of oil refineries located in London East. A series of consolidations and mergers resulted in large corporations like the Imperial Oil Company, which became an economic mainstay in London East. The relocation of the Great Western Car Shops from Hamilton by 1872 provided a massive economic boost to London's eastern suburb, providing both tax revenue and employment to nearly 400.³⁶ The establishment of one major industry in a suburb led to the building of increasingly larger numbers of similar heavy industry to the same area.³⁷

While industrial interests never came to dominate the other suburbs as they did in London East, the other municipalities were not blind to the importance of attracting business to promote internal growth. Even in comparatively tiny Brockton, the village council granted tax exemptions to the planing mill owned by the McCracken family. There was a "strong desire of the members Council to promote the interests of the village." As it was, after two years of incorporation Brockton's council passed a bylaw that permitted those enterprises that possessed capital of \$20,000 or more "be free from

³⁶ Frederick H. Armstrong. The Forest City: An Illustrated History of London, Canada (Windsor Hills, California, 1986), 121, 128. Imperial Oil emerged when seven oil refineries joined together in 1880; Goodspeed, 382, 410; Ross, 19, 51. It was noted that the actions of London's council ensured that while the citizens of London could still smell the oil refineries the "taxable property was outside the jurisdiction of city assessors."

³⁷ Ann Durkin Keating, 21-22. In the example of Roseland, Illinois Keating explained that the 1881 establishment by George Pullman factory for the construction of railway sleeping-cars led to the mushrooming of housing and subsequently increased the pull of other industry into the area. Local landowners were quick to make fortunes in selling out their holdings to accommodate the growth.

taxes for 20 years.” Brockton’s elected officials were not the only ones disposed toward increasing the village’s economic base. The Toronto Evening Telegram explained that a number of village property owners, eagerly anticipating an influx of such interests, were hurriedly putting various parcels of land up for sale. The Evening Telegram detected a flaw, for Brockton needed “a good supply of lake water to encourage manufacturers to settle in this thriving village to make it a busy hive of industry.”³⁸

For the villages of London West and New Edinburgh, there was almost no influx of what might be termed heavy industry, although both villages had mills and New Edinburgh did possess a foundry. Certainly the mills powered by the Rideau River, around which the village had initially sprung in the 1830s, remained important economic mainstays. Begun long before incorporation, the New Edinburgh Woolen Mills were owned and operated by the Blackburn family. Robert Blackburn served as the village’s reeve for a number of years. Gradually a partnership emerged between the Blackburn and Maclaren families, and in the 1870s James Maclaren positioned himself to take over both the Woolen Mills and the stave mills located on Green Island. These operations remained with the Maclarens until sold to a larger lumbering firm some eight years after New Edinburgh was amalgamated with Ottawa in 1886.³⁹ In London West the Saunby family,

³⁸ Brockton Bylaw 79, March 10, 1884; Bylaw 55, January 5, 1883; Toronto Evening Telegram, January 6, 1883; Toronto Evening Telegram, February 15, 1883. In February 1883 Brockton’s Reeve Dr. John McConnell received a communication from Hogart Brothers Workshops of Brampton indicating that they were in favour of moving their business to Brockton “if a suitable bonus is given.”

³⁹ Harry Walker and Olive Walker. Carleton Saga (Ottawa: Carleton County Council, 1975), 331; Courtney C.J. Bond, ed. Historical Sketch of the County of Carleton (Belleville, Ontario: Mika Silk Screening, 1971), 191. In the late 1870s New Edinburgh had “three first-rate general stores and a number of groceries, on shoe shop, one tailor shop, two butcher shops, Paterson & Law foundry, McClymont & Co.’s grist and flouring mills, and Blackburn & Co.’s woolen factory.”

which produced the village's first and last reeves, ran a flour mill. Purchased by Joseph D. Saunby and his partner, William Hilliard, the mill became a major player in supplying the London market with flour. From 1862 to 1878 Saunby expanded the company's holdings and acquired a second mill on the London side of the Thames, as well as building up the Saunby Grain and Farm Supply Store in London proper.⁴⁰ In the central portion of London West, the Gurd family ran a small broom factory, while to the west of the Kensington section Robert Arkell owned and operated a brewery until the 1880s. In general, London West's council appears to have done relatively little to attract industry into their village, although in 1882 council agreed to exempt the R.S. Murray Woolen Mill from taxation for a period of ten years. Unfortunately, however, by 1886 the company had folded and rescinded the offer on the property.⁴¹ The fact that the councils of the various suburbs made concessions to various business interests indicated the importance they placed upon these enterprises. These businesses would have provided employment and, if only eventually, important tax revenues to help fund the improvement of local infrastructure.

Protecting Property and Persons

One of the chief fears of most urban municipalities was devastation by fire. As a result there was often a concerted effort to develop adequate water supplies. As Letty

⁴⁰ London Advertiser, March 16, 1915; Saunby's Mill Restoration Company. "J.D. Saunby's Mill. To: The Committee of Adjustment City of London (April 28, 1972), 4.

⁴¹ London West Bylaw 63, May 2, 1882 and Bylaw 191, April 13, 1886; London City and Middlesex County Directory for 1884 (Toronto: R.L. Polk, 1884), 261; History of the County of Middlesex, Canada (Toronto: W.A. and C.L. Goodspeed, 1889; reprint ed., Belleville, Ontario: Mika Studio, 1972), 409.

Anderson explained, fire insurance companies certainly played a role in promoting fire protection, for by 1888 it was “reported that towns with waterworks could expect a 20 to 50 percent rate reduction for fire insurance.”⁴² It has been long argued that fire protection was the primary motivation for developing waterworks, while any domestic uses of water were seen as a secondary consideration.⁴³ Increasingly concerned about the quality of local water supplies, the health of residents and the matters of fire protection, municipalities began to investigate the idea of providing sanitary waterworks that would pump water into the homes of its citizens. Determined to eradicate outbreaks of waterborne diseases such as cholera and diphtheria, both scourges of the early half of the century, municipal governments sought to fund waterworks projects. Given that suburban municipalities developed on the periphery of urban centres, with smaller population bases, the need for large scale public waterworks was not immediately apparent. Householders and some business owners relied on individual wells to meet

⁴² Letty Anderson, “Water-Supply,” in Building Canada: A History of Public Works, Norman R. Ball, ed, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1988), 195-196.

⁴³ John Hagopian, “The Political Geography of Water Provision in Paris, Ontario, 1882-1924.” Urban History Review/Revue d’histoire urbaine 23 (November, 1994), 32; Jones, “Toronto Waterworks,” 303-307. Toronto had begun to look at the development of waterworks as early as the 1830s. The development of a publically financed works was seen as impractical given the municipality’s small size and the unwillingness of British financial institutions to finance such a venture. It was therefore deemed more expedient for a private franchise holder to construct the works. The project was carried through by Montreal financier Albert Furniss, but conflict between private and public interests continued to clash throughout the 1840s to the final selling of the private works by the city in 1875, a period which saw increasing support for a publically based system; Armstrong, Monopoly’s Moment, 17-18. An attempt was made to introduce competition into the waterworks business within Toronto, a venture that failed to meet expectations. By the late 1850s most ratepayers within Toronto had become disillusioned with the privately financed waterworks systems, although economic slowdowns and subsequent provincial legislation would slow down the development of a publically operated system until the 1870s.

their needs.⁴⁴ As the populations of these small communities expanded, pressure was brought to bear upon suburban councils to look into developing waterworks.⁴⁵ The perils of individual wells was amplified in the years immediately after Parkdale built a waterworks. On learning that a well within its municipal limits was contaminated with sewage, Parkdale's Board of Health ordered it to be immediately filled in, and recommended that the municipal council "enforce the taking of the village water, as being the only sure remedy against typhoid fever."⁴⁶ Waterworks were not only seen as a means toward safeguarding the health of the community at large, but also as a way of attracting further development in residential and business activities. Like the construction of town halls, waterworks were symbols to the world at large that their communities were vibrant and self-sustaining entities in their own right. As Henry Binford showed for Boston suburbs, an influx of urban residents into suburban areas increased the demands for better infrastructure. As Binford further explained such pressures could lead to

⁴⁴ Maureen Ogle, "Water Supply, Waste Disposal, and the Culture of Privatism in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century American City," *Journal of Urban History* 25 (March 1999), 321, 328, 332-335, 336-339. Ogle suggested that in the United States resistance toward large scale public waterworks or sewers was due in part to a prevailing adherence to individualism. Many urbanites within the United States during the mid-nineteenth century feared that large public works meant undue governmental intrusion into their lives. On a more pragmatic level large scale public works blurred lines between public and private spheres and were by nature of their scale and organization complex entities. Most householders were more interested in the simple, familiar, and cheap alternatives as constituted by individual wells, cisterns, and private drains.

⁴⁵ Maureen Ogle. *All the Modern Conveniences: American Household Plumbing, 1840-1890* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 4-5. By the 1850s and 1860s there was a steady proliferation of indoor plumbing and associated fixtures within American homes, while by the 1870s there was an increasing emphasis placed upon sanitation and indeed "Americans began to refer to plumbing fixtures as sanitary appliances . . ." As cities grew within the United States, there was an increased pressure to attempt to control the habits and actions of these populations, and thus expand the role of municipal government to make it more of a regulatory force within the lives of its citizens.

⁴⁶ *Globe*, February 5, 1884.

increased debt.⁴⁷

At some point in the early 1870s a group of some of Yorkville's prominent business and public figures petitioned Ontario's Lieutenant Governor William Howland for legislation approving the incorporation of the "Yorkville Waterworks Company". They explained that the existing supply of water "is not sufficient to meet the requirements of the inhabitants . . . or to afford protection for their property against fire or damage." While the proposed company was to be a private corporation, it was to satisfy the unspecified "social requirements of the inhabitants" as well as protecting against fire.⁴⁸ Another group of residents from both Yorkville and Toronto asked that the appropriate legislation be passed incorporating a company with a broader scope to be called the "Toronto and Yorkville Water Works Company", in order to efficiently supply water to both municipalities. To receive official incorporation, the petitioners argued, would allow the councils of both municipalities "to issue Debentures in aid of said company by way of loan, bonus or otherwise . . ." ⁴⁹ Yorkville's council was aware of demands for a waterworks, for in the spring of 1872 it acknowledged a letter from the

⁴⁷ Henry C. Binford. The First Suburbs: Residential Communities on the Boston Periphery, 1815-1860 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 203-205.

⁴⁸ AO, RG 8-14-0-81 Main Office Selected Files, No. 14. Petition of Inhabitants of Village of Yorkville Re. Incorporation of "The Yorkville Water Works Co.," [No Date], #55. The date of the petition is not known, although internal evidence suggests that it dates from the early 1870s. The names affixed to the petition were those of Joseph Severn a prominent brewer, George C. Moore, William A. Archer the village's incumbent clerk and treasurer, Robert Wood a Yorkville machinist, John T. Davison a local 'agent' and Cornelius James Philbrick .

⁴⁹ AO RG 8-14-0-82 Main Office Selected Files, No. 14. Petition of John Turner and Others Re. Incorporation of "The Toronto and Yorkville Water Works Co." [No Date], # 56. AO RG 8-14-0-82 Main Office Selected Files, No. 14. The names of those who signed the petition included such John Turner, William Elliot, R.W. Elliot, Alex Manning, W.H. Howland, George Greig, J. D. Edgar, and two individuals possibly deciphered as Arthur Rollc Hasert and N. Buruhack (some names hard to read).

secretary of the local 'Water Supply Committee' detailing the group's examination of a property north of the village for a reservoir. The committee suggested that "an Engineer should be appointed by the Council to examine and report upon the subject and give an estimate of the probable cost of the proposed works."⁵⁰ While little came of these early discussions, by the end of March 1875, Yorkville's council developed a bylaw that authorized the creation of a debt of some \$45,000, to permit the council to begin laying out the pipes and hydrants in the village itself "for the conveyance or conducting of water to be used in the extinguishment of Fires and for domestic purposes." Yorkville's council was preoccupied with fires, for the bylaw concluded that the money raised would also pay for the construction of a fire hall and the purchase of at least one steam fire engine as well as "other appliances necessary or useful for the extinguishment of Fires."⁵¹ As John Hagopian found in his study of Paris, Ontario, the general push for fire protection came from wealthier residents and ratepayers, but the tax structures meant that even those ratepayers who did not benefit from the works still bore a significant portion of the cost.⁵²

In 1876 Yorkville's council passed a series of bylaws which authorized debentures to cover the costs of constructing the reservoir and a host of other related expenses. Even after work was well under way, the council found it necessary to raise further funds with an eye "to completing the water works now in progress." Not surprisingly, the council was forced to authorize subsequent bylaws to enable the

⁵⁰ Yorkville Council Minutes, April 22, 1872.

⁵¹ Yorkville Council Minutes, March 30, 1875; Yorkville Bylaw 282, May 31, 1875.

⁵² Hagopian, "Political Geography of Water Provision," 49.

municipality to meet regular expenditures.⁵³ That same year the Yorkville Directory boasted that due to “public spirit and enterprise” the village constructed its own waterworks, providing “a constant supply of pure water for domestic purposes and due protection against fire.” Obtained from a ‘living stream’, the water was conveyed into the village by a series of iron pipes. The entire project, when finished, would “vie with any other of like capacity in the Province, both as regards efficiency and economy in its construction.”⁵⁴ In contrast to these rather laudatory remarks, however, one commentator explained that the Yorkville waterworks venture “proved a total failure, [as] both the quantity and quality of the water were condemned by public opinion”⁵⁵ Whether or not the supply was pure and bountiful, residents were engaged in an important discussion about their community’s future.

In the case of London East, as the population increased so did the amount of heavy industry.⁵⁶ With increased demand for water and a substantial tax base the village council set out to secure a constant supply of water. Water supply matters caused considerable debate in the late 1870s and into the 1880s. At the beginning of 1880, some local residents took matters into their own hands. Under the leadership of W.D. Imlach, a resident civil engineer, they searched for aquifers. They found two in the vicinity of the

⁵³ Yorkville Bylaws, 313 June 22, 1876; 314 July 28, 1876; 316 August 14, 1876; 317 September 18, 1876; 318 September 27, 1876.

⁵⁴ Yorkville Directory, 15.

⁵⁵ Mulvany, 260; Yorkville Council Minutes, August 28, 1882. At the end of August there was some talk, at least in Yorkville, of creating the office of a water commissioner that would oversee the provision of water to Yorkville, Parkdale, Brockton, and the unincorporated village of Seaton.

⁵⁶ Ross, 51-52.

village limits, both of which Imlach believed could supply London East and the entire city of London.⁵⁷ While nothing appears to have come of this particular find, it pointed to a growing sense the city and its eastern suburb would have to cooperate. The London Free Press welcomed the idea of extending the city waterworks into the eastern suburb, arguing that given the extensive personal and financial ties between the two municipalities “it would be very improper to treat the people at the east except in a generous spirit.”⁵⁸ The 1881 legislation that provided for London East’s incorporation as a town also provided that the newly elevated town could also assume responsibility for constructing its own waterworks.⁵⁹ The village’s Fire, Water and Gas Committee, after talk of constructing an independent water works, discussed the efficacy of approaching London City Council to connect to the city’s water works. London East’s reeve, Charles Lilley, cautioned “that some members of the City Council would laugh at a deputation coming to them.” Lilley suggested a compromise, whereby the village would lay their own water pipes and construct fire hydrants, and pay the city ‘one rate and a-quarter’ to access city water. Discussions became quite heated. Lilley was accused of having personal contacts with London council. Other critics complained that London’s newly elected council was not as well disposed to cooperation as the former one.⁶⁰ Some

⁵⁷ London Advertiser, June 3, 1880. It was expected that once an engine was secured to pump the water “a complete system of waterworks can be secured exclusive of the mains for less than \$20,000.”

⁵⁸ London Free Press, March 14, 1879.

⁵⁹ Statutes of Ontario 44 Vic. c. 41, 305-326.

⁶⁰ London Advertiser, March 15, 1881.

London East councillors may have been wary of the city's intentions, because a special committee of London City Council was seriously contemplating amalgamation with London East, London West, and the unorganized suburb of London South. While there was a consensus at City Hall favouring a grand amalgamation, some city aldermen agreed that an interim arrangement could be worked out to provide London East with water. One alderman cautioned that in dealing with London East and the water question the city "must not barter away our privileges." He agreed that should London East reject amalgamation, he would still "be willing to let them have water at a fair rate." Another councillor noted that should water mains be extended into London East, the villagers should be required to pay on the interest of waterworks property and mains that lay outside of the city, but not those which lay within the corporation of the city of London. Discussion on the matter appears to have stalled, and many in London East began calling for an independent works.⁶¹

In May 1882, London East's council passed a bylaw which provided for the council to raise \$40,000 in debentures for an independent waterworks. Significantly, both Yorkville and eventually Parkdale had managed to begin the construction of waterworks by 1881 without having to appeal directly to their ratepayers. However, by 1882, provincial legislation mandated that in order for a municipal council to assume significant debts the ratepayers had to be consulted to ratify or sanction such a move.⁶²

⁶¹ London Advertiser, March 19, 1881.

⁶² Ross, 62; John Hagopian, "Would the Benefits Trickle Down? An Examination of the Paris, Ontario, Waterworks Campaign of 1882," Ontario History 87 (June 1995), 129.

Shortly thereafter, London East's Council went to the ratepayers asking whether the town should construct an independent waterworks or take the less expensive route and come to an agreement with London. Not surprisingly, the ratepayers overwhelmingly supported the less expensive and more cooperative venture. Despite this mandate, a group of London East councillors bedevilled council's attempts to negotiate a connection to the London waterworks. Apparently worried that it would impinge upon London East's independence, these intransigent councillors lobbied for the town to create an autonomous system. Work began on water mains in early 1883, but by the close of that year, no water was available, because no agreement was reached with the city water commissioners, due in large part to the actions of the councillors who opposed agreement.⁶³ Local entrepreneurs and concerned citizens realized that the absence of a secure water supply for the fighting of fires in the industrial sections of London East could spell disaster. As wrangling impeded the completion of the waterworks, fate intervened. A fire inflicted \$200,000 damage at the Great Western Railway Car Works, putting roughly four hundred townspeople out of work. Murray Anderson, London East's mayor, unilaterally ordered that fire hydrants be erected and serviced for the Great Western Railway's car works, the town's largest employer.⁶⁴ As Sarah Elkind explained

⁶³ Ross, 62-63. As Ross explained, a bylaw passed by London East's council in April, 1884 agreed that when (or perhaps more likely if) "a water connection to the London system was made, it would be under the supervision of the City of London Water Commission." Similarly the town agreed to pay a total of \$33.00 each year for every fire hydrant that was erected within the town. This bylaw even went so far as to agree that should the town be amalgamated with London, then the residents of London East would pay the same water rates as those who already lived in the city.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 64-65. As Ross explained as London East had no fire department the London fire department had responded, but initially were reticent to cross over into London East as they "had neither received a \$100 indemnity guarantee from the town, nor gained permission from the city mayor." As the scope of the conflagration became

in her study of 'water politics' in Boston, Massachusetts and Oakland, California, by the end of the nineteenth century many city officials and residents alike began to appreciate the fact that municipal boundaries "crisscrossed watersheds [and] interfered with sewerage and water supply improvements."⁶⁵ While such revelations led to the implementation of regional water supply systems in the United States, similar revelations in suburban Ontario suggested that small independent works were incapable of meeting local demands.

Yorkville and eventually Parkdale opted to install independent waterworks, but elsewhere agreements between municipalities to share water were also arranged. A precedent had been set by an agreement between New Edinburgh and Ottawa. In 1878, city water mains were laid across the Rideau River into village streets. The village had benefited from the fact that the Governor General lived at the edge of the village, for early on Ottawa decided to extend its waterworks services to all government buildings and to Rideau Hall across the river in New Edinburgh.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the agreement to supply the village of New Edinburgh with water was not arrived at without disagreement. New Edinburgh complained about the mess left when Ottawa ran the water main to Rideau Hall. In May 1878, the Fire and Light Committee of Ottawa City Council

apparent, however, they did cross over into London East, but a series of delays in locating the necessary fire hydrants and another serious delay in actually getting water piped to the scene meant little could be done as the car works was utterly destroyed.

⁶⁵ Sarah S. Elkind. Bay Cities and Water Politics: The Battle for Resources in Boston and Oakland (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 162.

⁶⁶ Annual Report of the Water Commissioners for the City of Ottawa for 1877 (Ottawa: Ottawa Free Press Office, 1877), iv-v.

presented a report that recommended that New Edinburgh should be made to pay the compulsory sum of \$150.00 each time it called for use of the city based steamer fire engine, *Conqueror*, “whether there is a fire or not.”⁶⁷ By June 1878, with work laying water mains well underway, New Edinburgh’s council received this communication. The city water commissioners also indicated that they would charge the corporation of New Edinburgh a ‘superintendence’ fee to ensure that the alarm box installed in the village was maintained properly. New Edinburgh’s council agreed to pay the initial costs for the box and its installation, but refused to authorise payment for continued supervision by the city-based water commission. They changed their mind two months later and agreed to pay fifty dollars a year to ensure the system’s proper maintenance.⁶⁸

Relations between the village of New Edinburgh and Ottawa were tense in the early 1880s, because Ottawa attempted to annex a huge swath of outlying territory, including New Edinburgh in 1882 and 1883. While the move eventually lost steam and credibility, it ruptured relations between the city and the indignant council of its eastern suburb. With the failure of annexation, the question of water rates for those living outside of the city became a concern of city officials. In January 1884, the Ottawa Water Commissioners tabled a report that sought to deal with “the question of the terms for supplying water to the present consumers residing outside the City limits.” The committee recommended that all previous resolutions on the matter be withdrawn and

⁶⁷ Ottawa City Council Minutes, May 6, 1879, Report No. 5, of Fire and Light Committee, page 42.

⁶⁸ New Edinburgh Minutes, May 31, 1878, June 28, 1878, July 26, 1878.

that the rates for water charged to consumers residing beyond the city limits be increased by some twenty-five percent over “the present usual City rates.” This decision was to be made retroactive to November 1, 1883. The collector of water rates was to immediately notify all persons involved. If these additional rates were not paid by February 1, 1884, some two weeks after the introduction of this proposal, then “the water supply will be permanently cut off from all parties then in arrears.”⁶⁹ While the council minutes for New Edinburgh for this critical period have been lost, there is little doubt that the suburban council and residents were outraged by Ottawa city council’s actions regarding water rates. Two years later one indignant reeve recorded:

Years ago the City Council broke faith with us in the matter of water supply for the purpose of forcing us into a union, - and failing in doing so - punished us for our adherence to “Home Rule” by advancing our rates 25% over those paid in the City. These advanced rates we still pay.⁷⁰

While New Edinburgh’s arrangement with Ottawa’s water commission had problems, it did provide a functioning alternative to an independent waterworks with all the expenses that arose from these projects. While Parkdale’s council was anxious to secure an ample and safe water supply, Toronto was unwilling to extend its waterworks, partly to pressure outlying municipalities to amalgamate with the city. While Parkdale’s council initially hired a private firm to lay the waterlines throughout the village, by early 1881 the council decided that it would be more prudent to establish a waterworks. In March 1881, the Ontario Legislature passed legislation which permitted Parkdale to

⁶⁹ Ottawa City Council Minutes, January 14, 1884, Report No. 10, of Water Works Committee, page 306.

⁷⁰ John Henderson “New Edinburgh’s Appeal” letter to the Editor, Ottawa Evening Journal, July 10, 1886.

establish a waterworks and gasworks, and allowed the village to raise funds through debentures and loans.⁷¹ Work proceeded quickly. In September 1881, a site for the works was purchased just to the west of the village along the shore of Lake Ontario. Despite setbacks the entire complex was up and running by May 1882. Parkdale's council continued to debate whether it was expedient to have water extended to all households within the municipality. Even though the initial stage of development and construction was completed, questions arose as to whether those customers who had already connected to the system should be expected to pay for the costs of the mains and related infrastructure that bypassed those who did not opt for the water, or whether these costs should be borne by the ratepayers at large by means of a general rate. As the Toronto Evening Telegram cautioned, "there can be no overlooking the fact that the less the householder will have to pay in the beginning the more consumers there will be and a consequent increased in revenue must accrue."⁷²

Within a month of the inauguration of the waterworks, Parkdale's council took the question of further waterworks development to the ratepayers. A poorly attended referendum of local ratepayers gave a majority of forty-five votes for council's plan to issue debentures amounting to \$50,000, for supplying the entire village with water mains and fire hydrants.⁷³ As Parkdale grew during the 1880s, so did the waterworks. Toward

⁷¹ Statutes of Ontario 44 Vic., c. 44, 330-350.

⁷² Toronto Evening Telegram, April 13, 1882.

⁷³ Toronto Evening Telegram, June 7, 1882. This referendum was not without controversy, for as the Evening Telegram explained "A statement in a morning paper to the effect that the water-works' chairman made an open boast of having voted twice should be taken cautiously, as any one with a knowledge of the working must

the end of the decade, it was claimed that the output of the waterworks was sufficient to supply a community seven times the size. Parkdale was even able to negotiate the sale of water to Yorkville, an arrangement that lasted until Yorkville amalgamated with Toronto in 1883. By selling its water to outlying areas such as Sunnyside and West Toronto Junction, Parkdale managed to cover the costs of its waterworks and make a profit.⁷⁴

Geography contributed to the success of Parkdale's waterworks. Unlike the other suburban municipalities, Parkdale had a reliable supply of water from a Great Lake. Yorkville and London East were forced to work with the intermittent flow of streams or rivers. Parkdale never lacked for water and the village did not have to contend with constructing reservoirs and aqueducts.

Although interested in constructing a waterworks, Brockton was blocked from access to Lake Ontario by Parkdale, and possessed only marginal streams. By the spring of 1882, the village council looked elsewhere for water. In May, clerk C.A. Mumford wrote to Parkdale's council about securing water "both for fire and domestic purposes."⁷⁵ It was not until August 1882 that Parkdale responded with an offer to Brockton's council, agreeing to supply their neighbour "with water at ten cents per thousand gallons." The agreement was complicated by a dispute over the costs of maintaining the joint Dufferin

know that such a proceeding would be impossible."

⁷⁴ Laycock, 16-17; Toronto Globe, February 5, 1884. A report to Parkdale's council by the Waterworks Superintendent on February 4, 1884 showed that during the month of January 4,846,220 gallons of water had been pumped, with "a daily average of 156,329 $\frac{2}{3}$ gallons . . ." It was estimated that during the course of the month some 55,500 lbs of coal had been burned at the waterworks. Following the report "Deputy-Reeve Booth alluded to the bad policy of allowing water taps to run during the night to prevent their being their being frozen, a practice he believed many people were guilty of, and one which was of considerable cost to the Council."

⁷⁵ Brockton Council Minutes, May 17, 1882.

Street sewer. Parkdale now demanded that Brockton make good on payments already in arrears.⁷⁶ Brockton's council was in the mood for civic projects. It was issuing debentures to build a separate school, new sewers, as well as negotiating with a gas company to provide street lights on Dufferin and Dundas Streets.⁷⁷ By early in 1883, some Brockton officials openly suggested that their municipality construct its own waterworks. In March council had been approached by a contractor seeking to build a waterworks. Shortly afterward Reeve John McConnell announced that the municipality's solicitor recommended they should hold off on seeking a waterworks bill until the legality of the project could be determined. The advice was taken.⁷⁸ By the middle of April, Brockton's council received a communication from Parkdale with regard to the 'sharing of water'. In response, Brockton's Reeve McConnell expressed his fear that Parkdale's council was about to renege upon its earlier agreement to supply water for ten cents per 1000 gallons. The matter was complicated by the fact that Parkdale's reeve, Charles Frankish, had resigned at the beginning of the month. Brockton's council was advised that until a new reeve was elected, Parkdale's council could not act on the

⁷⁶ Toronto Evening Telegram, August 30, 1882; Brockton Council Minutes, August 28, 1882. On February 6, 1882 it was estimated that Brockton had spent some \$281.00 on sewers, while Brockton had been in communication with Parkdale about the Dufferin Street sewer as early as September 20, 1881.

⁷⁷ Brockton Council Minutes, November 13, 1882, November 28, 1882, February 12, 1883; Globe, October 12, 1882. As the question of water provision for Brockton continued the Globe reported that there was a proposal floated by certain Brockton officials that perhaps the best way to accommodate all concerned was for both Brockton and Parkdale to formerly merge, the argument being "that one larger corporation could be governed and legislated for more cheaply than two small ones." While this proposal seems to have garnered general favour in Brockton and quickly gained the support of some in Parkdale, nothing seems to have come of the proposal.

⁷⁸ Brockton Council Minutes, March 27, 1883 and April 3, 1883.

matter.⁷⁹ By the fall of 1883, there was increasing disquiet over the village's finances, and the legality of many acts and debentures. The local Property Owners Association contacted the council demanding information on Brockton's expenditures, particulars which the council directed the clerk to provide. As rumours of the village's financial worries became increasingly public, all talk of waterworks fell by the wayside. Some ratepayers even began to agitate for the village's annexation to Toronto.⁸⁰

The village of London West never constructed a waterworks or managed to make any linkages with the city water supply. Although bounded by both the North and Main branches of the Thames River, London West was continually plagued by floods. While the call for waterworks periodically arose within the village and was at times discussed by council, the major focus of the village's councillors was upon safeguarding the village from perennial flooding. Indeed, the only time the village had piped water was immediately following the flood of July 1883 when temporary pipes were laid from London's waterworks, so that village wells could be pumped out and sanitized with lime. The 1883 flood killed seventeen villagers, caused massive property damage, led to a massive deflation of property values, and began an exodus from the village. In some instances the value of village property fell by over seventy percent. The river front property owned by barrister W.H. Bartram, which was valued at \$1,500 in 1881, was

⁷⁹ Toronto Evening Telegram, April 3, 1883. Frankish, apparently upset by "the policy" which Parkdale's Council had adopted tendered his resignation on April 2, 1883. It seems that the departure was not lamented by too many for Frankish's "communication was greeted with applause." Brockton Council Minutes, April 17, 1883; Laycock, 61.

⁸⁰ Brockton Council Minutes, October 19, 1883 and November 5, 1883, November 19, 1883.

valued at only \$465 five years later. As future reeve Robert Lacey explained, the only way to overcome these difficulties was for the council to “[b]uild an embankment which will protect the village. Then property will rise again.”⁸¹

In the months immediately following the flood, various proposals were put forward and various scapegoats sought. Some called for the dredging of the river; others demanded that the dams belonging to the mills along the river be removed. Despite some educated guesses that massive regional deforestation had been responsible for the flooding, villagers looked for local causes, singling out London West resident, businessman, and former reeve Joseph Saunby. His mill dams were cited as having proven to be “a source of danger to the public health.” For his part Saunby was adamant that his dams had not been responsible for the deluge and insisted that he would fight attempts to remove them.⁸² London West’s council acknowledged that the construction of a breakwater would be the best safeguard for the village, but debt, uncollected taxes, and sagging revenues brought by the collapse of property values, meant that the village had virtually no resources for its construction. A few relatively inexpensive stopgap measures were taken, including the dumping of loose gravel at the ends of vulnerable streets.⁸³

⁸¹ Gregory K. R. Stott, “The Maintenance of Suburban Autonomy: The Story of the Village of Petersville-London West, Ontario, 1874-1897,” (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Western Ontario Faculty of Graduate Studies, Department of History, 1999), 107-108; Greg Stott, “Safeguarding ‘The Frog Pond’: London West and the Resistance to Municipal Amalgamation 1883-1897,” Urban History Review 29 (October 2000), 54-55; London Advertiser, February 6, 1885; Ontario 47 Vic. Sessional Papers, vol. 16, part 7, Section 6, Cap. 24, p. 77; Ontario 52 Vic. Sessional Papers, vol. 21, part 9, Section 6, p. 19. In 1882 the population of London West was pegged at 1 825 while in 1887 it was set at only 1,754.

⁸² London Advertiser, August 23, 1884, September 2, 1884, and September 8, 1884.

⁸³ London Advertiser, October 21, 1884 and October 24, 1884.

While Middlesex County Council did agree to help the village cover some of the costs involved in the breakwater construction, little was done until flooding again occurred in 1885. London West's council belatedly flew into action, pledging \$10,000 for the construction of a major earthen breakwater for the most northerly section of the municipality. Work was hindered by one notoriously contrary ratepayer and former councillor who refused to permit workers from entering his property. He opted to build this section on his own. Having incurred a heavy debt in constructing these small sections of earthen dams, London West was unable to finance the building of a complete breakwater system. As a result it was continually inundated by flooding, some of which seriously damaged the existing defences.⁸⁴ Brockton and London West viewed the creation of waterworks as important, but neither managed to secure either the funds or the sustained political will for waterworks construction.

The push within suburbs to develop services available in their urban counterparts had multiple sources and multiple ramifications. One of the main reasons councils pushed for the development of waterworks was common to the larger municipalities, namely the safeguarding of property from fire. A second reason seems to have been the view that providing a major service would attract both residents and businesses to these peripheral communities. Another major impetus for introducing major public works was to attract an influx of residents and capital investment to increase the tax base so that

⁸⁴ Christopher L. Hives. "Flooding and Flood Control: Local Attitudes in London, Ontario 1790-1952." (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Western Ontario Faculty of Graduate Studies, Department of History, 1981), 53, 66-71; London Advertiser, January 9, 1885; John Bulter Allenby, Letter to the Editor, June 29, 1888, London Advertiser, June 30, 1888.

suburban municipalities, with their smaller populations, could afford to provide the services. While this scheme worked well -- at least in the short term -- in Parkdale, this tactic had disastrous consequences for Yorkville and London East. In the village of London West, traumatized by devastating floods, the push was to sink municipal revenues into building an expensive, and ultimately failed breakwater, in an attempt to support local property values. The aim presumably, was to increase the tax base, which might then have helped to cover the astronomical costs involved in dike construction, and then possibly to provide for further infrastructure such as a waterworks. In the end these works were never pursued. In the case of New Edinburgh, which had early succeeded in hooking into the extensive waterworks system afforded by neighbouring Ottawa, the situation caused difficulties. A series of decisions made within the city itself, beyond the jurisdiction of the 'viceregal suburb' rendered the village virtually helpless against arbitrary and ultimately grievous actions that put increasing pressure upon the community to opt for municipal amalgamation.

The Financial Burdens of Suburban Government

The suburbs were trying to juggle urban ambitions without urban revenues. The quest to increase the tax base came at high costs to suburban municipal councils. The attempts to balance the need to keep taxation levels lower than their urban neighbours, while still providing urban services such as water, improved roads, subways, gas works and other amenities proved difficult if not impossible to sustain. Municipalities in Ontario had long been used to borrowing money, sometimes at large sums, through the

issuing of debentures and were aided by an increasingly prosperous group of bond houses. The practice of raising money through tendering debentures became more and more prevalent after 1870.⁸⁵ Given that suburban municipalities could boast only a tiny fraction of the population of their neighbours, their attempts to develop autonomous infrastructure almost always led to accruing crippling debts.

Perhaps the most troubled of the municipalities was Yorkville. By the end of the fiscal year 1879, receipts surpassed expenditures by nearly \$9,000, but the village's incurred liabilities sat at \$193,814, well over the municipality's accumulated assets of \$88,689.⁸⁶ Many of the accrued costs involving mundane village matters could be burdensome. When Yorkville's council agreed to the opening of Bellair Street at the end of 1880, it authorized the provision of \$2,720 for the purpose. Given the village's rapid population growth and the need to open new thoroughfares and residential streets, these costs were part and parcel of continued growth. However, added to these expenditures, the increasingly perplexing cost involved in waterworks construction plagued the municipality.⁸⁷

In its two years of incorporation, Parkdale's council ran up a serious debt, outstripping incoming resources. In 1879, the village pulled in \$11,786, and managed to spend close to twice that amount with expenditures of \$20,434.⁸⁸ By 1882, the

⁸⁵ Drummond, 329-330.

⁸⁶ Ontario 44 Vic. Sessional Papers, vol. 13, part 4, Section 6, Cap. 43, pp. 74-93.

⁸⁷ Toronto Mail, December 1, 1880.

⁸⁸ Ontario 43 Vic. Sessional Papers, vol. 13, part 4, Section 6, Cap. 43, pp. 74-93.

corporation's treasurer reported that Parkdale had spent \$101,371, but only collected \$73,973. Moreover, only twenty-two percent of income came from assessments, and sixty-two percent from issued debentures. This deficit of over \$27,000 was somewhat ameliorated by the fact that the village possessed assets totalling \$107,218, but these apparent benefits were again offset by liabilities amounting to another \$176,572. A comparison with villages of similar size (Parkdale did not assume the status of a town until the year 1885) was striking. Smiths Falls, with a population of slightly under that of Parkdale's 1,170, managed to keep the village's expenditures at \$11,080 while total receipts for the year had been \$11,614, allowing a comfortable surplus of over \$500. Smiths Falls was not without liabilities, having \$7,000 exclusively in issued debentures. These liabilities were somewhat offset by the village's total assets which amounted to \$32,534, in corporate buildings and fire fighting equipment. The village of Gananoque, with a population of nearly 3,000 and possessing nearly \$20,000 in liabilities -- almost exclusively in the form of railway bonuses-- kept its expenditures well under its receipts, leaving some \$2,272.53 as a surplus, which constituted the village's only reported asset. In general the amount of money spent upon the construction and maintenance of roadways, salaries, schools and the like seem to have been comparable between Parkdale and its eastern Ontario counterparts. However, Parkdale's municipal expenditures departed dramatically from that of either Smiths Falls or Gananoque under the category of 'miscellaneous'. While Smiths Falls spent slightly over \$4,000 and Gananoque a mere

\$481, Parkdale's council spent some \$80,419.⁸⁹ While it is not expressly demarcated in the statistics, it seems that Parkdale's push to construct a waterworks was the major source for its deficit and debt. Neither Smiths Falls nor Gananoque had constructed such an expensive works, and given the fact neither community did so until 1887 and 1892 respectively suggests that there was no great call for a waterworks. Even when a waterworks was constructed at Smiths Falls it was done by a private company and was not taken over by the municipality until 1900.⁹⁰ Communities throughout Ontario were faced with various pressures to build and maintain infrastructure. However, more isolated communities appear to have built expensive waterworks later than suburban municipalities and incurred less overall debt. The suburban preoccupation with emulating city services put unusual pressures upon their fiscal resources, which resulted in debts not experienced in communities like Smiths Falls and Gananoque.

By 1885, even given that Parkdale's assets offset some of its acquired debt, it was still \$130,000 in the proverbial hole. Its ratepayers and councillors alike looked ahead to the future, and as they tried to work through the construction of subways and induce other industry to locate within the community, they began to assess the viability of remaining a separate municipality. So while Parkdale's council petitioned York County for incorporation as a town, it simultaneously put out feelers to Toronto about amalgamation. With its history of seeking to annex its suburbs, Toronto's council agreed to negotiations. They ultimately bogged down when by early 1885 Parkdale could not

⁸⁹ Ontario 47 Vic. Sessional Papers, vol. 16, part 7, Section 6, Cap. 24, pp. 64-83.

⁹⁰ Bloomfield, 113, 118.

adequately outline its financial situation, causing Toronto's council to repudiate the negotiated amalgamation settlement.⁹¹

In the village of New Edinburgh, records detailing the last four years of its incorporation inexplicably vanished. This lapse caused provincial officials and former village notables unending difficulties in attempting to ascertain New Edinburgh's financial status at the end of its corporate existence.⁹² Bad bookkeeping also plagued Brockton. In 1884, key documents disappeared and the village's financial records were in chaos. Suspicions were likely aroused by the fact that the village reported that for the year 1882 its expenditures and receipts stood at exactly the same amount, sitting remarkably at \$17,859. A report on the village's finances after it ceased to exist noted that village "accounts had been kept in a very imperfect manner . . ." Brockton's treasurer had virtually no training in keeping books. Records for debentures, which had been issued for financing local improvements, had either disappeared or were never kept in the first place.⁹³

While Parkdale and Brockton's financial situations were troubled, their situations were not unique. In 1882 the Town of London East, with a population of 4,510, brought in some \$59,706 in receipts, with an overwhelming seventy-three percent being derived from either debentures or borrowed money. Its annual tax assessment had only drawn in

⁹¹ Laycock, 31-32.

⁹² AO, RG 19-142, Box 822. New Edinburgh Village Financial Returns, 1879-1887,

⁹³ Ontario 47 Vic. Sessional Papers, vol. 16, part 7, Section 6, Cap. 24, pp. 64-83; Joseph Blakely's report as quoted in Mary Frances Mallon, "The Village of Brockton," York Pioneer 71 (2), 9-10.

a little over \$5,000. While Parkdale had succeeded in spending itself into a deficit, London East's officials had managed to keep expenses down to \$39,537, but similar to its Toronto counterpart the largest outlay were reported under the category of 'miscellaneous', namely the town's push for waterworks development, for which the municipality had issued \$40,000 in debentures. As in the instance of Parkdale, London East possessed a sizeable number of assets. They had a value of nearly \$78,000. Liabilities, almost exclusively tied up in debentures, amounted to slightly over \$56,000. Of the sixty towns in the province that submitted statistics, only ten had assets valued greater than those in London East, while seventeen had a higher level of liabilities.⁹⁴ The municipality's financial situation worsened, however. In the subsequent year and a half, it issued more debentures: \$7,000 for the building of the new town hall, and a further \$50,000 for the waterworks in the summer of 1884. At that point, London East's council was forced to pass bylaws to borrow money "to meet current expenditures."⁹⁵

Even in the village of London West, where the provision of services such as water and sewers had never taken hold, given the village's preoccupation with the perennial threat of flooding, the debt rose significantly in the 1880s and 1890s. In 1888 the village, with a population of 1,754 had assessed property values at \$265,000, with tax revenue of a mere \$6,215, meaning that the burden of taxation sat at \$3.54 per head, which was not dissimilar to the situations that existed in other Middlesex County villages. By this date

⁹⁴ Ontario 47 Vic. Sessional Papers, vol. 16, part 7, Section 6, Cap. 24, pp. 84-95; London East Bylaw 115, October 18, 1882.

⁹⁵ London East Bylaws, 123, July 11, 1883, 142, July 9, 1884, and 148, September 17, 1884.

the only other suburban municipality of the six studied still in existence was Parkdale, which while possessing some 700 acres of land and a population of 3,601 managed to collect some \$65,420 in taxes, which amounted to \$18.17 per head. Given that London West had no waterworks or sewers, in fact minimal infrastructure, the tax revenue was not surprising. While specific statistics on municipal debt are absent after 1882, it appears that by 1896 London West was burdened by a debt of some \$44,640, most of which had been incurred by increased expenditure upon the breakwater to protect the village.⁹⁶ A simple comparison with London East, which had amalgamated with London in 1885 helps to illuminate London West's plight. While London East had managed to rack up a debt of some \$61,806 by the time it was amalgamated, this debt was somewhat offset by the fact that it had accumulated assets valued at some \$88,999, and also possessed a population that sat at well over 4,500. In dividing up the municipal debts, on average each London East resident had \$14.00 per head. In London West the debt sat at \$22.00 per head. The situation was not helped any further by the fact that while London West had been a municipal entity for well over twenty years by 1896 it had succeeded in accumulating a mere \$16,000 in assets.⁹⁷

City-based newspapers and city politicians accused councils of fiscal

⁹⁶ London Advertiser, December 29, 1896; Ibid., May 22, 1897. Ontario 47 Vic. Sessional Papers, vol. 16, part 7, Section 6, Cap. 24, pp. 64-83. In 1882 London West's financial situation was relatively stable, with the amount of expenditure falling under the receipts, and assets comfortably outstripping liabilities. London West's financial situation was not dissimilar to two villages of comparable size; Deseronto in Hastings County and Merriton in Lincoln County. Deseronto and Merriton had populations of 1,708 and 1,820 respectively (London West had 1,825). In Deseronto expenditures fell below receipts for 1882 while the village's assets outstripped its liabilities by a significant margin. In Merriton the situation was slightly different, for in 1882 expenditures exceeded receipts by a little over \$159.00, but the village's assets exceeded its liabilities by nearly three fold.

⁹⁷ Ross, 93, 96; Bloomfield, 156.

mismanagement and wasteful spending. Critics believed that small suburban governments had predilections toward corruption and spending beyond their means.⁹⁸ When compared with the fiscal situation of cities, the suburbs seem to have been grossly negligent. Throughout the 1880s Toronto, Ottawa and London managed their resources well enough, so that expenditures and liabilities generally fell below accumulated assets and receipts by a comfortable margin. In 1882 Toronto council managed to keep expenditures to \$ 2,167,287, which matched to the last penny their total accumulated receipts for the same year. London's expenditures for the same year fell short by just \$920 of the revenue taken in by the corporation, while its assets outstripped its liabilities by over a million dollars. In the case of both cities the situation was little different for the years 1886 and 1887. While Ottawa also succeeded in keeping expenditures below revenue for the same period, of the three cities it was the only one to have liabilities that surpassed assets, although as the decade progressed the gap narrowed.⁹⁹

As Ontario's suburban municipalities grew throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, so did the calls for local governments to increase services. While the lower rates of taxation had once been attractive to the small numbers who lived in the suburbs, the larger number of residents increasingly began to covet the services available

⁹⁸ London Free Press, June 29, 1897; Jackson, 144.

⁹⁹ Ontario 47 Vic. Sessional Papers, vol. 16, part 7, Section 6, Cap. 24, pp. 96-100; Ontario 52 Vic. Sessional Papers, vol. 21, part 7, Cap. 84-91. In the case of Ottawa the corporation's liabilities outstripped assets by twenty-three percent in 1882, nineteen percent in 1886, and sixteen percent in 1887; Bruce S. Elliott, The City Beyond: A History of Nepean, Birthplace of Canada's Capital, 1792-1990 (Nepean, Ontario: City of Nepean, 1991), 132-133. Ottawa's development of infrastructure had been extensive throughout the 1860s and 1870s, but the economic slowdown of the late 1870s, coupled with the exodus of a large number of 'workingmen' and their families to the suburbs contributed to the disparity between assets and liabilities.

to their urban neighbours. They wanted what the cities had, but perhaps lacked the managerial talent to control the new instruments of municipal finance. For the suburban councils that governed the municipalities these calls did not go unheeded as they attempted to balance the imperatives of keeping taxation low, while also providing their ratepayers with the services available in the city. Ensuring vital transportation links with the cities were of utmost importance to ensure the viability of the suburb as a domicile for suburban commuters, while putting in place services such as water, drainage, and even gasworks helped to enhance the attraction of their communities to further growth. While five of the six suburbs were primarily residential in character, the major industrial centre of London East was not alone in the realization that attracting increased commercial and industrial development would prove beneficial in increasing tax revenue which would help to offset the increasing costs of providing and maintaining local infrastructure. The combination of important municipal projects, poor management, and the attempts to accomplish too much with too little served to undermine suburban fiscal resources and impeded further development. In the instance of Yorkville and London East the push to build waterworks resulted in massive debts, and ultimately waterworks systems that generally failed to meet the initial hopeful expectations. Similarly, the village of London West expended vast sums of money on building a breakwater which seems to have served only to increase the municipality's debt, and crippled further attempts at development. Indeed the preoccupation suburban municipalities apparently had with public works increased their rates of expenditures, causing them to rack up serious debts. Those debts became increasingly difficult to manage and helped to pave the way toward

amalgamation with the cities they had sought so hard to emulate, but remain separate from.

Chapter Four:

Amalgamation

Heightened expenditures throughout the 1870s and 1880s led to prohibitive levels of debt amongst the six suburbs. Many observers within and outside the suburbs presumed that suburban government had predilections for corruption. It was assumed too that suburbs were, by nature of size and limited resources, ripe for absorption by the cities. In spite of the poor state of suburban finances and city expansionism, amalgamation proved to be a long, contentious process. It divided opinion within suburban and urban governments and suburban society at large.¹ Issues of urban expansionism and fiscal responsibility with the suburbs united those favouring amalgamation, but the situation was profoundly complicated by the contrary voices of those politicians who tied suburban identity to municipal autonomy. The matter was further muddied by divisions within the suburbs themselves, and, in the face of suburban demands, a resistance or unwillingness on the part of cities and city governments to annex the suburbs at any price.

In the United States, urban centres had annexed suburbs and outlying areas throughout the nineteenth century. Cities such as Boston, Philadelphia and New York extended their boundaries by annexing outlying towns, villages, and as in the case of Brooklyn, independent cities to widen their jurisdictions, increase their tax bases and

¹ Properly speaking the process that eventually united the suburbs and cities was that of amalgamation, which suggested a negotiated combination of two or more municipalities. The term annexation means something rather different, given that it is defined as an act by one party to add to itself by means of appropriation. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s when amalgamation discussions occurred across Ontario, the terms amalgamation and annexation were used interchangeably, and generally referred to what would be best described as amalgamation.

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swell their populations. Part of the push came from a call for efficiency in the provision of important utilities such as water. Sarah S. Elkind argued that beginning in the 1880s “many cities saw metropolitan or regional administration as an ideal means to improve efficiency of public services and to reduce resource competition among urban neighbors.”² While the calls for metropolitan cooperation did not speak to the complete consolidation of all concerned municipalities, it did speak to a pervading sense that better and more efficient systems could only be had within the framework of larger governing units. Kenneth Jackson explained that the prevailing business attitude of “bigger is better” was applied to municipal matters. The most ‘honestly governed’ were still prone, amalgamation advocates argued, to inefficiencies that could only be eradicated through municipal consolidation. Jackson argued that “[w]ithout exception, the adjustment of local boundaries has been the dominant method of population growth in every American city of consequence.”³ This was a North American trend. In his study of industrializing Montreal, Robert Lewis explained that over a forty year period from 1890 to 1931 the city’s population grew by some 600,000, ninety percent of whom lived in the suburbs that were annexed after 1883.⁴ Growth was often viewed as necessary for continued prosperity. From within the cities, therefore, there were many politicians and journalists who recommended annexations. Suburban councils and residents, meanwhile, were wary

² Sarah S. Elkind. Bay Cities and Water Politics: The Battle for Resources in Boston and Oakland (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 2.

³ Kenneth Jackson. Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 140-144; Ronald Dale Karr, “Brookline Rejects Annexation, 1873,” Suburbia Re-examined (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 103;

⁴ Robert Lewis. Manufacturing Montreal: The Making of an Industrial Landscape, 1850 to 1930 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 143.

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about joining the cities, which they feared were hotbeds of crime and inequity. Even in the face of suburban opposition, the trend in American cities was expansion of boundaries, a process that accelerated in the 1860s “before dying away in the late nineteenth century.”⁵

By the early 1880s, cities in Ontario began annexing their suburbs. Between 1883 and 1888, five of the six municipal suburbs in this study joined with the cities they neighboured. Only London West continued its independent course, at least until 1897. While city governments often initiated the process the ratepayers of each of these suburbs were moved by arguments for consolidation and sanctioned amalgamation. The decision was only reached after prolonged debate. Questions of fiscal responsibility and economic expediency were pitted against issues of identity and independence.

For most of its incorporated history, New Edinburgh enjoyed a more-or-less congenial relationship with the city of Ottawa, with each municipality holding to its own bank of the Rideau River. In general New Edinburgh led a fairly unruffled existence, for until at least 1879 it was reported that in the village “there has never been an election contest . . .” with every new council being selected by acclamation.⁶ New Edinburgh had

⁵ Henry C. Binford. The First Suburbs (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 195; Karr, 103, 108. Boston had steadily annexed its surrounding suburbs throughout the 1850s, 1860s and early 1870s until the process stalled in 1873 when it failed to annex the wealthy suburb of Brookline. Further attempts throughout the latter part of the decade also failed and ultimately ensured that “[t]he territorial expansion of Boston ground to a halt . . .”

⁶ Harry Walker and Olive Walker. Carleton Saga (Ottawa: Carleton County Council, 1975), 335, 339. There may have been a village wide ambivalence toward civic affairs, which also expressed itself in terms of education. In something of an understatement it was reported that “[t]here was very little interest manifested in the school election” for in the end only three eligible electors put in an appearance with the result that the three vacancies for trustees will filled by two men who had been slated for retirement and only one new member was ensconced on the school board. Occasionally there emerged contentious issues that served to unite the community,

even entered into a series of cooperative agreements with Ottawa including the all important agreements allowing the village to hook up to the city's waterworks and share fire protection.⁷ The year 1882 marked a decided turning point in the relations between the city and the village, and consequently the actions pursued by Ottawa contributed to poisoning what had been a relatively amicable relationship. In December, an Ottawa City Council committee reported that the city should embark on a massive expansion programme, annexing New Edinburgh and significant portions of both Gloucester and Nepean Townships.⁸ Heightened expenditures left Ottawa with an impressive infrastructure. However, the increase in local rates caused many people to flee to the outskirts, settling in the neighbouring townships and New Edinburgh. Coupled with this exodus of ratepayers, the economic slowdown of the late 1870s left the city with liabilities that outweighed its assets. For Ottawa City Council the best solution was to bring suburbanites back forcibly into the urban fold in order to recover this lost taxation.⁹

such as the unilateral annexation attempts made by the city. Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Carleton (Including the City of Ottawa) Ontario (Toronto: C.H. Beldon Co., 1879; Reprint, Port Elgin, Ontario: Ross Cumming, 1971), xxxi; New Edinburgh Minutes, April 26, 1875, July 25, 1879; Ottawa Free Press, January 7, 1880; New Edinburgh Minutes, January 28, 1867; New Edinburgh Minutes, February 25, 1867.

⁷ Ottawa City Council Minutes, 1878, page 142, May 6, 1878. Report Number Five of the Fire and Light Committee. In April 1878, the village council passed a resolution laying out the terms for the use of the city's steamer *Conqueror* to respond to fires within the village. Meeting in committee it was resolved by the City Council that while they were in agreement that the steamer should be dispatched to the village in case of fires, it would be stipulated that on each occasion it was requested that New Edinburgh Council would pay \$150.00, regardless of whether such a call was a false alarm.

⁸ Ottawa City Council Minutes, 1882, December 6, 1882, page 461-464. At the same time a more ambitious plan was proposed when a committee was struck to petition the Prime Minister for substantial federal aid at improving municipal services and infrastructure, so enjoyed by federal institutions, or to possibly seek the creation of a federal District, similar in scope to that of the District of Columbia in the United States

⁹ Bruce S. Elliott. The City Beyond: A History of Nepean, Birthplace of Canada's Capital, 1792-1990 (Nepean, Ontario: City of Nepean, 1991), 132-133; Ontario 47 Vic. Sessional Papers, vol. 16, part 7, Section 6, Cap. 24, pp. 96-100; Ontario 52 Vic. Sessional Papers, vol. 21, part 7, Cap. 84-91.

New Edinburgh's council was galled by the fact that until this point the city had never suggested amalgamation. On January 3, 1883 the local MPP was presented with a petition by New Edinburgh Reeve Henderson questioning the legality and morality of the city's bid to annex its environs, having failed to approach the elected officials of the concerned municipalities. This lack of consultation made it impossible for them to judge whether such a bid would benefit New Edinburgh. Henderson left immediately for Toronto to lobby against the bill moving through the legislature supporting Ottawa's annexation bid.¹⁰

Villagers were not the only ones concerned with the way in which the city had chosen to act. One concerned city resident, John Clancy, argued that the way Ottawa's attempted annexation bid had been presented to the provincial legislature contravened parliamentary practice and codes. The writer conceded that while the house had the power to suspend rules, such a course would be unusual and unlikely, and he assumed therefore that the residents in the areas under question could "make their minds easy for another year."¹¹ When the bill for Ottawa's unilateral annexation went before a committee of the Legislature, it was noted that the petitions against it far outnumbered those in

¹⁰ Ottawa Daily Free Press, January 4, 1883, 4. New Edinburgh claimed not to be acting alone in the matter, and explained that other communities apparently threatened with annexation would also forward petitions to their local member of the legislature. Among the communities expected to submit petitions were Janeville. One individual to attend the meeting was a Mr. Colton, a resident of Ottawa who apparently owned property in Gloucester Township, and was concerned by the city's actions. While New Edinburgh was located in Carleton County for municipal matters, it fell in the Riding of Russell County.

¹¹ Ottawa Daily Free Press, January 4, 1883, 2.

favour. The bill ultimately died in committee before the end of January 1883.¹²

Ottawa's unilateral attempt at municipal expansion was met with much hostility. To a certain extent New Edinburgh's elected officials resented that Ottawa's political leaders had never bothered to broach the issue with the council. Ostensibly the local news coverage of New Edinburgh might suggest that the annexation attempt by Ottawa caused little stir within the suburb. Shortly after the city's intentions were made public, however, the column in the Ottawa Free Press that reported on New Edinburgh happenings became more frequent and adopted the byline "Jottings From the Vice-Regal Suburb," as a possible way to distinguish the community from the city across the river, and imbue it with a greater sense of separateness and dignity.¹³ While the concern over issues of identity and community were perhaps expressed implicitly in the new interest paid by local news correspondents, the main upset was over the threat posed to the suburban electorate. The annexation bid was seen as an arbitrary attempt to subvert the authority and will of the ratepayers of a neighbouring and independent municipality. While the death of the annexation bill vindicated the rights of smaller municipalities and their ratepayers, it certainly did not spell an end to discussions of amalgamation.

Even if Ottawa's attempt to annex New Edinburgh in 1883 was viewed by village officials as unwarranted and legally suspect, discussion on the future of Ontario's suburban municipalities was hardly new. Questions of future extensions of city limits

¹² Globe, January 25, 1883; How widely the matter of Ottawa's arbitrary annexation played out in the discussions and concerns of New Edinburgh's ratepayers is difficult to ascertain. While Henderson and others argued against the annexation bid in Toronto the New Edinburgh correspondent for the Ottawa Daily Free Press seemed to indicate that the chief concern of New Edinburgh's council in January 1883, was in issuing debentures for the construction of a sewer.

¹³ Ottawa Daily Free Press, January 15, 1883, 4.

frequently dealt with the real possibility that most suburbs would one day become annexed or amalgamated with cities. As early as 1852 the Globe had predicted that the question of Yorkville's annexation to the city would become a matter of public discourse. Otherwise Toronto's growth would be inhibited by a ring of independent suburbs.¹⁴ In the late nineteenth century, cities in North America unabashedly subscribed to the notion that 'bigger is better'. Kenneth Jackson noted "[t]he desire to annex was inspired not only by the booster spirit, but also by the business idea that a large organization was more efficient than a small one and that substantial economies would accrue from a consolidation of municipal governments."¹⁵ In Ontario the populations of London, Ottawa, and Toronto rose dramatically between 1851 and 1881. By 1881 the populations of both London and Toronto at 19,746 and 86,415 respectively, were nearly three times those of 1851, while Ottawa's population of 27,412 in 1881 was a dramatic three and half times larger than it had been in 1851. During the same period the boundaries of these municipalities had not been altered, remaining as constituted in the 1840s. By the 1891 census, all three cities had extended their boundaries which, coupled with continued growth within the existing boundaries, meant they had much larger populations. After annexing most of its significant suburbs in the 1880s, Toronto's population rose by over fifty-two percent by 1891. Ottawa's population in 1891 was thirty-eight percent higher than it had been in 1881. After amalgamating with London East and annexing unincorporated London South, London's population had risen by thirty-four percent by

¹⁴ Globe, May 6, 1852. At the time it was noted that Yorkville's incorporation could only be seen as an "apprenticeship to the higher and graver duties of citizens of Toronto . . ."

¹⁵ Jackson, 144.

1891. After finally amalgamating with London West in 1897, its 1901 population was a full forty-eight percent larger than twenty years earlier (see table 4.1).¹⁶

Table 4.1

Population of Toronto, Ottawa, and London (1851-1901).

	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Toronto	30,775	44,821	56,092	86,415	181,215	208,040
Ottawa	7,760	14,669	21,545	27,412	44,154	59,928
London	7,035	11,555	15,826	19,746	30,062	37,976

Source: Laycock, 34; Armstrong Forest City, 128-129; Elliot, 132-133.

The drive for the expansion of cities could create stumbling blocks. Calls for the annexation of Toronto’s western suburbs in 1878 had played no small part in demands for the erection of Parkdale into an independent municipality in 1878. Two years later, the Globe explained that the annexation of Toronto’s suburbs would be a progressive move that would end the needless duplication of services. Aware that many suburban residents were against losing municipal autonomy, the Globe argued that suburbanites had “at least as much to gain by the union as Toronto has, or more.” The editorial suggested that the annexation would be a magnanimous gesture on the part of the city, which would acquire the ‘herculean’ task of upgrading the infrastructure of the suburbs, while benefiting solely

¹⁶ Elizabeth Bloomfield. Urban Growth and Local Services: The Development of Ontario Municipalities to 1981 (Guelph, Ontario: Department of Geography, University of Guelph, 1983), 156, 160, 164.

by “the glory of being able to brag of a population of 100,000 . . .”¹⁷ A subsequent editorial warned, with each suburb expending resources on costly independent works, the failure to maintain these would ultimately mean that “the progress of the suburbs will come to a sudden end.”¹⁸

A Provincial Trend

Annexation or amalgamation generally involved negotiations between two neighbouring municipalities. However, a wider provincial audience took an interest in these discussions. The question of amalgamation often reared itself nearly simultaneously across the province. When Toronto newspapers and Toronto City Council broached the issue with its suburbs in the autumn of 1880, it mirrored a similar campaign made by London’s City Council earlier that same year. When Ottawa attempted to unilaterally annex New Edinburgh and other outlying areas at the end of 1882 there was a renewed attempt to pressure Yorkville into forming a union with Toronto. When Yorkville endorsed amalgamation with Toronto in 1883, the example was not lost on others who favoured consolidation. As one London-based editorial explained, “Every argument founded on justice is in favor of union, and the day will soon come here, as it has already come in Yorkville, when even the pecuniary or selfish one will go in the same direction . . .”¹⁹ Lauding the merits and benefits to be had through annexation, one Ottawa councillor

¹⁷ Globe, October 2, 1880; Ibid., September 21, 1880. Toronto City Council had accepted a motion that would see them push for the “introduction and consolidation of such portions of the adjoining municipalities as may desire to become a portion of this city . . .”

¹⁸ Ibid., October 9, 1880.

¹⁹ Editorial entitled “The Annexation Question Again,” [circa 1883] found in the Charles Lilley scrapbook. 1859-1890. B 5584 No. 71, J.J. Talman Regional Collections, DB Weldon Library, UWO.

explained that it was “the opinion of the residents of Yorkville that that village should be annexed to Toronto.”²⁰ The movement toward amalgamation in Ontario during the 1880s mirrored earlier developments within the United States. Boosterism and calls for increased efficiency through municipal consolidation had led to massive annexations by large American cities. The nearly simultaneous pressure exerted by cities in Ontario upon their own municipal suburbs clearly suggests that the push for amalgamation, while in many ways a localized movement or process, was very much part of a larger provincial and even continental trend.

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, it was certainly not publically raised in 1880, “man”, argued that there tuation of both London advantages of the outlying : same distance from the : ng the market any nearer to a possibility by noting that lor, James Legg, was more toward its suburbs “[i]t will

be a good number of years before this village will become annexed to the city with the

²⁰ Ottawa Citizen, July 14, 1883.

consent of the taxpayers.”²¹ London’s municipal suburbs were continually made aware that annexation or amalgamation was highly likely. In the village of London West, it was generally acknowledged that amalgamation with London was an inevitability, and often a topic of internal conversation. One London City Councillor warned a group of villagers in 1890 that without exception municipalities of similar size situated so close to an urban centre would eventually realize “that they could not run a show so close to a larger one . . .”²² During the heated amalgamation debates of 1890, one ratepayer explained that though not averse to amalgamation in principle, he was adamant that “[w]hen some cranks want to give the village away just for the sake of getting into the city, I, like the majority of ratepayers, will put my foot down solid.”²³

In heavily industrialized London East, the issue of annexation or amalgamation drove wedges between various members of council. These fissures embodied conflicts among the populace. The debate over whether the municipality would be better served by city government or its own was common throughout the early 1880s, based upon the ebb and flow of the corporation’s solvency and prospects. When London East was granted town status, great things were predicted for the continued independence of the suburb. In

²¹ London Advertiser, March 20, 1880.

²² London Free Press, June 30, 1890.

²³ London Advertiser, March 20, 1880. While opinion was generally split over the question of whether London West (then called Petersville) should amalgamate with London, one ratepayer vocally supported the idea explaining that amalgamation would mean the extension of police protection into the village to curb the activities of those “roughs [who] get drunk in the city and come and indulge their circuses . . .”; London Free Press, June 26, 1890; Toronto Mail, October 2, 1880; Ibid., September 24, 1880. Discussions of Parkdale’s amalgamation with Toronto also ebbed and flowed. In part Parkdale’s rather lukewarm response to Toronto’s 1880 amalgamation proposals probably had much to do with the fact that the most attention was focussed on the fallout of a serious fire that destroyed a lumberyard and four stores; Margaret Laycock and Barbara Myrvold. Parkdale in Pictures: Its Development to 1889 (Toronto: Toronto Public Library Board, 1991), 31.

the face of this optimism it was not surprising that the annexation question subsided toward the end of 1880.²⁴ By March 1881, however, local pundits and journalists succeeded in reviving the issue, promoting worries about fires and London East's access to an adequate water supply. London East clergyman J.H. Robinson was not fundamentally opposed to annexation to London, provided that it was accomplished with 'equitable conditions.' He argued that if any agreement on amalgamation were to be reached it would require that "we must all make up our minds to give and take a little, and not exact the uttermost farthing from each other."²⁵ By the end of 1884, London East's fiscal situation seemed dire and negotiations with London failed to solve the question of the waterworks. People began to openly favour outright amalgamation.

Many were apparently swayed by the fact that the Grand Trunk Railway, whose car works-- a London East employer-- had been destroyed by fire, threatened to relocate elsewhere. Many agreed that if London East joined London they would have "greater bargaining power" to persuade the Grand Trunk to rebuild at their old location. At a

²⁴ London Advertiser, October 20, 1884. Calls for amalgamation apparently temporarily eased in the autumn of 1884 as former mayor Charles Lilley explained to a reporter from the London Advertiser it would not be long before London East council put a proposal before Middlesex County Council to separate itself from the county system and be "set apart as a distinct municipality." Lilley said that there was a general feeling within the suburb that such a course of action was in the best interests of the municipality and that he himself had advocated that course of action while he had been the incumbent mayor. The only thing that delayed such an action was that it had yet to be determined what was London East's proper share of the county debt that it would assume when such a separation occurred. In the end the poor state of the municipality's finances and ultimately its absorption by London ensured that this course of action was never taken.

²⁵ London Free Press, May 29, 1880; J. H. Robinson, letters to the editor of the London Free Press of March 11, 1881 and March 19, 1881, and letter by 'Ratepayer' to the Free Press dated March 24, 1881 found in the Charles Lilley scrapbook, 1859-1890. B 5584 No. 71, J.J. Talman Regional Collections, DB Weldon Library, UWO. Robinson would be a vocal supporter of amalgamation during the debates in the late autumn of 1884, Ian Christopher Ross. "London East, 1854-1885: The Evolution, Incorporation, and Annexation of a Satellite Municipality." (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Department of History, 1977), 71.

meeting of council in November, Councillor Peter Toll, once an advocate of London East's independence, presented a petition signed by 239 ratepayers, praying that the town council create a committee that would meet with London officials "with a view to preparing a satisfactory basis for amalgamation . . ." ²⁶ This amalgamation was to have a price. Some of the most outspoken members of the pro-amalgamation camp refused to sell-out at a low price. They would join the city only if London could protect London East's favourable rate of taxation. Others argued that London should agree to certain conditions to ensure that the Grand Trunk would rebuild its works within the eastern suburb. ²⁷

While the general mood seemed to be moving in favour of amalgamation, opponents began to dig in. London East's incumbent reeve, John W. Bartlett, quickly voiced opposition to those seeking admission into the city, arguing that while he had once harboured hopes for cooperation with London, he now felt strongly that London East should forge ahead alone. Other advocates of maintaining the status quo worried that London East's rate of taxation would rise to London's much higher rate. A London East druggist feared that, since the city had formerly banned the erection of heavy industry within its boundaries, once London East was part of the larger corporation it would surely try to do so again. Such a move would destroy the local economy. ²⁸ The elections of

²⁶ Ross, "London East", 67; London Advertiser, November 20, 1884.

²⁷ Ross, "London East", 68; London Free Press, October 30, 1884. The chair of London East's school board, William Lewis argued that "London East had done well enough in the past when the people were content to drag along without improvements of a city nature . . ." but now it was time to "take a share of the city's well-established and well-tested departments . . ." London Advertiser, November 4, 1884. It was predicted that should the Grand Trunk rebuild its works in London East it would provide employment for between 1,100 to 1,200 men.

²⁸ Ross, "London East," 68-69.

January 1885 were fought over amalgamation. All council seats were filled by amalgamation candidates; the results seemed to be an overwhelming victory for amalgamation. Defeated candidates who wished to see their municipality remain independent continued to agitate against the move, fearful that the level of London East's taxation would rise and that control of issues of particular concern to London East would be sacrificed for London interests.²⁹

Internal opposition to amalgamation was certainly common to all of the suburbs, albeit to varying degrees. Nowhere were the voices raised against amalgamation so numerous or apparently so vehement as in Parkdale. Only in Parkdale did ratepayers vote twice; first in 1885 and second in 1888. In both instances, a majority of ratepayers voted to accept the basis of amalgamation that their council had negotiated with Toronto. However, unlike in the other suburbs, the margin of victory was relatively narrow, with forty-two percent rejecting the 1885 agreement and forty-one the agreement of 1888 (see Table 4.2). The population of the town increased dramatically between 1885 and 1888 and while nearly twice the number of ratepayers cast ballots in 1888 over 1885, the proportion of those against amalgamation remained the same. Although accepted by a majority of eligible voters, the 1885 agreement lapsed after a series of inter-municipal disputes. Talks resumed periodically throughout the ensuing years until an agreement was reached in principle and October 27, 1888 was designated as the day when Parkdale ratepayers would have an opportunity to either accept or reject this latest bid to join

²⁹ Ibid., 72-78.

Toronto.³⁰ Opponents to amalgamation in other suburban municipalities had been vocal and campaigned against such proposals, but none were as well organized as those in Parkdale. Utilizing Toronto's newspapers, they wasted little time in having their complaints read.

Championed by the locally based anti-amalgamation Parkdale Times, the champions of 'Home rule for Parkdale' began clamouring for attention. The editor of the Times argued that the promised increase in the value of Parkdale property "would only benefit the land speculators who want to sell, and not those who desire a home."³¹ Opponents held that the support for the pro-amalgamation camp came largely from those ratepayers who resided outside of Parkdale. Many residents who wished to maintain their independence were indignant that those who had no interest in Parkdale had as much clout over its destiny as did those who made their homes there. Of the 1,091 eligible voters, close to forty-three percent did not live within the community. It is impossible to categorize the ratepayers who supported and rejected amalgamation, although in general the groups were mixed. Individuals who had a particular devotion to Parkdale community as an independent municipal entity resisted amalgamation. The chief champions of joining Toronto were those speculators who had the greatest financial stake in raising property values once joined to the city.³²

³⁰ Laycock, 32-33.

³¹ Parkdale Times, March 16, 1888 as quoted in Laycock, 33.

³² Laycock, 33; Globe, October 4, 1888. Indicative of the ill-will the whole contest engendered was a series of reports that emerged within days of the vote being announced with accusations that people's names had been deliberately struck from the list of eligible voters, causing something of a minor sensation, although apparently it was all a tempest in a teapot. Karr, "Brookline," 107-108. Part of Karr's study was to uncover the background and motivations of Brookline residents who supported annexation to Boston in 1873 and those who rejected it. Karr was

While it might be misleading to overlay the role of class in suburban politics, it played something of a role in the posturing made during amalgamation debates. In the minds of at least some suburban residents, the question of class was tied directly to issues of control. There was a sense among the suburban workingmen that the dominance of professional men on suburban councils was one of the main causes of poor fiscal management. The views of ordinary ratepayers within the various suburbs have largely

Table 4.2

Amalgamation Votes (1882-1897)

	York- ville 1882	Brock- ton 1884	London East 1885	New Edin- burgh 1886	Park- dale 1885	Park- dale 1888	London West 1897
Total Votes	275	103	424	162	404	804	332
For	227	86	330	137	240	465	297
%	82.5	83.5	78	84.5	59	58	89.5
Against	48	17	94	25	164	339	35
%	17.5	16.5	22	15.5	41	42	10.5

Source: Yorkville Council Minutes, September 25, 1882; Globe, March 11, 1884; Ross, 88-89; Ottawa Citizen, June 29, 1886; Laycock, 32-33; London Free Press, June 29, 1897; London Advertiser, June 29, 1897.

able to determine that while in many instances those in the pro-annexation camps “were frequently newly arrived commuters demanding expensive urban services . . .” Other annexation supporters were residents who possessed significant land holdings and wanted land values to rise. The charge by those opposed to annexation that it annexation “was a plot by land speculators . . .” was largely borne out in the analysis. In the end it was those residents who wished to keep taxation low and maintain the suburb’s rural character that managed to win the day.

gone unrecorded. There are a few tantalizing exceptions, however, that might point to an underlying tension between various groups that inhabited the urban periphery. When these views are examined in the context of the structure of municipal government in Ontario, it becomes clear that the fear of many of the suburbs' workingmen was that any alteration in the ordering of their municipalities had the potential to legally bar many of them from exercising their franchise, and thus having any influence on the way in which their taxes were spent.

Municipal Status, Property, Class and the Franchise

Beyond questions of sentiment or the intangible benefits to be had by retaining independence from cities, there was a very practical concern amongst many suburbanites about their political rights and freedoms. While the supporters of Parkdale's 1888 amalgamation bid argued that the value of suburban property was bound to rise within the framework of a greater Toronto, other Ontario suburban officials approached the issue more cautiously. One London West resident, John Evans, explained at the end of 1882 that the value of property within his suburb might well rise in value if the corporation opted for amalgamation. He warned, however, that "in the case of the annexation to the city[,] villagers, with very few exceptions, would not be eligible for a seat in the City Council."³³ Evans's views were backed up by a careful reading of the statutes governing municipal institutions within Ontario. The Municipal Act of 1873 sought to codify the regulation of municipal government and emphasized the existence of differing property qualifications within each level of municipal government. Recognizing four levels of

³³ London Advertiser, December 16, 1882.

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municipal organization, beginning with rural township government and rising through the tiers of village, town, and city, the government of Ontario had placed specific rules and regulations of procedure for each level of government. Both the responsibilities and powers inherent in municipal government increased with each tier of government.

Townships, villages, and towns gained increased representation at both the local level, as well as increased representation on County Council as their population increased. Cities, on the other hand, with large populations and increased mechanisms to raise money were -- with a few exceptions-- not subject to the overarching control of the county system.

The property qualifications spelled out for both the right to vote in municipal contests and the ability to hold elected municipal office were clear. Any change in municipal status had the potential to alter these provisions with serious implications for some ratepayers. Initially, all six suburban municipalities were constituted as villages.

Provincial regulation stated that in order for a ratepayer to be eligible to vote for village councillors he must possess property of a value no less than \$200. If a ratepayer had aspirations of holding a seat on the elected council, he was obliged to have real estate valued at least \$600 or leasehold on property that did not fall under the value of \$1200.

When a municipality was elevated to the status of a town -- as London East was in 1881 and Parkdale in 1885 -- the property qualifications for the vote and office holding rose accordingly. Similarly, should a municipality be further elevated or conjoined to a city the level of property qualifications needed to run for elected office would rise to a minimum of \$1500 freehold or \$3000 leasehold. Even should the value of property rise upon amalgamation, there was a sense that this would occur slowly, and until such time

impinge upon the ability of many to participate in the political process.³⁴

A major reason for the rise of the suburbs was the attraction of lower property values. Even if predictions of increased property values resulted from amalgamation, there was a real possibility that many suburbanites would not possess the requisite property to hold public office or vote within the framework of a city. Issues of property were certainly important to discussions of amalgamation. A significant proportion of Parkdale's residents were concerned over what they saw as the undue influence of nonresident ratepayers. The latter were generally viewed as speculators more interested in raising property values than in questions of community identity or local control. In the instance of London West, part of the fear expressed over amalgamation was that while it might lead to an increase in the value of property, the change in municipal status would debar many suburbanites from holding public office or even from exercising their local franchise. The maintenance of identity, loyalty to place and involvement in the political process were pitted against questions of enhanced property values.

At an open meeting in December 1882, London West ratepayers gathered to assess the performance of their council and make nominations for the upcoming municipal contest. James Daniels, a local carpenter, complained of the ineptitude of the village council. Claiming to speak on behalf of the community's labouring classes he announced that "they wanted workingmen to represent them not, professional men."³⁵

³⁴ Statutes of Ontario 1873, 36 Vic. c. 48, 212-215.

³⁵ London Advertiser, December 16, 1882; Ibid., June 5, 1874. James Daniels and John Evans had been early proponents of incorporation for Petersville (renamed London West in 1881) back in 1874, and both were charged with securing a proper census to determine if there were enough residents to warrant the village being granted municipal status. Evans voiced his concern that amalgamation would mean that many villagers would lose their right to vote in municipal elections given the differing property qualifications for city government. One

Class tension also was evident during the 1888 amalgamation campaign in Parkdale. At least one commentator claimed that Parkdale would benefit from joining Toronto as it would receive improved transportation links. An absence of good roads and streetcars had kept many of Toronto's wealthier residents away. The condition of the suburb's roadways had given rise to the notion that Parkdale was mostly given over to 'mechanics only.'³⁶ In Ottawa, there was a belief that the suburbs had been responsible for draining away many of the city's 'workingmen'.³⁷

The men who actually represented the ratepayers on suburban councils came from the suburban business and professional elite. Of the ten men who served in the position of reeve during the twenty-three years of London West's incorporation, three were lawyers, one sold insurance, while three others owned and operated their own businesses within London proper. Two of the Reeves, both members of the milling Saunby family, operated London West's only mill, with a store across the river in the city. The only reeve who did not fit the professional or business mould was local farmer John Platt, who owned property in the village.³⁸ The situation in New Edinburgh was much the same. Most of its Reeves were from the independent business and professional elite. Reeves

memoir recorded that Evans owned and operated a wood and coal "yard on Blackfriars Street and has a steam engine for sawing the wood. He sometimes lends it to the wood yard men up town . . ." Frederick Andrewes [?], "The West Side Some Years Back," (Unpublished typed memoir, J.J. Talman Regional Collections, U.W.O.), 2-3; Canada 1881 Manuscript Census, Petersville, Ontario, 49, 60.

³⁶ Toronto World, October 16, 1888 as quoted in Laycock, 33.

³⁷ Elliot, 133; Ottawa Free Press, December 7, 1882.

³⁸ London Middlesex Directory 1883, 146-148; History of the County of Middlesex, Canada (Toronto: W.A. and C.L. Goodspeed, 1889; reprint ed., Belleville, Ontario: Mika Studio, 1972), 725-726, 814-815, 883, 901-902; London City and Middlesex County Directory for 1880-81, 265, 553.

PhD Thesis -G. Stott McMaster University - History included Robert Blackburn, who owned and operated the New Edinburgh Woolen Mills and later served as Member of Parliament for Russell, and local physician Dr. Wilson. Other councillors came from a class of local artisans and contractors.³⁹ In his study of local government in six Upper Canadian communities during the period 1832 to 1860, William Thomas Matthews critically examined the role of local elites in the development of their municipalities. By giving close attention to the men who served on local governments, Matthews concluded that professionals and wealthy businessmen dominated municipal politics, to the virtual exclusion of the lower ordered artisans and ordinary labourers.⁴⁰ Even into the 1880s, local government and those that influenced it tended to come from the upper strata. In his study of the 1882 campaign to build a waterworks in Paris, Ontario, John Hagopian concluded that the project's promoters came from the upper echelons of Paris society and dominated the town council. Elites persuaded ratepayers to endorse the project and help foot the spiralling costs. Yet

³⁹ Illustrated Atlas of the County of Carleton, xxxi; Walker, Carleton Saga, 175, 335; The situation in the other suburbs was little different. The reeves and later mayors of Parkdale were drawn from independent business owners, including such men as Major John Gray who along with his position as commander of the Toronto Field Battery owned and operated the 'flourishing' Parkdale Nursery. Mayor Hugh McMath was "engaged in the insurance and real estate business . . ." and lauded the benefits "Parkdale offered for business. . ." The last mayor of the Parkdale corporation was Dr. Adam M. Lynd was an assistant physician at Toronto General Hospital. John G. Scott, The Parkdale Register Containing A History of Parkdale From Its Incorporation to the Present Time (Toronto: Bengough, Moore, & Bengough, 1881), 16, 26; Laycock, 61; In London East the reeves and mayors came from among that community's industrial and business elites, including oil refiner Isaac Waterman, Charles Lilley and Murray Anderson. Ross, 32-33; Goodspeed, 682, 712-713, 887.

⁴⁰ William Thomas Matthews, "By and For the Large Propertied Interests: The Dynamics of Local Government in Six Upper Canadian Towns During the Era of Commercial Capitalism, 1832-1860," (Unpublished PhD Thesis, McMaster University, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Department of History, 1985), iii, 63-73, 123-124; John Wyn Pritchard, "'Fit and Proper Persons': Councillors of Denbigh, Their Status and Position, 1835-94," Welsh History Review 17 (1994): 186-204. In his study of Denbigh, Wales, Wyn illustrated that while after 1835 municipal councils in Britain were annually elected by local ratepayers, municipal officials continued to come from the higher orders of local society, with a gradual shift from propertied interests to a more business dominated class. It was only at the end of the nineteenth century that ordinary working class individuals began to make any significant inroads into Denbigh's municipal council.

generally, the majority of ratepayers failed to enjoy the benefits a waterworks should have provided.⁴¹

Many suburbanites viewed Ottawa's attempt to unilaterally annex its suburbs as an attempt to broaden its tax base so as to afford greater infrastructure. Tellingly, the Ottawa Free Press explained that during the heady days of the 1860s and 1870s vast amounts of money were spent on public works:

we had a large population of workingmen, but when they were finished and the years of depression came upon us, the city revenues fell off and very serious financial difficulties had to be encountered. Meantime owing to the burden of city taxation populous suburbs sprang up around the city limits and drained away thousands of persons who went outside for the principle purpose of escaping city taxation. This made it all the harder for those who remained.⁴²

Suburban mechanics, the labouring class ratepayers, may have been suspicious of the way in which business and professional elites dominated, and even mismanaged, municipal politics. In Parkdale, suspicions peaked during periods of heightened labour conflict. Throughout the turbulent spring of 1886, as labour unrest spread throughout North America, Parkdale's council had been engaged in attempting to persuade the Toronto Street Railway (TSR) to extend its services further into the suburb.⁴³ Rivalries within the suburban council obstructed negotiations. Divisions were inflamed when Toronto's mayor, W.H. Howland, suggested that should a deal with the TSR prove futile then he was not averse to seeking Parkdale's immediate absorption into the city.

⁴¹ John S. Hagopian, "Would the Benefits Trickle Down? An Examination of the Paris, Ontario, Waterworks Campaign of 1882," in Ontario History 87 2 (June 1995), 149-150.

⁴² Ottawa Free Press, December 7, 1882.

⁴³ Gregory S. Kealey and Bryan D. Palmer. Dreaming of What Might Be: The Knights of Labor in Ontario, 1880-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 2-3. The year 1886 was marked by a great deal of upheaval in the United States, and also marked the peak of the Knights of Labor in Ontario.

Complications were intensified by the fact that the TSR was locked in a bitter labour dispute with its employees who were on strike under the leadership of the Knights of Labor. At least two of Parkdale's councillors, George Edwards and James Gowanlock, mirroring public support for the strikers, proposed that the suburban council pass a motion condemning the TSR for its treatment of its workers. Given the status of negotiations and the proclivities of other members of council, however, the motion was lost and the majority of council reaffirmed its desire to reach a deal with the TSR.⁴⁴

When Parkdale's council met on June 19, 1886 to appoint three block pavement inspectors, a group of councillors headed by Jonas Coxhead rejected the first application submitted by blacksmith and labour activist Samuel McNab. In the end two of the vacancies were filled by Councillor Rankin's father-in-law and Councillor H.C. Stevens's son. Angered by what he perceived to be injustice and nepotism, one disgruntled council member wrote the Toronto Daily News that "It is bad enough that Parkdale council has hung out the sign, 'No Knights of Labor Need Apply,' but if the relations of the councillors are provided for at the expense of the village, it is time that the workingmen of the place got ready to turn such shysters out."⁴⁵

Given the strict guidelines governing the municipal franchise, these 'workingmen'

⁴⁴ Laycock, 15-16, 24; Parkdale Minutes, May 17, 1886 and June 7, 1886; Kealey, Dreaming, 123-126.

⁴⁵ Toronto Daily News, June 21, 1886; Laycock, 24; Parkdale Minutes, June 21, 1886 and June 28, 1886. The reaction of Parkdale council to the letter was one of general outrage and there was a general condemnation of the act. Oddly, enough, according to the disgruntled councillor the division against McNabb found Councillors Gowanlock and Edwards on differing sides. At another meeting of council Rankin threatened a motion that would ferret out the offending member of council, but dropped his motion after "eliciting the most emphatic condemnation of the author . ." by the assembly. Whatever tensions there might have been in council over issues of labour an agreement with the TSR and Parkdale was ratified in October, 1886; Gregory S. Kealey, Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism, 1867-1892 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 326; Kealey Dreaming, 114, 116, 123, 126, 235. Samuel McNab was a veteran labour leader who had come to Toronto where he helped to develop various locals and where he rose up within the leadership of the Knights of Labor.

viewed amalgamation as a surefire way of not only barring them from elected office, but also jeopardizing their right to exercise their vote. While troubled by financial crises at the suburban level, many city-based elites regarded amalgamation as a means by which increased tax revenues could be added to city coffers and expensive infrastructure could be better financed. The codification of municipal regulations in 1873 ensured that property qualifications would mean that municipal politics, even at the local suburban level, remained out of the direct control of 'workingmen'.

It is impossible to uncover anything other than general reasons that led the suburban rank and file to be suspicious of annexation or amalgamation; however, we can discern the reasons offered by the opponents who sat on municipal councils. They came from what were the middling to upper echelons of suburban society, and their views on the matter of amalgamation were more often recorded than those of the men and women they represented. The majority of these representatives appear in the latter stages of the amalgamation debates to have supported their municipalities joining cities. However, a few diehard councillors usually opposed the surrendering of municipal independence until the end. London West's reeve, Robert Lacey, for example, went out of his way to forestall attempts by councillors or ratepayers to pursue annexation. When 235 London West ratepayers signed a petition directing their elected officials to open negotiations on amalgamation in May 1890, Lacey refused to accept it, citing technical irregularities. He subsequently ran as the sole anti-amalgamation candidate for the office of reeve in the January 1893.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ London Free Press, May 21, 1890; Ibid., January 3, 1893.

Other elected officials opposed to amalgamation, often in the face of overwhelming opposition. In the days that followed the relatively close, but successful vote on Parkdale's amalgamation bid in October 1888, the suburb's former reeve Hugh McMath and seventeen other ratepayers refused to accept defeat.⁴⁷ Acting on rumours and accusations that there had been too many irregularities and illegal votes cast, McMath and his supporters sought to overturn the vote by instigating a lawsuit. Of the eighteen petitioners, seven, including McMath, had served in some capacity on Parkdale's council. In 1888 two of the men, James Gowanlock and Benjamin Goodman, were incumbent deputy reeves, while George Edwards was a sitting councillor, a position he had held since 1886. Of the three, Edwards and Gowanlock had attempted to have Parkdale's council support the striking employees of the TSR. Three other men, like McMath himself, had served as councillors and one as deputy reeve at various times during Parkdale's incorporation. Over half of those who signed the petition had been living in Parkdale since at least 1881. Some had lived there prior to incorporation in 1879.⁴⁸

The merger of Parkdale and Toronto was slated to occur in March. McMath appeared in court in early January 1889, as he saw it, "on behalf of the ratepayers and inhabitants of Parkdale . . ." demanding that the bylaws ratified by both city and suburb

⁴⁷ *Globe*, October 29, 1888. Following the successful plebiscite the *Globe* had predicted that the positive result for amalgamation would put to rest any plans 'separatists' might harbour for contesting the result.

⁴⁸ *Parkdale Register*, 16, 20, 26, 30-31; Laycock, 61; Parkdale Minutes, June 7, 1886; AO Irving Papers, Petition of Hugh McMath, Parkdale to the Attorney General of Ontario, December 8, 1888. The petition was signed by McMath and sixteen other Parkdale residents. The petitioners were Hugh McMath, George Edwards, James Gowanlock, A.G. Gowanlock, V.B. Wadsworth, Caleb Weeks, George [?] Simlain, M. Fenwick, Benjamin Goodman, William Stewart, Edward Terry, John Inglis, George [?] Carlson, Sturgeon Stewart, James Stewart, Joseph Norwich, and J.C. Morgans, as well as one individual whose signature was impossible to decipher; William H. Hall, letter to the editor, October 3, 1888, Parkdale, *Globe*, October 4, 1888. As Parkdale's municipal clerk Hall wrote to refute rumours and complaints that in revising the voters' list he had removed the names of various ratepayers eligible to vote.

on the matter be 'quashed.' He requested that an injunction be forced upon both municipalities, and that the proposed proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor be put aside. McMath's attorney explained to the incumbent premier, Oliver Mowat, that his client feared that should the amalgamation issue be passed and promulgated then the case then before the courts would be forever thwarted.⁴⁹ The plaintiffs charged that the Municipal Act stipulated that the ratification of Parkdale's amalgamation bylaw should only have been voted on by those ratepayers whose names appeared on the last assessment rolls. It was their contention that some 150 names had been illegally added to the voters list. The complainants claimed to champion the plight of Parkdale's less affluent residents-- perhaps as an attack on non-resident landowners-- arguing that the Municipal Act mandated both freeholders and tenants to vote on such issues, but the voting list as constituted had excluded tenants. The insinuations were clear. The vote which the pro-amalgamationists had won by only seventy-six ballots should be cancelled.⁵⁰

McMath and his associates were not alone in condemning the basis for amalgamation. Two years earlier New Edinburgh's last incumbent reeve John Henderson issued a series of letters to Ottawa newspapers condemning the methods Ottawa had used to pressure his suburb into accepting annexation and then renegeing on key agreements. Unlike McMath, however, Henderson did not attempt to stop amalgamation per se, but

⁴⁹ AO Irving Papers, Box 57, 58 item 9, Ontario High Court of Justice Queen's Bench, Writ of Summons, January 9, 1889; *Ibid.* Z.A. Lash, Toronto, to Hon. Oliver Mowat, Toronto, 13 December 1888.

⁵⁰ AO Irving Papers, Petition of Hugh McMath, Parkdale to the Attorney General of Ontario, December 8, 1888. The petition was signed by McMath and sixteen other Parkdale residents.

rather to shame city officials into redressing his concerns.⁵¹ Part of the explanation for why many suburban officials resolutely opposed amalgamation or annexation might lie with their earlier emphasis on community building. The six suburban municipalities persisted for an average of sixteen years. During this relatively short period of time, various officials within the communities had laboured hard to develop municipal identities, be it through the creation of corporate symbols, the erection of town halls or the creation of bylaws. They had given form to their communities by enacting bylaws. Many of the officials who were confronted by amalgamation were the same individuals who had attempted to set up independent waterworks, in order to make their municipalities attractive alternatives to the cities. Given all of these labours and hopes, it is not difficult to understand why many of these men would find amalgamation a bitter pill to swallow. Amalgamation also meant that these local politicians would no longer be as politically significant in the larger urban setting.

The Retention of Limited Autonomy

While many suburbanites and suburban officials felt that entry into the city ultimately served the best interests of their communities, they were unwilling to surrender all local control. In all six of the suburbs, calls for ward status topped the list of demands for the new municipal arrangements. Concern over the future representation of their suburban communities was not limited to those who sought to retain complete suburban autonomy. Even among councillors who favoured amalgamation, there was a desire that

⁵¹ John Henderson, letter of July 10, 1886, New Edinburgh, in Ottawa Evening Journal, July 10, 1886; John Henderson, letter of July 15, 1886, New Edinburgh, in Ottawa Evening Journal, July 15, 1886.

their communities should retain some form of political representation. Practically this meant ensuring that a particular suburb was constituted as a separate ward within the city. In the majority of cases the incoming suburb formed a ward. The suburbs of Yorkville and Parkdale with populations of well over 4000 constituted the St. Paul's and St. Alban's Wards. Even comparatively tiny Brockton was admitted into Toronto as the separate ward of St. Mark's in 1884.⁵² A similar arrangement had been made for New Edinburgh's admission into Ottawa in 1886 when its incumbent reeve explained that his village "would form no small or insignificant ward . . ." and would even exceed other Ottawa wards in size and prosperity.⁵³ In the instance of London East, one of the key amalgamation provisions saw the former town transformed into a city ward. Even unorganized suburbs such as London's comparatively poor and unorganized suburb of London South was admitted as a separate ward in 1890.⁵⁴

The fact that a suburb had been an independent body did not guarantee its admission as a unit into the city political framework, nor for that matter did the guarantee of ward status necessarily sway a suburb to accept amalgamation. In the instance of London West, city-based negotiators offered the suburb ward status during negotiations in 1890 and 1893. By the time London West's legislators were inclined to accept amalgamation in 1897 the demographics of the city had changed so that it was no longer

⁵² Stephanie Hutcheson. Yorkville in Pictures 1853-1883 (Toronto: Toronto Public Library Board, 1978), [no page]; Laycock, 34; Mary Frances Mallon, "The Village of Brockton," York Pioneer 71 (2), 11.

⁵³ Ottawa Evening Journal, July 15, 1886, letter by Reeve John Henderson of New Edinburgh, July 15, 1886.

⁵⁴ John Lutman. The South and West of London: An Historical and Architectural Guide (London, Ontario: Corporation of the City of London, 1979), 9-10.

viewed as feasible or fair that London West should be admitted as a ward. Its small population and its dismal level of assessment meant that it would fall far behind the city's smallest ward. At least one spokesman explained that if London West was constituted as a separate ward "they would always be pulling for more than their share. . ." ⁵⁵ In the instance of London West negotiators for both the city and suburb had consistently approved of granting ward status to the suburb throughout the early 1890s. Ultimately, however, the failure of these discussions to accommodate both city and suburban demands and the changing demographics of the area, led to London West's amalgamation without the granting of ward status. This illustrates that the cities were unwilling to amalgamate with their suburbs at any price, and illustrates the perils of delaying amalgamation.

Fiscal Chaos and The Reticence of Cities

If it could be secured, the transformation of a suburb into a separate city ward could mollify those suburbanites who feared the loss of their community's identity through amalgamation. One of the most troubling issues facing both those for and those against amalgamation was the state of municipal finances. Suburban insolvency often made it difficult to justify continued independence. At the same time the fiscal chaos within some of the suburbs made cities reluctant to see amalgamation accomplished. Although Brockton had only been incorporated late in 1880, by the middle of 1883 its

⁵⁵ London Free Press, May 31, 1897; Jeff Leunisson, "London's Ward System 1848-1986: An Exploration in Municipal Electoral Geography" (Unpublished Senior Undergraduate Thesis, University of Western Ontario Department of Geography, 1987), 29. While London West was appended to the existing Ward Two London City Council did agree to have the former village divided into two separate polling subdivisions, possibly with an eye to providing at least a semblance of legal separateness within the city framework, and to ensure that candidates that would be elected to city council from these subdivisions might be more responsive to the needs of London West.

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fiscal house was in a shambles. Complaints by various ratepayers and members of council led to the creation of a larger finance committee and the removal of financial matters from the purview of the treasurer and reeve.⁵⁶ Part of the problem may have had something to do with the high rate of turnover on Brockton's council. Only one councillor M.J. Woods and the ineffectual treasurer, John Mallon, bumbled along throughout its entire four year period of incorporation.⁵⁷

Matters were complicated by personality conflicts between the village's second reeve, Dr. John McConnell, and a slate of unspecified councillors. As McConnell and the treasurer oversaw the village's finances, McConnell took accusations of ineptitude as a personal affront. In June 1883, several councillors held an impromptu, and from McConnell's point of view, illegal meeting to appoint auditors, something which he subsequently refused to sanction.⁵⁸ By the end of 1883, Brockton's beleaguered council bowed to pressure from both ratepayers and Toronto City Council, then investigating amalgamation, to have the village accounts placed before a special auditor, Joseph Blakely. What Blakely found baffled him. He was astonished to find that the village's fiscal records were confined to "only one book, making this answer for cash book, journal and ledger." Neither of the men in charge of the village's finances had any experience or

⁵⁶ Brockton Council Minutes, May 21, 1883 and May 28, 1883. At this time a petition signed by a number of ratepayers requested that a solicitor be hired to investigate the state of Brockton's financial affairs, while an auditor also be appointed to go over the village's books.

⁵⁷ Mallon, 9.

⁵⁸ Brockton Council Minutes, June 16, 1883, June 25, 1883, June 28, 1883. On June 16th a group of councillors held a special, and apparently unauthorized meeting to look into the subject of having the village books audited. When council met for its next regular meeting Reeve McConnell refused to accept the minutes for that special meeting stating that the whole thing had been illegal. While the four councillors voted to accept the minutes, the reeve abstained from voting and thereby refused to give his assent. This impasse continued until the end of June with the reeve refusing to have his vote recorded on any matter.

training in the keeping of such important records. While no one denied the accusations, the fact that the treasurer, John Mallon, was one of Brockton's noteworthy businessmen, owning and managing two large abattoirs and a livestock farm suggested that municipal bookkeeping was not one of his priorities. If shoddy record keeping was not bad enough, Blakely discovered that Brockton had issued debentures to cover the costs of local improvements, but the record of these transactions had either been lost, or more likely had never existed in the first place. Blakely's report to Brockton's outgoing council on January 17, 1884 was duly accepted and adopted.⁵⁹

The council had conspicuously failed to uphold the corporations' motto of "Industry, Economy, Intelligence". Thus, at least one new councillor, Charles Leslie Denison, won a council seat for 1884 in an attempt to get control of the village's runaway finances. While the council concerned itself with the appointment of village officials for the upcoming year and negotiated the removal of the last remaining tollgate between the village and city, another political storm was brewing over the election of school board trustees. A group of Brockton ratepayers petitioned a York County justice, claiming that the recent election of Abram Manne had been illegal. Concerned ratepayers contended that an illicit ballot -- cast by a man who had failed to pay his taxes -- had tipped the scales in Manne's favour at the expense of his opponent Henry T. Meredith. The defence informed the judge that other than the returning officer *none* of those who had participated in the school board election had paid their taxes and concluded therefore that

⁵⁹ Mallon, 4, 9-10; Globe, January 19, 1884. The investigation had not come cheap, for it was clear that \$698 was owed to the firm of Robbins Brothers for undertaking the investigation and it was also concluded that Mr. Blakely "who conducted the commission" should be paid \$425. While the matter was discussed a resolution to make payment was not passed, the matter presumably being held over for the new incoming council.

“the vote disputed was as good as any of the others polled.” The judge called for a new election. He added that “all the ratepayers in the village were disenfranchised . . .” with the exception of the returning officer and would only be permitted to vote when they paid their overdue taxes. The ruling sent shockwaves through Brockton and beyond, and soon questions were being raised as to the validity of the municipal contest itself.⁶⁰ Within days of the ruling, the situation for Brockton worsened. As the Globe reported on February 9, 1884:

The troubles for Brockton are increasing. The election of Mr. Manne to the Board of School Trustees has been declared void; an effort is being made to oust the recently-elected Reeve, Dr. McConnell, from his position, on the score of property disqualification; and now two writs have been issued against the corporation, one for \$700 by Messrs. Robins Bros, being their bill for the investigation of municipal accounts; and the other an auditor’s bill for \$75 from G.W. Evans.⁶¹

Given the farces it was hardly surprising that a group of Brockton ratepayers began to argue that “annexation is the only cure for the ills of the village.”⁶²

Brockton’s elected officials seemed to be increasingly hankering toward

⁶⁰ Globe, January 22, 1884, January 26, 1884, February 6, 1884. Toronto’s City Clerk announced that when making up the list of eligible ratepayers each year he included the names of those property owners who were still in arrears with property taxes, although he noted those who had failed to pay up their income tax were barred from casting ballots.

⁶¹ Ibid., February 9, 1884. This movement against Reeve John McConnell is surprising given that he had won reelection with 128 votes, a full eighty-six votes ahead of his opponent. Similarly at the conclusion of the election contest, when “enthusiasm rose to such a pitch” McConnell had been hoisted onto the shoulders of various jubilant ratepayers. Ibid., January 8, 1884. Curiously enough, however, one of the first actions of Brockton’s new council in 1884 was to pass “a vote of thanks to THE GLOBE for the reports of the Council for the past year . . .” Ibid., January 22, 1884.

⁶² Ibid., February 9, 1884, February 6, 1884. On February 5th Toronto’s Mayor Boswell had attended the annual ‘conversazione’ of the Brockton Literary Club and been presented with an address by Reeve McConnell. Apparently it was at this gathering that Boswell commented on Brockton’s fiscal and political woes; Minutes of Proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the City of Toronto, 1884, March 17, 1884, section 290, page 67. Even while Mayor Boswell weighed in on the issue of Brockton’s finances the first official mention of Brockton’s amalgamation did not creep into city minutes until after Brockton ratepayers voted in favour of amalgamation in March, 1884.

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amalgamation. By the middle of February, Councillors Morrow and Denison, both newly elected and thereby “strangers to municipal work in the capacity of councillors . . .”, argued that the most expedient remedy for the current municipal woes was to seek amalgamation with Toronto and to submit a bylaw to accomplish this end to the ratepayers for consent.⁶³ Matters quickly came to a head. A bylaw proposing amalgamation was put before Brockton’s ratepayers on March 10, 1884, which they ratified with eighty-six favouring the move and only seventeen opposing.⁶⁴ Whatever the feelings of Brockton’s ratepayers might have been over issues of local control, they were overshadowed by the incompetence and infighting of their elected and appointed officials. The personality conflicts with which Brockton’s council had been riven, had been exacerbated by the growing fiscal crisis that the municipality faced; a crisis that had arisen from carelessness and incompetence.

The mess created by mismanagement of municipal funds invariably emboldened those suburbanites who sought amalgamation and squashed the hopes of those who wished to remain independent. While internal opposition to amalgamation was perhaps to be expected, in some instances the most potent and often disarming opposition to amalgamation could come from the city itself. In at least two instances strong opposition from members of city council or council as a whole derailed amalgamation talks. After nearly six years as a municipal entity there had been increasing disquiet in Parkdale over whether or not the suburb could continue to go it alone, what with increasing

⁶³ Globe, January 8, 1884 and February 13, 1884.

⁶⁴ Ibid., March 11, 1884.

expenditures upon subways, waterworks, and other costly infrastructure. Following only a week of negotiations, special committees from Toronto and Parkdale reached an agreement in principle and close to sixty-percent of Parkdale's ratepayers voted to accept the proposal on January 5, 1885. With a mandate to proceed, Parkdale's council voted to compel the reluctant Reeve Hugh McMath to pass the results of the vote onto Toronto's mayor, and to put Parkdale's financial records before the joint amalgamation committee no later than January 31, 1885.⁶⁵ Despite this instruction to have the village's records scrutinized by the amalgamation committee, the matter dragged. In April, Parkdale's council was still haggling over the question, and by May 1885, Toronto began to place further demands upon Parkdale pertaining to the subway.⁶⁶ Frustrated by Parkdale's delays in making its records available, Toronto's amalgamation committee lost patience. It is not surprising that Toronto was anxious to audit Parkdale's financial records to ensure that the city would not be unduly surprised or burdened. By the end of May 1885, the city's Executive Committee went before council as a whole and stated that it had yet to receive a complete set of financial records from Parkdale, and recommended that Toronto terminate negotiations with Parkdale. To save face, Parkdale's council met on May 21, 1885 and claimed that certain demands of Toronto's went against the spirit of the bylaw upon which ratepayers had voted. Parkdale's council agreed that "it seems inadvisable to continue negotiations for the present."⁶⁷

While the issue of amalgamation between Ottawa and New Edinburgh had had a

⁶⁵ Parkdale Council Minutes, January 12, 1885.

⁶⁶ Ibid., April 6, 1885.

⁶⁷ Laycock, 31; Parkdale Council Minutes, May 21, 1885.

chequered past, by June 1886, a mutually beneficial agreement for municipal consolidation had been worked out by municipal officials. A deputation of city officers including the Mayor F. McDougal had approached New Edinburgh's council in March 1886, and made it clear to various village councillors that Ottawa "might not receive us at all if we delayed too long."⁶⁸ Committees were struck and satisfactory terms were agreed upon, which would have seen the extension of city services to New Edinburgh as well as promises of increased bargaining power with provincial and federal authorities, and help in combatting the perennial nuisance of spring flooding. Sensing that the optimum time had come to accept the inevitable amalgamation with Ottawa, New Edinburgh took its bylaw to the ratepayers for approval. Some villagers were slightly annoyed when certain city Aldermen, formerly in favour of amalgamation, voted against the resolution, which none-the-less passed. The matter came to a head, however, when village officials failed to notify City Hall that their ratepayers had accepted the basis for amalgamation. When word finally did arrive, Mayor McDougal scandalized villagers by refusing to request the Lieutenant Governor to recognize the agreement. McDougal alleged that New Edinburgh had been tardy in submitting its bylaw, so the city's solicitor had not been able to analyse the agreement thoroughly. McDougal argued too that village officials had not properly addressed the question of their municipal debt, and made claims upon the city had that never been negotiated. A public war of words ensued as both the Mayor and Reeve attempted to explain their positions in the Evening Journal.⁶⁹ Shortly afterward

⁶⁸ Ottawa Evening Journal, July 10, 1886.

⁶⁹ Ibid., Ibid., July 12, 1886, July 13, 1886, July 15, 1886.

McDougal submitted all relevant information to the city's solicitor. After another flurry of correspondence between Ottawa and New Edinburgh, Ottawa's solicitor concluded that the estimates of New Edinburgh's assessment and liabilities were "in accordance with the resolution of Council . . ." He further explained that he could see no objection to the city council passing a resolution accepting amalgamation, and forwarding the appropriate memorial to Ontario's Lieutenant Governor.⁷⁰ Matters concluded at the August 2, 1886 meeting of Ottawa's council. A series of alterations to the proposed amalgamation were introduced that would have reworked the ward system in the city and appended New Edinburgh to an existing ward. The meeting extended late into the night. By its close, the original basis for amalgamation was accepted with seven votes for and six against.⁷¹

The fact that opposition came from within the cities themselves points to the fact that city officials were unwilling to take in their poor country cousins at any price. The bids to expand boundaries were after all done to further the interests of promoting the city. To hobble these corporations with large debts not of their making was unthinkable. Cities were also unwilling to be dictated to by smaller corporations, for as at least one frustrated city councillor warned – in the face of suburban intransigence– it was a

⁷⁰ D.B. McTavish, Ottawa City Solicitor, Ottawa, to Mayor F. McDougal, Ottawa, 19 July 1886, Appendix One, in Ottawa City Council Minutes 1886, 283. On July 15, 1886 the City Clerk William P. Lett had written to Reeve Henderson for a specific breakdown of the 'Bridge and Dike Debentures,' while New Edinburgh's clerk Thomas Tubman was required to submit a statement about the village's 1886 assessment returns the same day Ottawa City Council Minutes 1886, 284-285.

⁷¹ Ottawa City Council Minutes 1886, August 2, 1886, 279-281; Globe, November 6, 1886. The Bill formalizing New Edinburgh's amalgamation to Ottawa was more or less formalized by early November, although special legislation was required to remove potential doubts about the validity of municipal elections in January, 1887 due to some unspecified "a legal question . . ."

privilege for the city to extend the benefits of municipal consolidation and suburbs were in no position to insist upon a superior bargaining position.⁷²

London West's amalgamation negotiations with the neighbouring city of London continually faltered. Talk of merging the two municipalities had been discussed at various times throughout the 1880s; however, the matter was never seriously pursued by either municipality until 1890 when London annexed London South. London West's financial situation was poor given its expenditures on the construction of the breakwater. At the same time the municipality sought recompense for flooding apparently caused by city owned dams.⁷³ City officials proposed a union with London West, proffering generous terms that included adopting the suburb's massive debt, and working toward eradicating the threat of flooding. A series of internal conflicts and squabbling on the part of London West's council derailed preliminary negotiations, despite considerable ratepayer support. One former London West reeve complained that too many of his colleagues were far too eager to join the city at all costs, and warned that to join the city would mean becoming heirs to the city's major debts. While London West had debts and liabilities, he argued that the suburb's debt had been accrued in no small part due to the city's negligence for it was city dams that were responsible for London West's flooding woes. This had forced London West to expend exorbitant sum of \$32,000 on flood

⁷² London Advertiser, July 8, 1890.

⁷³ Lutman, 9-10. London South had developed on the southern bank of the Thames River, in Westminster Township, and never incorporated; London Free Press, May 21, 1890; Ibid., January 11, 1893. As the Free Press reported at the time of the 1893 municipal contest "[f]or the last few years the village has spent an enormous amount of money in needless litigation . . ."

protection.⁷⁴ Talks were renewed but little progress was made. Within London there was a sense that “London West would be a burden.” An indignant London City Alderman argued that it was absurd for London West to make increasing demands upon the city given that the general feeling was that “It was quite a boon for London West to have the city offer them the privilege of joining.” The city broke off talks with London West by the end of the summer.⁷⁵ Negotiations resumed in 1892. By November, a joint amalgamation committee worked out a plausible program for merger. London West’s municipal contest in January 1893 was a veritable mandate for further discussions and ratification. However, by March 1893, various city officials repudiated certain clauses in a proposed bylaw, especially those that allowed the village to retain its own rate of taxation for a period of ten years and others which would have obligated the city to maintain London West’s large breakwater.⁷⁶ Soon other city-based voices joined in the fray. London’s Board of Trade argued that “the assets of London West would be a detriment to the city, rather than a benefit.” The same body complained that should London West join the city it would burden the larger municipality and hinder progress,

⁷⁴ London Free Press, May 21, 1890, June 30, 1890; Christopher L. Hives. “Flooding and Flood Control: Local Attitudes in London, Ontario 1790-1952.” (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Western Ontario Faculty of Graduate Studies, Department of History, 1981), 64-65. Since the terrible flooding of 1883 London West’s council had demanded that the city remove the waterworks dam at Springbank, as they viewed this construction as the main cause of the disaster. A series of lawsuits were launched against the city. The Court of Chancery had found in favour of London West, and ordered the City of London to make restitution to the village, but complaints later reveal that London West’s council had not pressed the matter and ultimately failed to extract any payment from the city.

⁷⁵ London, City of. Proceedings of Municipal Council, 1890 (London, Ontario: R. Southam Printer, 1891), 63; London Advertiser, July 8, 1890; London Free Press, June 30, 1890.

⁷⁶ Proceedings of Municipal Council 1892: January 18, 1892 to January 9, 1893 (London, Ontario: R. Southam, 1893), 20, 244; London Free Press, December 28, 1892, January 3, 1893, January 10, 1893.

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and demanded that city officials carefully revisit the proposal.⁷⁷ Despite indignant protests from village officials, city council heeded the Board of Trade, and by the middle of 1893 again broke off talks.⁷⁸

The main roadblock to carrying through suburban annexation had come from the city. In both the Parkdale and London West instances city officials were not about to accept amalgamation on any terms. When it came to amalgamation, one London alderman argued that the poor fiscal shape of suburbs was a deterrent for cities to accept amalgamation.⁷⁹ In London West, amalgamation was only achieved late in 1897 after village officials came to the conclusion that the optimum time for amalgamation had long since passed. It joined London appended to an existing city ward, although it was guaranteed a lower rate of taxation for a period of ten years, and promised continued maintenance of the breakwater.⁸⁰

The fact that suburbs often demanded and were ultimately extended the right to form separate wards within the newly consolidated cities suggested the importance suburbanites placed upon retaining some influence. The demand of ward status also illustrated that the suburbs were viewed as valuable additions of both population and assessment to the cities. The failure of London West to gain the safeguard of ward status illustrated that smaller suburbs ultimately did not necessarily have leverage, and could

⁷⁷ London Free Press, April 24, 1893.

⁷⁸ London Free Press, April 27, 1893, April 28, 1893; Proceedings of Municipal Council 1893: January 19, 1893 to January 15, 1894 (London, Ontario: Jones and Lawson, 1894), 144, 121.

⁷⁹ London Advertiser, July 8, 1890; London Free Press, June 30, 1890.

⁸⁰ London Advertiser, May 22, 1897, May 31, 1897; London Free Press, June 1, 1897.

miscalculate their ability to negotiate amalgamation. The prosperity and relative size of a suburb determined this, and the continual stalling of London West's officials showed that changing demographics altered conditions. The optimum time for amalgamation had been missed.

One question that begs attention is exactly how interested the various ratepayers in the suburbs were about amalgamation. In New Edinburgh 162 of the 233 enumerated voters cast their ballots, leading the Ottawa Citizen to infer that "great interest was taken in the matter . . ." ⁸¹ Toronto's Globe, a long time champion of amalgamation, expressed pleasure at the successful outcome of the October 1888 vote by Parkdale residents, but lamented that the margin of victory was "not so large as we wished to see . . ." given that a little over 800 votes were cast when the expectation had been over 1000 (poor weather kept a significant number of city-based ratepayers housebound). ⁸²

While the interest of ratepayers is difficult to ascertain, in general the response to the outcomes of the various votes were frequently congratulatory and full of boastful predictions. The language chosen by the mostly city-based newspapers in describing the outcomes of amalgamation voting was tinged with a sense of the inevitable and perhaps even a tone of condescension. After the ratepayers of New Edinburgh cast their ballots, the Ottawa Citizen explained that the villagers had come to "settle the often mooted question of its remaining aloof or throwing in its lot with its next door neighbour . . ." ⁸³

⁸¹ Ottawa Citizen, June 29, 1886.

⁸² Globe, October 29, 1888; When London West ratepayers cast their ballots on the amalgamation agreement struck between their village and London in June, 1897 it was reported that "[t]here was not much interest manifested in the vote on amalgamation in London West today." London Advertiser, June 28, 1897.

⁸³ Ottawa Citizen, June 29, 1886.

When the ratepayers of the last of the independent suburbs in our study, London West, ratified the bylaw for amalgamation, the London Free Press did not mince words. Small local governments provided “strong inducements for extravagant and unnecessary expenditure . . .” Such remarks were hardly surprising given that the same paper had earlier argued that any discussion over amalgamation was simply a matter of “dollars and cents among the wise men at City Hall. Sentiment has no part or parcel in it.”⁸⁴

Following the amalgamations, there was a sense that the process had been inevitable, and, if the London Free Press should be believed, a belief that the whole experiment in suburban independence had been an unnecessary extravagance. Those that claimed suburban municipalities had been a superfluous experiment had been shortsighted. When New Edinburgh, London East and Petersville-London West were incorporated between 1866 and 1874, the cities had shown little interest in these settlements on the urban frontier. The desire to gain control over their own municipal affairs, too often ignored by predominantly rural townships, had been the major factor in seeking incorporation. Caught between rural and urban worlds, neither of which took much interest in their needs, these suburbs opted to take an independent course. There were frequent suggestions that the amalgamation of the suburbs was an inevitability, with many even claiming that it was a desirable final outcome. However, there was sense that there was an optimum time for that occurrence and, until such time, municipal autonomy could serve the interests of residents.

⁸⁴ London Free Press, June 29, 1897 and May 31, 1897. London’s other newspaper the Advertiser provided a more conciliatory review of the matter, emphasising the long standing personal and business ties that bound London West to the city, and proffered the hope that “by the union any little municipal friction will be prevented and the united community will be the better able to make the most of its energies.” London Advertiser, June 29, 1897

Until the late 1870s cities such as Toronto, London and Ottawa did not seriously contemplate annexing the outlying suburbs. The acquisition of Yorkville, London East, and New Edinburgh in 1883, 1885, and 1886 respectively marked their first successful bids to extend their boundaries, a process that accelerated rapidly in successive years. The villages of Parkdale and Brockton were incorporated following the emergence of an annexation agenda on the part of many city officials. Their incorporation was made as a direct attempt to thwart annexation designs placed upon them. Following Brockton's incorporation, however, there was a general malaise or mistrust of incorporation, as the example of the failed campaign to incorporate Riverside indicates, where a sizeable majority of ratepayers within that unincorporated suburb lobbied to skip over the intermediary step of incorporation and chose instead immediate annexation to Toronto.

However, it is important to remember that between Yorkville's incorporation in 1852 and Riverside's rejection of the same course in 1884, much had changed within suburban and urban conglomerations and to Ontario as a whole. The process of urbanization had still been very much in its infancy in the early 1850s and infrastructure, even in the most populous centres like Toronto, Ottawa, and London, had been minimal. Questions of directing and controlling taxation and the upkeep of roadways had been the primary concerns of municipal councils and ratepayers. As the decades progressed so did the calls for increased infrastructure development and the implementation and acquisition of new urban services, most notably the provision of waterworks, gasworks, and public transportation. The new demands placed upon councils, whether they represented suburban villages or large cities, rose dramatically as the need for new revenues to fund such expensive projects increased. Municipalities such as Yorkville and New Edinburgh

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had once been primarily concerned with maintaining roadways and proper sanitation and drainage. Now, in the 1880s, they faced the task of providing expensive waterworks.

In general many of the promises made about the provisioning of important city based services were carried through, at varying rates of speed. Parkdale, Yorkville, and Brockton were gradually provided with improved water, sewers, and lighting. However, some promises took longer to address. For Parkdale, a major plank in the pro-amalgamation camp had been the reconstruction and widening of the contentious Queen Street Subway, a matter that was not finally addressed until well into the 1890s.⁸⁵

Concerns over safeguarding New Edinburgh from spring flooding had been one of the promises with which amalgamation had been sold to its residents, although it soon became apparent that officials with the City of Ottawa were unwilling to expend vast sums on flood protection and informed villagers that they “would have to protect themselves in that matter . . .”⁸⁶ In London West the question of amalgamation had been heavily dependant upon flood control as well. While services such as water and sewers were quickly extended across the Thames into London West, attempts to implement effective safeguards against flooding lagged.⁸⁷ In 1898 there was an outcry when city officials arbitrarily renamed village streets after members of city council, ignoring the

⁸⁵ Laycock, 34-35; Hutcheson, [no page number].

⁸⁶ Letter of Mayor F. McDougal, July 12, 1886, Ottawa, in Ottawa Evening Journal, July 13, 1886; Ibid., July 10, 1886.

⁸⁷ Flooding continued to be a pressing problem for London West with regular with serious inundations, that led one historian to remark that for the people of London West “most of their money was tied up in their submerged dwellings.” The matter came to a head in 1937 when hundreds were left homeless by a devastating flood, and it was not until the completion of a major dam on the Thames in 1952 that the flooding menace was solved, a full fifty-five years after London West was amalgamated to London. Hives, 110-114; Lutman South & West, 57; Public History Students, “Rediscovering London’s River: An Historical Documentation of the Thames” (London, Ontario: Public History Students Project at University of Western Ontario, 1996), 58.

wishes and feelings of London West residents.⁸⁸

Caught between rural and urban worlds neither of which took much interest in their needs, the six suburbs in our study had briefly pursued an independent course. This lasted until internal and external pressures forced consolidation with cities. The uncertain finances of the suburbs more than anything else ensured that the amalgamation question would be much debated by suburb and city. If anything, the struggle over amalgamation illustrated that suburban solvency and responsibility had to be weighed against questions of suburban agency and independence.

⁸⁸ Harriet Pridis, "The Naming of London Streets." Transactions London and Middlesex Historical Society (1909), 26-27.

Conclusion

Between 1883 and 1897 Yorkville, Brockton, London East, New Edinburgh, Parkdale, and London West all amalgamated with their respective neighbours. Despite the fears of some suburbanites about the loss of autonomy and local character, following amalgamation people continued to identify with their respective communities. In the instance of Parkdale and Yorkville, the former municipal buildings were taken over by city officials to house various community institutions, such as police offices and libraries. At the same time various reunions for Yorkville's 'Old Boys' continued well into the twentieth century. To varying degrees the former suburbs retained at least part of their former identities. For well over a century after their amalgamation, the names of Parkdale and New Edinburgh remain as identifiers of specific urban neighbourhoods, while Yorkville became synonymous first with the flourishing counterculture of the 1960s and subsequently as a high-priced shopping district within Toronto. Parkdale was dramatically altered as the twentieth century progressed, as its population increased and many of its older homes were demolished to make way for large apartment complexes. The continued flight to the newer suburbs and construction of the Gardiner Expressway in the 1950s meant profound change and severed Parkdale from the shores of Humber Bay. Despite these developments the former suburb successfully maintained its identity more than a century after its amalgamation with Toronto.¹

While the names of London West and London East have fared less well in the last

¹ Hutcheson, Yorkville In Pictures; Laycock 35-36; Timothy J. Colton. Big Daddy: Frederick G. Gardiner and the Building of Metropolitan Toronto (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 110-111.

few decades, a recent resurgence in the use of the old designation of Petersville has led to a renewed interest in the old community and its past.² For decades after annexation London East remained a distinctive neighbourhood and vibrant shopping district within the city of London, and to varying degrees this identification remains. Perhaps the most complete casualty of amalgamation would be Brockton. The efforts of some dedicated individuals in the 1970s to preserve the memory of the former suburb, the retention of the name of Brockton Avenue, and a more recent move to erect street signs with the heading 'Village of Brockton,' provides links to the past, nevertheless the name appears to have little resonance for the people who currently make the former suburb home.³

As the nineteenth century reached its midpoint and the cities of London, Ottawa, and Toronto entered into a period of accelerated growth, a diverse group of communities began to emerge on their outskirts. Forming at milling sites, important road junctions and tollgates, or as rural retreats just beyond the corporate boundaries of the cities, these small settlements gradually developed as suburban entities. Despite their varied origins these communities began to attract increasing numbers of residents. Many were lured by the lower taxation and pastoral charms of life away from the dirt and congestion of the cities, establishing homes, small businesses or market gardens. The same lure of cheap land

² London West was initially constituted as the Village of Petersville when it was incorporated in 1874, but changed its name to London West in 1881. Greg Stott, "The Maintenance of Suburban Autonomy: The Story of the Village of Petersville-London West, Ontario 1874-1897"(Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Western Ontario Faculty of Graduate Studies, Department of History, 1999), 38-46.

³ The Petersville Neighbourhood Project (London, Ontario: Blackapple, 1994); John H. Lutman and Christopher L. Hives. The North and East of London: An Historical and Architectural Guide (London, Ontario: Corporation of the City of London, 1982), 59-60; Harry and Olive Walker. Carleton Saga, 323; Jane Wilson. Ottawa: More Than a Capital City (Burlington, Ontario: Windsor Publications, 1989), 82-84; Marjorie Harris. Toronto: The City of Neighbourhoods (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1984), 11-17, 57-61.

certainly drew large numbers of residents to London East, while also encouraging various entrepreneurs to establish large industrial interests. The suburbanites in all six communities came from various walks of life. Earlier studies have portrayed nineteenth-century suburbs as having been largely inhabited by the professional and clerical middle class. All of the suburbs in this study contained a mixture of clerks, businessmen, and professionals, but all also featured heavy concentrations of unskilled and skilled workers. This influx of householders who largely found employment within the cities created difficulties in areas governed by largely rural and agricultural townships. The liberalization of Ontario's municipal legislation in the 1849 and again in 1873 made it easy for suburbs such as Yorkville, New Edinburgh, London East, and London West to incorporate, a process spurred on by the failure of rural township governments to serve the needs of these new 'urban' communities. The fact that both Parkdale and Brockton were incorporated in the face of overtures by Toronto to annex them in 1879 and 1881 respectively, indicates that these suburban communities genuinely saw themselves as being distinctive and possessed a sense that their interests would best be served – at least for the time being– outside the city.

As independent municipalities, these suburbs cultivated a sense of separateness. Elected councils enhanced and directed this process, creating corporate symbols and buildings around which they hoped to foster a heightened sense of identity and belonging. Similarly, these communities, having rejected rural government and consolidation with their urban neighbours, tended to define themselves against, and as alternatives to the cities. While most of the suburbs attempted to cultivate a pastoral rapport with nature and

to promote healthy living away from urban congestion, industrialized London East succeeded in accommodating the industries that London had previously expelled. Indeed, each suburb established a particular niche and character. Yorkville, surrounded by the estates of Toronto's landed elite, transformed itself from a conglomeration of taverns around the Potter's Burial Ground into a sizeable and diverse community of mechanics and businessmen. Benefiting from its location on Lake Ontario and its successful waterworks, Parkdale was able to attract increasing numbers of householders. While Brockton was rocked by scandalous mismanagement it retained its niche as the home of market gardeners and those who found employment in the city. New Edinburgh had developed around a series of milling complexes, but the presence of Canada's Governor General helped to transform the village into the "Vice-Regal Suburb". Perennial flooding had a devastating effect upon London West's property values, but also made this suburb deeply suspicious of the neighbouring city and helped to delay its amalgamation for nearly a decade.

To a very large extent the proximity of the suburbs to the cities created a special set of problems and pressures that did not exist for more isolated towns and villages of similar sizes throughout Ontario. While many came to the suburbs because of ready access to open spaces and cheaper taxation, suburban councils were caught in a difficult position. They attempted to create city-like infrastructure for their municipalities, but they possessed smaller populations and infinitely more modest revenues. The pressures to attract further residential and business development required the improvement of roadways and the creation of costly investments such as waterworks. One community,

London West, never invested in a waterworks, but spent vast amounts of money on constructing breakwaters to protect its flood-prone streets from regular flooding. This infrastructure forced several of the municipalities into massive expenditures which were beyond the fiscal resources of their communities. The imperative to safeguard industrial and residential interests and to attract further development in all of the suburbs through tax breaks for businesses, the issuing of debentures and heavy borrowing created fiscal chaos. In at least one case, Brockton, costly overruns were exacerbated by personality conflicts on council and shoddy record keeping, both of which led to a virtual collapse of the suburban government in 1884.

The increasing fiscal constraints placed on the suburbs throughout the 1880s roughly corresponded to a reevaluation of these communities by city governments. During this period Toronto, Ottawa, and London began to seriously contemplate expanding beyond their original corporate boundaries. While some city-based newspapers may have worried about being surrounded by a ring of independent suburbs, more-often-than not cities had been largely unconcerned with the creation of suburban municipalities in the 1850s, 1860s and 1870s. However, the calls to increase their land areas and to bring in the added revenues afforded by those ratepayers who lived in the suburbs became a common refrain after 1880. Although technically all authority on municipal matters rested with the province, in practice issues of amalgamation were dealt with at the local level. Although many of the suburbs faced increasingly intractable financial situations, offers by the cities for amalgamation were not immediately accepted. In general initial overtures by the cities turned into protracted negotiations. Ill-served by rural township

government and initially ignored by city governments many elected officials within the suburbs were divided on whether or not to join the city.

While many suburbanites— perhaps even a majority— felt that amalgamation was an inevitable and even desirable outcome for their communities, they were adamant that they should secure the best terms for their communities to safeguard the hard-fought identities that suburban leaders had worked to construct. Very often these demands included provisions to maintain their lower rates of taxation and their admission to the city as a separate ward. At the same time, bargaining teams from the cities were unwilling to accommodate the suburbs at any price. In the case of Parkdale in 1885 and London West throughout the early 1890s, it was the cities that stalled negotiations based upon what they saw as suburban intransigence. Certainly some of these stubborn demands and continual resistance toward the question of amalgamation was due to questions of continued agency within the framework of municipal government.

Amalgamation threatened to disenfranchise those unskilled labourers and artisans who had secured homes and businesses in the suburbs, particularly since voting qualifications were considerably lower for villages than cities. Some local politicians lamented the amalgamation of the independent communities they had sought to create, while others sensed that there was an optimum time for consolidation with their urban neighbours.

The passing of Ontario's first generation of suburbs was not the end of the story, and indeed the process of suburban incorporation and amalgamation continued well into the twentieth century. While the process of urban consolidation slowed in the decades immediately preceding World War II the need to accommodate postwar growth and plan

for larger metropolitan projects led to the introduction of metropolitan and regional governments. Starting in the 1990s questions of fiscal accountability and municipal duplication resulted in a massive reordering of the municipal landscape in Ontario and other Canadian provinces. There were many parallels between the amalgamation discussions of the 1990s and the 1880s. As in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, suburban residents of the 1990s expressed concern about the loss of local identity and control. At the end of the twentieth century old cities like Toronto had to contend with the strain caused by the decades long exodus of people and revenues to the suburbs, mirroring concerns of Ottawa's politicians in the early 1880s. The pace of annexations in Ontario in the early twentieth century had slowed considerably, as cities contended that the costs involved in providing the suburbs with infrastructure would prove inordinately expensive. By the end of the century, many suburban municipal entities, well endowed cities in their own right, feared that amalgamation would mean that suburbanites would be burdened with expensive upgrades of outdated infrastructure within the old city centre. Perhaps there is some irony in the fact that in the 1990s Ontario's government explained that their rationale for consolidating cities and suburbs was to reduce the cost and duplication of municipal services and make them more accountable to taxpayers. In the case of Toronto and its suburbs this consolidation was forced through in the face of a plebiscite that indicated an overwhelming majority of taxpayers were against the move.⁴

⁴ Roger Keil, "Governance Restructuring in Los Angeles and Toronto: Amalgamation or Secession?" in International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 24 (December 2000), 765-767; Julie-Anne Boudreau, "Megacity Toronto: Struggles Over Differing Aspects of Middle-Class Politics," in International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 23 (December 1999), 771-772.

In the 1880s and 1890s ratepayers in all six suburbs ultimately exercised their franchise to ratify amalgamation.

In coming to terms with the political, economic and social imperatives of suburban entities in Victorian Ontario, scholars will enhance their understanding of similar processes of municipal restructuring at turn of the twenty-first century.

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