Toronto, No Mean City

Eric Arthur fell in love with Toronto the first time he saw it. The year was 1923; he was twenty-five years old, newly arrived to teach architecture at the University of Toronto. For the next sixty years he dedicated himself to saving the great buildings of Toronto's past. *Toronto, No Mean City* sounded a clarion call in his crusade. First published in 1964, the book sparked the preservation movement of the 1960s and 1970s and became its bible. The third edition, prepared by Stephen Otto, updated Arthur's classic to include information and illustrations uncovered since the appearance of the first edition.

This reprint includes four new essays. Christopher Hume, architecture critic and urban affairs columnist for the *Toronto Star*, addresses the changes to the city since the appearance of the third edition in 1986. Architect and heritage preservation activist Catherine Nasmith assesses the current status of the city's heritage preservation movement. Susan Crean, a freelance writer in Toronto, explores Toronto's vibrant arts scene. And finally, Mark Kingwell, professor and cultural commentator, reflects on the development of professional and amateur sports in and around town. Readers will delight in these anecdotal accounts of the city's rich architectural heritage.

ERIC ARTHUR was, at his death in 1982, professor emeritus in the School of Architecture, University of Toronto. He was appointed Companion of the Order of Canada in 1968.

STEPHEN A. OTTO has been a director of the Ontario Heritage Foundation and a member of the Toronto Historical Board.

But Paul said, I am a man
which am a Jew of Tarsus,
a city in Cilicia,
a citizen of no mean city. ACTS 21:39

TORONTO

ERIC ARTHUR

No Mean City

Third Edition

Revised by
STEPHEN A. OTTO

With new essays by Christopher Hume,
Catherine Nasmith, Susan Crean, and Mark Kingwell

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Toronto, No Mean City

Christopher Hume

Like the rest of the world, Toronto is a different place now than it was in 1964 when Eric Arthur published the first edition of his classic book. Back then Toronto was a city of the future, a community whose full greatness still lay well ahead. Now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, that sense of civic optimism remains with us, but diminished. The road to our brighter tomorrow suddenly seems filled with obstacles, from amalgamation, underfunding, and waterfront redevelopment to homelessness and suburban sprawl.

Despite the increasingly metropolitan nature of Canadian society, however, we have been slow to come to the aid of our cities. Although 80 per cent of us now live in urban centres, our peculiar political and legislative history has left Canadian cities unable to deal with the issues that face them today.

Because of this perhaps, *Toronto, No Mean City* is more important and relevant than ever. Four decades after its appearance, Arthur's book has become an essential feature on the intellectual landscape of Toronto. It is one of the ways we learn who we are and come to understand fully what it means to be a Torontonian. Arthur also reminds us of what it means to be part of a city, arguably the greatest of all human creations.

Born in New Zealand in 1898, Eric Arthur moved to Canada in 1923. He had completed his studies in England and accepted an offer to teach architecture at the University of Toronto. When Arthur arrived here, the city was in the midst of an immigration boom that saw its population double. Toronto's long colonial slumber was drawing to a close and the groundwork for future glory was being laid.

During the twenties, a decade of civic advancement, much of the public infrastructure that is now being dismantled so recklessly was put in place. The Toronto Transit Commission, for example, was established in 1921, but

even before that Ontario Hydro had completed its take-over of privately owned electricity companies in Toronto.

The young Arthur soon emerged as a fixture in local architectural circles as well as in the larger community. Perhaps the fact that he came from the generation that started life with horse and buggy and ended it with space travel enabled him to appreciate the importance of both past and present, history and modernity.

More than anything, it may have been the remarkable scope of Arthur's passions that makes him a unique and crucial figure. *Toronto, No Mean City* is more than an exploration of our history and a lament for our lost architectural heritage, it is also a celebration of what the city might become.

Eric Arthur was there when the city's heritage preservation movement began organizing in the 1930s. And he was there decades later when Viljo Revell's extraordinary proposal for Toronto City Hall was chosen through an international design competition. Without Arthur, a champion of contemporary architecture who helped drag the city out of its smug parochialism, that competition would never have been held. Without that competition, the most significant piece of civic architecture in Toronto would never have been built. Who can say how that would have affected this city and its very image of itself?

'Taller buildings will be built before the end of the century here and elsewhere in North America,' Arthur prophesies in *No Mean City,* 'but there will be no comparable or more renowned city hall.'

The important thing is not that he was right – though he was – but that he had such unquestioned confidence in Toronto. More than anything, this assumption of greatness forms the subtext of his book. Arthur was well aware of the failings of his adopted hometown, especially the sometimes stultifying conservatism, even timidity, of its residents. He quotes none other than Charles Dickens, who visited Toronto in 1842 on a lecture tour. For the most part, the great writer liked what he saw, but not entirely. In a letter to a friend, Dickens didn't mince words: 'The wild and rabid Toryism of Toronto,' he complained, 'is, I speak seriously, appalling.' Some things never change! Or so it seems.

But even Toryism has changed; the town presided over by the Family Compact has grown into a multicultural metropolis where more than 130 languages are spoken. Fuelled by waves of post-war immigration, Toronto is a true city of the world.

The advent of amalgamation on 1 January 1998 had a dramatic impact on Toronto. Imposed on an unwilling city and its suburban communities by the provincial government, it brought together the former municipalities of York, East York, North York, Scarborough, Etobicoke, and Toronto. Though it instantly created the fifth-largest city in North America, the process was by all accounts rushed and chaotic. Indeed, as this is being written, amalgamation remains a work in progress.

With annual expenditures of nearly $7 billion, the new City of Toronto – the 'Megacity' – has a larger budget than all but four Canadian provinces.

However, it still does not have control over its own economic destiny as it must apply to Queen's Park for legislative permission even for something as minor as speed bumps on city streets.

As Toronto's size and governance have changed, so has its appearance. The condominium boom that started in the early 1980s and continues into the 2000s has altered the face of the city irrevocably. Though the architectural quality of these condos leaves much to be desired, the wave of residential towers has brought tens of thousands of new residents into the heart of Toronto.

Arthur understood that cities must grow in order not to die, but he insisted that they should do so intelligently. Discussing the administration of the Honourable Peter Russell, who headed Upper Canada after Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe and his family returned to Great Britain in 1796, Arthur writes that 'a form of zoning was inaugurated to keep the town compact in the face of a tendency, not unknown today, to sprawl in more than one direction.'

Needless to say, sprawl in the eighteenth century wasn't what it is today. Arthur knew that, of course, but his observation reminds us that certain principles of city building pertain regardless of time or place.

Toronto, No Mean City also reminds us that a community's history lives on in its present and that although the past can be torn down, covered over, and ignored, it can never be obliterated. It survives in countless ways everywhere around us. Appendix C, for instance, 'The Origin of Street Names in Toronto,' comprises a concise yet colourful history of the city's past.

'What we see,' Arthur writes about the early nineteenth-century outpost on the edge of the vast Canadian wilderness, 'is the present-day great city of Toronto in all its cultural aspects, but in miniature.'

What we see now is the city writ large, a vast, pulsating organism stretching farther than these pioneers could possibly have imagined. Not so Eric Arthur, for his faith in Toronto and its future was unbounded. Without a doubt he would have been disappointed by much of what has happened to this city, especially the unabashed banality of much of its architecture, but his love for Toronto would have continued just the same.

Despite its problems, despite its losses, despite itself, Toronto remains, in his memorable phrase, no mean city.

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Build Well

Catherine Nasmith

The message that comes to me from Eric Arthur is the value of building well, not just in the sense of things not falling down, but in the way that building well offers the chance to leave the mark of productive lives. Every architect since Vitruvius has been taught that architecture combines firmness, commodity, and delight. The hardest to achieve is the ephemeral 'delight,' that intangible aspect of design that brings a spring to our step when we find it. There is an understood pact between those who build well and the future generations for whom the work is actually created, that the work will be valued and preserved. If we break that pact, then what incentive is there to strive for delight?

As an educator of architects, writer, practitioner, and citizen, Eric Arthur lived his values. He worked hard to protect Toronto's architectural legacy through writing and activism. He pressed for an international competition for a New City Hall, and taught and practiced modern architecture. In *Toronto, No Mean City* Arthur noted the architectural ambitions of the nineteenth century and the pride taken in the presentation of success through excellence in architecture. As Arthur was writing in the 1960s, this attitude lived on in a different style in great modern buildings such as Toronto City Hall, the O'Keefe Centre, and the Toronto Dominion Centre. At the same time, the rising preservation movement began to protect the great buildings of the previous century, including Old City Hall, St Lawrence Hall, and Osgoode Hall.

The complex of New City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square embodies Toronto's mid-century optimism and remains one of the world's great modern civic complexes. Framed by Osgoode Hall and Old City Hall, it shows how Arthur believed Toronto would progress. Over time the best would be kept while the second rate would be weeded out and replaced with the more ambitious. If expansion and renewal of the city created

opportunities to build well, then of course it was something to look forward to.

Would Eric Arthur still think of Toronto as *No Mean City*? How is Toronto doing in building the kind of city he envisioned? In 2003 it is much harder to look confidently to the future. Toronto is a social miracle, a place of great financial opportunity and success, but signs of stress are appearing everywhere as our growth outpaces our ability to manage it. Toronto has slipped from the 'liveable city' of the seventies and eighties. The promise of preservation, dawning as Eric Arthur wrote, and gaining momentum as Stephen Otto revised in 1986, is dimming in the post-amalgamation era. Toronto seems to have lost the link between building a successful financial and social city and building a beautiful city.

As the new shotgun marriage of the six former municipalities struggles with financial challenges and with clashes between suburban and urban values, there has never been more debate about urban issues. Will Toronto go on to new heights, will citizens regain their connection with City Hall, or will the city continue in the decline that seems to have occurred so rapidly since amalgamation?

In part due to an inadequate heritage preservation system in Ontario, building preservation exists in a culture of confrontation and compromise, not celebration. With weak heritage laws, lack of public resources devoted to preservation, and lack of financial support for owners of heritage property, it is very difficult to keep the pact. The wonderful 'live and let live' attitude of the city fails us in the arena of cultural preservation. Many fine buildings are buried under unsympathetic alterations and garish signage. Often we are unable to preserve buildings whole and are left with facades grafted onto buildings designed for a shorter life than the original.

Strong political will is needed to preserve the best of the past as the city renews itself. In the 1970s Council pressured Eatons until their project saved Holy Trinity Church and Old City Hall and delivered a great new space, Eb Zeidler's galleria. In the 1980s BCE Place preserved less, but gave us Calatrava's extraordinary white steel cathedral of commerce. Political will was sadly lacking, however, when the amalgamated Council gave permission for the destruction of the Concourse building and for absurdly high buildings adjacent to the city's birthplace at Fort York. Only the elevations of the lower three floors of the Concourse building, with mosaic murals by J.E.H. Macdonald will survive intact; a pastiche of the rest will be applied to the bottom part of an undistinguished new office tower. Fort York may regain its dignity if plans to bury the Gardiner Expressway and create new parkland around it go forward, but it is equally possible that the city's birthplace could spend the next hundred years lorded over by two elevated highways and high rise buildings. If Council doesn't demand the best, it will not get it.

Failure by Council to demand and protect excellence in the physical environment is equalled by the corporate failure to deliver it. In the last thirty years the development industry has grown to dominate building construc-

tion, becoming the middleman between building occupant and architect. The industry supplies commodity with little firmness or delight. The lack of corporate or political leadership creates an overwhelming sense that new buildings will be detrimental, not helpful, to city building.

In this worrying downward trend there are some strong countercurrents. Toronto clearly still knows how to build well. Projects like the reconstruction of St George Street, Cumberland Park, the Music Garden, a number of exceptional new buildings at the University of Toronto and York University, as well as several wonderful new library projects demonstrate that when the city's talent and resources are brought together great things can happen.

Three of the city's major cultural institutions are challenging the prevalent 'good enough for Toronto' attitude. The Royal Ontario Museum, The Art Gallery of Ontario, and the Ontario College of Art and Design are engaging international architectural talent to undertake major renewal of their buildings and generating all kinds of debate about architecture in the process.

Even though there has been little support on the Council for defending or promoting architectural excellence, Toronto citizens continue to work for better. After a short post-amalgamation flirtation with abandoning New City Hall for the more prosaic Metro Hall, they convinced the new City Council to embrace the delight of Viljo Revell's masterpiece.

The strong tradition of citizen involvement is still alive, struggling against additional layers between themselves and council. A grassroots committee raised private funds to improve the quality of the new suicide barrier for the monumental Prince Edward Viaduct. Citizen-initiated heritage conservation districts are spreading from Cabbagetown to Rosedale and perhaps beyond to Don Mills. The determined Citizens for the Old Town defied expert opinion and found the archeological remains of Upper Canada's first parliament buildings – in the parking lot of a car wash! This amazing discovery has challenged all levels of government to at last recognize the place where Ontario's democratic traditions originated.

A handful of private companies are leading the way in linking good design, preservation, and marketing success. At 20 Niagara Street an architect-led development company constructed a new 'loft' condominium that sold out quickly and has been much copied. In the shoulder areas of King and Spadina and King and Parliament, a smart new planning regime has encouraged the reuse of heritage buildings and sensitive infill around them. Two projects, one at 401 Richmond Street West and the other at the former Gooderham and Worts distillery, are capturing the energy of Toronto's artists and creative industries to revitalize large abandoned industrial spaces. On a smaller scale, along the city's main streets, a handful of young owners are restoring their buildings with great care.

There are encouraging signs from government as well. In response to concerted public pressure, senior levels of both provincial and federal governments are looking to strengthen the heritage preservation system with tax incentives for owners of heritage buildings. The Ontario government has announced a review of the Ontario Heritage Act. The city's new official

plan contains a campaign for beautiful places and is strongly encouraging the replacement of the first generation of single-storey commerical buildings along the suburban arterials with higher, mixed-use buildings – a wonderful opportunity for building well.

Even though there is not much visible evidence of it on Toronto's streets yet, design culture is enjoying a renaissance. In 2002, during Doors Open, Toronto's third annual celebration of the city's great architecture, 135,000 visits to the over one hundred buildings clearly demonstrated the public appetite. Many talented young architects and designers, soured by the limited opportunities for creativity in the development industry, are honing their skills designing furniture and clothing and are competing successfully in the international market. Shops selling beautifully designed modern housewares and furniture are opening on every corner. Design magazines are selling well in Toronto; several are published here. In an effort to keep the pact with twentieth-century architects, the Toronto Society of Architects has mapped one hundred important post-war buildings. This initiative will no doubt lead to better public understanding and protection of modern work before more is lost.

If this renewed interest in design and architecture continues to grow, the politics of development in Toronto may change for the better. Every new project may once again be seen as a chance to move beyond the 'good enough' mentality, and as an opportunity to build well. Every project could enhance our streets and our city. We could build a city that matches our great social and financial achievements, a city we would be proud to pass on to our descendents. Then it would be their turn to keep the pact.

Le Toronto Imaginaire

Susan Crean

Looking across time into the faces of Toronto's buildings is like looking through the family photo album. Architecture is personal that way. On the one hand, it is history in visible form, defining places where remarkable events took place, and expressing the values and attitudes of the society, the architects, and the owners who actually built the buildings all that lengthening while ago. Yet, architecture is also a rolling canvas against which succeeding generations enact their lives. All of us living in Toronto today share history with the intersection of King and Toronto Streets where Lount and Mathews were hanged after the Farmer's Revolt of 1836, not far from the building where Conrad Black ensconced himself when he first became a tycoon in the seventies. We share it with Christie Pits, where the race riots took place in 1933 and baseball is still played, with the Arts and Letters Club on Elm Street, where the Group of Seven and their friends met in the twenties and literary awards are celebrated today, and with Convocation Hall, which has seen tens of thousands of students graduate from the University of Toronto, heard the words of some of the world's great thinkers, and embraced the energy of the city flowing like tidewater through its doors; people come to witness, to learn, to share, to remember.

From such buildings the strands of personal memory spin out a community wide and many lifetimes deep. In the case of Convocation Hall, my own memories run to gatherings at the end of International Women's Day marches in the eighties, the Dalai Lama's teachings in the nineties, Toni Morrison's lectures last year, and (somewhere in between) Timothy Findlay reading Beatrix Potter's *Peter Rabbit* at a P.E.N. benefit. This is the soul side of a city; everyday life exerting itself in and around the architecture, culture making itself known. It is glimpsed in old news footage and documentary films such as Lorraine Segato's *QSW – The Rebel Zone* about the Queen Street arts scene before the chainstores; in novels like Michael Ondaatje's *In*

the Skin of the Lion; in poems like Lillian Allen's 'Rub A Dub Style Inna Regent Park'; and in the music of Segato's own band, the Parachute Club, whose signature song 'Rise Up, Rise Up'* was sung on the picket line during the Eaton's Strike in 1985. You can see it in the photographs of Michel Lambeth (to whom Ondaatje dedicated his book), who was busy watching Toronto at work and play during the decades when my generation was growing up: boys down in the Don Valley climbing about the pillion feet of the Bloor Street Viaduct, children behind the stalls at the St Lawrence Market or waiting for the Santa Claus parade, artists hanging out in Hayter Street, Eastern European husbands, purses in hand, trailing their wives at Allen Gardens, exotic dancers lounging in their dressing room at the CNE. Lambeth found grit and character in these scenes and left us candid views of people living their lives and being themselves.

Lambeth† also left a huge catalogue of images documenting the comings and goings of the artists' community he was part of in the sixties and seventies: photos taken in people's studios, at art openings, at theatre rehearsals, at artists' meetings and demonstrations, and backstage at the Riverboat when Gordon Lightfoot was starting out and Sylvia was still with Ian. Lambeth's photojournalism is redolent with cultural history. He witnessed a world that we have left behind, where artists were rebels and outlaws by definition. Culturally speaking, Toronto *was* a mean city when Eric Arthur wrote this book in 1963; despite its grand architectural past and its burgeoning arts scene, Toronto was a city that denied that art comes from within. The downtown was empty on weekends. People scoffed at plans for a new city hall that included a large public square. Toronto wasn't Rome, they grumbled. Marshall McLuhan explained it later when he commented that while Europeans might be in the habit of going outdoors to socialize Canadians prefer to go indoors. There was truth to that insight then; it seemed to square with the notion of Canada as *un pays d'hiver.* But in the following decades everything changed as the city core was revitalized and neighbourhoods reclaimed territory there. The atmosphere heated up with the music and panache of young people and of Black culture in particular. Artists made a point of doing all sorts of things outdoors and all sorts of people were lured to the resulting folk music festivals, street fairs, poetry readings, and peace marches. This trend continued into the eighties and nineties with Caribana, Word on the Street, the Gay Pride Day Parade, and Shakespeare in the Park. Nathan Phillips Square has become a hub of civic activity, a contemporary *agora* where speeches, performances, and art exhibitions, celebrations, demonstrations, and public rituals, official and impromptu, happen all year long.

Since the last edition of this book was published in 1986, Toronto has grown into its title. It has acquired an edge, become cosmopolitan. On the

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*Lyrics by Lynne Fernie

†See Maia-Marie Sutnik, 'Michel Lambeth, Photographer,' exhibition catalogue, Art Gallery of Ontario, 1998

one hand, it has realized the promise of the cultural battles of the seventies, the political movement that produced a host of small theatres and artist-run spaces that dot the downtown (Tarragon, Theatre Passe Muraille, Open Studio, and A-Space). On the other hand, it has been redefined – reinvented really – by the diversity of cultural traditions alive in the community. This is reflected in the existence of arts organizations such as Native Earth Performing Arts, the theatre company that introduced Tomson Highway and 'The Rez Sisters' to the world and that turns twenty this year. It is revealed in the international careers of artists like Oscar Peterson, Raymond Moriyama, Rohinton Mistry, and Deepa Mehta, all of whom call Toronto home.

Today Toronto is a city full of artists and creative people, an energy centre that people come to to make a career in the arts, in design, in music, and in the media. Every autumn the international film world shows up for the Toronto International Film Festival and not long afterwards the literati appear to take part in Harbourfront's International Festival of Authors. Celebrities, foreign and domestic, come to town and everybody dresses up. These events are the outward signs of success. The inward signs include the effect artists have had on the city by virtue of their ebullience and collective imagination. The painters and musicians Lambeth photographed, for instance, took over parts of Toronto – neglected and therefore affordable parts – and began making things happen. Their activity attracted attention, people, and eventually the investment that would push prices up and the artists out and on to other sections of town. They worked like a guerrilla urban renewal project whose long-term trajectory can be traced from Gerrard Street to Yorkville, down to Queen Street West, and from there to points further west and east and even north. Out of art and community came culture.

Artists no longer huddle in the cracks of this city; their presence has become visible, and not just in Gap jeans ads. Film crews are a familiar sight with their spotlights, trailers, and traffic controllers wielding clipboards. Live music is as ubiquitous as Much Music is in your face: the station's mobile unit blasting through the east side wall of its studio on Queen Street announcing its street-smart irreverence. Even visual artists have made an impression on the cityscape as never before: Noel Harding's giant planters (*Elevated Wetlands*) alongside the Don Valley Parkway, Eldon Garnet's essay on time ('Time and a Clock') on Queen Street at Broadview, Michael Snow's gaggle of fans (*The Audience*) at the Skydome, and Barbara Klunder's wild, whimsical wall at the (now defunct) Bamboo Club. Dozens of such installations, murals, and sculptures have inveigled their way into our daily lives. Who hasn't dashed past Charlie Pachter's hockey players at the College Street subway stop or felt the gloomy gaze of John B. Boyle's William Lyon MacKenzie at Queen? The nineties added something totally unexpected to this mix when graffiti artists turned up in their uninhibited dozens, taking possession of whatever bare wall space they could find. Spreading their tags and their talent up and down the back alleys of the inner city, along railway passages and warehouse fences, they have refused all the usual venues and written their messages large.

So it isn't only that thousands make their living working in the cultural industries here, and that some artists have become genuine celebrities, which prompts me to note that the city of my youth, a place to be *from*, has become a place to *be*. Toronto, the hometown, the destination, the ancient meeting place, and post-modern panoply has been imagined into being.

Toronto in Season: 1986 and After

Mark Kingwell

Not many people would honestly claim to miss Exhibition Stadium. As a venue for professional sports, rock concerts, monster truck rallies, or really anything at all, it was, to say the least, poor. Baseball games, especially those early-season contests that mean so much to winter-addled fans, were marred by sleet and snow. More than one home opener I attended became an exercise in human endurance, not to mention an unpleasant punchline to tired American jokes about life in igloo-land Canada.

Even in summer, high winds and seagulls blew in from the nearby lake to play havoc with long-ball flightlines and Dave Winfield put-out throws alike. Football season was a constant weather crapshoot and by late in the CFL season the place was all but uninhabitable. The sole Grey Cup game I attended at Exhibition Stadium was also the single most miserable sporting event experience in my memory bank, a bone-chilling rain-to-snow ordeal unredeemed by pulls of whisky from a smuggled flask. The sightlines were such that big outdoor shows – Queen, Michael Jackson, and David Bowie are the ones I remember from the early 1980s, each one of them somebody else's idea – had to be reproduced on a massive television screen to avoid having the protagonists reduced to barely visible posturing miniatures.

It was a terrible place, in short, and everybody knew it. The buildings that have overtaken it in our civic fabric, the SkyDome and the Air Canada Centre, are at least impressive attempts to solve problems of exposure and location that Exhibition Stadium by nature could not. And yet, there are memories to cherish even here, our very own mistake by the lake that was nonetheless what we still want a baseball stadium to be, a park.

On summer days in 1983, before Major League Baseball virtually eliminated the weekday afternoon game, a few of us used to slip away from my office as editor of the University of Toronto undergraduate newspaper, *The Varsity* – usually myself and the tall managing editor, David Evans, plus a

straggling copyeditor or two – and ride the Bathurst streetcar down to the shore to watch the Jays tangle with the White Sox or Tigers or Indians.

Or there were the evening games the summer after with my sweet baseball-loving girlfriend, and the long walks home together to a not-yet-hip College Street up through the Dufferin Gate and on to Strachan Park and the humid heart of the city, with the rows of narrow brick houses and sounds of Portuguese and Italian, the two of us stopping to kiss every few blocks along the way. Sure, we cared who won or lost, but mostly we cared that it was there, baseball, for the warm afternoon or evening's taking. There were, too, those wonderful late-summer games whose tickets got you into the CNE for free and allowed you to snake through the clanging midway on your way to the gate.

I left Toronto, and Canada, in the fall of 1985 and would not return to live here until 1991 after a six-year sojourn in graduate schools in Britain and the United States. The whole time I was away I lived and died with the Blue Jays; so much so that, like other fans, I experienced the thrill of the consecutive early-90s World Series victories with a strong admixture of anti-climax. The tough years were 1985 and 1986, when the most talented team in baseball nevertheless failed to go all the way in those agonizing late-season runs for first place against the Red Sox and Yankees. Walking the streets of Edinburgh or London in those days before the Internet or SkyTV, I would scan the agate in the sports section of the *International Herald-Tribune* for the outcomes of games two days old, my heart rising and sinking as if confronted by wartime dispatches from the front.

It's hard to square those days, even the city-wide enthusiasm of the early nineties, with the apathetic turnout at today's Jays games in the dim, echoey SkyDome. There is no doubt it is an impressive feat of engineering, enshrined on stop-motion video in the Cooperstown Hall of Fame, but the SkyDome leaves me cold. It is loud and sound-killing at the same time. The Moonraker-style roof is a wonder to watch opening or closing and makes those frigid season-bookend games a thing of the past, but it encloses fans in an airless gloom.

It's not really fair to make the comparison, the places are so different, but notice how Seattle's Mariners, chastened by their experience with the crumbling KingDome, solved the problem of a retractable roof by fashioning a gorgeous neo-traditional baseball-only stadium, Safeco Field, and then erected a kind of massive shed-cover – reminiscent of the corrugated-steel metalwork of the nearby railyards – that moves back and forth on a simple rolling frame. Inside Safeco, even with the roof over the stands, you feel both protected and open to the air. Fan sound is concentrated and bright, as in all the best baseball yards; no matter how far away your seat, you feel close to the action. Plus, the sushi is actually good.

As I said, no fair. And anyway, what have the Mariners done lately? The last half of the 1980s and first years of the 1990s were heady days for baseball fans here in Toronto, the other half of the expansion class of 1977. I moved back to the city, my graduate school sojourn completed, delighted to find

Torontonians in the grip of baseball fever. Of course Toronto is a hockey town at heart – forgive the understatement – and Jay mania proved to be temporary, fickle, and so far unrepeated; but coming from Connecticut, where I'd spent four years trying to find friends with cars who would drive with me up I-90 to watch the Boston Red Sox AA farm team in New Britain, it was a straight-up pleasure to join the throngs, skin colour of every hue and accent of every inflection, then crowding into the Dome.

As the *Globe and Mail*'s Stephen Brunt wrote of the first World Series victory, as fans we hardly deserved it. No courtship, no hardship, no need to cultivate the aggressive wryness of the Red Sox or, especially, Cubs fan, denied the prize for so long. At Fenway Park, where fans have not scented a title for eighty-five years and more, hawkers offer t-shirts that say 'Any team can have a bad century.' Here in Toronto, just fifteen years into the franchise's life, it was all ours; and then, miraculously, again the very next year. We liked to talk about the frustrations of those mid-1980s teams, but really, it was a fast ascent – and as quick a decline.

That is the nature of sports, sometimes, as it is of the cities that support them. Nowadays it can be hard to find a Toronto sports bar willing to cede its giant TV screen to a World Series game if it conflicts with a meaningless early-season Leafs contest. By the same token, I have spent spring nights in New York unable to locate a single bartender who would switch over to the Stanley Cup finals if the Yankees or Knicks were in town. The seasons have grown too long, sure, but there's also the shifting fabric of a city's psyche – and its skyline. The Dome no longer inspires the strong reactions it once did; it has settled into its chunk of railway land in the shadow of the CN Tower, another downtown landmark that tends to become invisible through familiarity. The Jays have slipped from their role as 'Canada's Team,' when an upside-down flag was a major international incident, back to the merely civic status enjoyed, if that's the word, by most squads. And no matter how much some of us love baseball, they will never nestle in the hearts of Torontonians the way the surly Leafs do.

Nor, for that matter, will the Raptors, the most obvious change to Toronto's sportscape since 1986. Together with their impressive new house, the Air Canada Centre, the Raptors bespeak a twenty-first-century version of the city, Americanized and slick. Though located far downtown, the team has an out-of-town feeling and a substantially suburban fan base, young and racially diverse, quite different from any other team in the city. It is a sign of Toronto's critical mass, I think. You'll find the same thing in Los Angeles, or New York, where the fans gathered for a Rangers game deep inside one of the levels of Madison Square Garden, that intricate spaceship on Eighth Avenue, are noticeably whiter and more working-class than the Manhattan norm; Jerseyites and Bronxers all sporting team jackets, mullets, and ballcaps and nowhere to be seen on the daytime streets.

The Raptors played their pre-ACC games in a weird semi-enclosed version of the SkyDome, the hardwood floor and a bank of seats tacked awkwardly onto one row of permanent stands, and they were surely glad when

the sleek new building was finally ready for their rock and roll sports show. The Leafs also moved to the ACC when it was completed, along the way dooming old Maple Leaf Gardens to history's garbage bin. This is a clear loss, but one of those things that only cranky old men can really complain about with conviction: you have to earn your association with the Gardens, usually over decades. Still, I loved the place for all kinds of oddball reasons: because it was nothing like a garden but called that anyway, after the great irrational tradition; because I witnessed some great hockey games there, also some formative rock-concert moments during the early 1980s, with the likes of Bruce Springsteen, Elvis Costello, Neil Young, and Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers; and because my father grew up in a house, itself long gone, right across the street from it.

If you live in a city long enough, going away and returning, these connections get both made and then, like it or not, broken. Nowadays I walk to work along the street where my mother and my aunt went to high school in the 1950s. On summer Sundays I go to Christie Pits, where they used to swim and play ball, and watch those other Maple Leafs, the semi-pro baseball team, tilt with their rivals from the small towns of southern Ontario. I feel that weird glow that is part misplaced nostalgia and part straight sadness – the city's poignant intimation of mortality. How long will these things last? Already part of my mother's school, on Brunswick Avenue, has been closed, the building, formerly a residence for the Loretto nuns who no longer do all the teaching, taken over for condominium development. I sit in the little rickety stands at the Pits, eating a hot dog, and think maybe I should buy a place over there on Brunswick, in the neighbourhood, and so make concrete my memories and connections to the Toronto of my parents.

Not even that would stop the passage of time, of course. In cities, as in sports, where hope must spring eternal if it's to spring at all, they like to say 'there's always next year.' Yes. And, like it or not, the one after, and the one after that ...

Preface

to the Third Edition

I remember more than twenty years ago receiving a gift of the first edition of *Toronto, No Mean City* and, book in hand, setting out to explore the city in which I had been born. What pleasure there was in seeing parts of Toronto as if for the first time and in sensing the continuity of history that was represented by its older buildings. My gratitude to the late Eric Arthur for this birthright was one reason for undertaking the third edition of this book. His pride in our city and his enthusiasm were inspiring.

Another reason existed in the impressive quantities of information and many new pictures that have come to light since the first edition was published. Newspapers of the nineteenth century now have yielded building reports and construction-tender calls that fill out the decades before the appearance of the *Canadian Architect and Builder* magazine in 1888. From these sources it has been possible to enrich and expand the biographies of Toronto architects in appendix A and to add a new appendix B for builders and contractors. Among the pictures uncovered since 1964 are twenty-five of the earliest photographs of Toronto, found a few years ago in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Library in London, England; six of those views of 1856–7 are included in this edition. Of particular significance, however, was the presentation in 1979 of the J.C.B. and E.C. Horwood Collection of architectural drawings and related materials to the Ontario Archives. In making his magnificent gift – the largest collection of its kind in Canada and the most valuable donation ever received by that institution – the late Eric Horwood hoped that it would help to strengthen our collective memory of our architectural accomplishments. He would, I think, approve of its extensive use in the preparation of this new edition.

Toronto, No Mean City has been the most significant book on the fabric of the city to appear since John Ross Robertson's *Landmarks* was published during the first decade of this century. The interest in older buildings that

both books fostered was reinforced by Canada's Centennial in 1967 and the passage of the Ontario Heritage Act in 1975. Although almost twenty buildings have been demolished that existed in 1964 and were illustrated by Professor Arthur, it is not too much to hope that the third edition will foster a renewed vigilance over those buildings that remain.

Edith Firth, to whom Professor Arthur was greatly indebted for her assistance with the first and second editions of this book, has been a partner once again in the preparation of this edition, giving generous encouragement and needed advice. I am very grateful also to Robert Hill and Kent Rawson for making available their extensive research notes on Toronto buildings and architects. They, as well as Marion MacRae, Shirley Morriss, Douglas Richardson, Jack Richardson, and David Roberts, responded to my numerous questions with helpful information and were good enough to suggest many improvements to the appendixes on architects and builders.

Several of the new illustrations could not have been included except for the interest and kindness of Jim Burant, John Crosthwait, Mike Filey, Helen Heward, Donna Ivey, Tom McIlwraith, Rollo Myers, and Joan Winearls. In revising the text, appendixes, and captions I have appreciated the insights and important information provided by Jim Bitaxi, Donald Brown, William Cooke, Pleasance Crawford, Lynne DiStefano, Jim Gillespie, William Greer, Dennis Reid, Thomas Ritchie, Judith Saunders, Roy Schaeffer, Pamela Manson Smith, William Withrow, John Zigur, and Willie Zimmerman. I would be remiss were I not also to acknowledge the co-operation I received from many members of the staff of the Metropolitan Toronto Library and the City of Toronto Archives. I am grateful also to Wayne Daniels, who prepared the index. The Central Records unit of the Department of the City Clerk and the Records unit of the Department of Buildings and Inspections were most helpful in confirming the dates for construction and demolition. Throughout the book inclusive dates for the erection of a building are given where available; where only one date is given, it indicates the first year of substantial construction.

A grant from the Ontario Arts Council that offset out-of-pocket expenses in obtaining the new illustrations for this edition was much appreciated.

STEPHEN A. OTTO
22 February 1986

Foreword

Too little has been written about the early development of Toronto and the reasons for its growth. When my grandfathers came to live here about one hundred years ago, one from Scotland, the other from what was once known as Lower Canada, Toronto was a city of some sixty or seventy thousand people. At the beginning of that century it was nothing but a frontier village of no more than four or five hundred inhabitants. Today the population exceeds one and a half million, and there is no end in sight.

In writing this book, it was not Eric Arthur's purpose to explain why Toronto has grown so big so quickly or to guess what may happen to it in the years that lie ahead. However, in providing us with this record of the things our predecessors built, often with difficulty and with limited resources, he has given us some insight into their characters. Torontonians have been noted for their drive, energy, and ambition, for a materialistic urge to get ahead. In the process they found time to create some things that were handsome, even beautiful. It is these that should be preserved.

Toronto is no longer exclusively British or colonial in outlook. It is now a cosmopolitan city whose people have come from all corners of the earth. This makes it a much more lively and interesting place to live and provides an atmosphere in which the arts can flourish and develop. Nevertheless, the same characteristics of drive, energy, and ambition are still very much in evidence. We would not wish it to be otherwise.

Some years ago Professor Arthur told me of his plans to write this book about the origins and early architecture of Toronto. He asked me to write a foreword. As one who was born and brought up in Toronto, I was pleased that a man of Professor Arthur's talents was going to write a book about our city, and I was flattered at the thought of being associated with it even in a minor way.

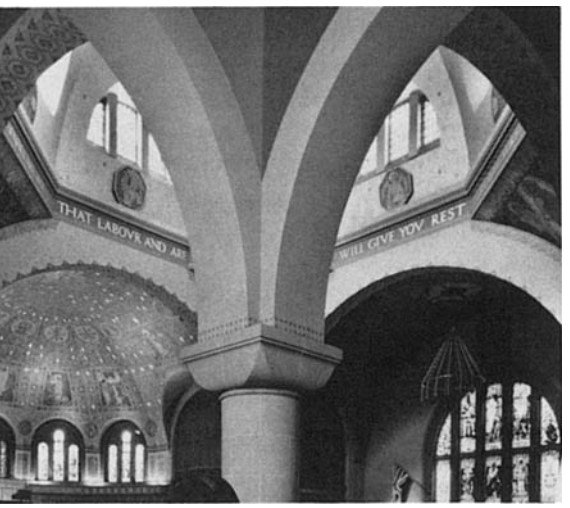
However, our conversation proved to be one of the most expensive ex-

periences I have ever had. Professor Arthur had expressed the wish to include illustrations of the building at 15 Wellington Street West, owned by the firm of which, at the time, I was the senior partner. Shortly after our conversation the building was inspected and found to be unsafe. We were ordered to vacate it. Some of my partners thought that the building should be demolished to make way for a more modern structure. Others felt that this might spoil Professor Arthur's book, on which he had been working for some years. They said that if I were to write the foreword, the only decent thing for us to do would be to renovate the building. This argument prevailed, and the old Commercial Bank building at 15 Wellington Street West has been completely rebuilt from the inside out. It was a costly undertaking.

However, it is a lovely building. Now it will be preserved for many years, and not only within the pages of this book. I am sure all my former partners are pleased with the decision that was taken, for there cannot be many chartered accountants who, in Professor Arthur's words, occupy 'a truly fine building that cannot help but evoke thoughts of Greece and of Byron, Shelley, Keats, and others.'

I hope his labours will inspire others to preserve some of the few architectural gems of earlier times that still remain. One of these is St Lawrence Hall on King Street at Jarvis. A building of a much later period renovated recently is St Anne's Church on Gladstone Avenue, north of Dundas. The interior of this church was decorated by local artists who later became famous as the Group of Seven. In a pulsating, vital metropolis like Toronto, with its ever-changing population, there is a need to be reminded of the things that were created by those who went before us. Professor Arthur's book meets this need admirably.

W.L. GORDON
31 December 1963



St Anne's Church, Gladstone Avenue (1907), Ford Howland, architect: one of the most colourful church interiors in Toronto, a labour of love on which several of the Group of Seven painters left their mark

Acknowledgments

For a quarter of a century or more this study of Toronto has never been far from my thoughts, and it is inevitable, however much I regret it, that many acquaintances and some old friends who provided information will be forgotten in these acknowledgments. We may have met by chance at dinner, on the street, or in a bus, and, rather as in the stories about subversive characters one reads in the newspapers, an address has been given, a snapshot or a letter has changed hands, and we have parted. The number of such encounters, if not legion, must number hundreds, and they have led more than once to old books, old photographic collections, and not least to old people.

It has been my good fortune to make my investigations into old Toronto at a time when many who are still living remember with enviable clarity the buildings and people of the later nineteenth century that are of vital importance in the story of the city. So many of our ancient landmarks are lost that the architectural historian of even so recent a period as the nineteenth century must frequently feel that he is concerned with some ancient civilization like Pompeii or Herculaneum. Fortunately, he can be brought back to reality by meeting older citizens like William Wadsworth, QC, who remembers vividly having Sunday tea with his mother at the house of her uncle, Colonel Frederic Cumberland, the designer of St James' Cathedral. Even more impressive and more indicative of the youthfulness of Toronto are Mr Wadsworth's records of his great-grandfather Thomas Ridout, who came to Toronto when the population was only fifty. For the interviewer, Max Beerbohm's phrase, 'the intruder from posterity,' cannot help but come to mind.

Few who recall the seemingly venerable walls of old Trinity (1851) on Queen Street would believe that many now living knew its architect, Kivas Tully, who died in 1905. I myself knew and greatly admired W.A. Langton

and his brother Hugh, the distinguished sons of the great vice-chancellor of the university John Langton, who acted as intermediary between Cumberland, the architect, and Sir Edmund Head in the building of University College in 1856. It is with rather special pride that I can count the late Dr Needler as colleague and friend. He fought in the Riel Rebellion and was a youth when the Metropolitan Church was built. For him, the melancholy story of Mrs Anna Jameson, who died in 1860, seemed that of a near and dear friend rather than of a figure who appeared briefly on the Toronto stage and left, never to return, in 1837. These are but a few of the men and women in that ever-diminishing band whose memories, only slightly dimmed, recall the buildings and the people of the past century.

Fortunately for the architectural historian, there were others, actually living in the nineteenth century, whose love of buildings was second only to their interest in their neighbours. Where they lived, where they worshipped, and where they worked have been the study of several works. Chief, of course, was Dr Henry Scadding's *Toronto of Old*, followed by the monumental records of John Ross Robertson in his *Landmarks of Toronto*. I am bound to acknowledge my profound obligations to both of them. There are other sources of material cited in the bibliography elsewhere in this volume, but I should like to pay special tribute to the late Percy Robinson, whose *Toronto during the French Régime* first introduced me to a period that I found far from negligible in the evolution of Toronto's urban pattern.

But to return to the present. Many have gone, but there are still Torontonians with no personal memories of the nineteenth century who yet, perhaps by reason of their closeness to it as children, have made a study of early buildings and people of that period the habit of a lifetime. From them the most notable contribution was that of the late T.A. Reed, who published little but left a sizeable collection of photographs to complement the John Ross Robertson sketches in the Metropolitan Toronto Library. Reed was not only an eager collector of Canadiana; he ranked second to none in his love of Toronto.

Less well known, but one who has been tireless in research on my behalf, has been John Songhurst. Mr Songhurst has long been a resident of Toronto and can remember his first interest in buildings as a messenger boy seventy years ago. At the age of seven he received the first volume of the *Landmarks*, and it has been a constant companion ever since. His wife shares his interest, as well she might, having been born in St Lawrence Hall of parents who, like her grandparents, had the custody of the hall in the days of its dignity in the life of the community.

I am particularly indebted to Hugh Robertson, the photographer. His skill is apparent in his work, but had it not been for his interest in the subject and his willingness to work at odd and critical times, many buildings would have perished without record. At various times foundations and friends have contributed towards the cost of photography, and I am happy to express

my gratitude to the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, the Flavelle Foundation, and Harry Kohl.

I am very much obliged to Wallace Bonner of the Toronto Public Library for bringing to life by photography many old maps and hardly discernible pictures; to Uno Prii and Vyt Kvedaris, two young architects, for sketches of similar material; and to Mrs Howard Garfield and Mrs G.E. Edgar for the typing and retyping of these pages.

Professor John Russell of Winnipeg has been a source of inspiration and encouragement over most of the years this book was in preparation, and I can only hope that the book itself may be some sort of requital for his kindness.

I am under various obligations to friends who have provided information on matters of art, technology, or history: to F. de Rege, the consul general of Italy; His Excellency Leo Maynard, the Canadian ambassador to Italy; Dr Emilio Goggio, Alan Jarvis, William Colgate, Mrs Marion Fowler, R.E. Chadwick, L.J. McGowan, George Grainger, and W.E. Fleury.

Finally, there are people and institutions without whom this study of old Toronto would in all probability not have been made. I am chiefly indebted to the president and Board of Governors of the University of Toronto for allowing me sabbatical leave in 1958–9, and to the Canada Council for a very welcome senior grant directed particularly to research into the early architecture of Toronto. I should be remiss if I did not include in these thanks my colleagues in the School of Architecture, whose labours, one must assume, were not lightened by my absence.

The basic material on the origin of street names comes from John Ross Robertson and T.A. Reed, but even their lists left many streets of doubtful or unknown origin. Some yet remain uncertain, but the gap in our knowledge has been greatly narrowed. It is my hope that the publication of the origin of Toronto street names will bring more people to the defence of ancient names when they are attacked by those for whom history has no meaning or importance. Until recently Ann and McGill Streets were not unromantic reminders of Ann McGill, who became the wife of Bishop Strachan, but Ann became Granby as a concession to a long-held Toronto belief that a change of name would raise the tone of a street both socially and morally. Granby, of course, was a marquis. The fact that in 1834 Strachan purchased twenty-five acres north of Gerrard Street out of which he gave the land to the city for Ann, McGill, and part of Carlton Streets carried no weight with Judge Parker, who granted the change. Guy Carleton Wood was Mrs Strachan's brother, and Carlton is misspelled.

I am very aware that there is some presumption in a person of antipodean birth and English education following in the footsteps of Scadding, Robertson, and Robinson as a recorder of old Toronto. My excuse is that the story might well be told again through the eyes of an architect, aided, as his predecessors were not, by photography and the clarity of the modern

printed page. At the same time I am very conscious of the fact that the story of its architecture is part of the social history of Toronto and cannot be told without a knowledge of the political and economic history that, through war and peace, boom and depression, gave it character and life.

In that area of knowledge, I must confess my own inadequacy and my very real debt to Miss Edith Firth. She must be held blameless for any of the errors that appear, inevitably, in these pages. The period in which she is an authority covers the early years of York, Upper Canada; I, with the innocence of a fairly new Canadian and an audacity that at times must have left her breathless, have not hesitated to explore the Toronto scene from Louis XIV to Edward VII. Her painstaking reading of manuscripts and her frequent suggestion of clues that led to English architects like Fowler and Soane can never be repaid.

For many years Mrs Harry Davidson has been a tireless research worker and collaborator in the preparation of the material for this book. Many of the illustrations would have remained hidden but for her zeal in pursuing them in odd places, and the section on street names owes much to her patience and persistence. My very sincere thanks go to her.

The writing of a book makes many inroads on the family and social life of the author, and my thanks go to my wife for her sympathetic understanding of the many problems the work imposed.

Last, but by no means least, is my grateful acknowledgment of the generosity of the J.S. McLean and the Laidlaw foundations, which have helped to make the publication of this book possible.

ERIC ARTHUR
Toronto 1963

Introduction

This architectural history of Toronto has been in the mind of the writer since the time, many years ago, when he first made it a habit of wandering with no fixed objective through the streets of the old town. Thirty-five years ago one could enjoy many thoroughfares that still had about them an air of colonial Upper Canada – a quiet Georgian peace created in part by the low horizontal lines of the two-storeyed, terraced houses. Those streets are now slums or ruins and can be enjoyed, like Ruth Draper with her imaginary garden, only in memory.

But if the architecture is gone, a few individual buildings of an older time remain. The visitor to Paris knows what it is to turn a corner and see a famous monument like the Madeleine for the first time. It is not necessary to leave Toronto to have the same emotional experience; one may have it when one looks north on John from Queen and sees the Grange for the first, or even the tenth time. Osgoode Hall at the head of York and Sir William Campbell's house, which used to close so beautifully the vista of Frederick Street, are not easily forgotten.

The newcomer to Toronto from Europe or Great Britain has probably left a city that was rich in those ancient landmarks that give colour and meaning to history. And there are other newcomers – our own children – for whom the city of Toronto shows few visible signs of its ancient origins or of the various cultural influences that have shaped our architecture since Simcoe chose his capital in York.

In the march of progress we have ruthlessly destroyed almost all our older architecture; street names cherished for a hundred years or more have been altered to suit the whims of the people on the street, and even our most treasured buildings, Fort York, going back to the beginnings of British settlement, have been threatened because the historic soil on which they stood interfered with the curvature of a modern expressway. In our defence

it must be said that the loss of a great deal of early building can be laid to more than one disastrous fire in the days when water pressure was inadequate and fire-fighting equipment was primitive. Whatever the reasons for the destruction of our early architecture, the sad fact remains that the buildings worthy of record from the nineteenth century are, for the most part, churches and university buildings whose safety can be reasonably assured. The rest have disappeared, some without a trace.

It would not be the wish of this writer to condone the destruction of our early buildings, but it would be unfair to compare the interest of the people of London or Edinburgh in the preservation of their ancient monuments with the apparent lack of interest of the citizens of Toronto in theirs. Toronto is a growing city under a pressure that could hardly be conceived of in a city in the United Kingdom, where half-timbered houses can stand on High Holborn in London from Jacobean times and Georgian squares remain untouched by the speculative builder or the financial institution. It has not been so here. What has been saved from wanton destruction or from fire in the last hundred and fifty years is extremely vulnerable in a period of unprecedented growth. As a result, the few idealists who tried to save the Cawthra house at King and Bay knew that they stood little chance against the millions of the Bank of Nova Scotia, which required the site for a new head office. We may regret the loss, but we may feel less humiliated if we think of the chances of survival had the same old house stood at the corner of the Haymarket and Piccadilly.

It was partly the architectural gaps in our history that posed for me the question whether to show only buildings of unquestioned merit or to demonstrate the taste of the century more truthfully by showing a greater number of buildings of unequal architectural quality. The decision to do the latter was supported also by the fact that while not every reader has access to the John Ross Robertson *Landmarks*, many would be interested in illustrations of historic houses, churches, and other buildings that, on a strictly architectural selection, would be discarded.

I have suggested that we in Toronto are curiously apathetic towards our history in terms of landmarks, street names, and the like; indeed, surely no city in the world with a background of three hundred years does so little to make that background known. Our children are brought up to take pride in the British beginnings of the city, but they have a limited knowledge of that vastly more exciting period when the Senecas had a village on the site, when black-robed priests and French noblemen dwelt at times at the mouth of the Humber and wrote glowing letters home to France of the potential of Toronto as a settlement in the empire of Louis XIV. No pageants recall the great events that took place under the French regime: 1959 passed with little comment on the destruction of Fort Rouillé in 1759, and yet, in the opinion of historians, this was the birthplace of a metropolis that now boasts two and a half million souls. Pierre Roy, the Quebec archivist, was moved to say of Fort Rouillé, 'this is the great city of Toronto in embryo – Paris

did not have a more glorious beginning.' In J.E. Middleton's three-volume work on the *Municipality of Toronto*, the French period enjoys a mere ten pages out of a total of over a thousand.

I hope to show in the early part of this book on Toronto that its beginnings are based on use and a road pattern to my mind far more important than that isolated monument Fort Rouillé, housing less than a dozen men. It has become popular to speak disparagingly, or to speak not at all, of the so-called pre-history of Toronto, but from that neglected period we can make more valid comparisons with the birth of Paris in Roman Lutetia and of London in Londinium than that made by Roy.

The comparison, at first sight far-fetched, is between the effect of Roman planning on Paris and London and our present-day use of the location of the old trails. That they are by no means insignificant can be gathered merely from their names – the Don Valley Parkway, the Frederick Gardiner Expressway, and Davenport Road. The most important and the oldest of the old trails followed the Humber. It has disappeared, but its value as a highway to the north has not changed in several hundred years. We replaced it with Highway 400. The monotony of the rest of our street pattern, the gridiron, is a technique of planning that we received as a legacy from Rome via Alexander Aitkin in 1793. It is for these reasons, very real to the architect and the town planner, that the pre-Simcoe period in our history is discussed in some detail.

There is, of course, another reason, and that is the inaccessibility of information for those new and old Canadians who would like to be more familiar with the earliest period. It is to be found chiefly in *Toronto during the French Régime* by Percy Robinson, a book issued first in a limited edition, for many years out of print. In 1697 Father Hennepin dedicated his book on the *New Discovery of a Large Country in America* to 'His Most Excellent Majesty William III,' which Robinson rather slyly suggests 'will not be without significance to those who recall the subsequent devotion of the city of Toronto to that Monarch.' It may well be asked whether our continued devotion to the memory of the House of Orange has not blinded us to the beauty, the tragedy, and the high adventure of the period under the kings of France – the centuries that saw brave men and women bringing civilization into the wilderness, as well as gentlemen explorers, both French and English, with names that rank high in the histories of both countries. Those years saw, too, the arrival of quite a number of rascals of many races, and of dedicated Catholic priests, some of whom were to die at the stake for their faith. All these people knew by reputation the village at the mouth of the Humber and the trails from the north, the east, and the west that led to it. A surprising number knew the site of Toronto from actual experience and left records of their impressions.

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To the memory of

ERIC ARTHUR

1898–1982