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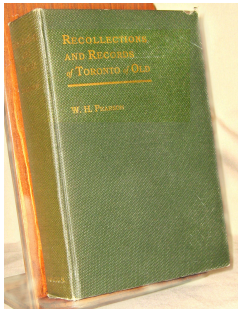
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## Recollections and Records of Toronto of Old - 1914 CA0330



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## About this CD.

The author, William Henry Pearson, was uniquely qualified to write this book. He first came to live in Toronto in 1839 at about 8 years of age. He went on to spend his whole working life in the city, in employment which brought him into daily contact with its inhabitants and made him familiar with its institutions. Several years after his retirement, he was prompted by his friends and - he says - by a sense of civic duty, to make a permanent record of his life's experience, including, as the title says, his "Recollections and Records."

William was a student of everything going on around him, both in the lives of people and in the development of the environment, so that rather than simply regarding these events as a sort of "backdrop" to his own passing life, he considered them something he should capture and record. For instance, shortly after he went to work for the Post Office he started keeping a written record of the deaths of all the people he had had occasion to come into contact with, until, in his retirement his list amounted to some 3,900 individuals.

This is a somewhat difficult book to describe in a paragraph or so simply because it contains the reminiscences and stories accumulated through a whole lifetime and is, consequently, a mixed bag of individual, and often unrelated, memories.

Following an introduction to the old city of Toronto, largely based on his recollection of the buildings, the progress of William's book approximates the passage of time, although the chapters continue to be named for the areas and individual edifices which were central to the events of the time rather than to the dates on which they occurred. Throughout the book the city's inhabitants are introduced (and described) as a result of their connection to a location, or to an event, meaning that it is often not obvious where to look for them. Our computer search facility, however, is extremely useful in unlocking this valuable personal information provided by the book's pages, as all the occurrences of a name can quickly be found.

Once the initial introduction to the city and the chronology of events is complete William continues with a commentary on the influence of civic growth and industrial development and particularly on the influence that the church and its clergy had. This area of the book is particularly rich in references to members of the churches discussed.

Illustrated with artwork and photographs of early Toronto landmarks and portraits of its inhabitants.

# Recollections and Records of Toronto of Old

WITH REFERENCES TO BRANTFORD,  
KINGSTON AND OTHER  
CANADIAN TOWNS

BY

W. H. PEARSON

TORONTO  
WILLIAM BRIGGS  
1914

## PREFACE

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WHEN conversing with friends I have sometimes referred to my early days in Toronto and the great changes which have taken place in the city since then. I have often been told that I should put my recollections in permanent form, but have hesitated undertaking to do this, partly because several books have already been written regarding Toronto of Old, notably Dr. Scadding's valuable and interesting book by that title, Mr. J. Ross Robertson's "Landmarks of Toronto," covering a great deal of ground and containing a vast amount of useful and interesting information, and Mr. C. C. Taylor's "Toronto Called Back," also containing a good deal of interesting matter.

After careful consideration I decided that I would make an attempt to write my recollections, believing that I could add something new, interesting and of some value, and in some cases from a different viewpoint

## PREFACE

from what had already been written and under the belief that it was a duty I owed to the community. I also felt that if I was to write anything it was about time that I did so, having entered upon my eighty-third year.

In my early days I had especially favorable opportunities for securing information and becoming acquainted with the people of Toronto, having been a clerk in the Post Office for seven years, from 1847 to 1854, and consequently brought into contact with a very large portion of the residents. As a matter of fact I knew every person of any prominence in the city, and having a good memory, cultivated by my long training in the Post Office, learned and can still recollect the Christian and surnames, firms and residences of nearly all of the business and professional men of the city and of many others within the time named. After leaving the Post Office I was in the service of the Gas Company for the long period of fifty-four years, and was thereby kept in touch with the public. I have also a clear recollection of the topography of the city in the

## PREFACE

forties and fifties. Of course I have had to draw information from various other sources, and must here express my appreciation of the kindness of those who have so readily furnished information not obtainable from records available to me and to whom hereafter I have made personal acknowledgment. I have covered a good deal more ground than at first intended, as one thing suggested another and subjects which I considered would prove interesting and of some value continued to present themselves.

I have also considered it desirable to present some statistical statements showing the progress and changes which have taken place during a number of years, not only in Toronto but in some other places in Canada, which I have been enabled to do from having the records in my scrap-books and also having some old directories and almanacs. I have personally checked all the calculations and figures in these statements and have verified the dates referred to. As far back as 1853 I commenced keeping a record of the deaths of those with whom I was personally

## PREFACE

acquainted, as well as of a number of prominent men, with their ages, residences, causes and dates of death, and have kept it up until the present time. The list now contains nearly thirty-nine hundred names. It seems a very strange thing to have done, and I hardly know why I commenced keeping it—possibly because the keeping of statistics and records is one of my hobbies. However, it certainly has been admonitory and has proved to be of some practical use in the preparation of this material.

I do not claim any literary merit for these “recollections”—my first attempt at writing anything for publication, excepting Companies’ Reports and a few letters to the newspapers—but have simply endeavored to give a plain, clear, reliable, consecutive and somewhat comprehensive account of the conditions and progress of the city, some important events in its history, a few biographical sketches, some illustrations and portraits and the statistical statements referred to, with the hope that all may prove of some value and interest to the public.



# CONTENTS

---

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTORY . . . . .	11
II. GENERAL DESCRIPTION . . . . .	22
III. THE WATER-FRONT . . . . .	26
IV. KING STREET . . . . .	40
V. WELLINGTON STREET (formerly Mar- ket) . . . . .	44
VI. CHURCH STREET . . . . .	49
VII. DUKE AND DUCHESS STREETS . . . . .	53
VIII. QUEEN (formerly Lot) AND COL- BORNE STREETS . . . . .	56
IX. ADELAIDE AND LOMBARD (formerly March) STREETS . . . . .	63
X. RICHMOND STREET . . . . .	75
XI. FREDERICK AND GEORGE STREETS . . . . .	79
XII. WEST MARKET SQUARE, JARVIS, To- RONTO AND VICTORIA STREETS . . . . .	90
XIII. YONGE STREET . . . . .	93
XIV. BAY, YORK AND SIMCOE STREETS . . . . .	103
XV. THE ISLAND . . . . .	112
XVI. THE DON RIVER . . . . .	115
XVII. RELIGIOUS AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	119
XVIII. THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL CON- DITIONS . . . . .	128
XIX. KINGSTON . . . . .	133
XX. TORONTO IN 1843 . . . . .	142

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXI. THE PROGRESS OF THE CITY . . .	148
XXII. THE GREAT FIRE OF 1849 . . .	155
XXIII. A DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY IN 1850 .	157
XXIV. THE NATIONALITIES . . . . .	163
XXV. BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS . . . . .	168
XXVI. THE POST OFFICE . . . . .	175
XXVII. THE TELEGRAPH . . . . .	185
XXVIII. THE VESSELS, AND THE ONTARIO, SIM- COE AND HURON RAILWAY . . . . .	190
XXIX. THE GAS COMPANY . . . . .	200
XXX. LITERATURE, MUSIC AND ART . . . . .	209
XXXI. THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS . . . .	220
XXXII. LIQUOR DRINKING . . . . .	233
XXXIII. A GENERAL VIEW OF THE CHURCHES IN THE FIFTIES . . . . .	240
XXXIV. ST. JAMES' CATHEDRAL . . . . .	254
XXXV. OTHER CHURCHES . . . . .	271
XXXVI. EARLY METHODIST CHURCHES . . . . .	283
XXXVII. MARCH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH . .	295
XXXVIII. THE RICHMOND STREET WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH . . . . .	300
XXXIX. THE REV. JAMES CAUGHEY—AN APPRECIATION . . . . .	316
XL. THE REV. DR. DOUGLAS—AN APPRE- CIATION . . . . .	333
XLI. THE METROPOLITAN CHURCH . . . . .	342
XLII. THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSO- CIATION . . . . .	353
XLIII. TORONTO OF TO-DAY . . . . .	359

## ILLUSTRATIONS

---

	PAGE
W. H. Pearson . . . . . <i>Frontispiece</i>	
Toronto in 1834 . . . . .	15
Toronto Fish Market, about 1840 . . . . .	31
Toronto Harbor, about 1840 . . . . .	33
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church . . . . .	48
Jesse Ketchum . . . . .	95
Harte's School . . . . .	143
Knox Church . . . . .	149
Toronto in 1854 . . . . .	157
Copper Coins in use in the Forties . . . . .	178
R. F. Easson . . . . .	187
John Harvie . . . . .	193
F. C. Capreol . . . . .	199
E. F. Whittemore and Richard Yates . . . . .	208
Holy Trinity Church . . . . .	271
Richmond Street and Adelaide Street Churches	300
Rev. James Caughey . . . . .	316

# RECOLLECTIONS AND RECORDS

## CHAPTER V.

### *WELLINGTON STREET (FORMERLY MARKET STREET).*

ON the north-west corner of Market and Church Streets was the "Ontario House," subsequently the Wellington Hotel. It was a large three-storey wooden structure with high columns and a verandah, with extensions on Church and Henrietta Streets. The proprietors of the Ontario House until it became the Wellington Hotel were William Campbell, Mr. Deering, my father (from 1839 till 1841), and later on John Hutcheson and David Botsford. On this hotel, as well as the North American, a bell was fixed in a frame on the top of the roof, which was rung half an hour before dinner-time in order to notify the guests. On the west side of the hotel a small lane called Henrietta Street ran from Wellington to King Street where the Albany Club building now stands. On this lane, which was generally in a muddy and filthy condition, were two or three miserable, dilapidated wooden houses and a small cottage in a somewhat better condi-

## OF TORONTO OF OLD

### CHAPTER XIV.

#### *BAY, YORK AND SIMCOE STREETS.*

##### BAY STREET.

ON the east side, between Front and Wellington Streets, were the grounds of the Honorable Robert Baldwin and Mr. Andrew Mercer. Between Wellington and King Streets stood a row of three-storey brick buildings and a roughcast building on the north-east corner of Melinda Street. North from the corner of King Street were a number of private dwellings and on the north-east corner of Adelaide Street the Congregational Church, a wooden building, of which the Rev. John Roaf was pastor.

On the west side between Front and Wellington Streets were a number of three-storey brick dwellings and north of Wellington Street a row of two-storey brick dwellings; then, Mr. John Boyd's Commercial Academy and the Primitive Methodist Chapel (referred to elsewhere). On the north-west corner of King Street was the Bank of Montreal, and farther on the double brick residence of Mr. Hugh Carfrae. Above

## RECOLLECTIONS AND RECORDS

ish North America on the south-east corner of King and Frederick Streets (still standing), the Commercial Bank on King Street (afterwards the store of Angus Dallas and later on the *Globe* office), about where Dunning's Hotel is situated, and the Bank of Montreal on the north-west corner of King and Bay Streets.

### THE HOSPITAL.

The General and only hospital was situated near John Street and faced King Street in a block bounded by King, Adelaide, John and Peter Streets (now covered with buildings). I remember, in 1849, seeing a great number of Irish immigrants—who were ill with what was called the “emigrant fever,” somewhat like the cholera, and which was very fatal—lying on beds or stretchers in rows of sheds, open at the sides, occupying almost the whole of the vacant land—a most pitiable sight!

### THE WATER AND GAS SUPPLY.

There were no water-works until about 1843, when they were established by Mr. Albert Furniss of Montreal. In most of the yards there were wells or pumps, and rain-water was collected in underground tanks

# RECOLLECTIONS AND RECORDS

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS.*

#### THE MILITARY.

THERE were three regiments of the line\*—the Thirty-second, Thirty-fourth and the Ninety-third Highlanders—in Toronto between 1838 and 1843—only two of the regiments being stationed here at the same time. One occupied the old fort and the other Osgoode Hall, the new garrison, where our soldiers are at present stationed, not having been built. On Sundays the soldiers marched in the morning along King Street, headed by their bands, one regiment to St. James' Cathedral and the Highlanders to St. Andrew's Church. This was one of the events of the time.

There was also a company of Lancers, the officers of which were Major Thomas Magrath and Captain James Magrath, of

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\* The soldiers at this time and for a few years after were armed with cumbersome muskets (which were, of course, muzzle-loaded), with flintlocks by which the powder placed in the pan was ignited.

## RECOLLECTIONS AND RECORDS

I was much impressed with the large number of boats in the harbor. There were scores of barges, either being loaded or unloaded, and the numerous French-Canadian sailors or bargemen belonging to them created quite an animated scene while they were engaged at their work. There were numerous tow-boats, a number of schooners and quite a few steamers in the harbor.

The appearance of the city was quite impressive viewed from the water-front and from across the bay, the buildings standing out prominently owing to the rather steep rise of the land.

It was an important military post. The Twenty-third Regiment, the Royal Welsh Fusiliers—I think the full regiment—and some batteries of artillery were stationed there, in addition to the artillerymen at the fort. Frequent reviews, held near Barriefield, across the bay, were a source of much interest to the citizens. The Twenty-third Regiment had a very large fife-and-drum band—I think nearly a hundred in number, it being a hobby of the colonel's—and the nightly tattoos (sometimes by the whole band) were great attractions. Many of the men of the Twenty-third were a rough, drunken lot, and fights amongst themselves and with some of the rougher element in the



## RECOLLECTIONS AND RECORDS

*Globe* newspaper, afterwards the well-known member of the firm of Dunn and Wiman, mercantile agency, and subsequently prominent as an advocate of commercial union between Canada and the United States. He was a wonderfully enterprising, energetic and progressive man and the promoter of many large undertakings, but did not always display wisdom in his methods. He died on February 9th, 1904, at the age of seventy years. Maunsell B. Jackson (previously mentioned); E. W. Gardner, brother-in-law of Mr. J. Ross Robertson; John Dixon, Robert A. Harrison and James Tilt, afterwards a Q.C., and a member of the firm of Messrs. Mulock, Crowther and Tilt, a very sound and safe lawyer. Robert A. Harrison was a son of the clerk of the market. He was a man of great energy, industry and ability, who rose to a high position in the legal profession and became a Judge of one of the Superior Courts. He was the author of the Common Law Procedure Act and the Municipal Manual. He, as well as all the other scholars named excepting Maunsell B. Jackson, have passed away.

John Dixon had a good deal of dry Irish humor, and, though a troublesome boy, was very kind-hearted. He was a son of Mr.

## RECOLLECTIONS AND RECORDS

### CHAPTER XXV.

#### *BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS.*

THE principal wholesale and retail dry goods establishments in Toronto in the latter part of the forties were Messrs. Bryce, McMurrich and Co., William McMaster, Isaac C. Gilmor, Gilmor and Coulson, John Robertson, Shaw and Turnbull, Walter MacFarlane, Ross and McLeod, Andrew McGlashen, A. Lawrie and Co., Bowes and Hall, Scott and Laidlaw, Ross, Mitchell and Co., McKeand and Patterson, John Ewart, Jr., and Co., Peter Paterson, George B. Wyllie, W. L. Perrin and Co., Betley and Kay, and Moffatt, Murray and Co. In this branch of business the Scotch element loomed up very largely. With the exception of Messrs. William McMaster, Matthew Betley, W. L. Perrin and Co., Lewis Moffatt, and Bowes and Hall, all the firms and individuals were Scotch, as were also the managers of the Bank of Montreal (Mr. William Wilson), the Commercial Bank (John Cameron), and the Bank of British North America (W. G. Cassels). The other banks were the Bank of Upper Canada and the

## OF TORONTO OF OLD

Kneeshaw, Vice-President, and John Watson, Secretary. Directors: Charles Berczy, Postmaster; Hugh Scobie, publisher and editor of the *British Colonist*; Hugh Miller, druggist; James Beaty, leather merchant; John T. Smith, hotelkeeper; E. F. Whittemore, merchant; George C. Horwood, hotelkeeper; Richard Kneeshaw, druggist; Peter Paterson, dry-goods merchant; Richard Yates, grocer and tea merchant; R. H. Brett, hardware merchant, and David Paterson, hardware merchant.

On March 22nd the Company obtained an Act of incorporation with an authorized capital of £50,000 currency (\$200,000), the dividends being limited to 10 per cent. per annum. Subsequently, negotiations were entered into with Mr. Furniss for the purchase of the works of the City of Toronto Gas, Light and Water Company, which purchase was consummated in the month of June, 1848, the amount of the purchase money being £22,000, or \$88,000.

Hitherto gas had been supplied both by meter and by flat rate contract, which arrangement was continued for some time. It is somewhat amusing to read the stipulations laid down when gas was supplied by contract. "Lighting must not commence on any day until the sun has set, and all

## OF TORONTO OF OLD

### CHAPTER XXXII.

#### *LIQUOR DRINKING.*

THE custom of drinking intoxicating liquor was very general, and a very large majority of the people used either spirits (generally whiskey), beer or wines at the dinner table. Even amongst the Methodists (principally those from the Old Country), who were supposed to be teetotalers, the use of beer as a beverage was quite common. In fact, Messrs. John Doel, Joseph Bloor and George Rowell, all Methodists, were brewers.

Treating was very common. Instead of tipping a cabman or the driver of a stage, he was usually treated. It was not generally considered disreputable for a gentleman to get drunk after dinner. The custom of men making New Year's Day calls was very general. With refreshments wine was usually served and sometimes stronger beverages, and it was not an uncommon sight to see men reeling through the streets and sometimes uproariously drunk at the close of the day. The physiological effects of

# INDEX

---

	PAGE
Adelaide Street Methodist Church, list of members	288
Allan, The Hon. Wm.....	41, 56
Armstrong, J. R., Jr.....	114
Bagot, Sir Charles.....	138
Baldwin, Mrs. John S., residence.....	54
Baldwin, Rev. Edmund.....	54
Baldwin, Morgan.....	55
Baldwin, Bishop Maurice.....	55
Baldwin, Arthur H.....	55
Baldwin, Hon. Robert.....	222
Baldwin, Robert.....	355
Bank of B. N. A., 1830.....	40
Bank of Upper Canada.....	54
Baptist Church—	
Some of its early ministers.....	296
Officials in 1856 and 1913.....	298
March Street, some prominent members.....	298
Barron, F. W.....	114
Berczy, Charles.....	176, 202-205
Bethune, Donald.....	191
Boulton, Wm. H.....	110
Bowes, John G.....	192
Boyd's Commercial Academy.....	103, 231
Brantford, incidents and the military.....	19
Brent, J. W.....	273
Brunell, Alfred.....	193
Buchanan, Isaac.....	130
Burns, Rev. Dr. Robert.....	149
Burnside, Dr.....	73
Canada Co.'s office.....	41, 79
Capreol, F. C.....	17, 194
“Cherokee,” man-of-war.....	140
Chichester, Sir Charles.....	139, 154
Churches and ministers in 1850.....	240
Churches—	
Relative position in 1850.....	243
Character of services.....	244
Social status of adherents.....	248
Comparative statement of membership.....	252