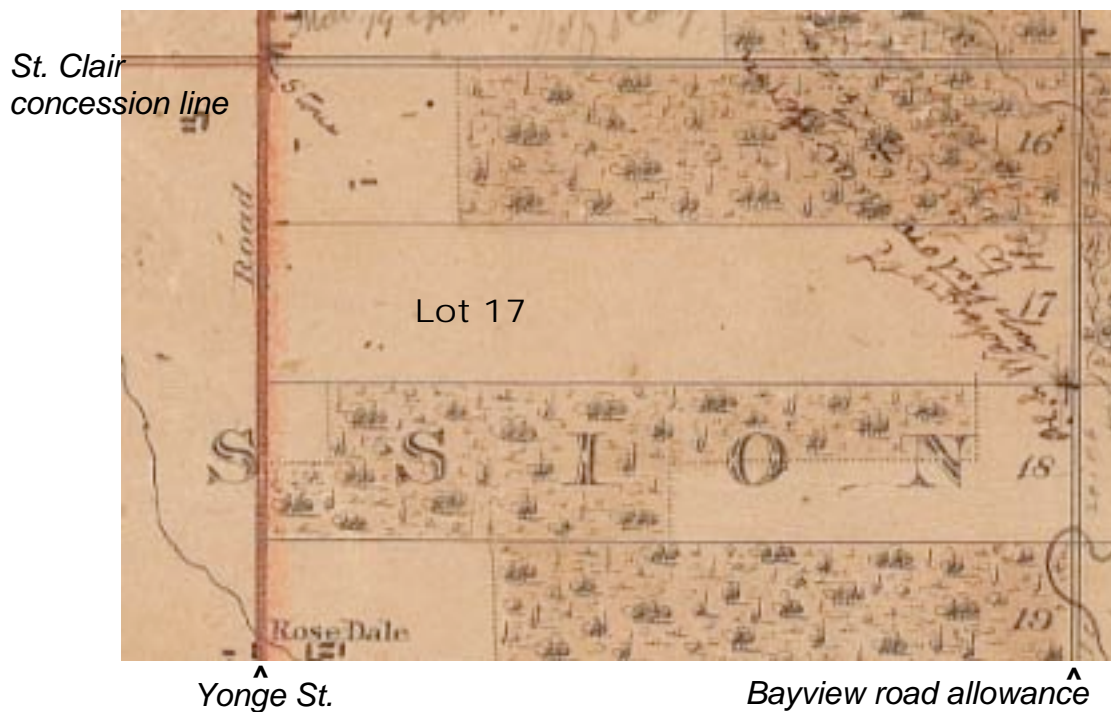


## SUMMERHILL

Malcolm Graham  
Jennifer Fallis  
Susan Stock

It was pretty quiet on lot 17 in the Second Concession from the Bay when it was purchased by Charles Thompson in 1833.



From a map of York Township, 1851

The map shows its extent: from Yonge St. East to the Bayview road allowance. It appears to have been cleared, but this is a mapmaker's convention of the time. Certainly there were no buildings; all along Yonge St. there was very little settlement between Yorkville and York Mills, apart from a few taverns and a distillery. Pleasures were few and simple in those times.

What a difference 20 years make! Here is the Western part of lot 17, (our part) outlined in red:



West part of the Summerhill after the Chancery survey 1873

Still seem to be no houses on it, but we have roads- one across the ravine- with unfamiliar names, also a reservoir to the North and a subdivision into many lots. (The tiny "277" means subdivision according to plan 277.) In fact, there was one house on the land- I've marked it with + . This was the site of the residence built by Charles Thompson in 1842 (note the names of the Streets).\*

Charles Thompson was long dead in 1873, but his estate had just finished being chewed over in the Court of Chancery, as his executors were suing his lawyer and his creditors were suing both. Finally in 1864 Plan 277 was the result, with lots put up for auction in 1868.

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\* Why two streets? Hypothetical answer: Naturally, Thompson was anxious to run a road across his property, but why Charles St. (Shaftesbury) too? The city limit was now at the Southern boundary of lot 17 with a toll gate on Yonge St. at Cottingham. Further South, Yonge St. becomes quite a challenge for heavy vehicles in wet weather. This made this route to the markets very unpopular for farmers bringing produce into the city: first a toll then a slog. Thompson Ave. offered an alternative route down Ritchie and Edgar into Rosedale and over the iron bridge to market. Although Thompson welcomed the traffic (for a modest fee), he wanted it away from his pleasure ground. Hence the second road to the head of the ravine.

Charles Thompson had a prosperous transportation business, running coaches from Toronto to Lake Simcoe, where he ran two steamboats plying the Lake ports. When his home at Holland Landing burnt down, he bought the land in Yorkville and built his house near the Avoca Ravine on the ridge overlooking the marshy land South to Toronto. He called it Summer Hill House. ("Summer Hill" became "Summerhill" with Thompson's death.) It was large, as befitted a wealthy man, with a huge drawing room with a fireplace at each end.



A later (ca 1900) view of Summerhill House

Thompson ran into financial difficulties when the newly built Grand Trunk Railway began competing with his stagecoach line. His response was to develop his Yorkville property as "Summer Hill Spring Amusement Park" with his house as a dance pavilion. The Toronto Street Railway, in which he had an interest, brought fun seeking families from the city for 5 cents from St Lawrence Hall. There was music and dancing, a cricket pitch, swings and roundabouts. Berry picking was a popular pastime. A day in the country.

Music and Fun at the  
Summer Hill Springs  
Pleasure Grounds

**Amusements.**

---

**SUMMER HILL SPRINGS**

AND

**PLEASURE GROUNDS.**

**T**his gorgeous and picturesque farm and residence, comprising two hundred acres of wood and lawn, hill and dale, is situated immediately at the Northern terminus of the Toronto Street Railway on Yonge-street, and has been leased for the purpose of a summer resort for games and recreations.

The house is now being fitted up with billiard tables, rooms for ice cream and other refreshments, draughts, cribbage and chess boards. The proprietor of the Street Railway has agreed with a band of music to play select airs three afternoons and evenings during the summer months; and a portion of the lawn in front of the house will be set apart for dancing parties.

A race course is being prepared in full view of the verandah; and grounds will be appropriated for the good old British games of cricket, quoits, skittion; and swings and gymnastic poles will be erected.

Parade and target grounds, with music, are offered to Volunteer Companies free of charge.

The grounds are in places covered with strawberries and other fruit plants. There are abundant springs of water, and the sulphur springs will in time be used for baths. The back grounds of wild wood and green sward render the place peculiarly adapted for Picnic and school parties.

An efficient police force will be on the grounds to prevent disorder.

The orchard grounds within the orchard enclosure will be reserved expressly for the use of families and children.

No carriages will be allowed to enter the premises.

The Street Railway Cars will run to the spot every afternoon and evening; leaving St. Lawrence St. every ten minutes. Fare 6 cents; no charge for entrance to the grounds.

The programme of music to be played by the Band will be duly advertised.

The grounds will be opened to the public on the 24th instant; a band of music with 27 performers, will be in attendance

Toronto, May 13. 3778-261

4

**THE BAND WILL PLAY**

AT

**Summer Hill Pleasure Grounds**

**THIS AFTERNOON.**

Toronto, July 25. 254

---



**The German String and Quadrille**

WILL PLAY AT

**SUMMER HILL GROUNDS**

**THIS DAY.**

Toronto, August 19.

For many years, residents have organized each June "Summerhill Fair" in the Little Park- for a brief moment a harking back to the old Summer Hill Pleasure Ground.

If one ventures into the Little Park on a quiet night, one may perhaps hear the distant sound of dance music and laughter.

**TO BE RENTED,  
THE FARM AND RESIDENCE  
OF THE  
LATE CHAS. THOMPSON,  
KNOWN AS SUMMERHILL !!**

**T**HE above property being about half-a-mile from the Yorkville toll gate, and two miles from the St. Lawrence Hall, Toronto, comprises a large first-class

**DWELLING HOUSE,**

Containing eighteen rooms, large vegetable cellar and kitchen, good hard and soft water; also, coach house, stables, barn and out-house, and a large orchard and garden, with about 200 acres of excellent land, well watered by a never-failing stream.

There are about 100 acres under cultivation, which from its close proximity to the Toronto Market, would be invaluable to any person wishing to carry on extensive gardening or dairy business. Being about 400 feet above the level of Lake Ontario, it is one of the most beautiful and healthy residences in Canada, and is well adapted for Ladies' Seminary.

It will be rented by the year or on a lease for one block, or in such portions as may be required, by applying to **GEORGE P. DICKSON**, Richmond Hill, or **JOHN C. GRIFFITH**, Yonge Street, Toronto.


—ALSO,—

A farm adjoining, containing about 150 acres of land, on which are a good stream of water, good dam and mill, formerly used as a distillery, will be rented in one block, or the mill privilege separately; it is well suited for a dairy farm.

Apply as above,  
Toronto, March 16, 1858. 2475-2

**Chancery Notices.**

**Chancery Notice to Creditors.**



**IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF  
CHARLES THOMPSON, DECEASED,  
—  
HERBERT BIGGAR,  
—  
AGAINST  
GEORGE PENN DICKSON,  
—  
AND JOHN COLEMAN GRIFFITHS.**

**P**URSUANT to an order made in this matter by the Court of Chancery for Upper Canada, the creditors of the said Charles Thompson, late of the township of York, in the county of York, Gentleman, deceased, who died on or about the 6th day of February, 1858, are on or before 10 of the clock in the forenoon of **TUESDAY**, the 10th day of January next, to come in and prove their debts before me, the undersigned Master in Ordinary of the said Court, at my chamber in Osgoode's Hall, in the City of Toronto, or in default thereof they will be peremptorily excluded the benefit of the said order.

And 12 of the clock, noon, of **FRIDAY**, the 20th day of January next, at my said chambers, is appointed for proceeding upon the said claims; and if not then allowed, the same will be heard and adjudicated upon at my said chambers at 12 of the clock, noon, of **FRIDAY**, the 2nd day of February next.

Dated the 23rd day of November, 1859.

**A. N. BUELL.**

**MORPHY & WALKER,**  
Solicitors for Creditors.

Toronto, Nov. 24, 1859. 2008-41 8

**The Thompson Estate in trouble: Dickson and Griffith were Thompson's executors and Biggar was the main creditor**

Thompson died in 1858, leaving his affairs in a mess, partly it seems because of rather loose financial behavior by his lawyer. In order to save something for his widow Lucretia, the Summerhill Estate was broken into 59 lots and sold at auction. (1866-8). Look again at fig 2: Lucretia was given lots 1,2,35 and 36. It was known that the railway would likely cross the estate very soon and she should benefit from sale of these lands. It was not to be. She sold too soon, apparently to Thompson's executor(!), but the profit was taken by an outfit called the

Scottish Ontario and Manitoba Land Co, which already owned most of north Rosedale. The same thing happened to the new owner of lots 33, 34, Andrew White Young, porter, whose widow sold to the SOMLC in 1882 for \$4000 and the SOMLC sold in 1884 to the Ontario and Quebec Railway for \$20000! The owner of lots 3,4,5 and 31, 32, John Lyons, yeoman, did better: he sold directly to the railway.

With the railway right of way setting a boundary to the South and the new city reservoir (1872) to the North, our area of interest becomes a well defined one, with Yonge St. on the West and the Vale of Avoca on the East, a tight little community. It comprised, between Shaftesbury and Summerhill, five 1/8 acre lots along Yonge St. lots 6 to 10 and six lots behind these: 25 to 30. North of Summerhill seven more small lots along Yonge and seven more larger ones behind, 18-24. When the lots were available for sale in 1866, a few were taken up by flippers, but by 1871 the first ownership was established. Quick off the mark was the SOMLC, who obtained lot 6 on the corner of Yonge and Shaftesbury and built the Rosedale Hotel- a long lived landmark. This was probably the first building within the area after Summerhill House itself and possibly "Mower Martin's House" next to the reservoir entrance.



**Rosedale Hotel in 1944**

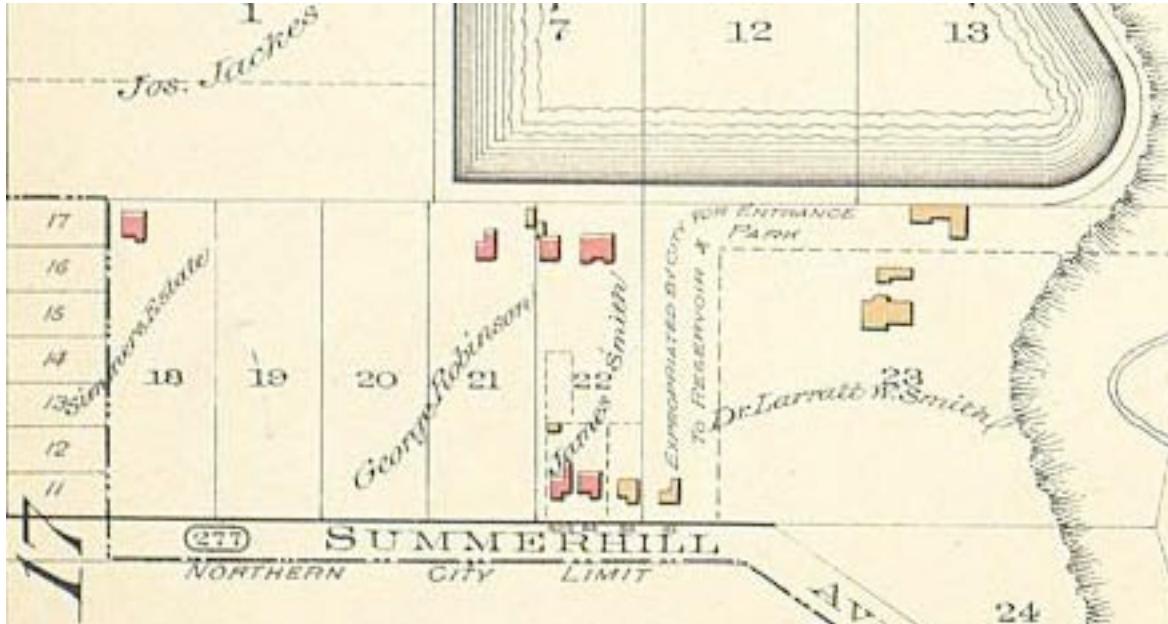
Before Toronto's annexation of part of Summerhill in 1884, our information was mainly drawn from the assessment rolls of York Township. These are large heavy books with hand written information which did not state the location of property beyond the lot number- lot 17 in our case. Also, the early books have been lost. A good deal of assumption was needed!

Here is the last information from the York Rolls, for 1884:

1884 YorkAssesment Rolls		Lot 17	Box #237984					
Name	O	wner tenant/freehold	Occupation	Age	Acreage	Family	Religion	Animals
								cat/tia/ sheep/
								hog/horse
Wm. Ashby	T	Gardener	50		4 1/2	5	C of E	1/1/01
<b>Wm. Arming</b>	F	Gent	52		1/8 acre	2	Methodist	
Allan Walker, Toronto	F				5			
Stephan Coolie, Yorkville	F	Gent	34		3 1/2	1	C of E	0/0/2
<b>E.Y. Crowne, Toronto</b>	F	Merchant			4	3	C of E	3/0/0
<b>Wm. Duncan, Yorkville</b>	F	Bookkeeper	28		30?	2	Presby.	
G.P. Dickson, Yorkville	F	Gent			3			
Samuel Dunn, Willowdale?	F	Farmer	42		multi lots	8	Methodist	10/20/1/
<b>Ebenezer Faulkner, Toront</b>	F	LA	56		1/8 acre	2	Methodist	
Wm Lawrence, Yorkville	T	Butcher	27		1/20 acre	4	Presby.	0/0/0/1
Ino. Mowat, Toronto		Mechanic	32		1/2 Ace	4	C of E	
Ino. McKim, Yorkville	F	DO	56		10	6	C. No	2/0/2/3
Thomas Manton, Yorkville	T	Gardener	29		1/2 Ace	5	C of E	1/0/0/1
<b>H.B. Morphy</b>	F				5			
Benj. Morton?		Estate Agent						
& Jeremiah Nelson,	T	Gardener	45		4 1/2	8	C of E	6/0/3/1
H. J. Pamel	T				1/2 Ace			
<b>&amp; G.B. Crowne</b>	F							
Jas. Parkhill, Yorkville	T	Agent	27		1/8 acre	2	C.M.	
Dr. C.J. Philbrick	F				7 1/2			
George Peas, Toronto	F	Gent			8			
Robert Ray, Toronto	T	Carpenter	49		1/8 acre	10	C of E	
<b>George Robinson, Yorkvill</b>	F	Gent	56		3 3/4	5	C.M.	
Hugh Ritchie, Agent								
<b>&amp; Jas. Smith, owner</b>	F		50		1 1/5	8	Presby.	
<b>Sam. W. Sims, Toronto</b>	F	Gent	26		1/16 Ace			
<b>Sam. T. Sims, Toronto</b>	F	DO	60		1/8 acre	4	Cong.	
<b>L.W. Smith, Toronto</b>	F	Barister	64		20	10	C of E	2/0/02
George Sevens, Yorkville	F	Brewer			16			
Fred. Swine, Yorkville					1/8 acre			
Sam. Beaty	T		42		multi lots			
Charles Stewart	T	Farmer			100			
Daniel Trump, Toronto	F	Gent	32		1/4 Ace	3	C.M.	
<b>Fred. Thompson, Yorkville</b>	F		34		6?	6	C.M.	0/0/0/2
Ino. G. White	T	Com. Travell	35		2	9	Presby.	
<b>&amp; Silas James, owner</b>								
John Youmans	T	High Sch. Tea	51		1/5 acre	5	Methodist	

Names in boldface are people identified to be in our area

An interesting social phenomena now becomes apparent: the lots between Summerhill and Shaftesbury were taken by three developers who did not intend to live there, while the more desirable lands on the ridge were to become four gentleman's estates. There was for a long time a social gradient between the blue collar residents of Shaftesbury and those further North. Let us first look to the gents.



Gentlemen's estates on the North Part of Summerhill 1890  
*Immediately on Summerhill, the two on the left were built by Smith, 82 & 84.  
 next is an older house built by Henry Morphy who briefly owned lot 22 before  
 Smith. Known as the "Mower Martin House" after its first occupant. (ca 1870)  
 Fourth is the lodge for Summerhill House, later the gate house into the Park.*

The westernmost lots, 11-19 were obtained by Matilda Simmers. The Simmers family remained in residence until about 1908. The map shows the location of their mansion, long lost. The next two lots were purchased by George Robinson, a (gentleman) butcher. The house still stands on the grounds of the YWCA. Lot 22 was owned by James Avon Smith, an architect with a natural propensity for building: he put two houses at the southern end of his land on Summerhill (#s 82 & 84) and an additional house on the ridge (now 82 Woodlawn E). These houses were serviced by a laneway from Summerhill Ave called Summerhill Place. The detailed history of lot 22 has been told by the present owner of James Smith's house, now 84 Woodlawn E, Bob Campbell. Finally, the remaining land west of the ravine and including Summerhill House was purchased by Larratt Smith, a noted lawyer. He refurbished and expanded Summerhill House and lived there until his death in 1905.

### *SUMMERHILL PEOPLE= Larratt Smith*

Larratt William Violet Smith was born in Plymouth, England, on Nov. 29, 1820 and in 1832 his father emigrated to Upper Canada. He had served as an officer with the Royal Artillery and, as semi-retired British officers were allowed to buy land in Upper Canada at low prices, shortly after the family's arrival in the town of York he purchased a large plot of land in Simcoe County that he hoped to turn into a profitable farm. Before leaving town with his wife and the rest of the children, he enrolled Larratt and his younger brother in the new boys' school Upper Canada College. Larratt Smith spent all of his teenage years at the school. In April 1844, there was an unexpected family crisis. His father and mother had both grown tired of the hardships of life in the bush and had decided to return to England with their children but Larratt was now so happy with his life in Toronto and his prospects that he decided to remain.

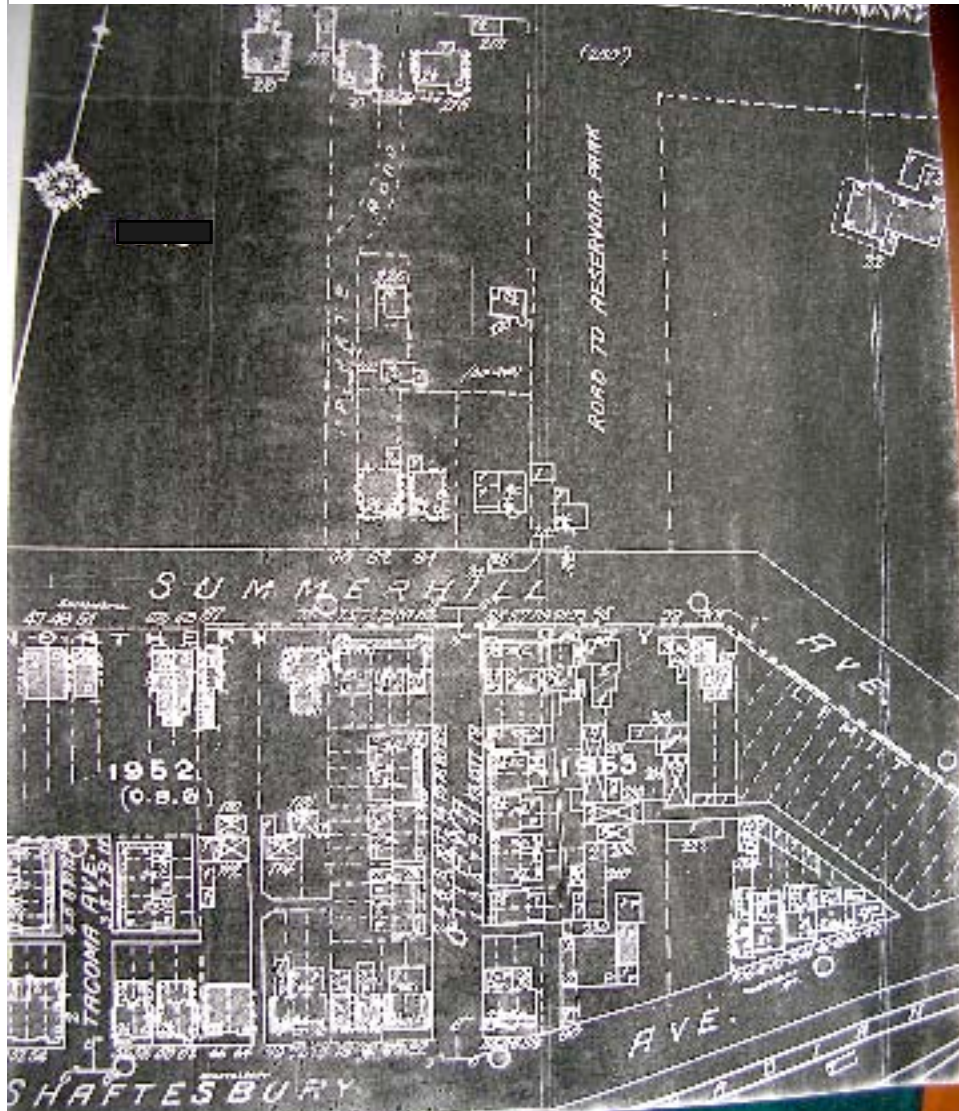
In 1843, when Toronto's first university, King's College, was founded, Smith became one of its first students while still continuing work in a law office. In later years he would play an influential role in the life of the university as vice-chancellor when it was re-established as the University of Toronto. A few months after his family sailed from Toronto, he was called to the bar and with the help of a wealthy aunt in England, he bought a partnership in a law firm.

He married, but two years later his wife died from pneumonia. It was six years before Smith fully recovered from the shock of her death and throughout those years, he always wore a waistcoat of black. Finally in 1858 he married again. His wife was the former Mary Elizabeth Smith, the daughter of a prominent Toronto merchant. Smith was now 38 and had earned a reputation as a fine lawyer and a sound financier. He had also started to acquire a small personal fortune and in 1866 he bought Lots 23 and 24 on the Summerhill estate.

He became a prominent figure in the life of the city and was appointed a director of many of Toronto's leading firms and shortly before his death on Sept. 18, 1905, he became the president of the Consumers' Gas company. His funeral service at St. James was attended by a large number of his friends from the business world of the city. The entire faculty of the university attended in a body.

The city meanwhile had expropriated some parts of lot 23 for an entrance to the recently developed Reservoir Park and ravine lands for the park itself and the O&Q RR had taken most of lot 24.

In 1888 Toronto had annexed up to the South side of Summerhill and in 1908 the remainder of our area became part of Toronto- originally St Paul's ward.



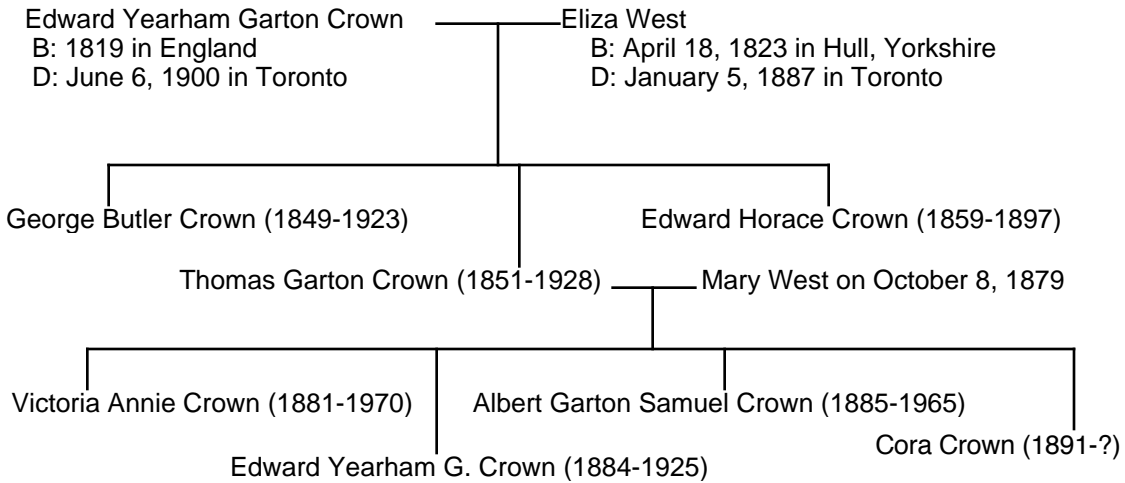
Central part of the area in 1903. Summerhil House is top right.

There are no new houses on the North side of Summehill.  
Note that the city limit is now along Summerhill Ave.

The plan shows these same houses 13 years later, in 1903, with a more accurate representation of Summerhill House. You see that considerable development had occurred further South by then. We will look at that now.

The westernmost lots 7-10 and 28-30 were purchased by Edward & Eliza Crown in 1869 for \$1742.50. He was a toll gate keeper at the city boundary, at that time just below the Summerhill estate at Miss Price's line. Many of his family settled in the area and some were still here within living memory.

*SUMMERHILL PEOPLE= Crowns*



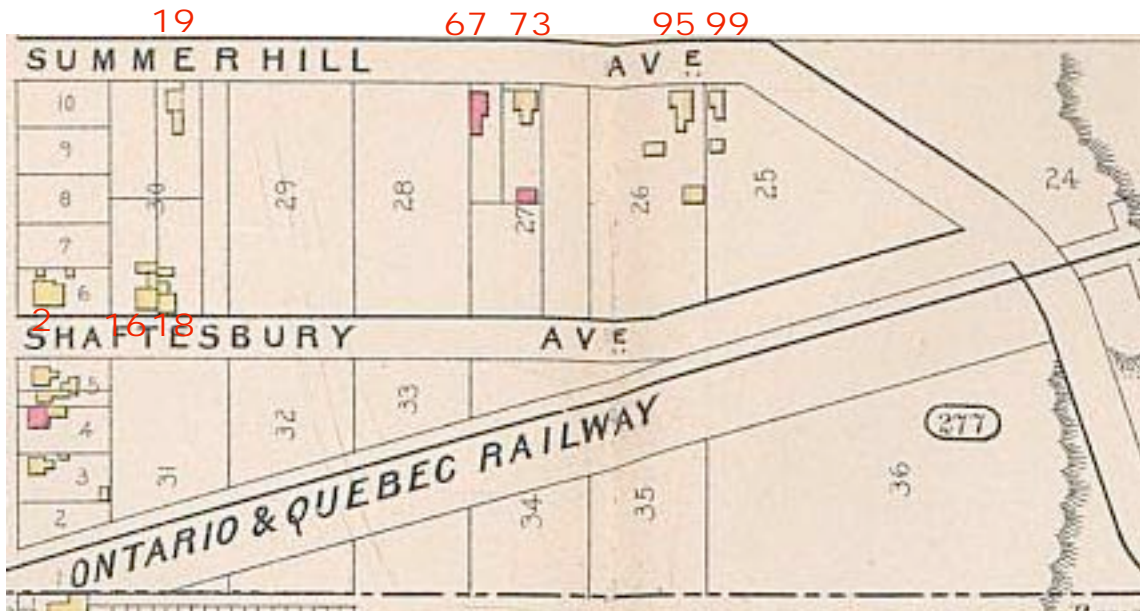
He almost immediately quartered the Westernmost large lot, lot 30, and sold off most of the land, keeping the SE quarter for himself. This was done outside of a registered plan, so some details are obscure. Later, in 1885, plan 662 was registered. The first houses on Shaftesbury were built on lot 30 (Fig 12). One of the first houses on Summerhill was built on the NE quarter of lot 30 by Samuel Sims, shoemaker, whose family remained in the area for many years and owned several homes. He died in this house, #19 Summerhill, in 1905.

Edward Crown, Yonge street, at the toll-gate, a two-storey frame building; value, \$600.  
 Mr. Dunn, Yonge street, at the toll-gate, a rough-cast cottage; value, \$300.  
 Peter Latham, Summer Hill road, a rough-cast cottage; value, \$600.  
 Mr. Martin, Summer Hill road, a Gothic frame cottage; value \$700.  
 A. Simmers, corner of Summer Hill road and Yonge street, a two-storey white brick house; value, \$2,500.

Early (1890) property sales by Crown, Latham, Simmers

1884 houses on Summerhill

- 19 Samuel Sims
- 67 Wm Duncan for GT Crown
- 73 Fred Thompson
- 95 Wm Britnell
- 99 James Johnson



Shaftesbury

- 2 Rosedale Hotel - Scottish Ontario & Manitoba Land Co
- 16 John Booth
- 18 Ebineezer Faulkner

Next East, lots 26 and 27 was bought by Peter and Elizabeth Latham for \$800. He is styled as a gardener. He sold part of the North half of lot 27 in 1880 to Wm Duncan who built #67 (rebuilt in 1893) and part to Fredrick Thompson who built #73 about 1880. The south half of this lot was acquired by the SOMLC in 1882, later sold to Simon Fraser, a builder who established a planing mill on Shaftesbury which persisted for many years. Finally, the laneway was rechristened as Tacoma Ave and built up in 1889-90 by Wm Parsons under plan 219E. W J Woodley owned the even numbers and Thomas Parker owned the odd numbers. Two more houses added in 1904:

# BUILDING PERMIT ✓

No. 1143

Plan No. ....

Lot No. ....

Toronto, SEP - 1 1904 190

Permit granted to

Mr. *George W. Britnell*

To erect a *Two detached Two Story  
Stone & Brick dwellings  
near Shafsbury Ave*  
on *Tacoma Ave*

Architect *H. A. Marshall*

Builder

Cost of Building, \$ *2750 00*

Plans and Specifications approved by

City Architect

No. of Block Plan

Limit

Water, \$

1904 building permit to George Britnell of 95 Summerhill Ave for #s 15 & 16 Tacoma Ave, built 1907.

In 1907,

15 Tacoma owned by George Britnell, tenant Albert Britnell, stone merchant

16 Tacoma owned by Campbell English, tenants Thos & Richard Knight

*SUMMERHILL PEOPLE= English/Simmers*



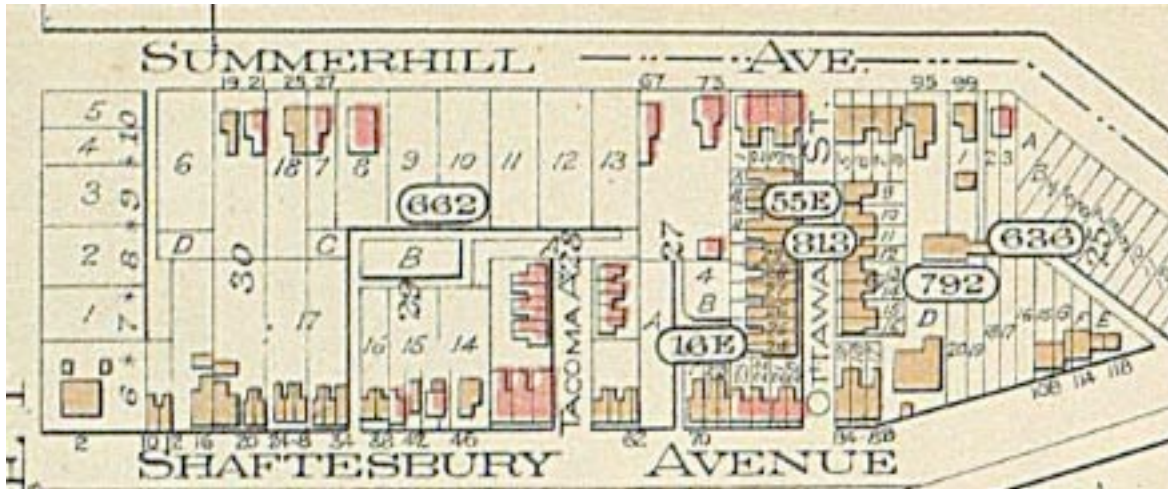
Summerhill people: Members of the English and Simmers Families  
Olive Farm Dairy and old landholders on the Simmers Estate.

Lot 26 went through a jumble of plans and owners, with Simon Fraser, Hugh Graham, Thomas Monk, the O&Q RR and the SOMLC all active on the South half in 1888-9. Ottawa St. was opened and built up very quickly. The English family of Olive Farm Dairy became established in this area.

About 1900, Thomas English and his wife Mary bought Green's Dairy on Shaftesbury, which became the T. English Dairy Company. It started with a one horse-drawn cart plying the streets of Toronto. This was before the days of pasteurization and people simply walked out their front doors to the cart and, ladle in hand, drew the fresh milk they needed.

In 1909 Thomas was kicked by a horse and died of complications. It was soon after this that the company changed its name to Olive Farm. Thomas's wife Mary took the business over and built it to the point that

Olive Farm became the largest privately owned dairy in Toronto. (#68 Shaftesbury)The dairy stayed in the English Family until 1965 when it was sold to another dairy. It was the end of an era; dairy home delivery was relegated to the pages of history. Olive Farm was eighty years old when progress ended its run.



Goad map of 1890. Rapid development of Shaftesbury and Ottawa  
The various plans instituted by developers are shown in cartouche  
The large building on lot D of 792 was Simon Fraser's planing mill.

**15**

Finally, lot 25 was purchased in 1885 by Silas James: 3 acres for \$850. He had been superintendent of York roads when the toll-gate system was in vogue. He subdivided as plan 636, but a couple of houses were already on the property, #99 Summerhill, Wm Britnell, noted merchant, deeded to Alice "in natural life so long as she remains a widow" and #101, Walter Bebbington, master bricklayer and land owner, who built many of the houses in the area. James sold some lots along Shaftesbury fairly quickly and small houses were built as #s 108-118. About 1900, the city took the remaining land along Summerhill for taxes. In 1902, Robert Youngusband built the two houses at the end of the street (#s 135 & 137) , the next two were built in 1905. In 1907, Wm Booth secured most of the land beyond #103, instituted plan 360E and built #s 105-125. Booth was a long time builder in the area, with a lumberyard on the North side of Summerhill on the Larratt Smith estate.

Like most of the houses in the South side of the above map, the titles passed about 1910 to the Toronto Dwellings Ltd., the real estate arm of the CNR, (not the CPR, as is often alleged) and remained with that company and its successors until after world war II.

1914 City of Toronto Assessment Rolls

(made in 1913 for tax year 1914) Ward 2, Div. 4

ADDRESS	OWNER	OCCUPANT
#123 Summerhill Ave	Toronto Dwellings Ltd.	Herbert Leak (34) Lumberman
#125 Summerhill Ave	"	John Raeburn (76) None
VACANT LOT		
#129 Summerhill Ave	"	John Miller (50) Mason
#131 Summerhill Ave	"	Jessie Dykes (W)
#133 Summerhill Ave	"	William Bentley (81) None
#135 Summerhill Ave	"	Vacant House
#137 Summerhill Ave	"	Harry Smith (39) Concreter

# FOR SALE

## Land With Buildings and Vacant Land Extending East From Yonge St. Along Shaftesbury Avenue, Toronto

It is the intention of Canadian National Railways Company to dispose of by sale, certain land with buildings and vacant land located on Shaftesbury Avenue, Tacoma Avenue, Ottawa Street, Summerhill Avenue and Summerhill Gardens. Full particulars of the dimensions and location of these properties, with form of tender, may be obtained at the office of the undersigned.

Tenders must be distinctly marked on the outside "Tender for North Toronto Properties" and addressed to the undersigned not later than the 15th day of March, 1937.

Each tender shall be accompanied by an accepted cheque drawn on a Chartered Bank payable to the order of Canadian National Realities, Limited, for an amount equal to 5% of the offer submitted, the balance of the purchase price to be paid on terms to be agreed upon.

All tenders submitted should allow not less than thirty days for acceptance or rejection.

The highest or any tender will not necessarily be accepted.

Toronto, Ont.,  
Feb. 3, 1937.

H. A. PALMER,  
Right of Way Agent,  
Canadian National Railways,  
Room 1468, 28 York St.,  
Toronto, Ont.

T.148

After 30 years, the CNR releases its holdings

1896 South side of Summerhill:

Vacant Lots

- 19 Samuel Sims, gent
- 21 Samuel W Sims, clerk  
Private Ground
- 25 Richard Holmes, labourer
- 27 George Crown  
Private Ground
- 31 Wm J Crown  
vacant lots- George Crown, Wm Wighton
- 67 Thomas English, dairyman  
Private Ground
- 73 Estate of Barbara Heyden, widow
- 75 vacant
- 77 Thomas T Chick, jeweler
- 79 Henry Thomson, stone mason
- 81 vacant
- 83 Thomas Armstrong
- ===== Ottawa St ends
- 85 Arthur & Gerrie Williams, dressmaker
- 87 Harvey Clarry
- 89 T Barnett, window shades
- 91 Albert Fessington, gent
- 93 John Britnell, merchant
- 95 William Britnell, stone & concrete  
Vacant lot
- 99 Charles Turner
- 101 Walter Bebbington, bricklayer
- 103 George Weir  
Vacant lots- Silas James

We pause in the tale of property development to show some pictures of our area as seen about 1900-10, showing the vanished crossing and bridge that connected us to "Far Summerhill" until 1915 and the more manicured Reservoir Park of those days (with open water until about 1965).

RR crossing at Summerhill ca 1905



View South



View North



Further back from above, showing wood-block road to Summerhill House.



Bridge over the Avoca Ravine, RR bridge in left background

Views of Reservoir park



Entrance at Summerhill

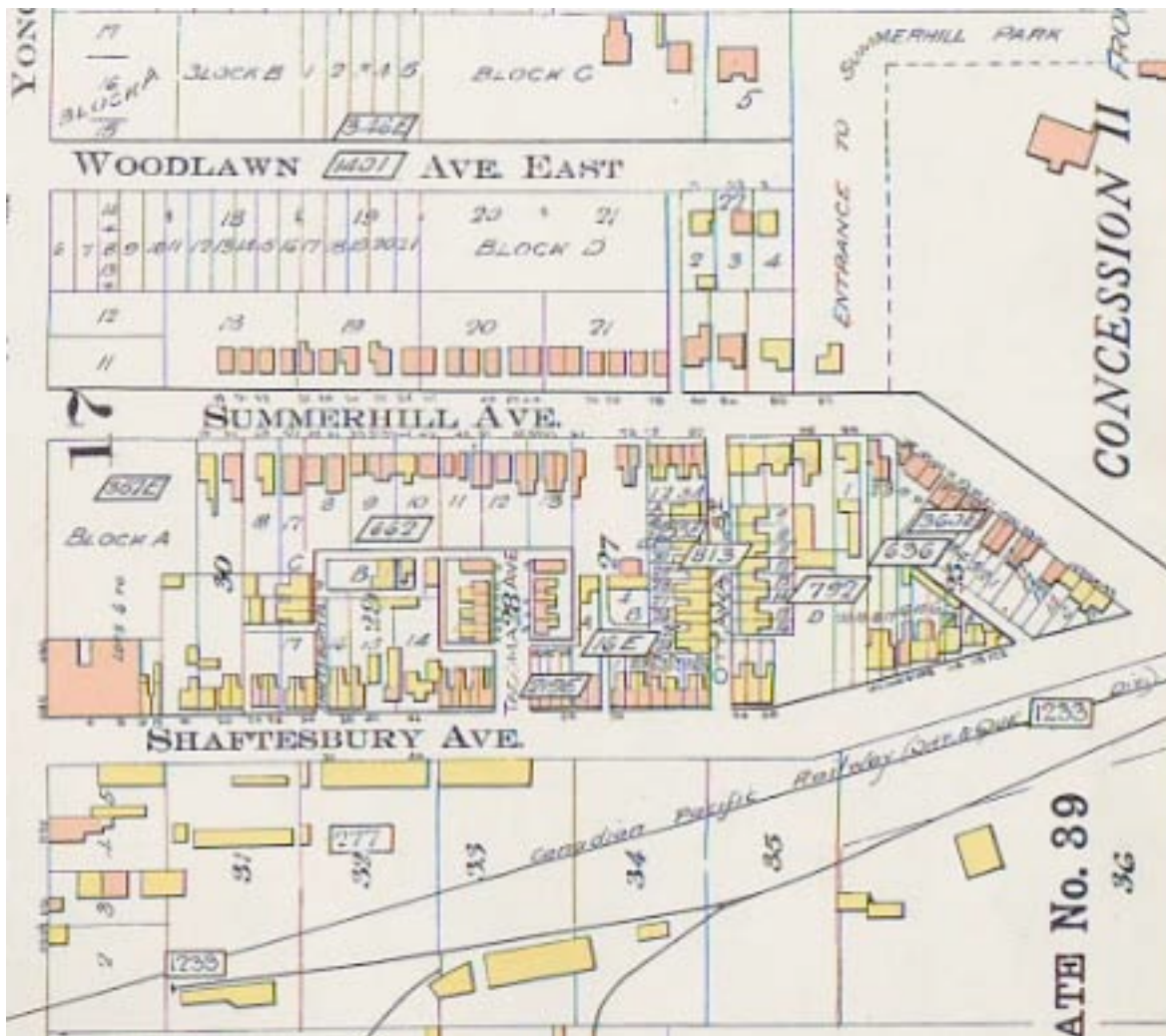


NE corner



drained for clean up 1925

About 1905, the Simmers and Robinson families found it expedient to sell off the bottom parts of their holdings on Summerhill as 25 or 30 foot lots, all 130 ft deep. From Simmers, #30 Summerhill built in 1902, #s 26 & 32 in 1904, #28 in 1906 and #36 in 1910. From Robinson, #s 48,62 & 64 in 1907 and 74 in 1908. In about 1907 the Eastern extension of Woodlawn was built and plan 1401 was registered by Anton and Herman Simmers, H W & Alice Robinson and James Smith for development of land on the South side of the new street, Wm Chariton and Norman Brady, builders.



1910. The Simmers have sold the Yonge St lots to Gooderham interests and their mansion is gone. Elias Rogers Co is already established on lot 4. No development yet on Woodlawn or the Gardens. Otherwise, nearly complete. The buildings on the south of Shaftesbury are coal depots. The last one was destroyed only in 1961. Rude men used to whistle at passing ladies from the second floor windows.

By 1914, Woodlawn E was completely developed- at least on the South side.

Woodlawn E building permits issued

#	date	owner	occupier
9	1911	John Phillips	John Phillips
11	1911	Victor Maulson	Victor Maulson
13	1911	Wm Treadgold	Wm Treadgold
15	1912	McIntyre, Wm W	McIntyre, Wm W
17	1911	Herbert Robinson	Herbert Robinson
19	1911	Scott Innis	Scott Innis
21	1911	Wm Charlton	unfinished
23	1911	Annie Jamieson	May Jamieson
25	1912	Reg Kelly	Reg Kelly
27	1911	Duncan Buchanan	Duncan Buchanan
29	1913	Wm McClain	Wm McClain
31	1912	George Fraser	George Fraser
33	1914	Yonge St Methodist	Rev Sam. Fallis
35	1912	Wm Towne	Wm Towne
37	1914	Emma Rowland	Frank Rowland
39	1912	Talbot Grubbe	Talbot Grubbe
41	1912	Alex Mullin	Alex Mullin
43	1912	Harry Jarvis	vacant
45	1912	Thomas Harrison	Thomas Harrison
47	1913	Gordon Ritchie	Gordon Ritchie
49	1914	Jas & Mary Hossack	J&M Hossack
51	1914	Peter Thomson	Humphry Campbell
53	1912	James Gibson	James Gibson
79	1910	Brian Pontifax	Brian Pontifax
81	1903	James A Smith	James A Smith
81.5	1903	James A Smith	Thos Elgie
83	1919	Avery Summure	Otto Redfern
85	1910	James A Smith	Hugh Melvin
87	1910	Andrew Stephenson	Andrew Stephenson

In about 1914, the level crossing at Yonge was replaced by the present bridge by raising the tracks and digging under as well. The old station which was just in from Yonge at Cottingham was replaced by the new station on the East side of the bridge, with the landmark clock tower.



Old and new stations



Rosedale Hotel in 1916

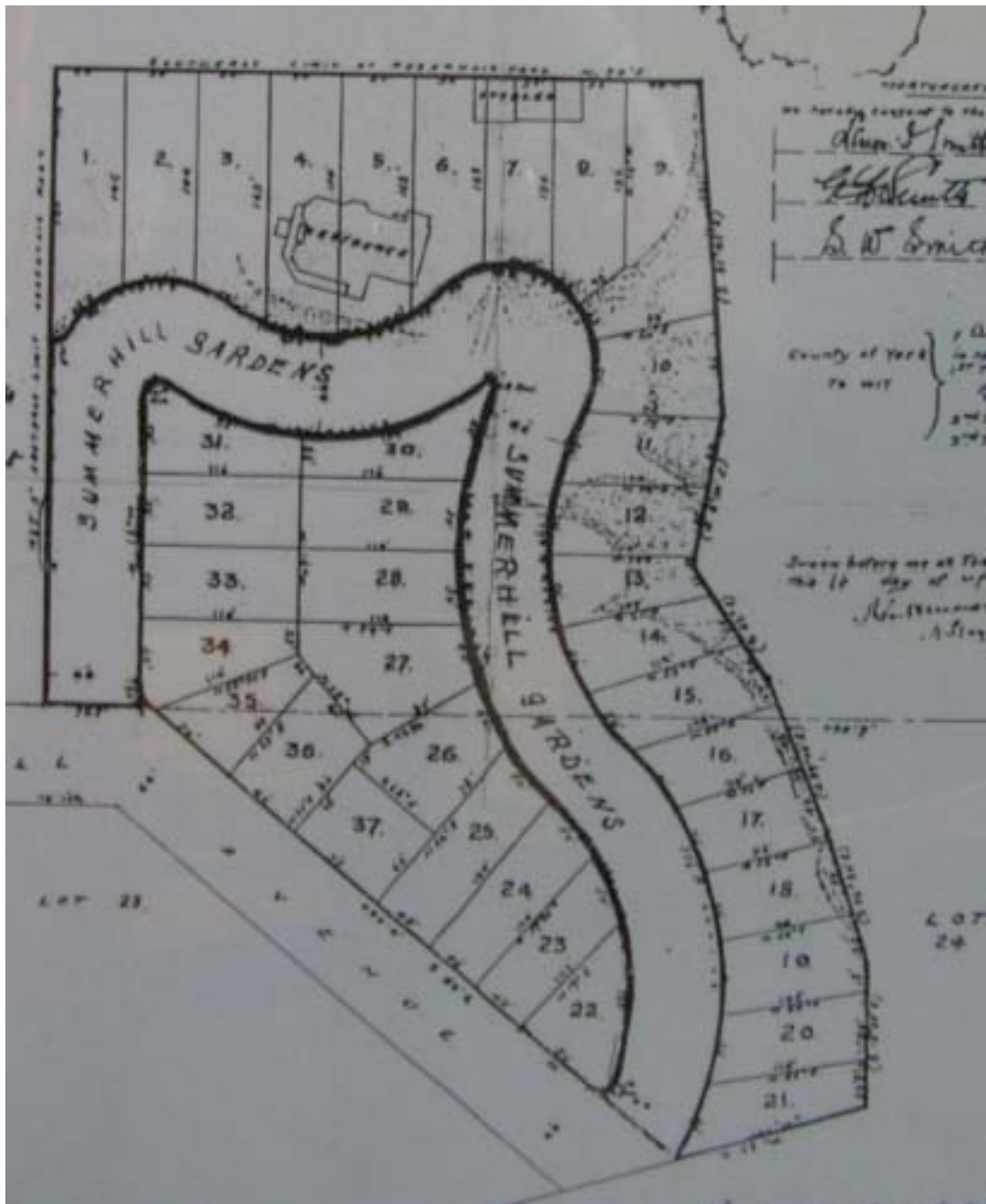


1916 laying new track looking North from Birch Ave  
Note Rosedale Hotel



1912 RR crossing looking South  
Showing the Radial tracks out from Birch Ave  
Note the Britnell's stone & cement shop

When Larratt Smith's widow died in 1910, the heirs sold lot 23 to Gough & Sillers Investments, who subdivided as plan 398E.



1910 planning for Summerhill Gardens.  
The location of Summerhill House is shown  
The signatures of the three Larratt Smith sons are on the right

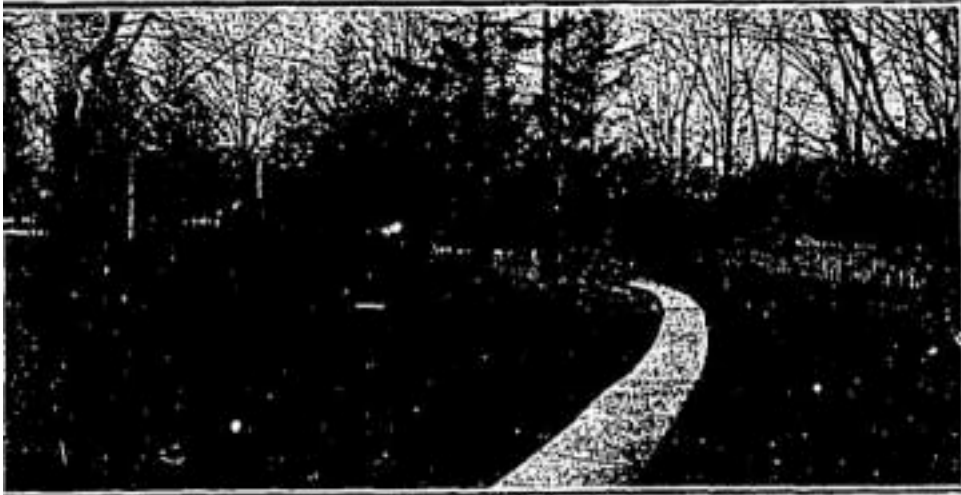
Add 1910 Robins Ltd

# Summerhill Gardens

*Rosedale*

Adjoining Reservoir Park on the south.

There have been so many requests for lots on the Smith Estate (Summerhill Gardens) that we have decided to place the entire block on the market at once—guaranteeing that all improvements will follow immediately. This is the property that was to have been added to Reservoir Park, but was purchased by an enterprising firm for the purpose of dividing for exclusive homesites. Prices \$25 to \$90 per foot front. See plans.

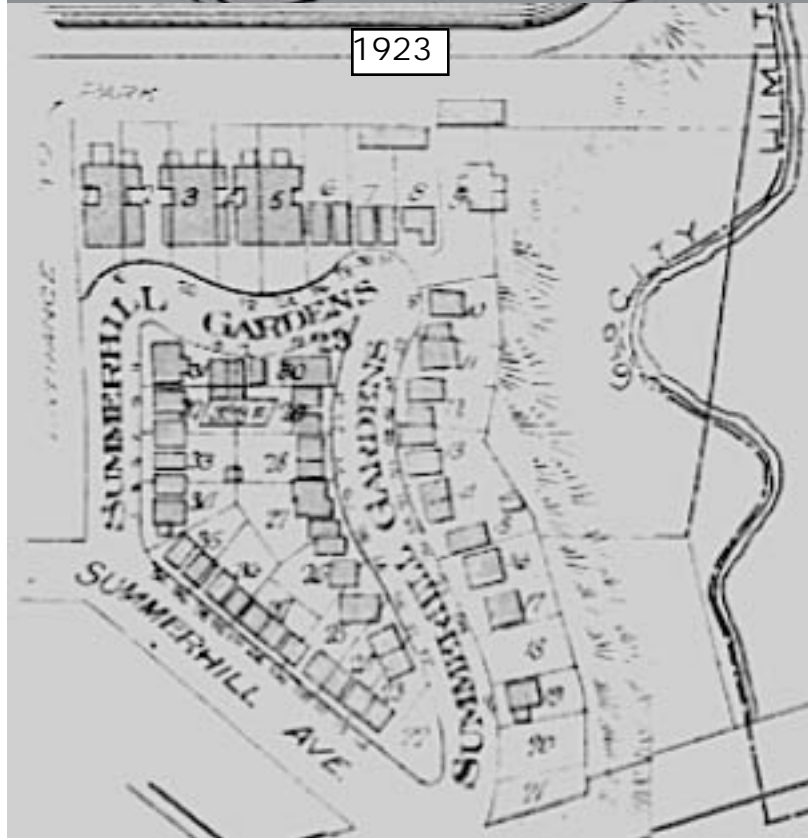
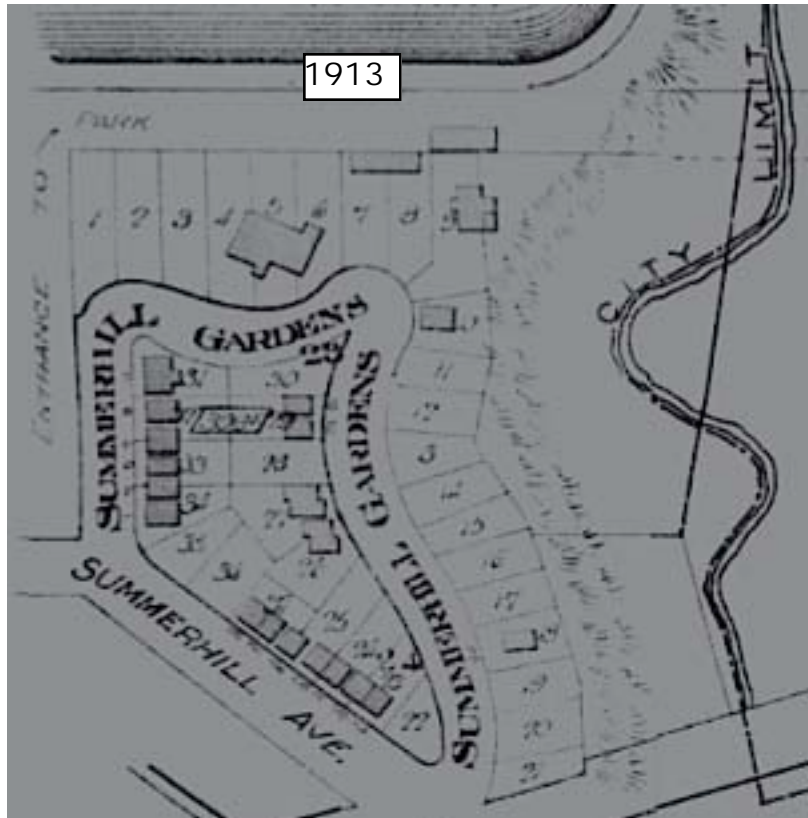


A Lawn in Summerhill Gardens.

We claim this to be one of the finest plots in Toronto. It is bounded on the north and west by Reservoir Park, south by Summerhill Ave. and east by the beautiful Rosedale Ravine. Opening prices subject to change without notice.

Some of the land was sold to developer Joseph McCarthy Vaughan in 1911. He demolished Summerhill House and built houses along the ridge. Houses were built by him and others all around the old driveway and along Summerhill North Side over the next 15 years.

There could be terrific turnover in ownership on one lot, while the next door one did not move for 30 years. One outstanding example on the Gardens: first sold in 1910, then resold in 1912 twice, 1913, 1925, 1927, 1929, 1942, 1947, 1950, 1961.



10 year development of Summerhill Gardens 1913-1923

The final development was done by Redvers Chaffe in 1948- the row houses on both sides of the street at the East end of the property.

This was the end of large scale development in the area until just a few years ago when the land South of Shaftesbury was built on, with a new lane "Charlesworth Lane".

Michael Vaughan, grandson of builder J. M. Vaughan, reminisces about a farmer's market on the railway siding South of Shaftesbury:

"Produce and products were unloaded at the siding into large sheds. I think they had metal roofs and were on the south side of the street, possibly both sides. You could buy oats in burlap bags, various types of wheat and so on, eggs, live chickens, live turkeys, vegetables and much else. What I remember, most, of course is the oats and cereals because, as a small boy, I kept guinea pigs, rabbits, waltzing mice, white rats, hamsters and other pets, much to the olfactory dismay of the other residents of the building, in what was the storeroom at 14 Summerhill Gardens, across from the kitchen. I would visit the market constantly, with my father, to get food for these animals so I remember what that was like. I did not pay a lot of attention to the other products, but I do remember the chickens, eggs and turkeys , etc., there was no need for bread or ice at the market because they were delivered by horse drawn truck. I think the milk came in on the milk wagons, as well, although we may have picked up milk from the Olive farm dairy on Shaftesbury."



Olive Farm Dairy

whale steaks for the Shaftesbury market



*SUMMERHILL PEOPLE = Wilson/Vaughan*



Kate Wilson, née Stanley (left), lifelong resident of Summerhill and Seanna Vaughan, grand-daughter of Joseph Vaughan, builder at Summerhill Gardens. They are standing at the entrance to Reservoir Park, next to the old gate house.

One now vanished landmark in the area was the Yonge Street Methodist Church, on the NE corner of Summerhill Ave.



YongeSt. Methodist (later United) Church  
Built in 1911 on the NW corner of Yonge and  
Summerhill,  
destroyed by fire in 1971  
The manse was at 100 Summerhill Ave

Another landmark gone with less regret, the old "marble house" on Shaftesbury:



A house decays....



1930 67 & 69 Summerhill  
homes of John & Campbell English



1894 Edward Martin Shop, Shaftesbury  
Place renovated way upmarket 2008



The subway cutting lost us houses: 10 to 26 Shaftesbury,  
14-22 and 19-27 Summerhill and 11-19 Woodlawn E



Thomas Mower Martin, famous artist,  
was a very early resident 1870-74 .

Artists, architects, composers have been attracted to Summerhill. Famous artist Mower Martin briefly owned Lot 22 and lived in a house on the property before selling it to James Avon Smith, one of Toronto's prestigious architects. Both were members of the Society of Artists and founding father's of Ontario College of Art. Smith designed and built 84 Woodlawn Ave. East for himself, then 82 Woodlawn Ave. for James Strachan Cartwright, Master-in-Chambers of the Supreme Court of Ontario and father of a future Chief of the Supreme Court. Smith also designed 84 Summerhill Ave., which restored today, sits gloriously at the top of Ottawa St.

Research has found that Charles Varley and Tom Thompson rented temporarily at 119 Summerhill Ave. in 1911 and John Beckwith, composer lived at 11 Summerhill Gardens in the 40's. Michael Snow still owns 137 Summerhill Ave. Famous gardener Ed Lawrence grew up on Shaftesbury. The Britnell family were a presence in the neighbourhood, both George, stone dealer and builder and Albert Britnell, book seller

## SUMMERHILL PEOPLE= Britnells

The Britnell family originate from Chinnor in Oxfordshire, England, but immigrated to Toronto, Ontario in 1881, where they were the owners of a concrete business and built several houses in Summerhill. Long time residents at 95 Summerhill Ave. William Britnell (1858-1943) was born in Chinnor. He married Agnes Mary Hursey (1860-1958) and they had ten children: George William, Albert Edward, Agnes Marion, Charles Sulston, Edward Ernest, Vera Narcissa, an unnamed infant daughter, Gertrude Ardella, Wilfred Thomas and Hilda Edith Ann.

George William Britnell was born in London, England on the 5 February 1880. George married Annie Priscilla Aldous (1880-1976) in September of 1920 and they had two daughters: Winifred Agnes and Muriel Ethel Britnell. George and Annie Britnell lived at 112 Summerhill Avenue. George was a WWI veteran, active member in the Ontario provincial Liberal party, and a member of the St. George's Society of Toronto (1929-1956).

The Britnell family's Toronto based concrete business was owned and operated by William, and then his son George William Britnell. The second son Albert owned the famous book store on Yonge St.



Magnificent examples of Victorian Gothic, Victorian Bay and Gable, Second Empire, Dutch Colonial and Toronto Four Square sit next to one-another. The neighbourhood is an intact example of Toronto development from 1860 to 2009. Small lots with character, charm and historic facades by both famous architects and local builders, surround parks and gardens nurtured by residents providing a high density environment with a very human scale.

Now we have our own Subway station, the world's largest liquor store just around the corner, some super food shopping and great restaurants- we are lucky to live here!

