



# The Story of Colborne Lodge

Where dwelt  
John George Howard  
the donor of  
Toronto's finest public park.

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WITH THE  
COMPLIMENTS  
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DIAMOND HALL  
TORONTO



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A **CORDIAL** invitation is  
extended the readers  
of this souvenir booklet to visit

DIAMOND HALL

Ryrie Bros., Limited

Yonge Street

Toronto



John George Howard

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## The Story of Colborne Lodge.

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**F** RONTING the lake's edge about four miles westward from Yonge Street's stream of trade, stands Colborne Lodge. Unmoved by the stress of city growth it has "lived a life apart" these three score years and ten. In placid old-world quaintness it gazes upon Ontario's stretching waters, as though it would ignore completely those intervening lines of rails with their puffing locomotives and vibrant trolley cars.

Not the oldest of Toronto's buildings—nor in large historic affairs the most noted—is Colborne Lodge. But the essential human interest of its story cannot fail in an appeal well nigh universal; and from Torontonians no one of their city's landmarks evokes more of affectionate regard than the home of the late John George Howard, whose long life of service to his fellows had its climax in the giving to the city of the magnificent parklands surrounding his home. His gift forms a large part of the 375 or so acres of Howard Park—still commonly known as High Park—Toronto's most beautiful pleasure ground.

A house built in 1837 can scarcely lay claim to antiquity; but that particular year was one of moment in the history of the Canadas, on account of the armed revolt against the Government, headed by William Lyon Mackenzie and Louis Papineau. It was only about two weeks

The  
Carved  
Swan



before moving into his new home that John Howard, on December 7th, led the right wing of a scouting party up Yonge Street to attack the insurrectionists who had congregated at Montgomery's tavern, with a view to raiding Toronto and sacking the Government buildings.

**B**UT Colborne Lodge has associations that link the present with times much more ancient than the stirring days of '37. Almost from its very door runs a romantic path called—as is many a woodland path elsewhere—"The Lovers' Walk." This peaceful walk leads to another, still in use when the Lodge was built, and not very long before that time a veritable war-path. And one can yet make out this old-time Chippewa trail that for centuries led northward to Lake Simcoe.

Not only with an aboriginal past has Colborne Lodge its associations. There is a visible link with the "storied years of old-world art and glory." Skirted by the Lover's Walk is a square burial plot, fenced on one side by an iron railing of curious and massive design. Upon a brass plate are to be read these rugged lines:



The  
Old  
Well

"St. Paul's Cathedral for 160 years I did enclose—  
Oh! Stranger look with reverence;  
Man! Man! unstable man!  
It was thou who caused the severance."

This railing is in fact a portion of the old iron fencing that at one time surrounded St. Paul's Cathedral in London—made, no doubt, in accordance with the very plans and specifications of Sir Christopher Wren himself.

The changing fortunes of this bit of railing are well worth the telling. After being torn from St. Paul's it

found its way to the sheds of a London old-iron merchant, one Hogarth by name. From him it was purchased by a Mr. Robert Mountcastle—evidently a man of sentiment—and shipped for Toronto in 1834. But the good ship "Delta," to which it was entrusted, became a wreck about five miles below Cape Chat Light—and, not unnaturally, the fence remained under water. However, a part of it was rescued and later brought to Toronto by Mr. Howard. Here it was finally set on the stone curb where it has remained since November 18th, 1875.

STILL further historic interest is suggested by the name of a small sheet of water near the Lodge, known as Grenadiers' Pond. The story is told that this lakelet owes its name to the drowning of several grenadiers, belonging to a party of British regulars during the war of 1812, who were marching across its frozen surface to oppose the expected landing of United States troops.

Not less interesting than these wider historical associations is the story of John George Howard's own life. A descendant from warlike Lord William Howard—the "belted Will" of Sir Walter Scott—this no less sturdy hero was born twenty-one miles north of London somewhat more than one hundred years ago. At fifteen he went to sea as a boy before the mast, but after two years' experience abandoned nautical life—chiefly because he was chronically troubled by that non-heroic affliction, *mal de mer*. From that time on he devoted his attention to civil engineering and architecture. In 1832 he and his young wife resolved to emigrate to Canada. And then began a series of exciting incidents

Always  
on  
Guard



that would fill to overflowing an "adventure" book of the type that so delights the average boy—and his elders.

**M**R. HOWARD'S own log tells in engrossing detail of such mishaps as being left ashore by accident, and drifting helplessly for eighteen hours in a small boat; of a mutiny aboard ship; of a man overboard, and of a storm that carried away "the four top-gallant and royal masts." The grand finale of the ship voyage was of a sort that in fiction would have been worthy of Marryatt or Kingston at his best—and in real life was doubtless exciting enough. The events are thus abridged from Mr. Howard's own words:

"About 10 o'clock I heard an unusual noise upon deck. Mr. Hill, the mate, came and told me to get up as there was no doubt but the ship would be lost, for the captain and the other mates were drunk, and the ship was driving fast upon the rocks. It was a beautiful moonlight night, and I saw the carpenter sitting upon the bulwarks with his axe ready to cut the anchor stop should it be necessary. We had three good boats, but they would have been crowded and swamped, for there were one hundred and sixty-two persons on board—and a great many of them very bad characters."



Carved  
from a  
Root

Fortunately a change of wind saved the ship and its passengers and on the 14th of September, 1832, Mr. and Mrs. Howard arrived at York, as Toronto was then called—and "Muddy" York at that.

Through the influence of Sir John Colborne, Mr. Howard was soon appointed drawing-master at Upper

Canada College, at a salary of £100 per annum. Gradually his professional ability gained in recognition, and he became City Engineer. The passing years added steadily to the honors done him by his fellow citizens. With a gratitude and a public spirited generosity all too rare, Mr. Howard, in 1873, made a gift to the City of the greater part of the estate surrounding Colborne Lodge. In 1876 the City Corporation conferred upon him the title of Forest Ranger, and for many years he superintended the beautifying of the park which Toronto owes to his munificence.

It was in 1875 that Mr. Howard erected, at the summit of a picturesque ravine near his house, the monument protected by the iron fencing from St. Paul's. Walking from the house along the willow-fringed path, the sight-seer comes upon this unique and imposing memorial. A cairn of unhewn granite boulders supports a double marble pedestal, terminating with a Maltese Cross—for Mr. Howard was a Masonic Templar. A marble tablet bears this simple inscription, between the lines of which one may read the sadness of separation, after a half century of heart union, and the pathos of fifteen years' lonely waiting before he was laid to rest with full Masonic honors by the side of her whom he loved.

Sacred to the Memory of

John George Howard and Jemima Frances his wife.

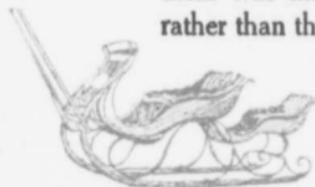
Jemima Frances, born 18th Aug., 1802, died 1st Sept., 1877,  
Aged 75 years and 14 days.

John George,

Born 27th July, 1803, died February 3rd, 1890,  
Aged 86 years 6 months and 7 days.

AND now a final word as to the Colborne Lodge of the present and the objects of interest it contains. From the public road which runs along the lakeshore an ascending driveway and a rustic path lead up to the unpretentious stuccoed dwelling. All about are specimens of the late occupant's curious handiwork in wood carving, among them a graceful life-size swan. The railing of the verandah has clinging to it a huge serpent-dragon, carved from a tree root so shaped and colored as to be most alarmingly uncanny. Among the interesting objects covered by a shed in the rear of the house, are two very old carriages, and a sleigh of curious design. The running-gear of the smaller of the two carriages was a gift from King George IV to Sir Peregrine Maitland on his leaving for Canada. He was recalled in 1828 and gave the carriage to Sir William Campbell, at whose death it was bought at auction for the late Chief Justice Draper. He in turn sold it to his own groom, who was setting up as an independent Jehu. Later the cabman sold it—again by auction—and finally it was bought by Mr. Howard for \$40. The larger vehicle is a huge chariot, built in London early last century for the special purpose of conveying the then noted Mrs. Trollope from place to place when she gave her Shakespearian readings throughout England.

To many, the most interesting feature of Colborne Lodge will be the collection of pictures in the gallery behind the main house—the majority of them the work of Mr. Howard himself. Their chief value and charm are not due to high artistic merit, for the hand that limned them was that of the skilled architectural draughtsman rather than that of the artist. But the glimpses given of



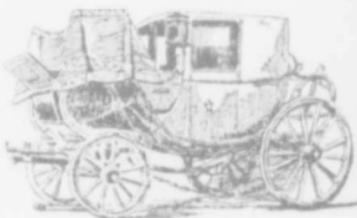
A Sleigh  
of Curious  
Design

Toronto's earlier life — its inhabitants, buildings, and natural surroundings — possess a quaint directness and fidelity that out-charm the work of many a more perfect painter.

**O**F exceeding charm is the quaint English garden — a place of perfect old-world beauty, especially during hollyhock bloom. Guarding it from all unfriendly invasion is the sturdy brass cannon — planted on an eminence overlooking the lake — with which the loyal owner used affectionately to salute his Queen on the anniversary of her natal day.

As the sightseer leaves the Lodge, and strolls or drives along the winding roadways through the magnificent parkland to the north and east of the house, he finds it not difficult to realize why the name of its donor should be an honored household word with all grateful Torontonians.

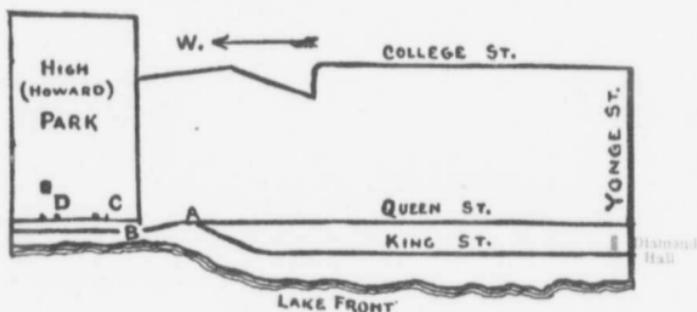
Built  
early last  
Century



NOTE—On the following page appears a chart with explicit directions for reaching Colborne Lodge.

# How to reach Colborne Lodge

Commonly called (The Howard House)



The above chart indicates clearly the way to reach Colborne Lodge. Car lines run West to Howard Park (or High Park) along College, King and Queen Streets. The last named is the most direct route, but the King Street Line affords a more pleasant ride.

**T**AKING a King Street car going West, the traveller may transfer to the Queen Street Line at the point marked A, or may walk the short distance to Sunnyside—marked B—where the Queen Street Line ends. A few steps farther along the Lake Shore Road is the first entrance to the Park—indicated by C—but this leads to Colborne Lodge only by a considerable detour. The surer way of reaching the old house is to proceed about half a mile farther along the Lake margin to the gate marked D—either by foot or by the Suburban Car Line that starts from Sunnyside. It is well to bear in mind that, to the car conductor, Colborne Lodge may be better known as The Howard House.

Readers may have copies of this souvenir  
sent postage free to any friends whose addresses  
are furnished to

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