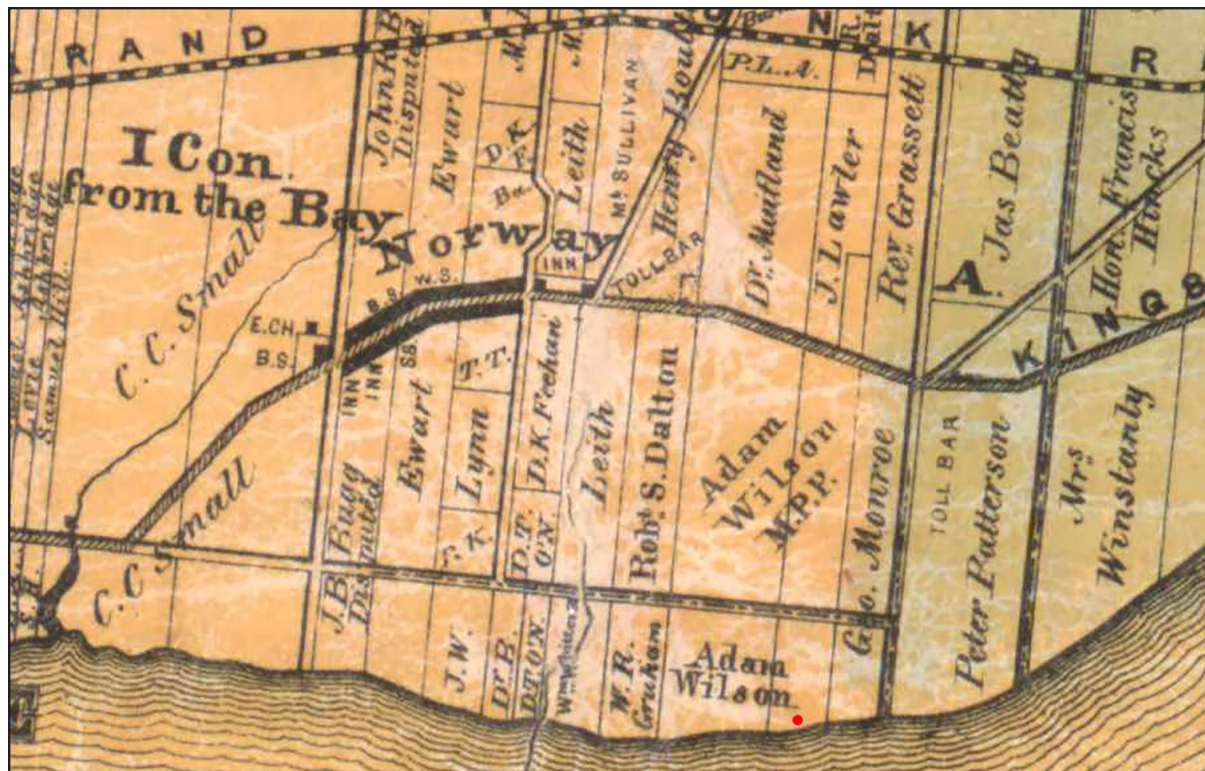


A History of 15–21 Glenfern Avenue

Prepared by Shaun Oakey, 2026

THE LOT

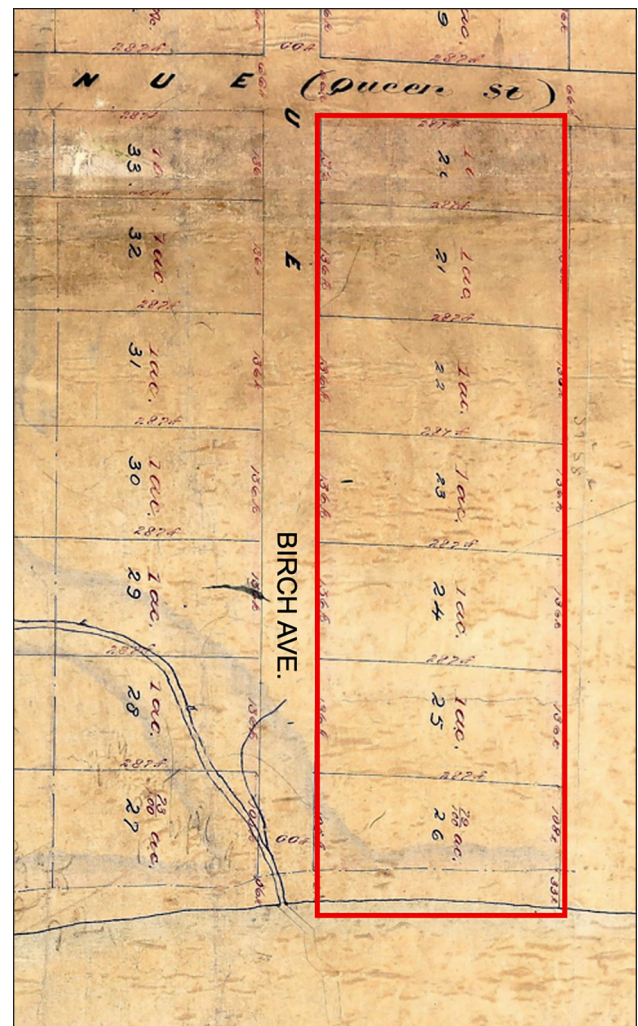


Map 1—1860: Tremaine's Map of the County of York, Canada West (detail; oldtorontomaps.blogspot.com). Adam Wilson's estate, with George Monroe's beside it. The red dot marks roughly where 15 Glenfern would be built.

In 1853, 39-year-old lawyer and barrister Adam Wilson acquired a 51-acre country estate east of Toronto, land that had first been surveyed in the 1790s. Why or how he did so remains murky. The land appears to have been deeded to him, not sold, so it might have been in return for some favour or service. In the ensuing years, Wilson was a Toronto alderman (1855–59); mayor of Toronto (1859–60), after campaigning against a Grand Trunk Railway line running from downtown east along the lakeshore; provincial politician (1860–63), during which he was solicitor general for a year; and then a judge for 24 years (1863–87), rising to the role of chief justice of Queen's Bench.

In 1876 Wilson and some friends and business partners subdivided much of his estate into 145 one-acre "villa" lots and laid out the tree-named streets Birch (now Silver Birch), Balsam, Beech, Pine, and Maple (now part of Queen) for what they envisioned as semi-rural seasonal retreats for the upper class. Registered as Plan 406, its borders stretched from today's Maclean Avenue to a little east of Birch Avenue (a line marked by the present-day Scarborough Road) and from Kingston Road south to the lake. Wilson retained for himself the two easternmost portions on both sides of Birch. He had a cottage built for himself at the bottom of Birch, roughly where "Purple Park" is now, which he named Balmy Beach Cottage. To entice buyers to the lots, at the foot of Beech Avenue he established a two-and-a-half-acre public park with a promenade "for the common use and enjoyment of lot owners." In 1887, aged 73, Wilson retired from the bench and was knighted in recognition of his long service.

That same year, three small-scale real estate speculators—Robert Arthur Donaldson (chief clerk at an insurance company), William Haworth Banks (a developer and insurance company executive), and Frederick Vaughan Philpott (a Central Bank of Canada branch manager and president of the Toronto Argonauts)—purchased from Wilson and his wife Emma seven lots (20 through 26) in the southeastern portion of his old estate, on the east side of Birch between Maple (Queen) and the lakefront, for the price of \$6,250. Among these was the one-acre Lot 26, on the lakeshore. Their aim was to subdivide these large villa lots into smaller and therefore more profitable cottage lots. And so they laid out six lots on their new Balmy Avenue and on Maple/Queen, and five lots on their new Glenfern Avenue.* They registered this layout as Plan 732, which is still in place today.



Map 2—1876: Registered Plan 406 (detail; Ontario Land Registry). The outlined lots will become Plan 732.

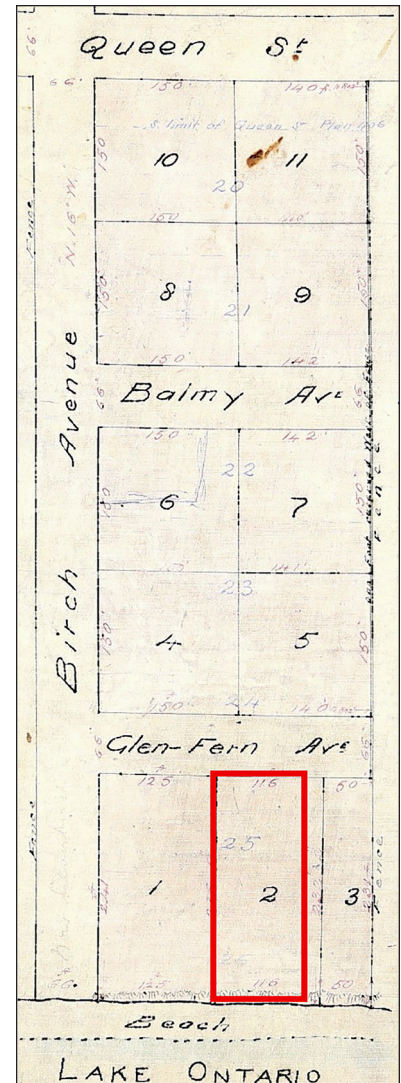
**In city directories, atlases, insurance plans, voters lists, and rental ads well into the late 1970s, the street name appears as both Glen Fern and Glenfern, and the address as 15, 21, and 15–21. This history uses “15 Glenfern” for consistency.*

On the south side of Glenfern our trio of speculators laid out three large rectangular lots extending some 230 feet south to the beach. Lot 1, at Birch, had 125 feet of lake frontage, Lot 2 east of it had 115 feet, and Lot 3 had 50 feet.

William Banks purchased Lot 1 of the new plan for himself. In 1908, the *Toronto Star* reported that "'Silver Birches' [was] the summer residence of Mr. W. H. Banks, on the lake front, at the foot of Birch avenue" (Nov. 19), and the 1916 Goad's map (see Map 6) shows "Silver Birches" being the only home on that lot. (H. Addison Johnston purchased the lot in 1919.)



Map 3—1887: Registered Plan 732, "being a subdivision of Lots 20 to 26" (Toronto Land Registry Office, instrument MBP732). The majority of Lot 2 would become 15–21 Glenfern Avenue.



Both Glenfern and Balmy are dead ends because they ended at the eastern limit of Wilson's property, at its border with wholesaler and former mayor George Monro's 60-acre estate, the site of the future Munro Park amusement park. (This is not a typo. The name spelling was changed for the park.)

THE FIRST OWNERS

Provincial law at the time did not require formal subdivision of large lots. Buyers could obtain title to defined sections and build on them. In the late nineteenth century, private lenders and speculators frequently mortgaged these newly subdivided beach lots. It wasn't uncommon for affluent families to park their money in real estate to protect their wealth. As well, Toronto men who could afford to invest in real estate frequently placed properties or cottage lands directly in their wives' names or had their wives sign on to mortgages to legally separate high-risk stock market capital from tangible real estate assets. Lots could also be exchanged. An ad in the *Toronto Telegram* in 1890 reads: "House with stable on or near Avenue road wanted for Balmy Beach lots" (Aug. 13).

In 1887, when Plan 732 was drawn up, Lot 2 (116 feet across its north border) was owned by Donaldson and his wife Frances (daughter of artist Paul Kane), Philpott and his wife Julia, and Banks and his wife Emily (née Winstanley, daughter of Orlando, one of the partners in Wilson's 1876 subdivision and onetime owner of the land that became Victoria Park). That same year, the owners sold the lot to William Banks's brother Arthur Francis Banks, another insurance agent. In 1888 Arthur sold the west portion of the lot (W. 66 ft) to stock broker and estate agent George Todd Alexander for \$1,650 and the east portion (E. 50 ft) to Henry Mill Pellatt for \$1,250 (see sidebar). In 1890 Pellatt sold a portion of his plot (W. 25 ft) to Sarah Adelaide Alexander, George's wife, for \$750, making the Alexanders the owners of the entire westerly 91 feet of the lot down to the water and including the water lot.* This is the Lot 2 that 15 Glenfern was built on.

In 1890, the Alexanders went to Toronto law firm Montgomery, Fleury & Montgomery, which matched local borrowers with wealthy British investors, and through them borrowed \$2,500 from Margaret H. Home, a spinster in Edinburgh. (It wasn't uncommon for wealthy Brits to invest in Canadian property. Interest rates were as much as double here.) Home held the title as security against her loan. In the meantime, George Alexander and his family moved to Santa Barbara, where Sarah died in 1897. The following year, someone, perhaps George, tried to sell the lot for \$3,500.

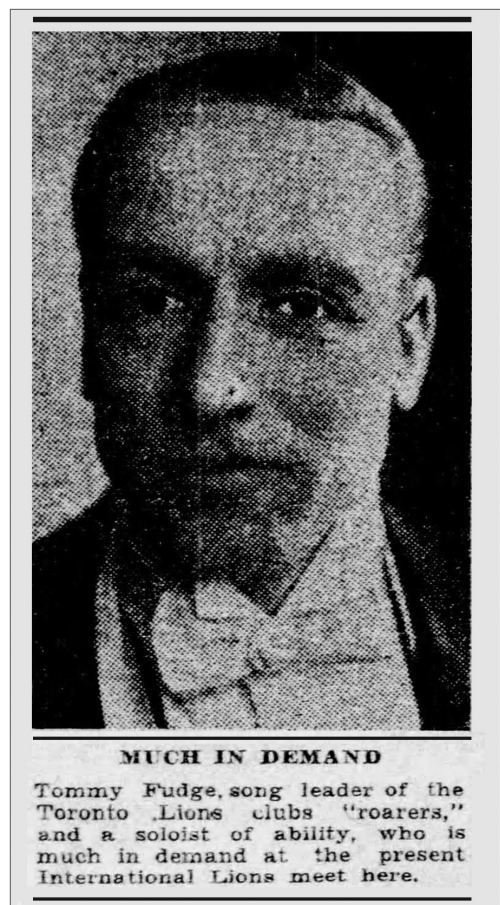
\$3,500—BALMY BEACH, large lot, 91 x 236, with good water lot, well wooded with beech trees, etc., good beach house of eight or nine rooms, large piazza, etc., south side of Glenfern ave.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, future Casa Loma builder Pellatt built several properties on Queen near Fallingbrook, including, in 1891, a grand summer home called Cliffside on the site that is now the R.C. Harris filtration plant. Throughout the late 1880s and 1890s, other owners or at least mortgage holders (mortgages on land could be given as security for a loan) of the east 25 feet of Lot 2 included Robert Turner Gooderham, the businessman son of William, cofounder of Gooderham and Worts Distillers; Malcolm Smith Mercer, who acted as Pellatt's barrister for many years, succeeded him as officer in command of the Queen's Own Rifles, and as a brigadier-general died at Ypres in June 1916; and Annie Stark, wife of Toronto Stock Exchange president John Stark, who bought and sold a number of properties at the time, and whose husband had a cottage at, and named, the Birch Cliff area along the Bluffs. In 1920 this easterly 25-foot section was divided into two roughly 100-foot-deep lots, the sites of the two houses now there.

*Water lots are literally lots in the water, allowing property owners to build wharves or to dredge. Lot 2's water lot extended "10 chains more or less into the water of the lake," or 660 feet. This water lot vanishes from legal descriptions of the property around 1984, when Ontario was routinely "depatenting" underwater portions of descriptions, reverting the lakebed to public Crown land.

Telegram, March 24, 1898: "\$3,500—BALMY BEACH, large lot, 91 x 236, with good water lot, well wooded with beech trees, etc., good beach house of eight or nine rooms, large piazza, etc., south side of Glenfern Ave." At the time, the word "piazza" was interchangeable with "porch" and "veranda," although it implied a large covered porch that wrapped around the side of a home.

George, widowed with five young children, defaulted on the loan, and Margaret Home moved to foreclose. The High Court of Justice for Ontario issued a Final Order of Forfeiture in May 1902. Two weeks later, to recover her investment, Home sold the parcel to Clara Trotter, the wife of dentist William, for \$2,600. (Home died in 1906, leaving an estate in Scotland and England worth \$7.5 million Canadian in today's money; *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, Nov. 22, 1907.)



Thomas D. H. Fudge, *Star*, July 16, 1931

In June 1904 Trotter sold it to musician and businessman Thomas David Herbert Fudge, for \$2,800. There's no evidence that Fudge was actively involved in real estate deals, but not insignificantly, two months earlier he had married Ida May Gardiner, the only daughter of James and Susan Gardiner.

Fudge was born in Surrey, England, in 1874, and his family came to Canada in 1887, when he was 12. By all accounts he was a busy and lively fellow. In 1901 he was secretary of the Toronto Musical Protective Association, forerunner of the Toronto Musicians' Association. He kept his racing yacht, *Spray*, at Balmy Beach, where it sank in heavy seas in 1902. In 1903 and 1904 he captained the Munro Park Nine ball team, "composed of players in connection with theater" (*Star*, July 12, 1904), and on which 21-year-old George Lawrence Gardiner, Ida May's brother, played. George's father, James Gardiner, provided the trophy for the 1904 match. Also in 1903 he was groomsman at George's wedding to Ruebena Eulalie Smith.

Fudge was a "celebrated baritone" (*Musical Canada*, May 1910) who had performed at the Metropolitan Opera House. Back home in 1909, he became the conductor of the Beaches Choral Society, which in 1910 gave its inaugural concert at the Masonic Temple on Balsam Avenue, just south of Queen. Under his performing name, T. Harland Fudge, he advertised

"Solo Baritone ... Concerts, Recitals, etc." and gave vocal lessons, first out of St. Lawrence Hall and later at his studio next door to the Elgin and Winter Garden Theatres. Later he worked as a stock broker, and in 1922 he and several other brokers were arrested—falsely, Fudge maintained—for stock fraud. The charges were dropped the following year. In 1925 he was living in Los Angeles and performing as a singer, but by the end of the decade he was back in Toronto, now the manager of a stock brokerage inviting investments in such enterprises as a B.C. gold mine (of which he was the secretary treasurer) and a muskrat fur farm.

An avid golfer, he organized the annual Shriners golf tournaments in Toronto and the lavish awards dinners that followed them. In 1930, Fudge told the *Star* that among prizes for that year's tournament he had "everything from a race horse and an automobile to a case of cough mixture and a complete course at a chiropractors" (May 1). Also in the 1930s he was president of a banner-towing company that had "options on over a hundred aeroplanes" (*Star*, May 22, 1930). No wonder the *Star* called him "one of the greatest hustlers and funsters around Toronto" (May 22, 1930).

In November 1904, five months after purchasing the property from Clara Trotter, Thomas ("musician") and Ida May Fudge sold it to her father, James Gardiner ("gentleman"), for \$3,000—\$200 more than he'd paid for it, equivalent to a \$7,500 profit in today's money.

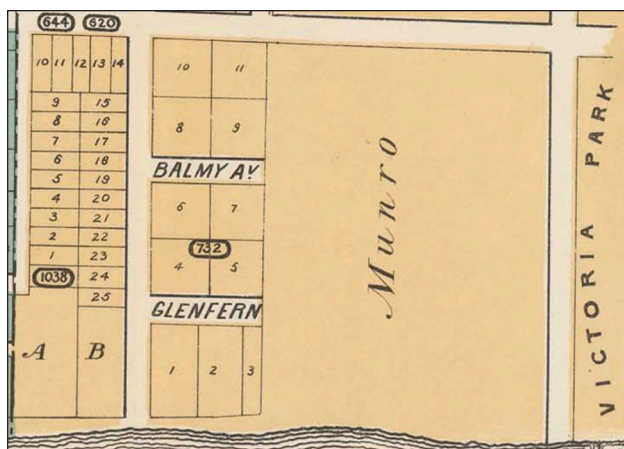
THE GARDINERS, WITH FINGERS IN MANY PIES

James Gardiner was born in Dundee, Scotland, in 1853 and came to Canada in 1868, around his sixteenth birthday, possibly with his younger brothers Thomas and William. By the next year, he was operating a bakery on Centre Street, in the largely immigrant St. John's Ward behind Osgoode Hall, while Thomas and William had a bakery and confectionery on Princes Street (now Princess) at Front Street. Their father (a baker), his mother, and six more of his 13 siblings, including his younger brother Neil, followed in 1871. Their mother died on the voyage and is buried in Quebec City.

Seven of the eight Gardiner sons were bakers, confectioners, or in the food business. James and Neil opened a bakery and confectionery on King Street East near Sherbourne within a year of Neil's arrival. Thomas ran "refreshments rooms" at a tramway station on King East before opening a well-regarded bakery on Queen Street West near Yonge; by 1907 he had retired as a "gentleman" and was living on Cedar Avenue in Balmy Beach. Peter worked as a confectioner. David ran a lunch room and coffee house on Adelaide Street East. William and John settled in California and Chicago, respectively, where they each worked as bakers and confectioners.

In 1874 James married Susan Collins. About all that's known of her is that she was 20 and was born in Toronto. In 1877 he opened his own bakery on Sydenham Street, near Parliament and Queen Street East, and two years later relocated to Queen between Berkeley and Ontario Streets, where he and his family lived upstairs. After 1887 he also had bakeries and confectioneries on Spadina between Queen and College. In 1894 James and his family moved into a home on Berkeley Street just north of Queen, roughly where the Moss Park apartments stand today. Neil moved into the Queen Street premises, though James continued to work there for a few more years. The Berkeley house was big enough to accommodate nearly 70 guests for his daughter Ida May's wedding to Thomas Fudge and to host a reception and supper afterwards in a large marquee on the lawn (*Star*, April 29, 1904). William Banks, who had mapped out Glenfern Avenue and summered next door to Lot 2, was a guest at the wedding.

Neil kept busy beyond the Queen Street bakery. In 1905 he opened a refreshment pavilion in Riverdale Park and soon after was charged twice for selling ice cream and cigars on the Lord's Day (*Star*, Sept. 16; *Telegram*, Sept. 30). The case was dismissed after appeal, but the objections lingered. In 1910, when Neil applied to extend his lease, one alderman warned, "It is demoralizing to children to have the place open selling ice cream and candy on Sundays. On the same line the bars of the city might be open on Sundays" (*Globe*, May 14). On the side he was an officer of the Toronto Canary and Cage Bird Society.



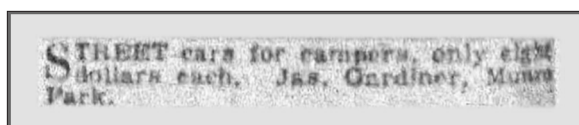
Map 4—c.1890:

“Map of Toronto and Suburbs east of the Don, including East Toronto Village” (detail; City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 200, Series 726, Item 514), showing how close Munro Park and Victoria Park were. Glenfern had been laid out just three years before.

Munro Park opened east of Lot 3 in 1896. It was run by the Toronto Railway Company, which hired James and Thomas Gardiner to manage it. The job included arranging entertainment, from vaudeville acts and acrobats to hot air balloon rides and brass bands (“The Sunatero Family, marvellous Japanese Magicians. Prof. Rice, with a new series of Illustrated Songs. Daily, except Sunday”; *Telegram*, Aug. 1, 1899). Entertainment even included Neil’s own children, performing “Scotch and Irish jigs”: “The Gardiner children were again heartily applauded in their exhibition of dancing” (*Globe and Mail*, Aug. 11, 1898); “The Gardiner children, Florrie and James, ... are so popular with the frequenters of the park” (*Globe*, Aug. 29, 1898).

According to one newspaper, the park had 40,000 visitors in 1898, proving “beyond a shadow of a doubt that it is the most popular place of resort in the vicinity of Toronto. ... Not once during this season has there been the slightest disturbance in the park. This speaks volumes for the able manner in which the place has been conducted by Mr. James Gardiner, the lessee” (*Toronto World*, Aug. 2, 1898).

Never one to miss an opportunity, James rented out horse-drawn streetcars for park visitors to sleep in. One newspaper noted: “The old bobtail cars are being utilized to good advantage at [Victoria] Park and Balmy Beach by campers. No less than twenty have been placed in different parts of the grounds to be used as sleeping tents” (*Evening Telegram*, May 27, 1895).*



Evening Telegram, June 16, 1900: “Street-cars for campers, only eight dollars each. Jas. Gardiner, Munro Park.”

In 1899, when the Toronto Railway Company leased Victoria Park, on the site of today’s R.C. Harris Water Treatment Plant, it again hired the Gardiner brothers, and so they were running both parks. In 1900 entertainers again included Neil’s children: “The Gardiner Children, in National Dances” (*Telegram*, July 28). In announcing the opening of Munro Park for the 1901 season, the *Telegram* reported that “the Gardiner Bros. are the caterers, and visitors are assured that everything will be of the best and the lowest possible prices” (May 22).

In 1901 the railway company had a dispute with the Monro family, which was settled, but after that the owner could not pay the mortgage, and rumours that the park was going to close were constant. The park was purchased in 1906 in a foreclosure sale, and it and Victoria Park closed the next year. It was reported that “Mr. James Gardiner, who ran the park last season, is removing the theatre building” (*Telegram*, May 17). It’s plausible that James bought Lot 2 in 1904 with a mind to subdividing the land when the nearby park land was subdivided, which it was in 1908.

*“Bobtail” refers to animals with a bobbed, or docked, tail. The nickname was adopted for the early horse-drawn streetcars that, because they lacked front and rear platforms, appeared “bobbed.”

Across the street from Munro Park, James and Thomas operated the 18-bedroom Gardiner House at the corner of Queen and Maple (Scarborough Road), primarily for the use of performers at the parks, but they also had guests from such far-flung places as Boston and Cleveland. The Gardiner brothers sold it in the mid 1900s, possibly when the amusement parks closed, and after operating as a butcher and grocer's store for some years it was demolished in 1930 to make way for a gas station.

OLD TIMES IN ONTARIO

By E. C. GUILLET
Research Historian
Archives Of Ontario

The accompanying picture of an old East Toronto hotel, the Gardiner House, is reproduced by courtesy of Frank Gardiner and Dr. Norman Found. The original is a water color made for \$1.50 by a travelling artist.

The Gardiners kept a flourishing hotel over 60 years ago at the northwest corner of Queen and Maple (now Scarboro Road), for vaudeville troupes played from time to time in Victoria park and Munro park.

The locality, then largely bush land, was popular as well for picnics, and Toronto citizens came by carriage or

Gardiner House Popular Place



THE OLD GARDINER HOUSE, EAST TORONTO

night residents of East Toronto tore up the tracks that the railway company had laid the previous day. This was the period of horse-cars, but electrification was to come a few years later. As transportation improved, amusements and pavilions sprang up in the parks, and soft drinks and peanuts were dispensed in great quantity every summer by the Gardiners, who were also well-known bakers.

The old hotel, which had 18 bedrooms, ceased to be a paying proposition when Scarboro Beach park was opened to the south. It was for a time occupied by a grocer and a butcher, but finally an oil company purchased the property and pulled down the building.

wagon, or by bicycle, then printed giving the state of representative cyclists in al- as the popularity of the dis-
a popular mode of travel. So the chief roads in Eastern most every settled locality, trict increased, for the town
much were bicycles used in Canada and the United States, the rules for bicycling tween the city of Toronto objected to the extension of
the 'eighties and 'nineties, in fact, that booklets were and racing, and the names of the Toronto Railway Com-
citizens came by carriage or fact, that booklets were and racing, and the names of the Toronto Railway Com-pany into the region. One

Star, July 11, 1959

When James purchased Lot 2 in 1904, he wasn't new to real estate dealings. There's evidence from 1886 and 1887 that he, alone and with his brother Thomas, sold properties on Huron Street and Major Street. Somewhere along the way, James acquired a parcel of land at 2236 Queen Street East (renumbered 2110 in 1913), on the north side just east of Wineva. After 1900, city directories continue to list him as a baker or confectioner. In the 1901 census, he is earning \$1,000 a year, or close to \$40,000 today. In 1905 he moved to his Queen Street home. Presumably he had retired, since after that no occupation is listed. But does a person like James Gardiner really retire? Neil's great-granddaughter remembers the Gardiners operating ice cream stands at the foot of Maclean Avenue and other spots along the boardwalk.

James, Neil, and James's son George were active in the local Freemasons. Around the time Glenfern was built, the Beaches Lodge held their annual gala at the Balmy Beach Club, and for some years they charged single women extra.



Left to right: George Lawrence Gardiner, Neil Steele Gardiner, and James Gardiner in their Master Mason aprons, about 1910. Courtesy of Carolyn Allen.

James died in October 1913, aged 61, whereupon the west part of Lot 2 passed to his widow, Susan.

The following July, “noted East-ender” Matt Tayles, “faithful servant to late Jas. Gardiner” for 21 years, died at the age of 80. “Matt was as well-known in the East End as his master. He was a familiar figure around Munroe and Victoria Parks, in which he worked as a gardener and handy man.” Ever since James’s death “the old servant has not been at ease, and those who knew him best felt that he was fretting over the loss of his master” (*Star*, July 4, 1914)

EARLY USE

When James Gardiner purchased Lot 2 in 1904, a summer house and at least one summer cottage were already on the site. We know this because he and his son George wasted no time renting them out. In 1897 the *Globe* had noted that “boarding houses are in demand at the beach” (June 17), and there’s no reason to think it wasn’t still high.

It’s not known who built these structures or when. They’re not identifiable in the 1901 census, where, on the south side of the street, there’s a family living at 3 Glenfern, and at the residence to its east—the house number is illegible—are 40-year-old widow Annie Buffey and her teenage son and two daughters. Minus the son, the Buffeys are still there in the 1911 census.



Our stretch of Balmy Beach (“Along the Line of the Toronto and Scarboro’ Electric Railway—The Lake Front,” *Globe*, Jan. 13, 1894).

SUMMER cottage to rent Balmy Beach.
Jas. Gardiner, Munro Park. 128

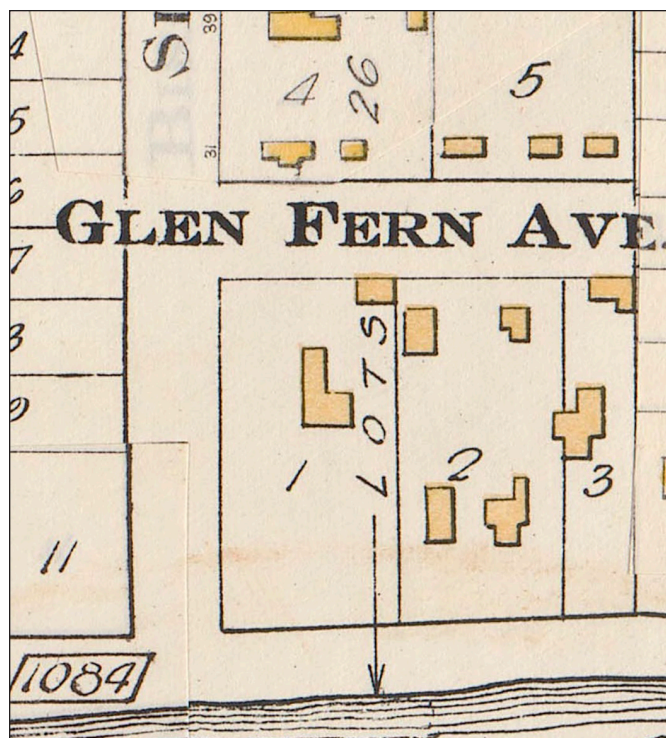
Telegram, June 21, 1904

TO RENT—Summer house also cottage on lake front, Balmy Beach; also cottage on Birch avenue. George Gardiner, Eulalee, Birch avenue, above Queen.

Star, April 5, 1905. George’s house is named after his wife. The house is at 117 Silver Birch.

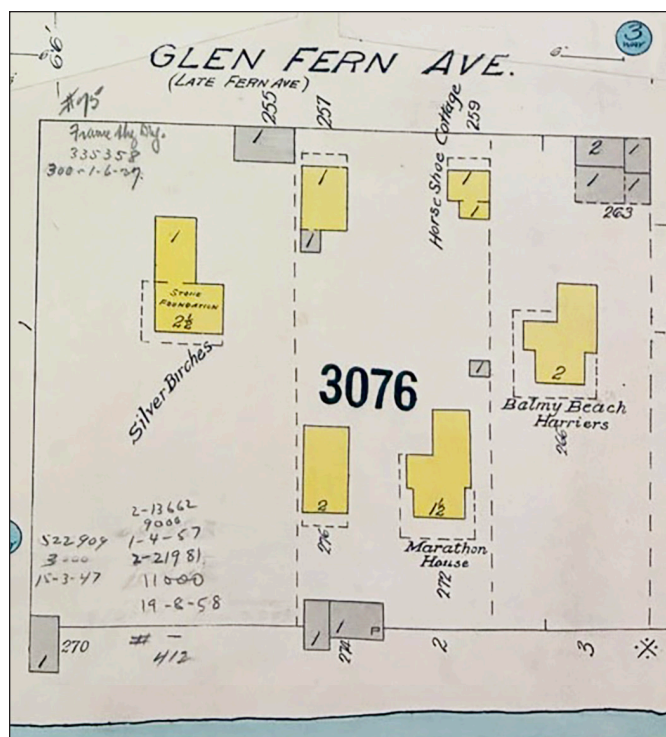
At any rate, by that time Balmy Beach was a rapidly growing community. Back in 1895 it was reported that “twenty families ... have cottages and spend the summer months at these camping grounds” (*Evening Telegram*, May 27). “The tone of this beautiful resort is good,” wrote the *Globe* that same year in its “Balmy Beach Items” column, “as is evidenced by the notice put up on the boathouse, ‘We respectfully ask the owners of boats, not to allow them to be used on Sunday. The Sabbath has always been well kept by the residents of Balmy Beach, and we earnestly ask you to assist us in continuing this observance.’ ... On Tuesday and Saturday evenings the residents sit around their camp fires, and many pleasant tales are told and songs sung” (July 18).

Even though Glenfern had been laid out in 1887, the 1909 York Township directory lists only one residence on "Fern ave, s s [south side]." Meanwhile, there were six homes on the equally new Balmy Avenue. There are no addresses for Lake Front east of Birch, even though there were then at least two buildings between Birch and Munro Park: "Delightful rooms, good board, splendid bathing, moderate terms during September, close to King st. cars. First house west of Munro Park, on lake shore" (*Star*, July 11, 1898). Newspapers were full of ads for summer houses and cottages to rent on the lake in Balmy Beach, but few included addresses or even contact names.



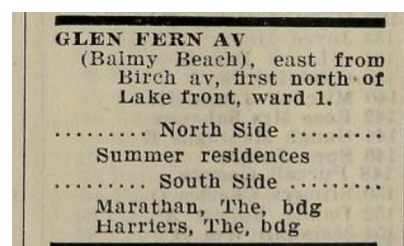
Map 5—1910:

Goad's Atlas of the City of Toronto, Volume 3 (detail; Toronto Public Library Digital Archives). Yellow indicates wood frame construction. The four buildings on the lot remain standing until just before construction of 15 Glenfern.



Map 6—1916: *Goad's Insurance Plan of Toronto, Volume 9 (detail; University of Toronto Libraries). Grey indicates wooden outbuildings, in this case, boathouses on the beach. Note that the eastern lot line has shifted west. The two short lines at the north and south borders of Lot 3 indicate the previous boundary between Lot 2 (115 ft along the north) and Lot 3 (50 ft), a line that, in the 1910 map, cut through the Harriers building. A fence separated Marathon House from the Harriers summer house. As late as 1983, deeds continued to describe the eastern boundary of Lot 2 as running "along the site of a former fence."*

The 1910 Toronto city directory—the first to include Balmy Beach, annexed in 1909—lists just two buildings on the south side of Glenfern, both summer residences/boarding houses, the Harriers and the Marathon. However, the 1910 map shows four buildings on the site: two one-storey cottages close to the street, one named Horseshoe Cottage, and two larger houses closer to the lake, one two storeys and the other one and a half storeys. City directories list nothing for Lake Front east of Silver Birch until 1915, when number 400, the only listing between Silver Birch and Munro Park, is vacant. (Given that directory information was compiled in the fall, many summer houses were recorded as vacant.) In 1916, both 414 and 418 Lake Front appear, both summer residences.

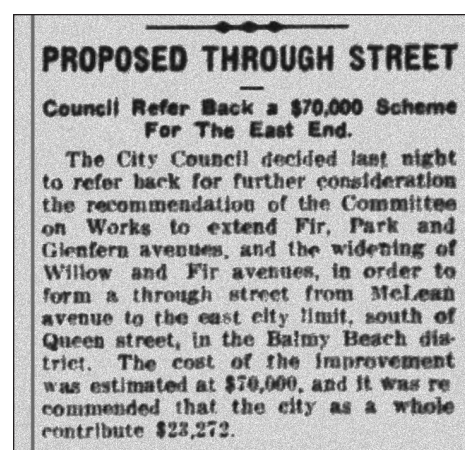


Might's Toronto City Directory, 1910.
"Bdg" stands for boarding house.

Close Call No. 1

In 1913, the City proposed to widen some Balmy Beach streets and extend others, including Glenfern, "in order to form a through street from McLean avenue to the east city limit" at Victoria Park.

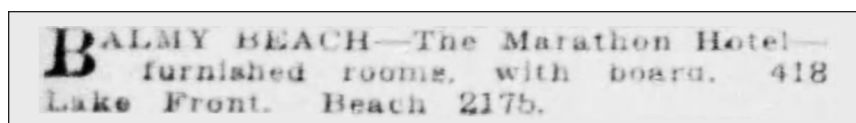
Opposition was vocal. "The people do not want it," said one opponent at a committee meeting, "and you cannot find four men in the district who were in favour of it" (*Star*, June 6, 1914). Nevertheless, in late 1914 the City published notice that a bylaw would be passed. Obviously, the proposal fizzled out.



Telegram, Nov. 25, 1913

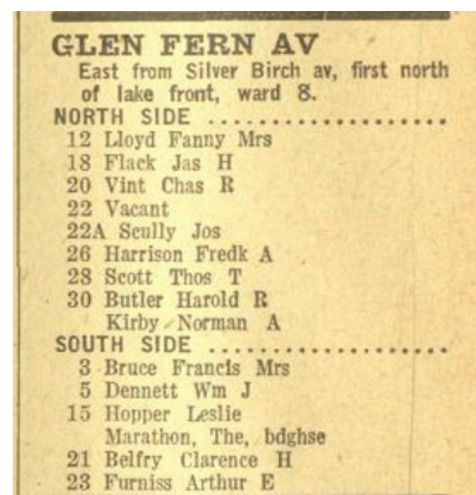
The Marathon and the Harriers boarding houses were unnumbered in the beginning, being listed after 1909 as located at "Glen Fern—South Side" or

"Glen Fern av. e of Silver Birch av." In the 1920 directory (which means in 1919) they have the addresses 1 and 5. A 1921 ad in the *Star* is the first to link the Marathon Hotel with the address 418 Lake Front.

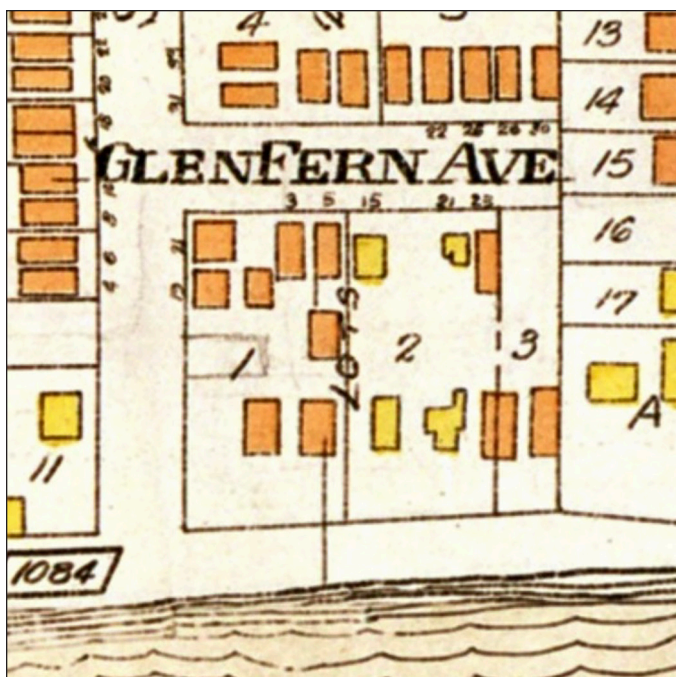


Star, Aug. 11, 1921

In the 1922 directory (so in 1921) the Marathon boarding house is listed at 15 Glenfern, with a Leslie Hopper leasing, and the former Harriers house at 21 is no longer described as a boarding house. Numbers 21, 414, and 418 are leased by people who weren't there the year before and don't appear again.



Might's Toronto City Directory, 1922



Map 7—1924:

Goad's Atlas of the City of Toronto, Volume 3 (detail; City of Toronto Archives). House numbers 15 and 21 make an appearance. The Harriers summer house has been replaced by two brick buildings (orange) along the division line of Lots 2 and 3. These are the current 23 Glenfern (built 1921) and 422 Lake Front (built 1920). Just west over the lot line, H. Addison Johnston's apartment house at 412 Lake Front (built 1923) has also appeared.

In 1923 William Ferguson is listed at both 21 Glenfern and 414 Lake Front, where he has a boathouse and confectionery. In 1903, wood worker William John Ferguson, 21, had married Neil Gardiner's daughter Florence Lillian—one half of "the Gardiner Children" who performed at Munro Park. In 1908, he was assisting at Neil's Riverdale Park "restaurant" (*Telegram*, Jan. 7), and by 1911 he was manager of his own refreshment pavilion in the park (*Telegram*, Aug. 2), or perhaps he'd taken over Neil's. In the 1924 and '25 directories he's listed at both 15 and 414, while Hopper has switched to 21.

Did they move, or were addresses fluid? Are 15 Glenfern and 414 Lake Front two buildings, or does the same building have two addresses, depending whether you approach it from Glenfern or from the beach? Or were 15 and 21 the two street-side buildings while 414 and 418 were the two lake-side buildings? Given the shifting names and numbers, it's difficult to know. But we do know that Ferguson continued to run his confectionery and boathouse until he disappears from the site in 1925, when 15/414 is/are vacant, and 21/418 is/are assigned to Leslie Hopper/summer residence

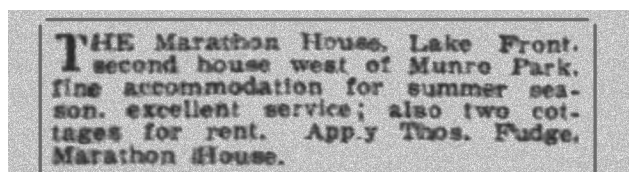
In 1926 (the 1927 directory), 15, 21, and 414 are all vacant, though 418 is still listed as a summer residence. The plot is being readied for the Glen Fern Apartments.

GLEN FERN AV 8	
East from Silver Birch av, first north of lake front, ward 8.	
NORTH SIDE	
4	Moran Eva Mrs
6	Vacant
18	Cleworth Chas W
20	Smith Chas V
22	Vacant
22A	Bongers H E
26	Harrison Fredk A
28	Scott Thos T
30	Butler Wilfred H E
	Timson Ernest
SOUTH SIDE	
3	Bruce Frances S Mrs
5	Dennett Wm J
15	Vacant
21	Vacant
23	Furniss Arthur E

Might's Toronto City Directory, 1927

MARATHON HOUSE

A word about the name “Marathon,” which first appeared in a 1907 ad, with Thomas Fudge as the contact:



Telegram, May 1, 1907. The first house west of Munro Park was possibly the Harriers cottage, east of the Marathon. The “two cottages” are quite possibly those close to the street.

Thus far ads hadn’t named the building—it was a nameless “summer house” on the lakefront. But just to the east, straddling the boundary between Lots 2 and 3 (as do the two homes there today), was the Harriers summer house, rented each season by the West End YMCA Harriers, who trained at the Balmy Beach Canoe Club and the nearby athletic field. They ran, they canoed, they played baseball, and they took a prominent part in the social life at Balmy Beach. Their “cottage” or “camp,” as they called it, was the site of much merrymaking.



The Harriers at Balmy Beach. Jack Tait is on the ground in front of the canoe. Courtesy Balmy Beach Canoe Club.

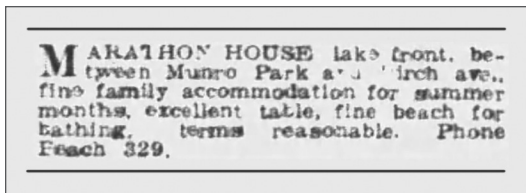


The Balmy Beach Harriers at their boarding house next door to Marathon House, 1905. Jack Tait sits at the far left in the second row. Courtesy Balmy Beach Canoe Club.

The Balmy Beach Harriers had formed in 1900, and the original seven members “went camping” in an old house on Beech Avenue while they attended their training camp. In 1900 the *Star* reported, “The Harrier boys have been specially gay during the past week, a number of their lady friends from the city spending several evenings with them,” and the place was “bright with their torches and gay with their talk and laughter” (Sept. 1). Around 1905 they “moved to a large frame house on the lakefront at the foot of Silver Birch Ave., right alongside old Munro Park” (*Daily Star*, April 10, 1934). Membership was restricted to sixteen and included Canadian champions and members of British Commonwealth Games and Olympic teams. In 1905 their annual masquerade ball was attended by around 100 “friends from the city and the beach”: “the scene from the lake was very like ‘La Bal Masque’ in Venice” (*Star*, Aug. 21). In 1906 they wrote a letter to the editor of the *Telegram* asking if they had the right to erect a fence “to keep all passers-by from trespassing on the beach which lies in front of their place” (Aug. 18). The noncommittal answer was to read their deed.

A 1907 article about a visit from another YMCA group tactfully notes that “the procession from the [street]car to the cottage was full of incidents” (*Telegram*, Oct. 4). According to the *Star*, “The Harriers Club was a popular rendezvous at the Beach, their dances and social gatherings and the hospitality extended to visitors, made the club a popular one” (June 13, 1914).

Perhaps more importantly, though, “Boy Wonder” Jack Tait was a founding member of the Balmy Beach Harriers and a summer resident at the Harriers house. In 1906 Tait shot to national fame by finishing just behind his friend and rival Tom Longboat in a 15-mile road race before a crowd of 200,000 in Montreal. In 1907 Longboat won the Boston Marathon, breaking the course record, and two months later Tait won against Longboat in a dramatic head-to-head five-mile race in Toronto. Everyone was talking about Tait and running. It’s not a stretch to imagine Fudge or Gardiner capitalizing on that running craze, and their star next-door neighbours, by naming their anonymous summer house “The Marathon” to attract renters. And they milked it for nearly 20 years. (Tait went on to compete in middle-distance running at the 1908 Summer Olympics in London, alongside Longboat, and at the 1912 Summer Olympics in Stockholm. He lived on Wineva Avenue from the mid-1920s until his death in 1971.)



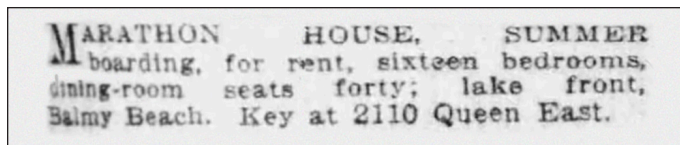
Telegram, July 12, 1907



Globe and Mail, June 15, 1908

The Marathon advertised for an “Experienced cook” in 1909, “Cook and girls” in 1911, a “Dining-room girl” in 1912 and 1914, and “A Girl for washing dishes” in 1920.

By 1915, the building appears to have been expanded:



Star, March 23, 1915. 2110 Queen was the home of Susan Gardiner.

And whoever was living next door at 414 Lake Front had got in on the action:



Daily Star, August 26, 1918



“Lake front looking up Silver Birch—ice conditions at beach,” March 1924 (detail; City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 200, Series 372, Subseries 3, Item 508). To the right of Johnston’s apartment house at 412 Lake Front is Lot 2, with William Ferguson’s house at 414, Marathon House at 418 with snow on its roof, and a string of boathouses out front.

The Marathon boathouses were available to the wider community. This notice appeared in the *Star* in the spring of 1920: "If canoes stored in Marathon boat house from year 1919 are not claimed by May 15th, 1920, same will be sold to pay expenses" (May 11).

If canoes stored in Marathon boat house from year 1919 are not claimed by May 15th, 1920, same will be sold to pay expenses.

Star, May 11, 1920

Marathon House was the scene of many garden parties and dances throughout the summer seasons—hardly a surprise with the Gardiner/Fudge team at the helm. "A most enjoyable garden party and dance" in July 1915 had "guests numbering about 70" (*Star*, July 26). But not all the parties were just for entertainment:

On Wednesday evening, August 11, the guests of Marathon House, Balmy Beach, gave a very successful garden party to invited friends to purchase cigarettes for the soldiers at the front. During the evening a fine program was rendered and dancing followed, and at the close of the evening it was found a substantial amount had been raised and the cigarettes will be on their way when this item is read.

Star, Aug. 13, 1915

Winding down at the end of the summer season in 1920, the Marathon advertised for sale "11 fine white Wyandotte hens, yearlings, good layers" (*Star*, Sept. 14).

MARATHON HOUSE, 418 Lake Front, Balmy Beach; partly furnished, suitable for summer boarders, good boating and bathing. Apply boathouse on the grounds.

The last ad for the Marathon appeared in spring 1925 ...

Star, May 30, 1925

... and by September, contents were being sold: "Must go to-day, large Quebec heater and two-ring gas stove. Bedframes. 15 Glen Fern, off Silverbirch" (*Telegram*, Sept. 28, 1925).

The 1926 assessment roll lists Susan Gardiner, widow, of 2110 Queen Street East, as owning two vacant houses on the property (numbers 15 and 21) and two associated vacant lots. The lot size is today's 91 feet by 234 feet; the value of the land is \$8,645 and the value of the two buildings is \$300.

Glenfern Ave South Side West End Comp at Silver Birch Ave									
Frank from Silver Birch Ave 75 ft									
269831	Bruce Frances	4 30 ft	✓	W				0 3	Glenfern Ave
269832	Dennett William J	28 1/2 30 ft	✓	Draughtman	Dennettilda R	✓	20 1/2 5	5	
269833	Vacant House				Gardener Susan	✓	130 0	15	
269834	Vacant House				Gardener Susan	✓	130 0	21	
269835	Vacant Lot				Gardener Susan	✓	130 0	21	Lake Front
269836	Vacant Lot				Gardener Susan	✓	130 0	21	
269837	Turness Arthur E	16 1/4 40 ft	✓	Est Agent	Turness Edna J	✓	20 1/2 0	23	Glenfern Ave

City of Toronto Assessment Roll, Ward No. 8, 1926. The notation above "Lot 2" stands for "part of west part" of Lot 2.

By the 1927 assessment, Susan Gardiner is still the owner, and the value of the land is the same, but now there's a 20-suite apartment building valued at \$42,000.

CITY OF TORONTO ASSESSMENT ROLL, WARD No. 8 DIV. No. 1

NAMES, ETC. OF TAXABLE PARTIES											DESCRIPTION AND	
1	2	3	3A	4	5	2A		3A	4A	7	6	
No.	NAME	Area of Frontage	Area of Sideage	Area of Rearage	OCCUPATION or S. M. W. or W.	NAME AND ADDRESS OF OWNER OR LESSEE	Area of Frontage	Area of Sideage	Area of Rearage	Area of Total	NAME OF STREET AND RESIDENCE OF PERSONS NOT ALIENS FOR	LAND
	<u>Glenfern Ave South side Cont.</u>											
270904	Dennett William J.	29 4	11	T	Druggist	Dennett Hilda L (ms)	10 4	0	0	10 4	Glenfern Ave	
270905	Gardner Alfred	47 4	11	T	Janitor	Gardner Susan (w) ✓	10 4	0	0	10 4	Side	
270906	Towers Harry D.	28 4	11	T	Clerk						2	
270907	Wright Charles	36 4	11	T	Mfg. Agent						3	
270908	Catford Richard J.	43 4	11	T	Artist						11	
270909	Vacant Portion										5	
270910	Vacant Portion										10	
270911	Vacant Portion										11	
270912	Vacant Portion										12	
270913	Vacant Portion										14	
270914	Vacant Portion										15	
270915	Vacant Portion										20	
270916	Vacant Portion										21	
270917	Vacant Portion										22	
270918	Taylor W Arthur	36 4	11	T	Importer						23	
270919	Hawship Charles	37 4	11	T	Adjuster						24	
270920	Tribe Emily S.	4	11	T	"						30	
270921	Broley Scott L.	57 4	11	T	Mfg.						31	
270922	Vacant Portion										32	
270923	Vacant Portion										33	
270924	Wood Lindsay M.	26 4	11	T	Salesman						34	
270925	Furness Arthur E.	45 4	11	T	Est. Agent	Furness Eliza J (ms) ✓	10 4	0	0	10 4		
270926	Furness Eliza J.	10	0		(ms)							
✓	Land assessed on Lake front 45 ft. (Horside & Krueger)											
	South side 9th & Reserve Strip on Plan 702											

City of Toronto Assessment Roll, Ward No. 8, 1927

THE PLAN

The estate of James Gardiner was administered by his widow Susan, his son George Lawrence Gardiner, and his son-in-law Thomas Fudge. Susan was possibly a small landlord in the neighbourhood, perhaps taking over her husband's role. Between James's death in 1913 and her own death in 1939, she and her son Robert, as well as daughter Ida May and Thomas Fudge, are listed as residing at four different addresses on the Queen Street block where she now owned the parcel James had bought. Although the tax assessments list her as the owner of the Glenfern property, the building permit index lists the owner as the estate of James Gardiner. The permit was issued to George, and he quite possibly oversaw the construction.



• W. BRO. G. L. GARDINER • 1915 •
ELECTED D. D. G. M. 1921
PRES. PAST MASTER'S ASSOC. 1926

Worshipful Brother George Lawrence Gardiner in 1915. D.D.G.M. is District Deputy Grand Master. Courtesy of the Beaches Lodge.

George was born in 1882, the middle of James and Susan's three children who survived infancy. In the 1901 census, when he was 18, he was living with his parents on Berkeley Street and working as an office clerk. He married Ruebena Eulalie Smith in 1902, and in 1904 they were living on Birch Avenue just north of Queen, two houses north of his Uncle Neil, and he was a salesman for the National Cash Register Company. With a father and at least one uncle prominent in the Freemasons, it's no surprise that George became a Mason too. He was initiated in the just-built Beaches Lodge, on Balsam Avenue, in 1906 and by 1935 he had been elected the Grand Z. (or Grand Master), Most Excellent Grand First Principal of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masonry of Canada.

By 1914 he was the first occupant of 65 Kingswood Road, and over the following years he was the managing director of Ideal Bedding and then vice-president of Hobbs Storage Battery, a maker of automotive and radio batteries. In the 1921 census, still on Kingswood, the family has four children and a live-in female servant. By 1933 they had moved to lower Forest Hill

and George was the vice-president of Photo Engravers and Electrotypers Ltd., a company that then employed about 215 people. He still had that position when he died in 1950, aged 68, just three years before the company began designing and printing the Simpsons-Sears catalogues, which it continued to do until the end of the catalogue forty years later.

We can't know why the family decided to erect an apartment building rather than sell the land or sell lots, although they could draw on years of experience in renting properties—the Marathon and the cottages on the site, and the Gardiner House hotel before that. At any rate, they proposed to build a twenty-suite apartment house with garages.

Two impediments: a 1912 Toronto bylaw stating "No apartment or tenement house ... shall be located upon the property fronting or abutting upon any of the following streets," and that long list of streets included Glenfern Avenue, and a 1919 bylaw specifically prohibiting "the erection of public garages and apartment houses on the property on the lake front, between Lee Avenue and the easterly city limits." Anyone intending to build an apartment had to obtain the permission of city council. The estate submitted the request, along with a (now missing) sketch of the planned building.

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned will apply to the Corporation of the City of Toronto (City Hall) for an amendment to Residential By-law, to permit of erection of an apartment house on 414 to 418 Lake Front, between Silver Birch and Munro Park avenue.

This is in accordance with Municipal By-laws Nos. 8740 and 8769.

JAMES GARDENER ESTATE.

Star, June 20, 1925

At a meeting of the civic property committee a few days later, enough opposition was heard that the committee postponed its decision.

A deputation of ward eight rate-payers objected to an apartment house being built at 414 and 418 Lake front.

The committee laid over the application, but granted a permit for the erection of an apartment house at the northwest corner of St. Clair avenue and Deer Park avenue.

Star, June 22, 1925

Close Call No. 2

Per custom, the property commissioner polled 35 surrounding property owners, representing 42 properties. In the end, representatives of two properties approved, representatives of 18 properties opposed, and representatives of 22 properties did not reply. In the opinion of the committee, the 22 non-responders didn't count and the 18 opposed did not constitute a majority, and so council approved the building, though without the garages. Despite the drama, Gardiner must have been fairly confident of the outcome: building plans were dated the same month.

1056

APPENDIX "B."

No. 10621, A BY-LAW

To repeal By-law No. 8090 in so far as it prevents the erection of a certain apartment house at 414-418 Lake Front.

[Passed November 16th, 1925.]

The Council of the Corporation of the City of Toronto enacts as follows:

I.

The provisions of By-law No. 8090, being "a By-law to prohibit the erection of public garages and apartment houses on the property on the Lake Front, between Lee Avenue and the easterly city limits," shall not apply to prevent the erection on the premises known in the year 1925 as Nos. 414-418 Lake Front of a twenty-suite apartment house located according to the sketch submitted to the Committee on Property and now on file with the City Architect and Superintendent of Buildings, but without the garages shown on said sketch, and the said By-law No. 8090 is hereby repealed so far as it prevents the erection of such apartment house.

THOMAS FOSTER,
Mayor.

W. A. LITTLEJOHN,
City Clerk.

COUNCIL CHAMBER,
Toronto, November 16th, 1925.
(L.S.)

Toronto City Council, Minutes of Proceedings of the Council, 1925

DEPARTMENT BREAKS RECORD

Issues Three Permits for Apartment Houses in the Morning

The city architect's department broke a record for one morning today when it issued three apartment house permits, one to the Bloor-St. George Realty Company for apartments at the southeast corner of Bloor and St. George streets to cost \$460,000, a second to Charles Young for apartments on the south side of St. Clair avenue near Spadina road to cost \$75,000 and the third to the James L. Gardiner estate for apartments at 414-418 Lake Front at the Beaches to cost \$45,000.

Star Weekly, March 6, 1926

PERMITS ISSUED FOR Apartment Houses

FILE	PERMIT Number	Date	No. Units	LOCATION	OWNER	VALUE	TOTALS	Units Issued
86424	94231	Jan. 11	2	Durham Ave., Glendale	Thos. W. Robinson	35,000		
86146	94171	25	1	St. Nicholas St. Yonge	J. J. Conham	10,000		
	2		3			45,000	45,000	
82315	94296	Feb. 8	1	Edinburgh Ave. Howard	E. Stanley & Co.	20,000	25,000	
	1		1			25,000	73,000	
85969	94534	Mar. 2	1	75 Bloor Near Lakeshore	Marjorie D. Cummings	27,000		
86342	94565	5	1	Adelaide Ave. N. Spadina	Chas. Young	75,000		
86011	94373	6	1	414-18 Lake Front E.	Jas. L. Gardiner	45,000		
86813	94374	6	1	Bloor, Cor. St. George	Chas. Young	46,000		
87025	94560	25	1	Durham, Cor. Bloor	Archibald J. Stringer	45,000	652,000	
	5		5			1,520,000	723,000	
87367	95327	Apr. 23	1	Barton Ave. Cor. Markham	Mrs. J. Harman	4,000	4,000	
88223	96163	May 12	1	St. Thomas St.	J. B. Brown	4,000	765,000	
87527	96167	12	1	St. James St. Bloor	W. H. H. H. H.	35,000		

1926 Building Permit Index

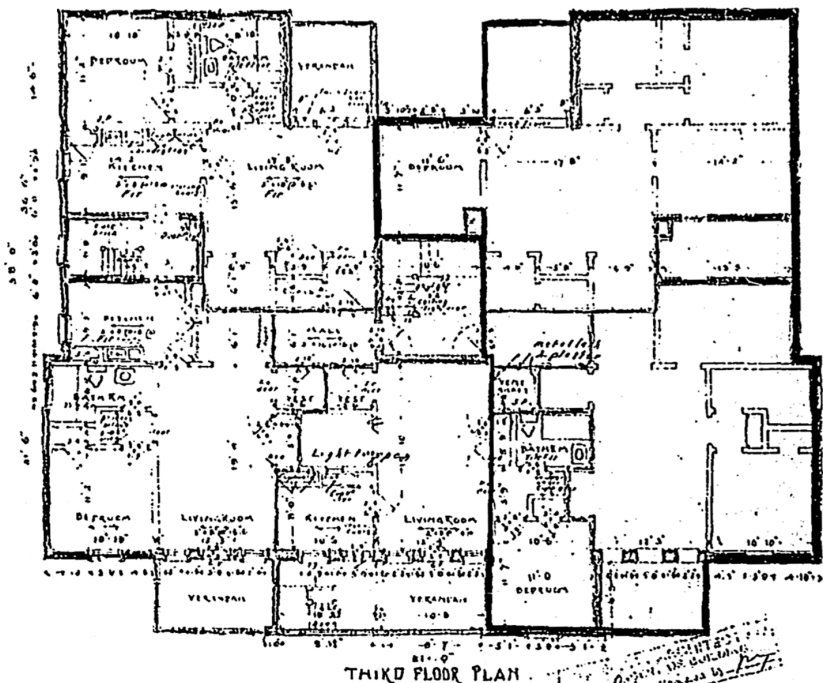
The permit was issued on March 6, 1926, for "414-18 Lake front E.," to the "Jas. L. Gardiner Est[ate]," for an apartment house with the value of \$45,000.* Given that rental ads started appearing that September, construction took roughly six months.

PROPOSED APARTMENT HOUSE, N° 410 LAKE FRONT

FOR THE JAMES L. GARDINER'S ESTATE

SCALE, 1" = 6'-0"

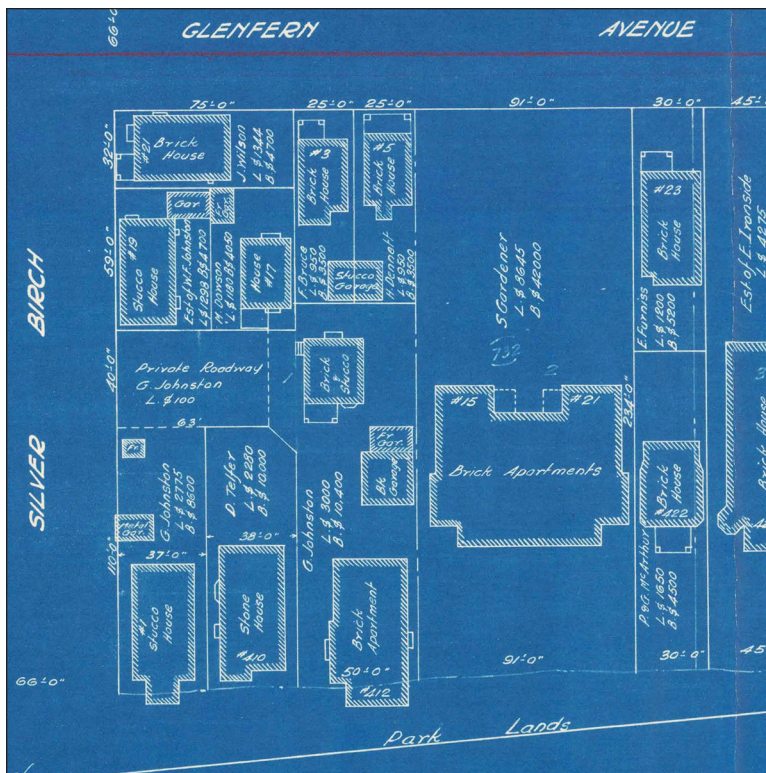
LAND TO BE SEVERED SHOWN OUTLINED IN RED



Although original blueprints cannot be found, a legal document from 1978 does include a barely legible photocopy, possibly of a thermal fax, of an original floorplan. It is titled "Proposed Apartment House, N° 418 Lake Front / For the James L. Gardiner's Estate" and is signed "Archibald J. Stringer, MSA [Member of the Society of Architects] / Architect 53 McLean Ave. / Toronto Nov. 1925."

As good as it gets. The thicker outline was added for a 1978 "Notice of Lease" in which the new building owner gave the previous owner deed-like leasehold control over suites 30, 31, and part of 32 to remodel into a penthouse suite.

*Many building permits listed in the 1925 and 1926 indexes are missing, including any documents for the 414-418 Lake Front/15-21 Glenfern addresses, so we do not have original blueprints or know anything about the builders or contractors.



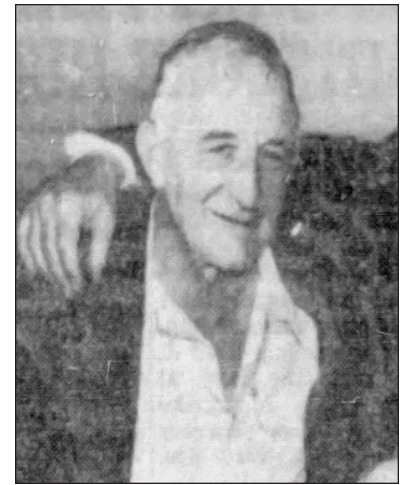
Map 8—1932:

“Plan Shewing [sic] Additional Lands Required for Park Purposes, Area East of Silverbirch Avenue” (detail; City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 200, Series 724, Item 219). S. Gardener [sic] is identified as the owner of the “Brick Apartments.”

THE ARCHITECT

Archibald Joseph Stringer was born in Brighton, England, in 1883, the son of a builder. He learned his trade at the Brighton Technical College from 1902 through 1906, whereupon he left for Canada at the age of 22. For the next eight years he worked as a draughtsman for Wickson & Gregg architects and for architect Alfred Chapman.* In 1909 he was a favoured candidate for the position of building commissioner for Edmonton schools (*Edmonton Bulletin*, Aug. 14) and in 1912 he applied for the position of architect of city schools in Toronto (*Telegram*, July 23).

He moved to Balmy Beach in 1914 and set up as an architect under his own name. That year he designed the furniture for the new Central Technical School, and the following year he began teaching building construction and estimating there, for an annual salary of \$1,600 (\$44,000 today). He contributed to the chapter “Application of Measures to the Trades” in the textbook *Mathematics for Technical Schools* (1921), which taught how to estimate the costs of jobs ranging from building a rubble foundation to painting a border. In 1924 he was appointed director of Central Tech’s department of architecture and design, a position he held for the next 25 years while also teaching night classes. Outside of teaching he steadily pursued a range of architectural projects. By 1925 he was a member of both the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Royal Architectural Society of Canada, and in 1931 he became a registered member of the Ontario Association of Architects.



Archibald J. Stringer, at the first annual Canadian lawn bowling tournament, Hamilton (*Star*, Aug. 31, 1955).

*In Stringer’s years with the firm, Wickson & Gregg were responsible for such projects as the Central Reference Library (Alfred Chapman’s design, and today the U of T Bookstore), Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, and the Eatons’ mansion Ardwold Hall. Chapman’s firm designed Knox College and the Old Mill Tea Room.

Stringer and his family lived on Maclean Avenue, first at 53 and later at 101, and he was deeply involved in the Beach community. He attended the Church of St. Aidan and held several parish positions there, such as rector's warden, and in 1922 designed its Memorial Hall addition. He was by all accounts a skilled lawn bowler, playing with the Balmy Beach Lawn Bowling Club for around 50 years. He started in novice competitions in 1913, eventually played in national championships, and continued to play into the early 1960s. Meanwhile he held a number of positions on the club's board, from secretary treasurer in 1914 to president to honorary president in 1921.

For many years he also belonged to the Balmy Beach Club, and in 1935, after the previous clubhouse burned down, he supervised the plans for the building of the new one. He was also a member of the Balmy Beach Parks Commission in the 1930s, and was quoted in newspapers on such subjects as swastika clubs in the Beaches and the proposed extension of the boardwalk from where it then ended just west of the canoe club (at Adam Wilson's deeded parkland) to Silver Birch Avenue.

More relevant to Glenfern, perhaps, is that he was a longtime member, and onetime Master, of the Beaches Lodge of Freemasonry, which James and George Gardiner also belonged to. In 1938 George was among those who paid tribute to Stringer at a testimonial dinner attended by more than 175 people at St. Aidan's Memorial Hall. When Stringer retired from Central Tech in 1949, he looked forward to "spending his retirement hitch-hiking and tramping around the country" (*The Argus* [Brighton], July 9), although he did complete a few more architectural projects in the following years. He was still living at 101 Maclean when he died in 1967, aged 84.

Stringer's known buildings (some of these may no longer exist)

1912: Major additions to Balmy Beach Club House	1921: Unspecified lodge hall, Toronto
1913: Addition to King George Theatre, 568–570 Bloor St. W.	1922: Arthur P. Holden residence, 36 Rosedale Rd.
1915: Masonic Temple, Main St., Weston	1922: T. A. Entwistle residence, 11 Belsize Dr.
1915: Design of furniture for Central Technical School	1922: St. Aidan's Memorial Hall
1916: Philip Morgan residence, 16 Williamson Rd. <i>Morgan was the vice-president of Holden Morgan Co., a maker of metal-working machines involved in manufacturing shells during World War One. See also 1918.</i>	1923: William H. Rutherford residence, 18 Hillcrest Dr. <i>Rutherford was the director of mathematics at Central Technical School.</i>
1917: Hyman Mehr residence, 13 Balsam Ave.	1926: Glen Fern Apartments, 15–21 Glenfern Ave.
1918: A. Simone fruit store and apartment, 2064 Queen St. E.	1927: Plans for Hobbs Storage Battery Ltd. factory, corner of Spadina and Fleet (not built). <i>George L. Gardiner was the vice-president of Hobbs at the time.</i>
1918: Unnumbered residence, Lyndhurst Ave.	1930: Alterations and addition, St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church, 509 Dundas St. E.
1918: Arthur P. Holden residence, 45 Leuty Ave. <i>Holden was the president of Holden Morgan Co. See also 1922.</i>	1954: Extension, Salvation Army Citadel, 789 Dovercourt Rd.
1920: Mrs. A. Lamantia, three stores and apartments, 894 Queen St. E.	1957: Expansion, Wychwood (Earls court) Salvation Army Citadel, Dufferin St.
	1957: Expansion, Oshawa Salvation Army Citadel

THE BUILDING

Glenfern is designed with features of Edwardian Classicism and echoes of Neo-Tudor, characterized by simple, balanced design, a straight roofline, concrete belt courses on each floor aligning with interior floor slabs, restrained decorative brick detailing, and period “Art Glass” in the front doors.

The street-side lawn, absent the proposed garages, was nice enough to be called a “park” in early ads. There was originally a slope, similar to the slope on the south side, between the oak tree and the building. Excavations to waterproof the foundation around the entrance in 2007 uncovered original steps leading up to the front doors. During further foundation work in front of suite 1 in 2012, the small window next to that suite’s stairwell was found to have originally been full size. The ground may have been levelled for the parking lot that is first mentioned in 1937. Pillars at the street entrance may have been original or may have been added when the parking lot took over the “park.” (The east pillar was removed in 2009 because it kept getting bashed by trucks, and the west was replaced with two new ones to match the originals.)

The roof had a prominent chimney, which during the 2016 reroofing was deemed in too poor shape to restore. It was shortened and capped, no longer visible from the ground. The original pyramid skylight featured a “cupola” ventilator cap, allowing hot air from the stairwell to naturally rise and leave the building. The centre pane of the inner skylight could be raised with a rope to assist with ventilation. Roof access was originally from a hatch over the west side stairs. A ladder had to be rigged up over the stairwell to reach what looked like an outhouse on the roof. Not many residents had the fortitude to make the trip, but those who did said the view was magnificent.



The original skylight with its cupola top. The three metal stacks are for the newer wood-burning fireplaces, and the shorter capped chimney in the background tops the ventilation shaft for the stack of bathrooms without windows. The metal box on the side of the chimney might be either part of an early lightning rod or the housing for an electric retrofit of the cupola fan.

Stringer's 1925 plan uses the word "verandah" for the open sun porches, which in early ads are also called balconies. These featured wood-and-stucco "Tudor panels" on the exterior (replaced in 2007 with fibre-reinforced concrete composite) and varnished tongue-and-groove cladding on the insides and the ceilings. The porches had sloped floors and scuppers to drain away water. The word "sunroom" starts being used in 1937, suggesting they were enclosed fairly early on.



then Markson had sealed his reputation with such designs as the Market Square Condominium, the Alexandra Park housing complex, and the Bathurst Jewish Centre.)

Given their style, these changes were likely made around the time the kitchens and bathrooms were gutted and renovated. A 1987 ad in the *Star* describes an apartment as "renov., with solarium," and a 1988 ad mentions "renov. bathrm. & lrg. kit." A mechanics lien was registered in 1982 by a plumbing and heating company, and a couple of construction liens were registered in 1984, one for "total renovation of ten apartments plus construction of extension"—presumably suite 1—with a contract price of \$72,613, and one to Envirocolour, a "painting and design" company.

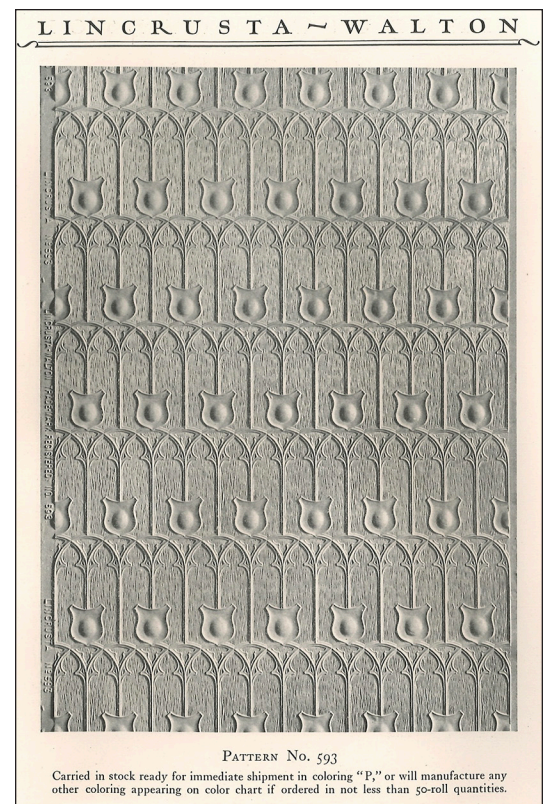
The staircase balusters and box newels with caps continue the clean, square Edwardian style. At some point the main staircase and balusters were painted black. One of the first jobs of the co-ownership was to have this paint stripped off and the woodwork refinished, a task that took weeks. In the main stairwell, the original Lincrusta embossed dado wallpaper is also typical of the period.

The original floor plan shows French doors leading to the landings. These would have allowed light into the halls and through the textured-glass windows of some suites.



This photo taken before the original Tudor panels were replaced shows the (now capped) scuppers at the lower edge of each verandah/sunroom.

In 1989, sunroom windows along with the framing and interior cladding were replaced, according to plans for "Alterations to Glen Fern Manor" by Jerome Markson Architects. Existing baseboard heaters were reinstalled at the same time. (This was an oddly pedestrian job for the Markson firm. By



From the 1922 catalogue of Lincrusta-Walton Co., New Jersey. Courtesy Bo Sullivan, Bolling & Company.

Inside, suites featured glass doorknobs, a popular holdover from the Victorian era, and push-button electric switches. Woodwork—doors, door and window frames, crown moulding, and picture and plate rails—was originally stained dark and shellacked. Each suite had a Murphy bed in the living room. These were removed, possibly during the other renovations in the 1980s, and replaced by fireplaces in north-facing suites. (One suite retains its unpainted woodwork. Until 2017, it also had the push-button switches and the original doors to the Murphy bed recess.) Each suite had a breakfast room (the so-called trunk room). Trim removed during a 2010 alteration had “Breakfast Room” pencilled on the back, to tell builders where trim belonged.



Some recent bathroom renovations have revealed green terrazzo flooring under the 1980s ceramic tiles, with an oval cut-out for a pedestal tub. In the south-side middle bathrooms, which do not have a window, a grille in the wall behind the toilet opened onto a ventilation shaft (labelled in the 1925 plan). At the bottom of this shaft today, a cupboard has been built, the mythical dumb waiter.

Kitchens had a built-in ironing board and a built-in hutch, called a dresser in the floor plan.

Glenfern had a live-in janitor/superintendent as late as 1972, according to city directories and voters lists. At first they lived in suite 1 and later in suite 2, both adjacent to the original boiler room supplying the steam radiators throughout the building.



Outline of built-in dresser, or hutch, in the corner of a kitchen.

A 1927 kitchen in Stewart Manor Apartments, 2269 Queen East, with its built-in. City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1034, Item 85



In the stairwell outside the kitchens was a Kernerator shaft. Any kind of garbage could be dropped down the chutes, and the janitor would regularly incinerate it. Each shaft still has a chimney on the roof.

The Beach had had telephone service since 1903—the Beach exchange, later named Gladstone, was the city's fourth exchange. Despite that, the first telephone listing here appeared seven years after construction, in 1933, in suite 21, home of barrister Fred Hall. Hall's number belonged to the HOward exchange, which began service in December 1925, when the two-year-old GROver exchange became too full. By the next year, another eight suites had phones (3, 11, 12, 14, 23, 30, 31, and 34). By 1935 all but one suite had a telephone number. It's not known whether the phone mechanics were original to the building, but they were installed in a closet built for them in suite 5. The smaller modern distribution panel was moved to the hallway in 1999, though the closet remained. (The 1923 Grover/Howard exchange building, at Main and Kingston Road, is still in operation, though much changed in appearance.)

In the early days, the depth of the beach out front could vary. Early ads for Marathon House promoted a good beach and boating, implying the shore was an easy distance from the boathouses roughly where our fence is today. H. Addison Johnston of Lot 1 wrote that when he purchased his property in 1919, "there was about forty feet of beach outside of my fences," and "at the expense of some thousands of dollars I have reclaimed about 125 feet more land." By sinking piles out 50 feet into the lake and letting sand accumulate, Johnston had built up the beach "to a width of 140 feet at the foot of Silver Birch Ave." (*Star*, April 13, 1929).

But heavy storms and high-water cycles regularly washed away the sand and damaged fences along the beach. Protections included the concrete breakwater, of unknown date, in front of Lots 1 and 2. Former resident Dorothy Bloore recalled six-foot drops the other side of the breakwater after strong winter storms. In 2001, you could sit on the boulders at the bottom of Munro Park Avenue and dip your feet in the lake. In 2002, the city undertook a major shoreline stabilization project, laying down pink granite armour stone breakwaters and sand fill that extended the beach up to 30 metres (100 feet) into the lake.

**No Garbage Can
— Only This!**

THINK of those ceaseless, day-after-day trips out to the garbage can, the rubbish heap! Rain, sleet, snow or summer sun make no difference. The ever-present garbage and waste has to be disposed of. But what a way to do it! Messy, untidy, unhealthful, disgusting of smell, old-fashioned. The time-tried Kernerator, at no more cost than a good radio set, banishes this hateful chore forever! Instant waste disposal, right there in the kitchen. Thousands in use for many years.

Costs Nothing to Operate—No Fuel Used

The Kernerator, built by the pioneers—the inventors—of fuelless incineration, is fifteen years past experiment. America's really modern homes are Kernerator-equipped. Leading architects, builders, realtors, recommend the Kernerator unreservedly. The Kernerator costs nothing to operate. It consists of a brick combustion chamber at the base of your regular chimney, with hopper doors conveniently located on floors above. Into these handy hopper doors, all waste—not only garbage, but sweepings, tin cans, bottles, crockery, cigar stubs, papers, magazines, in fact, trash of all sorts—is dropped. Falling to the combustion chamber, it is air-dried by scientific natural draft, and an occasional lighting burns everything but metallic objects and the like, which are flame-sterilized and removed with the ashes.

Note: The Kernerator can rarely be installed in existing buildings. Consult your architect or builder—they know and recommend the Kernerator—or write:

KERNER INCINERATOR COMPANY
707 East Water Street Milwaukee, Wisconsin

KERNERATOR
Built-in-the-Chimney
Garbage and Waste Disposal
without Leaving the Kitchen

THE FIRST RESIDENTS

The Glen Fern Apartments opened in September 1926. The first ad appeared in the *Toronto Daily Star* on September 23:



In December a *Star* ad boasted “everything new, blinds, linoleum, ranges, refrigerators.” Ads ran throughout 1927, reading “Are you looking for the most homelike apartment?,” “No location to equal this on lake front,” “large, airy rooms,” “private park, individual balconies, bathing beach,” “there is nothing to compare with them in this district.” In 1937, there was now “parking on property.” By

1938, ads mentioned “electric refrigeration” (presumably replacing non-electric iceboxes).

In the 1927 assessment roll, compiled in September and October of 1926, just 11 of 20 suites (as they’re called there)—5 through 22, and 32 and 33—were still vacant. That one entire floor and much of two others were vacant suggests finishing work may still have been under way. Susan Gardiner was listed as owner. Only the principal householder was named in the rolls.

- 1: Alfred Garland, 47, janitor
- 2: Harry D. Towers, 28, clerk [A.D. Gorrie auto dealership]
- 3: Charles Wright, 36, manufacturer’s agent
- 4: Richard J. Catford, 43, artist (lithographer)
- 23: W. Arthur Taylor, 36, importer
- 24: Charles Hanslip, 37, insurance adjuster
- 30: Emily Tribe, widow
- 31: Scott L. Cowley, 57, manufacturer [Corbett-Cowley clothing company, a major supplier of nurses’ uniforms]
- 34: Lindsay M. Wood, 26, salesman

The 1928 *Might’s Toronto City Directory*, which contains information collected in September and October 1927, shows only three vacant suites. Again, only the principal householder is named. Added information about others in each household is taken from the directory and the 1931 census. *Italics* indicate original tenants.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1: <i>Arthur Garland</i> with wife Audrey and teenage son and daughter | 20: C. Paul Fletcher, vice-consul, American Consulate, with wife Esther and two young daughters |
| 2: <i>H.D. Towers</i> | 21: Charles J. McLaughlin, barrister |
| 3: <i>C.R. Wright</i> | 23: vacant |
| 4: C. Hamilton | 24: <i>Charles E. Hanslip</i> |
| 5: H.G. Abernethy, and Stanley Abernethy, stock keeper at Telfer Paper Box Co. | 30: <i>Mrs. Emily Tribe</i> with her daughters Mrs. May Moorhouse and Ivy Tribe, CNR stenographer |
| 10: vacant | 31: <i>Scott L. Cowley</i> with wife Alice |
| 11: Arthur M. Johnson, head bookkeeper at E.M. Pierce stock broker, wife Hattie & young son | 32: Frank C. Robarts, assistant manager, Delco-Light, Frigidaire distributor, with wife Victoria and two teenage children |
| 12: vacant | 33: P.R. Fobert, accountant |
| 14: Harry B. Watrous, artist at Photo Engravers Ltd. (where George L. Gardiner was VP) | 34: <i>L.M. Wood</i> |
| 15: Robert Nicholl Gardiner, salesman, brother of George L. Gardiner. He lived here, after his second divorce, | |

By 1930 the building was fully occupied. In the 1931 census (the only record of all residents), there were 51 occupants, compared with today's 22 or so. All the men were employed, and all 14 wives were listed as "homemaker." There were two children in their early twenties and ten children under the age of 18, including three not yet one year old. (In 1929, suite 11 advertised for a "strong, capable young girl, over sixteen, as mother's help"; *Telegram*, May 7). By the 1935 List of Electors, everyone was new except Arthur Johnson and his family, who had moved from suite 11 to suite 20. Fast-forward to 1975, when one ad stated "no pets or kids," and in 1978, Glenfern was advertised as an "adult bldg."

In the 1938 voters list, there is one widow at Glenfern and no armed forces members. In the 1945 voters list, nine men are on active service. In the 1949 voters list, six widows are living at Glenfern.

Initial advertised rents ranged from \$35 to \$55. In the 1931 census, the range was \$30 to \$60. In a 1940 ad, the rent for a lake-side apartment was \$42. In 1975, suite 31 rented for \$325. In 1987, one-bedroom was available in "Glenfern Manor" for \$740 and \$820. Although units had been sold since at least the early 1980s, the first sale ad identifying Glenfern appeared in 1988, when suite 23 was on the market for \$184,900.

Young Style-On The Beach!
1 bdrm. apt. fronting on the lake, sunroom, renov. bathrm. & lrg. kit. Don't wait for next summers heat. See 15-21 Glenfern Ave. No. 23 Sat. & Sun. 2-4 p.m. \$184,900. Dianne Murdoch, 698-2571.
McARTHUR & SON RLTR.

Star, Nov. 12, 1988

GLEN FERN AV 8	
East from Silver Birch av, 1st n of lake front, Ward 8.	
NORTH SIDE	
2	Cawthorne Geo E
4	Moran Eva Mrs
6	Revell Herbt W
20	Hewlett Helen Mrs
22	Morrison Fred
22A	Bongers H E
26	Harrison Fredk A
28	Scott Thos T
30	Butler Harold R
	Timson Ernest
SOUTH SIDE	
3	Bruce Frances S Mrs
5	Dennett Wm J
15-21 Glenfern Apartments	
1	Garland Arthur
2	Towers H D
3	Wright C R
4	Hamilton C
5	Abernethy H G
10	Vacant
11	Johnson A M
12	Vacant
14	Watrous H B
15	Gardiner R N
20	Fletcher C Paul
21	McLaughlin C J
22	Harriman L E
23	Vacant
24	Hanslip Chas E
30	Moorhouse M Mrs
	Tribe Emily Mrs
31	Cowles Scott L
32	Roberts F C
33	Robert P R
34	Wood L M
23	Furniss Arthur E

Might's Toronto City Directory, 1928.
A few names are misspelled.

Close Call No. 3

After 1920, the City gradually expropriated land and buildings along the lakefront, and in 1928, the newly formed Toronto Harbour Commission announced plans for a public boardwalk and parkland along the waterfront. The Eastern Beaches Waterfront Park opened in 1932 and extended from Woodbine to Silver Birch. When the City looked into expropriating what remained of the lakefront housing, from Silver Birch east to the city limit at Victoria Park, the estimated cost was \$935,000, the idea of demolishing newer and well-built housing was unpopular, and the proposal died.

Instead, in 1931 the City expropriated the strip of inshore property along the remaining length of waterfront. The city controller decided to take possession of water lots and settle with owners later. Among 57 such property owners between Woodbine and the east city limits, Mrs. S. Gardiner was claiming \$50 a foot for 91 feet of frontage of Part Lot 2. (Her neighbours, H. Addison Johnston, Lot 1 to the west, and Messrs. Ironsides and Kreuger, Part Lot 2 and Lot 3 to the east, claimed the same value.)

In April 1931, the City paid Susan Gardiner, George L. Gardiner, and Thomas Fudge \$9,367.43 for their parcel of land "being composed of part of the Beach ... and part of the water lot in front of the said beach ... to the southerly limit" of the water lot, that lot being "patented by the Crown to the late Honorable, Chief Justice Sir Adam Wilson dated the 26th day of October 1880" (Deed, Susan M. Gardiner et al. to the Corporation of the City of Toronto, April 15, 1931, instrument ES11274).

LATER TRANSACTIONS

1926 (Toronto Land Registry Office instrument ES4147)

The heirs, administrators, and beneficiaries of the estate of James Gardiner—Susan and George Gardiner and Thomas Fudge, along with George's wife Ruebena and his brother Robert Nicoll Gardiner and *his* wife Eva May—mortgage the property for \$55,000 (\$1 million today) with the Huron and Erie Mortgage Corp., parent of Canada Trust Co.

1939 (ES16580)

Susan Gardiner dies in January. That March, George Gardiner and Thomas Fudge, acting as administrators of the estates of James Gardiner and Ida May Fudge (who had died in 1935), as well as George and Robert Gardiner as heirs of Susan, transfer to the Canada Trust Co. Lot 2 and the water lot except for the section of the waterfront expropriated by the City seven years earlier. Included in this transfer was the Queen Street plot and a lot on Silver Birch north of Queen. The land was transferred "to pay debts and distribute balance if any to beneficiaries"—essentially, James and Susan's heirs handed their inherited property over to the trust company to wind up the family estates.

1943 (ES19733)

Huron and Erie Mortgage Co. power of sale to Agnes Irene Herman. "Whereas by a Mortgage [for \$55,000] dated the 3rd day of April 1926 ... between Susan M. Gardiner, George L. Gardiner and Thomas H. Fudge, Administrators with the Will annexed of the Estate of James Gardiner ... And whereas default has been made in payment for two months and more ... the Corporation under and by virtue of the power of sale ... has contracted with [Agnes Herman] for the sale to her of lands and premises." Agnes paid \$10,000 cash up front, and the remaining \$45,000 was financed through a new mortgage given right back to Huron and Erie.

1945 (ES22592)

Agnes Herman to her husband Charles Herman to be held jointly.

1946 (ES24504)

Charles and Agnes Herman to Warwick Properties Ltd., \$60,000. Warwick's president, Everett E. Ott, was an accountant and professional secretary of numerous investment and mining companies. He had started business in 1930 and was among several Canadians indicted by a grand jury in 1947 after they "reputedly conducted sales of worthless mining securities in 18 states" (*Telegram*, July 18). Ott stayed clear of the States to avoid arrest, and in 1962 the government dismissed the indictments, saying "successful prosecution appeared unlikely at this late date" (*Buffalo News*, Nov. 2). In 1949 he was found guilty of unlawfully acting as a solicitor in the incorporation of a number of construction and management companies. His appeal was dismissed, and *R. v. Ott* remains a foundational precedent in Canadian law regarding the unauthorized practice of law, cited in judgments as recently as 2021.

1949 (ES29179)

Warwick Properties to George S. Drew, \$67,500. The connection is unclear, but the previous month, Crown Trust placed this ad in the *Star*. It indicates that ownership comes with a suite in the building.

CROWN TRUST
COMPANY
302 BAY STREET—WA. 3861
MEMBER TORONTO REAL ESTATE BRD.

STORES AND APARTMENTS
MODERN 20-SUITE APARTMENT
POSSESSION 4-ROOM SUITE
\$72,000 — Excellent location on lake front, spacious grounds. Possession of 4-room suite and sunroom, overlooking lake, with door from sunroom leading to garden and beach. Gross rents \$11.468. Leases expire May 31, 1949. See this building for value.

Star, March 28, 1949

1950 (ES31589)

George S. Drew to Charles Steinmetz, clergyman, and his wife Beatrice Margaret Steinmetz, \$90,000. Steinmetz was minister of both the First Hungarian Presbyterian Church and the Free Hungarian Reformed Church in Toronto. He and his wife moved into suite 20 and lived there until 1956.

1956 (ES29179)

Charles and Beatrice Steinmetz to Alyce Scott and Evelyn Dickson (both “married women”), \$125,000.

1966 (ES43370)

Evelyn Dickson, two-fifths interest to Alyce’s husband George Scott, realtor. George was a longtime vocal opponent of high rises, and specifically of plans to erect two towers on Lee Avenue across from Kew Gardens.

1968 (ES63994)

Alyce Scott, three-fifths interest to husband George, giving the Scotts jointly 100 percent interest.

1970 (ES67365)

George and Alyce Scott to George Smith, Hydro employee, \$193,000.

1971 (ES69895)

George Smith to Peter Wilson, \$229,800.

1976 (CT165425)

Peter Wilson transfer to Michael A. Overs, Esquire, \$299,000. Overs grew up in the Beach and had founded Pizza Pizza a decade earlier. After purchasing what one newspaper called a “deteriorating” building, Overs claimed to the Rent Review Board that the property had actually cost him \$500,000, in order to justify rent increases of up to 59 percent. (Meanwhile, he and his lawyers registered a fake \$195,000 mortgage to Peter Wilson, to explain the discrepancy in the purchase price. Wilson was eventually charged \$12,500 for evading speculation tax and swearing a false affidavit.) Overs passed on to tenants his 45 percent increase in mortgage costs while failing to make promised repairs and improvements (“snow blower, fire alarm system, major outside painting, roofing and bricking”). When tenants refused to pay an interim 8 percent increase, Overs’s lawyer sent letters threatening them with eviction.

1978 (CT279601)

Michael Overs sells the building to Toronto Lake Front Properties Ltd., president Robert Norman Phillips, \$545,000. The new owner began threatening to evict tenants for nonpayment of rent. As part of the sale, Overs secured a legal promise for a penthouse lease and threatened to evict the tenants in suites 30, 31, and 32 so he could turn those into one suite. Meanwhile, his lawyer (and main creditor) Theodore Belman by then held the fake \$195,000 mortgage, thus gaining control of the property. Charges against Overs for illegal rent increases and tax evasion were eventually dismissed. (For an in-depth description of the speculation, see “On the Beaches,” *Nexus: A Magazine of Land, Corporate and Community Affairs*, vol. 2, no. 1, March 7, 1979; <https://connexions.org/SevenNews/Nexus/NexusVol2N1.pdf>.) Back to Phillips: he was a partner in Realco Property Ltd., a high-profile renovator of such landmark properties as the Flatiron Building in Toronto and the Port Hope Post Office.

1979 (CT380467)

Toronto Lakefront Properties to 350038 Ontario Ltd., \$640,000. The numbered company was represented by Toronto real estate agent Eric Leatherbarrow.

1981 (CT471007)

350038 Ontario Ltd. to Gary Schroeder, Esquire, of Vancouver, in trust, with lawyer Barry Lipson the private lender providing a \$200,000 mortgage and receiving the assignment of rents, \$815,000. Schroeder was an entrepreneur with real estate interests, operating WellsGREY Properties Ltd., "a specialist in the acquisition, management, and resale of income producing apartment properties," with offices in Toronto and Vancouver (*Star* ad, June 4, 1980). In 1978 Lipson was troubled by the new Ontario Family Law Reform Act, which gave both spouses right of possession to the matrimonial home (*Star*, March 31).

Close Call No. 4

Abbacorp was a grantee of the 1981 mortgage alongside Schroeder. For six months in 1981, Abbacorp offered Glenfern for sale to developers.



Star, April 15, 1981



Star, Aug. 5, 1981.

Note how close the beach is to the slope.

Note as well the two oaks on the lawn. The second one blew over a year or two later.

Just deserts: Abbacorp filed for bankruptcy in 1982.

1983 (CT629801)

Schroeder to Integco Management, president Howard Adelman, \$850,000. Adelman was a philosophy professor, cofounder of Rochdale College, a prolific author on the subjects of refugees and genocide, and the founder of the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University. He had invested in a number of apartment buildings and other properties around town, but according to early co-owner Allan Kazmer, "Adelman only fixed things that were broken, with no concern for aesthetics or preventative maintenance."

In 1989 Adelman and 10 others, including one who lived at Glenfern, along with four corporations, including Adelman's H.A. Community Redevelopment (III) Inc., and all operating out of the same address, were charged with selling an interest in rental apartments in contravention of the Rental Housing Protection Act. According to the *Star*, "The purchasers made limited partnership agreements, which generally involve a group of individuals pooling their money for investment" (June 15). Adelman urged the province "to help tenants buy their apartments and bring in tough legislation that would guarantee the rights of tenants who don't want to buy" (*Star*, June 29).

Dec. 12, 1990 (CA121328)

Integco Management transfers the deed to Glenfern Limited Partnership, an instrument of Howard Adelman; value of land and buildings \$1,617,500.

According to Kazmer, "Once there were four or five owners, an ad hoc board of directors was created to make sure that the rights of the owners were considered. Adelman had no problem with this because it became apparent that the cluster of new owners were taking better care of the building than the corporation had been." In light of the charges laid the year before, the owners decided that a legally accepted form of multiple ownership should be executed quickly before there were serious consequences. Board member Susan Baker's father, a lawyer, suggested a co-ownership structure. Glenfern's lawyer, Kim Beckman, "did such a fine job with the co-ownership paperwork that the judge who adjudicated the application was upset. The City was doing its utmost to retain as many rental units in the city as possible," Kazmer recalls, "and this conversion was taking 20 units off that availability list. But he had to approve the transfer because the lawyer had written up such a foolproof application that he was forced to allow it."

Dec. 12, 1990 (CA121329)

Glenfern Limited Partnership, acting through its general partner H.A. Community Redevelopment, is dissolved and each of the 21 limited partners receives a percentage interest in the whole property. The articles of incorporation were certified on Dec. 18, 1990.

At the time, five units were owned by Adelman and members of his family. He sold two and defaulted on the maintenance fee for a third. The new corporation sold the defaulted unit. One unit is owned by the Adelman family today.

IN THE HEADLINES

"Contest for Custody of 13-Year-Old"

Star, Nov. 10 and 11, 1927, and May 26, 1928; *Telegram*, Nov. 11, 1927

Within a year of opening, Glenfern hit the headlines. Charles Wright, of suite 3, and his estranged wife Marguerite went to court to contest custody of their son.

According to Charles, his wife "was away during the afternoons and evenings, attending bridge parties, theatre guilds, schools of expression, shows, lectures, etc. She had sent her son to bed alone." Meanwhile, Marguerite averred that her husband had a violent temper, didn't earn as much as his brother, and was "a pinch-faced rat." Asked if her son had a quick temper, Charles's mother answered, "No more than any other man." The judge then "questioned the mother about the modern custom of a man helping his wife with the dishes." He said, "They do it sometimes through kindness, don't they?"

Stanley Abernethy, of suite 5, said his "only complaint about defendant was that late parties had been held in Mr. Wright's rooms, sometimes to as late an hour as 2.30 a.m. Witness had mentioned that the noise had disturbed him," that he had been kept awake "with dancing and singing," and that "he

had complained to owner, Mr. Gardiner." Alfred Garland, the building's janitor, verified that he had received a complaint about a late party in Wright's rooms. "It was rather boisterous," witness recalled. [He was asked] 'You could hear the noise outside?' "Quite a bit," Garland answered. And on that perhaps scandalous note, court adjourned.

By the time the trial resumed in 1928, Charles had moved out. Custody was awarded to the mother. The judge said, "I don't see how he is the man one would expect to bring up a boy with respect for him when he knew what kind of parties were carried on in his father's apartment. On one occasion a party began in one apartment and adjourned to Wright's. There was dancing and drinking up to 2 a.m. There were women there and all drank alike, according to evidence."

"In Lake Up to His Chin Lad Waits In Icy Water Until Nephew Brings Help"

Telegram, March 3, 1936

While playing on the ice at the foot of Silver Birch one morning with his five-year-old nephew Jimmy, nine-year-old Sidney McConnachie slipped into the lake. Jimmy tried unsuccessfully to rescue the boy, then ran home to Neville Park Boulevard to alert his mother. His parents and Sidney's mother ran down to the beach, while Jimmy flagged down an ice truck driver to help. They were joined by an "unidentified man who ran from an apartment house." Eventually they found the hole in the ice "where Sidney still stood, semi-conscious, his face blue and rigid. ... As the boy's rescuers were carrying the half frozen child they passed the Glenfern Apartments. Mrs. D. G. Lingley [of suite 12] appeared at the window of her apartment, and the father, fearing the boy would die, asked if he could bring his son into the apartment house and get him near the warmth of the furnace. 'Bring him into my apartment,' Mrs Lingley said, and the boy was carried in. In a very short time every occupant of the building was ready with hot water bottles and blankets, willing to do all they could." Dr. E. G. Wheeler of Queen Street East arrived, "and the boy was kept in Mrs. Lingley's apartment until nearly 7 p.m., when he was taken home." Sidney survived.

"Seize Sweep Records, Predict Many Arrests"

Star, Aug. 1, 16, and 17, 1950

After making three raids, morality officers arrested three people, including Mrs. Emma Geh of suite 22 and Frank Warren, who rented a room from Emma and her husband, for redistributing Irish Sweepstakes tickets valued at more than \$500,000. Officers said seized records indicated "wide distribution of Irish sweepstakes in Canada and U.S." "Police would not guess the number of charges that might be laid when the list of agents having anywhere from two books to 100 books of tickets ... is fully checked." That list had been seized from Geh's apartment. Warren was found to have 23,060 books of tickets. Defence argued that Mrs. Geh sold tickets "just to make a little extra money," saying "at least half the people of the city have at one time purchased sweepstake tickets" and that "as a matter of fact there was once a chief magistrate who was a winner." A constable noted that Geh and Warren's joint bank account was found to have had one deposit for \$22,070; "Warren admitted it all pertained to lottery tickets." The judge commented, "It's not as if these people were running anything crooked," and fined Geh \$200 and Warren \$500. "Mrs. Geh smiled and turned over her fine to a constable in \$100 bills."

THE MODERN ERA

In the 1970s Glenfern had a reputation in the neighbourhood for being the place to come to find drugs. Allan Kazmer, who bought a suite in the mid 1980s, recalls that passers-by often noticed “the aroma of grass (the recreational kind) floating in the breeze. Not *Animal House*, but not an uptight residence either.” Neighbourhood lore is that locals walked right in and went from apartment to apartment in search of a good deal.

Tamara Wilen, who moved in in 1987, remembers that many residents then were in their twenties and thirties, and many worked in film and television, “an exceptionally fun, creative bunch. For the most part, it was like living at a social club. We had many beach parties, bonfires and croquet tournaments in the backyard overlooking the lake.” (Not so different from the 1900s.) One year residents hooked up blenders and speakers. Neighbour Birthe Joergensen of 422 Lake Front recalled seeing seven-foot-tall speakers being set up on the lawn; she and her husband left town for a few days. Residents danced and drank rum punch throughout the afternoon and evening, inviting passers-by to join the party. Early the next morning Wilen went out to the beach to clean up and saw a neighbour who’d been at the party scanning the beach with a flashlight. When Wilen asked her what she was looking for, she replied, “My dentures!” The “Blender Party” became an annual event for a while, one of its rules being “Maintain unfettered joy.”

The same group continued the century-old tradition of bonfires on the beach. Wilen recalls one that was so fierce it melted the credit card in someone’s front pocket. The last bonfire was in 2002, to celebrate winter solstice.

Kazmer recalls “a collective bond” among the early co-owners, with “pride and participation in the building” increasing. Individuals and committees tended to maintenance and improvements. (Glenfern did not have a property manager until 2008.) Just since 2000, many improvements have been made, among them reskinning the exterior of the sunrooms and adding insulation there; insulating the attic; stripping the roof right down to the beams and rebuilding it, along with replacing the original central skylight and repairing all the rooftop brickwork; updates to meet current fire code; moving the fence south to enclose the full extent of the property; replacing all windows; painting and carpeting hallways, hanging original art in the hallways, and refurbishing the side stairwells; building the garden shed (to replace a rusted, collapsing tin one); and transforming the formerly overgrown, neglected grounds. All with the goal of keeping Glenfern going for maybe another hundred years.

SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE . . .

For weeks past residents at the foot of Silver Birch avenue have lived in misery because of the behavior of a certain dog. This phenomenal canine, being a gentleman of leisure, has developed the habit of going daily, at 6 a.m., to the waterfront; barking all day long; chasing other dogs less ferocious looking than himself, and nearly scaring the wits out of timid people. But the chief item of objection was the noise he made. There never was a dog in Toronto which barked so tirelessly and persistently, said the officers who investigated. Complaints have poured into No. 10 police station for the past two weeks, among them a signed letter from a neighbor. Yesterday Plainclothesman Whitelaw got busy, summoned the owner of the dog, subpoenaed several complaining neighbors as witnesses, and intimated that he was going to use the letter in evidence. The case is slated for the afternoon court today.

Star, Aug. 15, 1917

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY.

To the Editor of The Star.

Your correspondent says that "residents of Balmy Beach have had the privilege of using the beach under certain conditions, which have been respected generally, and they have been grateful to the owners of water lots for the free use of same." There is no doubt that the public have been granted many privileges on the beach by the owners thereof, but there are many instances where the gratefulness is sadly lacking. It does not make the owner of the beach feel particularly pleased with the public when every morning he has to rake up banana skins, orange peel, newspapers, broken bottles and empty bags which have been plentifully distributed over his property by the previous day's picnickers. It is not particularly pleasant to be sworn at when requests are made that certain individuals should behave themselves decently when occupying a portion of one's front yard. It is not particularly enjoyable to be waked from one's beauty sleep most summer evenings by loud talking, laughter and catcalls within a few feet of one's window, at eleven or twelve o'clock at night. Nor does it give much encouragement to the beach owner to unduly favor the general public when he finds corn husks, half eaten weiners, portions of buns and large quantities of debris scattered over his property the morning after a corn roast. It is rather tiresome to have to politely ask people several times every day to please keep out of one's boats when they are drawn up on the beach, it having been found that a printed sign requesting such was absolutely ignored. It certainly does not improve one's temper to find the bottom boards of one's canoe or dinghy stove in by the feet of the grateful public.

H. ADDISON JOHNSTON.

Letter to the editor by H. Addison Johnston, 412 Lake Front, Star, May 27, 1922

THE MYTHS

Glenfern was built by the Eatons as a summer place for management. At the end of the season, stockboys had the run of the place for two weeks. There was a kitchen in the basement. Meals were sent up in a dumb waiter or served in a dining pavilion on the lawn. The apartments had a trunk room, exactly the width of an opened steamer trunk. What's now the kitchen was originally a second bedroom.

It's easy to see how various historical facts might get mashed up over time. The evidence is undeniable that Glenfern was built as, and opened as, a rental apartment building. It was owned first by a local family and later by individuals who invested in real estate and later still by speculators and property management companies. There is no evidence that any of these people or companies had any link with the Eatons.

What the T. Eaton Company *did* do was operate, from 1917 until 1928, a "boys" camp on part of the former Victoria Park amusement park, using its sports and camping facilities. Young male employees could attend for two weeks at a time, affording them a relaxing "fresh air" experience. The Eaton's boys also performed outdoor theatricals, and could invite lady friends to Friday evening socials. Later the camp provided overnight and weekend stays, with the company providing buses to take employees straight from work to the camp and back again the next morning. The City purchased the property in 1927 for the site of the R.C. Harris filtration plant.

A history of confectionery stands along the lakefront, including on this property, and the Marathon boarding house's garden parties could well coalesce into a picture of Glenfern's dining pavilion on the lawn.

The door for the alleged dumb waiter likely provided access to the bottom of the ventilation shaft for cleaning. A dumb waiter that reaches from the floor to chest height is not exactly practical. And why leave that in place but remove all the dumb waiter hatches on each floor above and conceal the former openings with plaster that is indistinguishable from the original?

As for the trunk room, the architect's original plan and some trim clearly label the alcove the "Breakfast Room." The plan also identifies the kitchen and even shows the arrangement of stove and sink. And recent removal of original lath and plaster confirms that the supposed second bedroom was plumbed for kitchen use from the get-go.



THE END (for now)

Additions and corrections are welcome: balmybeach77@gmail.com

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Richard White, whose blog post “Beaches historical sight: East of Silver Birch” (<https://torontobeachesneighbourhoodhistory.ca/portfolio/2-east-of-silver-birch/>) introduced me to the Gardiner connection.

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Suzanne Courtney, layout.

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