

Assaly's grand scheme was further hampered by the City of Ottawa's indecision with regards to the electric railway right-of-way, for it was uncertain of the N.C.C.'s plans. A multi-lane highway was one early suggestion for it, but Assaly wanted to incorporate it into Lincoln Heights.¹³

It was not until 1980 that the City of Ottawa decided to sell off four lots on Lincoln Heights Road leaving a pedestrian right-of-way. The inside part was sold to the developer as a road allowance for considerations, money and landscaping of the pedestrian way.

In 1960, the city changed its subdivision policy which now placed the responsibility for water, storm sewers, sanitary sewers, pavement and street lighting on the builder. In the same year, City Council passed a by-law rezoning the area east of what later became Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre and north of Richmond Road, which prevented Assaly from putting up high-rises. He built two rows of townhouses along the south side of Regina and continued to ask for zoning changes, but Regina Street residents made City Council aware that they objected to anything except single family homes.¹⁴

In 1964, the City's zoning by-law AZ-64 was adopted. It maintained the balance between commercial and residential areas that previous zoning allowed, but it also gave room for apartment construction on specific sites on the heights.¹⁵

While the barrage of skyscrapers was still on the drawing boards, small apartment blocks and single family homes continued to build south of Carling Avenue on the heights. Campeau, for instance, developed DuMaurier, Farrell, St. Stephens and Watson Streets in an extension of an earlier subdivision west of Pinecrest. Small apartments began to dot the main streets. Britannia Court Apartments were put up on Doane near Carling in 1966, and a companion block was built later in the 1960s. In 1969 a small block appeared on the south side of Carling between Norton and Tavistock and also one on High Street.

Britannia residents soon became wary of the social and physical consequences of high density housing on their community. The mounting movement towards public housing in the city which tended to take the form of high density housing aroused cries of the possible slumming of Britannia.

During the sixties, the Ontario Housing Authority (O.H.A.), created by provincial statute and under provincial regulation, provided needed rent-to-income units to urban areas. Nepean re-

fused to have any and it fell upon the City of Ottawa to permit the O.H.A. to build units within its boundaries. Apart from agreeing to have the units, City Council had no further jurisdiction in the matter and the Authority, not wanting to bother with zonings and the like, asked contractors to submit proposals.

As early as 1962, the Britannia Heights Community Association, anxious about the Province's plans for a low-rent project near the junction of the two provincial highways, petitioned Ottawa's Board of Control for zoning changes that would allow only single family dwellings in their area. The Planning Area Board recommended deferring an application in 1963 to amend the zoning of Britannia Heights east of Pinecrest which was then slated for single family homes. The city was concerned about the possible building of low-rent housing in the area.¹⁶ Three years later, Regina Street residents opposed plans by the Ontario Housing Authority to convert 47 units of row housing on their street to low-rent housing. However, Assaly was successful in selling the units to Ontario Housing.

Opposition to rent-to-income housing by Britannia people was disregarded when in 1967 the O.H.A. chose the long abandoned site of the C.P.R. gravel pits on Bell's property west of the park and south of Ahearn for 180 units of row housing. This development was called Britannia Woods. Further plans for public housing in the Britannia area in 1970 were opposed by neighbouring people and city officials on the grounds that such a high concentration of housing in Britannia would drain the existing schools, churches and recreation facilities, and would create a "bad housing mix".⁷

During the 1950s and early 1960s, other matters were not quiet on the Britannia front for reasons related closely to development. Problems arose as development outpaced the promised extension of city services to Ottawa's West End. Residents and developers became uneasy about the existing state of water and sewage disposal. Much of Britannia Village remained dependent on the park's water tower, Gerald Jamieson's pipeline system and wells for its drinking water. The vulnerability of the village was highlighted in 1952 when Jamieson informed the 28 year-round and summer dwellers along the north side of Jamieson Street, the east side of Bradford, and on Kirby and Cassels, that he would no longer supply water to them during the summer.¹⁸ The Ottawa Transportation Commission, which administered the electric railway and park,

already provided water to people on the south side of Jamieson Street. The Commission took over Jamieson's service, but this presented an increased cost to the householders who were responsible for connecting with the O.T.C. water main.

A more serious problem in the mid-1950s was water contamination, particularly since other residents in Britannia were served by wells. Few people had septic tanks for which a minimum lot area of 15,000 square feet was required.¹⁹ Many houses and cottages built before 1950 did not meet these standards, and therefore had outhouses. In the spring of 1955, ratepayers expressed fears regarding the possible contamination of their drinking water caused by effluent from the remaining outhouses and spring flood waters. In 1958, some residents began to boil their water and Alderman Bower Boyce called for the delivery of drinking water to residents on Greenview, Zephyr, and Howe because their well water was unfit for consumption.²⁰

Subdividers in the West End also demanded city water and sewer installation to attract buyers to the area. Campeau, for instance, had anticipated these services when he promised them to the prospective owners of two industrial plants along the new Queensview industrial road.²¹ The City of Ottawa was slow in providing the services they had promised to Britannia, which was the neighbourhood farthest from the former city limits and therefore from existing major water mains and sewage collectors.

It was found that the City required another water filtration plant in the West End. The Britannia plant was being considered as early as 1951 in response to the rising demand for water by Ottawa's new ratepayers.²² The cold war between the Soviet Union and the West expedited these plans as city officials feared the possible destruction of the existing Lemieux Island filtration plant in the event of war on the American continent. The existing plant was expected to reach its maximum capacity by 1960, so in 1956 a second plant, further upriver at Britannia, was called for. Forty-four acres of land were bought by the City from the Ontario Hydro-Electric Power Commission in 1957, and construction of the plant began with an expected completion date set for September 1960. Work delays caused by spring floods and an electrician's strike postponed the opening of the plant until the following year.

The second problem encountered with extending city water to Britannia involved plans for the National Capital Region. The F.D.C. intended to expropriate land along the Ottawa River shore

for a parkway to Britannia and a bridge across the river at Deschênes Rapids. Letters were sent to residents in the Britannia village area in May 1956 outlining the federal agency's long-term plans. This brought some concern to the City of Ottawa and local ratepayers who saw the impurdance of having sewers and water mains go into the area if there would soon be no one there to pay for the services.²³

Nevertheless, mains and sewers were slowly channelled out to Britannia. The West Nepean Collector Sewer, as it was called, was extended to Woodroffe in 1958, but it was not until 1960 that further construction brought water mains and sewer collectors to the Britannia area. As the last area to acquire these critical services, Britannia was notorious at City Hall for sporting most of Ottawa's remaining 185 outhouses.

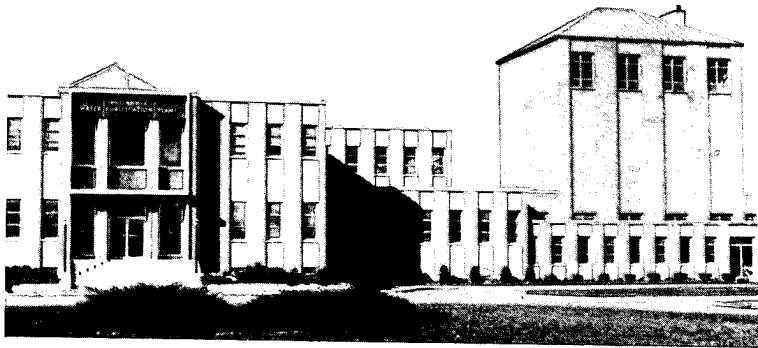
The construction of branch mains and sewers continued into the early 1960s.²⁴ The provision of these services to Belltown was postponed by plans to expropriate 13 acres of the neighbourhood for an addition to Britannia Park intended to offset property lost to the proposed Britannia-Deschênes Bridge arterial. But the demand for services overrode these long-term plans and the sewer extensions were approved in 1963. Parts of old Britannia Heights did not receive sewers until 1964-65.

City water services were being offered to residents on a local option basis, and newspapers wondered whether ratepayers would want to pay for these services if it was an expensive undertaking in view of the rocky terrain.²⁵ Some householders seriously considered not having city water brought to their homes.²⁶ For this reason, some people in the Belltown area adjacent to the park objected to the dismantling of the O.T.C. water tank in Britannia Park in the summer of 1961. The original Viens home on Richmond Road retained its own septic system in the face of the city's offer of sanitary sewers.

A conservative frame of mind was also displayed by Britanniains when its two rural post offices were closed and door-to-door mail delivery was extended to them. Both Britannia Bay and Britannia Heights post offices remained distinct rural post offices in the 1950s. The former had been operated by Mrs. Lilly McClintock since 1949 and the latter by Cam MacLaurin since 1923. In 1960, the Post Office Department decided that these institutions of Britannia were no longer practical and called for door-to-door mail service. The usual arrangement made between the Post Office and the house-

holders required that four out of five homes had to have letter slots or boxes installed before delivery could begin in their area. Britannia residents were apparently less eager than most in responding to this basic requirement. This aroused the curiosity of Walter Gilhooly, a columnist for a local paper, who described these people as rugged individualists who were too proud and independent to accept a service.²⁷ Nevertheless, after delivery was announced in October 1960, the postal requirement was met by February 1961, and door-to-door mail service began.

A similar reaction to change occurred two years later, with a referendum in Ottawa's West End on the question of allowing liquor licenses and various forms of liquor establishments. The vote was taken because this part of what was Nepean Township had been dry



Britannia Filtration Plant, 1982.



Britannia Woods, 1982.

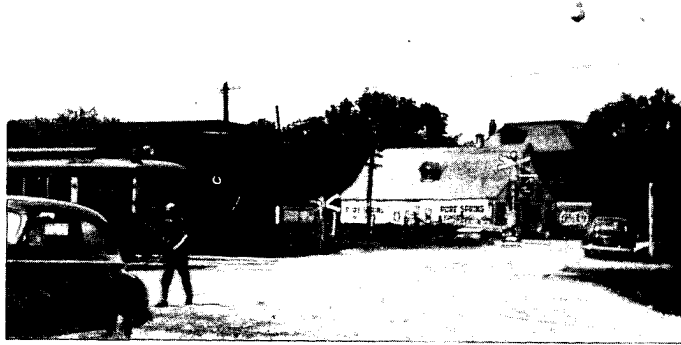
since the early years of the century when local governments held referenda on whether their municipalities should have prohibition. The West End vote, which took place in 1962, generally favoured the establishment of beer and liquor stores, dining room licenses, and cocktail lounges with overall votes of 71, 67 and 61 percent cast in favour of each.²⁸ Britannia people, however, were less convinced than most of the need for a wet neighbourhood.

Other modern services long enjoyed in other parts of Ottawa, including neighbourhood fire protection facilities and a telephone exchange, came to Britannia in the late 1950s. The Britannia Community Club lobbied for better fire protection in 1951. The only water source that was available to the neighbourhood in the event of fire at the time was the river. But in the winter the river was frozen and the roads were blocked. The need was partly met when the city installed water storage tanks in Belltown in 1954. Four years later, a fire station and health centre was established on Carling Avenue between Norton and Tavistock, giving the area a permanent neighbourhood service.

The Community Club also lobbied for a separate telephone exchange for Britannia in 1951. Party lines of up to eight or ten telephones were common, and, in an emergency, residents who needed the phone urgently were frustrated by other parties using the line. A telephone exchange which permitted private lines and long distance calls was provided in 1957.

The fifties brought many changes to the lifestyles of Britannia residents, the most obvious being the end of electric railway service which had done much to stimulate development. Annexation provided Britannia's patrons with city fares as one of Ottawa's promises to residents before annexation which citizens' groups and Nepean Township had demanded. This only lasted six years. The lower city fares that local residents had long fought for were ended when the O.T.C., to resolve its growing financial woes, imposed a five-cent zone levy in 1956.

The streetcar, the key to much of the urbanizing of Britannia, ultimately fell victim to modern times. The city's substitution of buses for weekend streetcars on routes other than the Britannia Line in 1957 was the start of a trend. A report prepared for the O.T.C. in 1958 declared that streetcars were no longer suitable and it recommended a complete conversion to diesel buses. Public streetcars circled the loop at Britannia Park for the last time on May 1st, 1959. Bus service started immediately afterwards and was soon



The C.P.R. brick waiting room at Britannia Road prior to 1959.

extended to the streets of Britannia Village. The streetcar tracks were lifted, leaving only a long narrow ridge in their place.

One disservice to Britannia by the City of Ottawa involved the municipal garbage dump. With prospects of more population growth, the City grew concerned about the rapidly filling dump that it had inherited from Nepean Township during annexation in Westboro. Ottawa first chose a site on Henley Street in Britannia Heights in 1951 for a prospective dump. This was overturned when local inhabitants petitioned against it.²⁹ Mayor Grenville Goodwin instead suggested using the gravel pit formerly operated by R.R. Foster on the Mosgrove lands. Little action was taken until 1953 when City Council approved the use of the Magee farm for garbage disposal. The Britannia Ratepayers' Association fought this decision, but supported the city's alternative site, the Foster gravel pits. A group of Britannia Heights householders in turn opposed this idea and in September 1953 formed a citizens' committee to rally opposition. This group did not learn until later that the pits had been deemed unsuitable by the City's health officials.

Ottawa finally settled on yet another location in the heights on the property of Willibald Viens off the west side of Pinecrest Road, where the city felt it could dispose of waste for at least five years. When this dump opened in November 1953, it too met with opposition from local residents. The Britannia Ratepayers' Association claimed that the new dump depreciated property values, disturbed funerals going to Pinecrest Cemetery, contaminated their wells, and endangered their health.³⁰ The city looked for another dumping site in 1957 and returned to the Magee farm where they settled on a nine-acre site between the two railway rights-of-way on F.D.C.

288.

property. This site seems to have met with approval; no deputation or complaint was made by residents against the move.

The growing population of Britannia brought a need for new places of worship and for schools. St. Stephens Anglican Church on Britannia Road had become too small for the congregation of the fifties. Robert Winthrop sold land to the parish for a new church but the sale was blocked by the F.D.C., which wanted the land reserved for future use. The parish later acquired land for a larger church and manse from Gerald Jamieson on the southwest corner of Britannia and Cameron, but it was underlaid with bedrock and would have been expensive to excavate. A campaign was begun to obtain the money for a new parish hall in 1952, and the parish asked the Anglican Church Extension Commission, which was set up to assist suburban parishes in such ventures, for funds by way of a mortgage for the project.

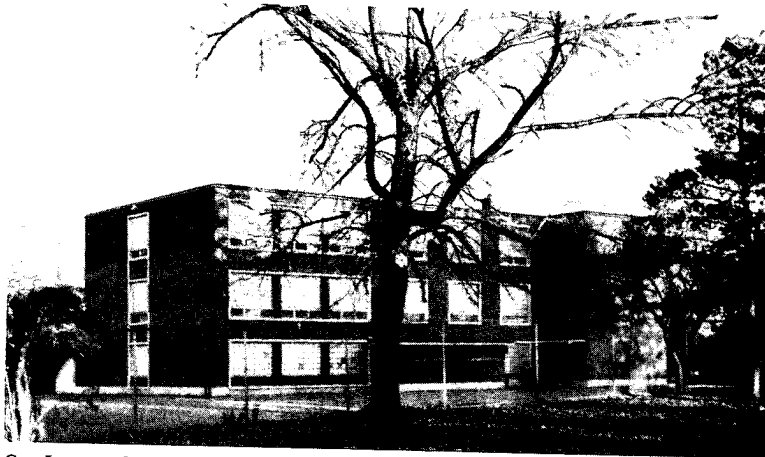
In 1953, a new one-acre property was obtained from Willibald Viens on Watson Avenue. The dramatic growth of the congregation, from 175 families in 1952 to 250 families in 1955, called for new arrangements: In 1956 plans were prepared for a temporary place of worship with a capacity of 350 people in the basement of a future church, which in all would hold up to 500. The completion of the upper storey came in a period of rising church attendance. Though the annual attendance fell during the late 1950s, the congregation swelled in size after 1960, and doubled between 1961 and 1963. The increased church funds received from contributions by the growing number of churchgoers reduced the building debt and allowed the parish to begin work on the upper level in the spring of 1962.³¹ A Sunday School hall was built two years later. Meanwhile, the old St. Stephens Church on Britannia Road was converted to secular use in 1956. At various times thereafter it has been used by local Boy Scouts, a boat builder, and finally became a private residence.

A similar crunch for space befell Britannia United Church in the fifties. As early as 1953, its trustees wanted to sell the church property at the top of Britannia Road and use the money for a new church.³² They initially bought property from Ted Giles on Pinecrest Road near the intersection of Watson and raised a campaign for funds to build the new church. As plans progressed, the property was found to be too small and the Arkell farm had just come on the market. The trustees acquired one-acre of the farm on the east side of Pinecrest in 1960 instead and a church hall was built

and officially dedicated in the following year.

The congregation, like the local Anglicans, intended to build a church adjoining the hall but never did. Instead, the hall continued to be used for religious services. In 1966, the Arkell homestead was presented to the congregation by Margaret Arkell in memory of her parents. This became a multi-purpose centre for the church and community. The former church on Carling was used by McIntosh and Watts for selling china, as an outlet for selling paintings by Canadian artists, and housed the Pottery Barn for a short while. The building was destroyed by fire in 1975 after having been a central feature of the heights for a hundred years.

The Roman Catholic parish likewise covered an expanding congregation. During the years between 1947, when Our Lady of Fatima Parish was formed, and its tenth anniversary, the number of families served by the church rose from 168 to 600.³³ The growing Roman Catholic congregation led to the winterizing of St. Bonaventure Church in the fifties to permit year-round use, and to the building of the St. Leonards Separate School, on Rob Roy behind Grant School, in 1957.



St. Leonards Separate School as seen from Grant Public School, 1982.

290.

Like the Anglican and United Church congregations, the Roman Catholic congregation needed a larger church. St. Remi was erected in 1963 on DuMaurier Street. The following year, with growing separate school enrollment, the parents of pupils at St. Leonards wanted another school despite the addition of six classrooms to the existing school in 1963. Since over one-third of the pupils were French-speaking, the petition to the Board asked that the proposed school give pupils instruction in French and English. Their wish was granted, and in 1965, a French separate school was put up adjacent to St. Remi Church. An addition to the school was built four years later. A third Roman Catholic school, Dr. F.J. McDonald, was built on Ahearn Street in Belltown in 1968 to serve the longstanding Roman Catholic community in that area.

Churches of other denominations were built in the Britannia area. The area's Lutheran community put up All Saints Lutheran Church at the corner of Pinecrest and Queensview in 1964. The site was appropriate, considering that half of the thirty Lutheran households in the Britannia area lived less than a mile away. A New Apostolic Church was built at the corner of Priscilla and Poulin on a small residential lot.

Churches did not simply provide for spiritual needs but also offered social services to residents in various ways. The United Church began the Britannia Community Service in 1965 which included volunteers from the Lutheran and Anglican Churches. They were mainly active in Britannia Village and later in the subsidized housing area providing transportation, food, babysitting, and short-term assistance to needy families.

The public school board responded to the baby boom of the fifties and sixties and to the movement of people to the West End by building new schools and enlarging existing ones. At the beginning of the period, Grant Public School was still the only school in Britannia. Its trustees began the construction of a four-room annex while the school was part of Nepean, but it was completed in 1951 after the school had become affiliated with the Ottawa School Board.

When the City school board assumed Grant School there were nine persons on staff and 262 pupils. As families moved into Glabar's and other new homes in Britannia during the following eight years, the student population nearly doubled and the staff was increased to 14. To accommodate this growth, the auditorium was converted into three classrooms in 1956 and the gymnasium, with

the addition of a stage, became the new auditorium. Later, two portable classrooms were added.

New schools were built in the areas of recent development to ease the burden on Grant School. A 16 room public school with an initial capacity of 560 students was built on property set aside on Severn Avenue in Queensway Terrace North. A third public school, Regina Street Public School, was built in Lincoln Heights. It opened in 1965 with two kindergarten and ten standard classrooms, and served the area bounded by Richmond Road, Britannia Park, the Western Parkway and the river.

The expansion of Britannia and the development of the West End in the fifties and sixties brought several changes to Carling and Richmond Roads. The establishments that had characterized both the old heights community and the early demands of tourism were gradually replaced by larger, more intensive commercial enterprises. Cam MacLaurin's store and post office closed with the introduction of door-to-door mail delivery in Britannia in 1961. In 1964 the Ranch House dance hall, later a restaurant, was destroyed by fire, and White's Dubl Dipp, the renowned ice cream parlour, closed when soft ice cream became popular and owner George White retired.

The accommodation business expanded and cabins were replaced by the more durable motels. Alice's Wonderland Motel, the earliest, was put up in the early 1950s by George Cooper on the south side of Carling west of the intersection of the highways. It was renamed the Britannia Motel and was pulled down in recent times. Cooper's nephew, Percy Doane, began the Stardust Motel across the street in the late 1950s. Cooper and Doane had once operated the Ranch House. On the east side of the junction of the provincial highways, three motels and cabin rentals now challenged the Town and Country for the tourist market. The White House Motel first opened for business in 1952 with seven cabins on the north side of Carling between Croydon and Forest, and later became a motel. On the site of the White Star Inn facing Richmond Road, the Pleasant View Motor Court with eight cabins and a tourist home started to operate in 1955. This became Riviera Cabins in 1963. These two establishments were gone by the 1970s. The L.N. Poulin summer home at the corner of Richmond and Carling became the core of a 100 unit motel, the Blue Bonnet, built in 1965. This was converted into the West End Villa nursing home in the 1970s.

The sixties also introduced Britannia to the age of the drive-in

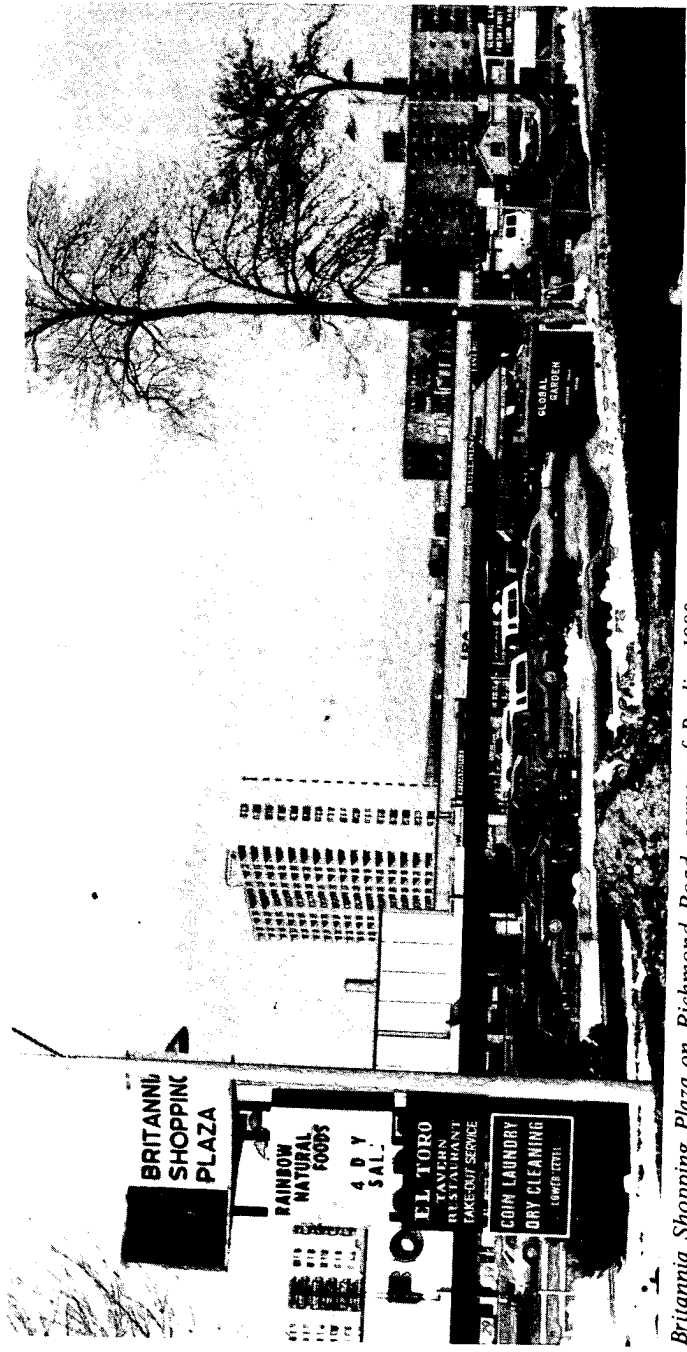
292.

restaurant. The Chop Suey Drive-In set up at the corner of Croydon and Carling in the early 1960s. This became the Capital Drive-In and then Ho-Ho Chinese take out. The Centennial Drive-In opened a year later and was associated with Riviera Cabins. Peter's Pantry began its successful existence first as a drive-in restaurant in the mid-1960s. It was renovated to become one of the first restaurants in Ottawa with a theme decor - gangsters and the twenties - in the early 1970s.

The Olde Forge, which had begun as George Winthrop's blacksmith's shop, served the Britannia community in several ways over the last 25 years. Its central location within Britannia, at the intersection of two main highways, and its longstanding presence made it a gathering place for local people. However, the rising traffic on Richmond and Carling spelled the end to the Olde Forge and other older homes as space was needed to widen the streets. The Winthrop property was expropriated by the City of Ottawa in 1956. The Skuce, Poulin and Driscoll homes in the immediate area were expropriated a few years later, and intersection was widened in 1960 and 1961.

There had been a small tourist bureau near the Esso station on the intersection of Richmond and Carling in the fifties, a suitable spot as these were the principal roads leading into downtown Ottawa from the West End. Since a permanent place was needed for disseminating literature and information to incoming holiday-makers during the summer months, the City of Ottawa began to use the Winthrop home as a tourist reception centre in 1958, after abandoning plans for building a modern one. Robert Winthrop continued to lease his old home from the city, while the reception centre occupied the living room. The Olde Forge building was later rented to a local letter carrier for several years. Other possible uses were sought for the Olde Forge during the sixties while it was a tourist reception centre. Mayor Charlotte Whitton wanted a museum on the site, while the N.C.C. suggested to the Board of Control that the property might be more suitably developed as a West End community centre with a library and health centre among other things.³⁴

High-rise development brought more customers and the need for large shopping plazas. The first major shopping centre to serve the West End was Carlingwood, built in the mid-1950s. The idea of locating small shops and services between a large grocery store and department store set a new trend in retailing at the time.



Britannia Shopping Plaza on Richmond Road, corner of Poulton, 1980.

Northeast of the intersection of Carling and Richmond, Britannia Plaza was the area's most important shopping centre for many years from the mid-1960s. It had an I.G.A. grocery store and several small businesses.

During this time, plans for a grander and more ambitious centre were being drafted. Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, as this complex became known, underwent many changes on paper before it appeared. Its original developer, John Combs, planned a \$25,000,000 centre in 1965 with 82 stores on three levels, the largest Loblaws store for its time, and a triple theatre with surface and underground parking. A four-tower luxury apartment complex was also to be built. Combs sold the 26 acre site to Bridgenorth Investments which presented a less ambitious but similar scheme. Under their plans there was to be a twin theatre, approximately 72 stores, commercial and office space and 1,100 apartment units. In comparison, the final structure of 40 stores on two levels built in 1971 seemed hardly worth boasting about.³⁵

Prior to the sixties there were few community organized activities. In 1961, the Britannia Recreation Association was formed, with plans for little league baseball and other sports for local children. Britannia Heights also formed a recreation association. It was in 1967 that the City of Ottawa dedicated over 100 unsold former Britannia Highlands lots for a park named after Frank Ryan, between Henley, Pinewood, Clarendon and Alpine streets. The park was complemented by the woodland bounded by Elmhurst, Alpine, Henley and Tavistock. The Frank Ryan Little League was started by members of the Gyro Club in 1962 in response to community interest. The Gyro Club had established Little League Baseball Canada in Ottawa seven years before in the Glebe and branched out into other neighbourhoods. After the first year, Britannia residents took over the Frank Ryan Park League. The coaches, organizers and others are all community volunteers.

The 20 years following World War II was a period of tremendous growth for the Britannia Yacht Club. Membership increased dramatically with the opening of the harbour in 1950, which enabled facilities to be expanded and many more physical improvements made. The harbour had mooring space for 200 sailing craft.³⁶ As more boats were brought in, it became necessary to clear space alongside the water for winter storage cradles and to build a shed for dinghies and equipment. The process of levelling, tidying and landscaping necessitated the removal of several cottages along the rock pile north of the harbour.

A significant event in the club's history took place in 1955, when the Junior Sailing Squadron was formed. Many fine sailors graduated from this school and some went on to win world acclaim in the name of Britannia. By the mid-fifties the club had progressed beyond a boating organization. Members played tennis on the club's five courts and enjoyed numerous other outdoor and indoor activities.

By about 1960 the harbour was completely filled and planning for a new inner harbour began. The inner harbour was constructed in 1963 by damming a channel between the mainland and a small island, then blasting an opening to the main harbour and building rock walls. Most of the harbour walls were built by volunteer club members on weekends, a task which continued for a period of 18 years, from 1951 to 1969.

By 1967 the membership had increased to 1300 with 350 boats, compared to 300 members and 40 boats in 1950. The next 15 years or so was a period of consolidation for the club.

The final transformation of Britannia from a summer community to a year-round neighbourhood within the City of Ottawa occurred in these post-war years. The local developer who sold vacant lots was ushered out as the large-scale corporate developer who built and sold homes, townhouses and apartments took over. This resulted in municipal government stepping in to control the pace and the extent of construction in Britannia and other parts of Ottawa. At the same time, the Federal Government had large-scale plans of its own for Britannia.

The decade to follow brought another level of government, more plans for Britannia and an increasing awareness on the part of some residents of the effects of proposed changes in the area, resulting in their wanting to have a say in the future of their community.



Britannia, 1968. Note the white area west of the parkway, between Carling and Richmond, the site of the future Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre.

The News of 1950-1955

West End Area Embraced by the City

The Year 1950

January 1st - The City expands westward to Britannia and all the unoccupied area between Carling Avenue and Baseline to be forerunner of great development. To the residents, the promise of city comforts. The City was living up to its Coat of Arms, "Advance".

We were in for many changes and adjustments!

The Britannia Boating Club hit the news, November 3rd, with a big development — "Provision for 300 boats in the old abandoned canal beside the rapids, with plans to build the finest yacht basin in Eastern Ontario."

The Year 1951

January - In the news, we heard Controller Charlotte Whitton wanting to see Britannia Park broken up into building lots, which raised a storm of protest from the Britannia Community Club. Continuing the wrangling into June when, "Voices rise, faces redden over the Park's disposition and City stalls its purchase which would involve transfer of a debenture debt of \$200,000 from the O.C.T. to the City."

The Britannia Boat Club renamed Britannia Yacht Club in the news of June 24th. The Club received an interesting presentation, when Captain Jack Chartier, retired Captain of the old river boat *G. B. Greene* and M.J. Brophy, Upper Ottawa Improvement Company, handed over the G.B.'s bell and the wheel of the *G. B. Pattee*. In September, Bruce Kirby wins the Lipton Cup at the C.N.E. in Toronto.

Britannia-Deschênes Bridge in the news when plans revived — and newspaper talk of a new Purification Plant to be built at Britannia. Plans to put a garbage dump off Pinecrest Road raised a storm of protest from the residents.

Loma Park came into the news with a full-page story of 11 newly constructed houses and the possibility of 100 or more to be built.

Lou Skuce, an old Britannia boy, who became world famous as a cartoonist, artist and playwright, died in Toronto in November.

298.

The year 1951 closed with the report of new residents in Britannia — “Mud Lake, a colony of beavers”.

The Year 1952

Britannia Park was to have a “Miniature Children’s Railway” erected. Later in the year, a \$500,000 Park project was laid before Planning Board with great plans for Park improvement.

Britannia mourned the passing of three old residents, Catherine Von Charles, J. Aurele Cote, both here since the 1890s, and John Farrell, retired postmaster and grocer at Britannia from 1927 to 1949.

The Year 1953

The year opened with the City proposing not to make any improvements to the Park that year. On June 4th, a ceremony took place when a “Windsor Oak Tree” was planted to commemorate the Coronation of H.M. Queen Elizabeth II. (Did it grow?) Warm weather in late June brought out crowds to the Park.

Two churches came into the news when St. Stephen’s Anglican purchased lots on Watson Avenue with plans to build a new church. Britannia United asked their Presbytery to sell their old white church built in 1873.

On April 23rd, two Britannia residents, members of the Women’s Institute, were in a group of Red Cross workers received at Government House. They were presented with the Red Cross Badge of Service by Governor-General Vincent Massey for devoted volunteer service of over 5 years or more. They were Mrs. M.J. Connolly and Mrs. R. Arkell.

Two very prominent residents of long standing in Britannia passed away — Gerald Jamieson, Britannia’s “Squire”, and David P. Kirby long time valued member of the Boat Club.

The Year 1954

Early in the year, news came out about Britannia’s Park. The pier supports were dangerous and in need of repair, weeds in the bay, and bathing unsafe, etc., and nothing was being done.

Controller Donaldson said, “Either make it a good amusement park, or let it go.”

Down came the Ontario Municipal Recreation Commission officials to investigate conditions. As a result of their findings, it was declared that, "Ottawa's Britannia Park is a ready made Coney Island". Their only suggestion was to improve — to repair the metal steps on the bridge over the C.P.R. tracks, which were unsafe due to rusting.

Over the weekend of a hot July 6th, it was reported thousands visited the Park to relax. September arrived and greatly annoyed was the City's Recreation Branch when the City had gone ahead and had the bridge torn down. It was a great loss to the Park, as it was one of the joy spots for the youngsters to ascend and view the approaching trains.

Mrs. W.R. Rowatt (nee Eliza Graham), long time resident since the 1880s and whose home still stands on Bradford Street, died.

The Year 1955

Britannia Park opened on May 24th and hundreds came out.

But tragedy struck in the early hours of July 4th, when the Lakeside Gardens went up in flames bringing to a close the many years of varied entertainment for thousands of Ottawans over the years.

It caused nostalgic mourning at City Hall, as well as with city and local residents. And it prompted the City to take another look at its old Park for a renewal program. First plans were for the demolition of its two pavilions and for work on the pier.

St. Stephen's Anglican Church in May had the sod-turning ceremony for its new church on Watson Avenue with the Bishop of Ottawa doing the honors.

Yacht Club news — Frank Amyot, Olympic Paddling Champion of 1936, was to have his name perpetuated in the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame.

A Junior Club was formed at the Club to teach its youth the art of good sailing skills.

The August issue of *Reader's Digest* had a Club scene on its cover. And Livius Sherwood and Ron Brooman won the C.P. Kirby Memorial Cup Race.

River frontage along the Ottawa River to Britannia has been expropriated by the Federal District Commission for a river parkway.

300.

At the Ottawa Planning Board's Inaugural Meeting in January, Mr. E. Viens, of Britannia Heights, was elected chairman.

One evening in August, two Britannia fishermen were caught in the current of the rapids, and found themselves stranded in the middle of the rapids for over nine hours until rescued.



The bridge over the C.P.R. tracks, the gates and water tank in Britannia Park, 1952.

Developments in Britannia in High Gear, 1956-1959

The years 1956 to 1959 are ones to be remembered in the history of Britannia. We went from rural living to city comforts.

Looking at the scrapbook of newspaper clippings, it is going to be a lengthy recording!

The Year 1956

February - O.T.C. raised its fares, residents in protest.

February 10th — rare service of Secularization held at St. Stephen's Anglican Church. The new church was ready on Watson Avenue, with Rev. J. Edwin Allsop, rector.

Britannia Park continued in the news citing \$150,000 required to put it in shape.

Andrew Hopewell Farm on Highway 17 sold to Montreal group for \$90,000.

Arkell Farm on Pinecrest sold to Campeau Construction for \$115,000.

Summer, 1956 — Tragic accidents recorded, mostly teenagers — Dennis K. O'Reilly, next Jacqueline Choquette, Betty Ryan and Janet Sheppey. All motor accidents.

In a car-train crash at Britannia Road, Andy Benkis, Roddy Clark and Richard Burwash were killed.

Marcel Choquette drowned in the Club's mooring basin.

A motor boat in the lake went over the rapids taking a mother and son.

November, 1956 - Mrs. Geo. Lillico, walking with her husband on Richmond Road, lost her life.

Bruce Kirby qualified in Olympic dinghy trials and goes to Australia for the world event.

The Federal District Commission announced a 5-year plan to remove the C.P.R. tracks.

Controller Jones makes reference to developments on the Magee and Stevenson farms.

Fire Hall at Britannia, the site is approved near intersection of Highways 15 and 17.

302.

New dream plan for Park unfolds in proposed development done by J.L. Richards and Associates.

Passing of oldtime residents recorded - Rev. W.B. Morgan, former Rector of St. Stephen's, Fabian L. Poulin, long-time resident, and Sam Rosenthal, oldtime summer resident whose cottage was beside the Park.

The Year 1957

January 17, Britannia to get a new Tourist Centre and Winthrop's old forge was chosen.

Plans to use part of the Magee farm as a city dump raised bitter opposition.

Ryan, Arkell and Stevenson farms in a \$64 million project. Campeau plans to build 2000 homes and industries.

Britannia Filtration Plant in the news for March 8th — Ontario Hydro selling city 46 acres for the site — cost \$23,875. Later appeared architect's sketch — cost of project \$5 million.

Britannia Community Centre elects Harry Williams president.

Frank Ryan's herd of holsteins sold at auction on April 30th.

Bell Telephone building a new exchange on Richmond Road.

Britannia Park Pavillion contract awarded for \$152,040. Plans to enlarge Park by 60 acres by filling in part of the bay.

Buses were to be used on weekends to Britannia and streetcars during the week starting in September.

Water and sewage for the Britannia area under discussion.

The year 1957 ended with an announcement of a new school on Pinecrest Road.

The Year 1958

Developments were fast taking place. It was announced that West Nepean collector sewer to be extended from McEwen Avenue to Britannia in 1959.

Britannia United Church announced purchase of a site for \$17,000 off Pinecrest Road.

OTC streetcars speeding along the Britannia Line had a protest put in by the Civic Traffic Commission.

The Olde Forge rented as a Tourist Centre for 1958.

Lakeside Gardens used as a community centre for teens by West End Kiwanis. Opened June 7 with 300 attending. Later a modern

art show was held and a festival of films ended the season a huge success.

Britannia's new Firehall and Health Centre opened in September by Mayor Nelms.

Britannia Filtration Plant held sod-turning on the site September 28. Controller Tardiff turning first sod in the presence of the Mayor and civic officials. News of July 23rd contract for building awarded to Robert Campeau for \$3,344,865.

"Too many wells at Britannia", said Alderman Boyce. In the news of December 8, Britannia will have water by June 1959.

Old residents who passed away during the year - Miss Lily Magee (sister to late Robert Magee, old pioneer farmer), Edward Murphy and sister Mrs. J.E. Hodgins (Emma) of Village history, and Mrs. W.F. Nesbitt (nee Hopewell), wife of former Postmaster and grocer for many years.

The Year 1959

Britannia residents are about to enjoy all the city comforts.

"The West End bursting", says Mayor Nelms in the news of January 14th.

Completion of Carling Avenue to Britannia by 1960.

Deschênes-Britannia Bridge may become a reality, news of January 14.

The graveyard of OTC street cars assembled at the old Power House at McEwen Avenue. This old power house has stood many years as a booster station. The cars are to be sold for scrap but four cars are preserved to go to the Brantford Electric Railway Association and the Canadian Railroad Historical Association. The *Journal* of January 15th had a nice writeup.

The last run of street cars in Britannia was made on April 29th. I shed a tear as I got off that day remembering over 40 years back and forth to work in the city. Excellent service, and only once, in a bad storm in the 1940s, the car got as far as the Britannia Highlands close to our stop when it could not make it.

In the news of May 2nd, streetcars are bid farewell by the city. All the old rolling stock cars, even one horse-drawn, formed into one grand parade through the city to Holland Avenue. Bands were playing and majorettes were doing their stuff. It was a wonderful send-off to a passing era of transportation.

Water main tenders were called for, from Carling Avenue to

304.

Britannia Road as far as Cassels, and on May 27th, the city promised sewers shortly.

Magee farmlands now known as Lincoln Heights. Assaly Construction advertising houses in this development.

Junction of Carling Avenue and Richmond Road to be broadened. City announced on July 24 plans to expropriate properties of G.O. Skuce, Hugh Poulin and Mrs. Violet Driscoll.

Two new Britannia schools being planned for, one on Arkell farm to cost \$538,000, and the other on Magee farmlands, site yet to be chosen.

In July, the Jehovah Witnesses in convention, held a Baptismal service at the lake, some 259 baptised, the oldest being 81.

Lakeside Gardens given a grant by the city for their Summer Festival of plays and concerts.

"Save the old homes," said Harry Walker, writing in the *Journal*, September 23.

Mail delivery to Britannia to begin shortly.

The year 1959 closed with news of a new bird visitor in Britannia, his bright red plummage brightening the snow covered ground, a newcomer to Ottawa, a Cardinal!



The closing days of St. Stephen's on Britannia Road. The memorial window is removed, February, 1956.



The new Lakeside Gardens in Britannia Park, January 1959.



The road to the filtration plant under construction, 1959. The cottage on the right, the Ranch, was built in 1895 and owned by J.R. Smith.

The Exciting Years of Development, 1960 - 1964

Over 20 years of history have taken place since the following happened! How many who are still residents recall the upset roadways when the water and sewer mains were being laid?

The streetcars were laid to rest, but we got the bus fumes instead. Mail was delivered to our door, but think back, wasn't it nice to have a chat with the postmistress or a neighbour collecting his mail. Soon the trains will be a memory!

The Year 1960

"The West Nepean sewer will allow servicing to all the Britannia area," declared Mayor Nelms, and tenders were called for water installations on Bradford and Cassels streets. It was amazing with what speed the tremendous work was done by the contractors and men, blasting through rock, to lay the water and sewer pipes along the streets.

Also in January, contractors were hard at work building the bridge over the Queensway on Pinecrest Road.

Severn Public, Britannia's new school, was to open in September for 560 children, contract let for \$499,742. A separate school is planned for the Stevenson farm. The Pinecrest School planned to introduce a unique design - an in-the-round effect.

John Dawson became head of Ottawa Suburban Roads Commission in February.

Mail service door-to-door in Britannia began March 14.

A West End shopping centre was being talked about on the Magee farmlands between Richmond Road and Carling Avenue.

On May 14, Britannia Heights retired postmaster and grocer for 38 years was feted, by 400 residents and friends, to a supper and presentation. Cameron MacLaurin, beloved by his clients for his genial character, and an old schoolmate and the writer of this column gave the speech. A night to remember in the passing of the local postmaster.

Spring flooding delayed work on the Filtration Plant. In August, Controller Tardiff laid the cornerstone.

Lakeside Gardens had a busy year with a local company putting

on six plays, all very well done, but a poor attendance.

Ten men were trapped in the Deschênes Rapids in July when their sailboats got into the swift waters. Even a helicopter rescue failed. Then in the morning a turbo-powered boat made the rescue.

Apartments in the news - sketch appeared - to be built in Lincoln Heights.

Britannia mourned the passing of three old residents. Edwin Lester Brittain, aged 93, from whose old scrapbooks we gained a picture of what life was in Britannia. They were recorded in this column! Hattie Bell, of the pioneer Bell family, whose home was across from the old Mosgrove school. Mrs. Frances A. Latchford, widow of the Judge, who built one of the first cottages in Loma Park.

The Year 1961

Came news of a \$5 million plan, just past Britannia on Hwy. 17, to be known as "Lakeview of Ottawa" controlled by Rhodes Real Estate Company.

In January, collector sewers were to be extended to Britannia Heights and west end sections, as well as Salina and Kehoe streets.

The founding meeting of the Britannia Recreation Association was held in March.

At the Park, the summer program continued with the Festival of the Arts and the children's miniature railway was to run again.

In March "Hill Talk", comment made by R.A. Bell MP, deplored the demolition of the old Campbell-Ryan home and the N.C.C. permitted it.

Ottawa Board of Control approved Ottawa Planning Board's recommendation to rezone the northwest corner of Carling and Britannia to permit highrise apartments.

On April 1, the *Journal* ran two pages of photos and comments on development of the Britannia Filtration Plant.

Britannia United Church had a sod-turning ceremony for its new church off Pinecrest Road on April 25. It was completed in November.

In May, the *Citizen* disclosed a housing project to cost millions bordering the Park and Carling Avenue by Contractor Leo Sipolins.

Bus service was extended down Britannia Road to the Yacht Club.

Intersection of Highway 15 and 17, a bottleneck and city working

308.

to complete an improvement by July.

Britannia fears City takeover - rumours that the city is going to expropriate the whole village of Britannia for urban renewal purposes caused deep concern to the residents. At a public meeting a city spokesman said two areas of Britannia surveyed in City Renewal studies, but no plans made for redevelopment (see Urban Renewal Report, 1962), showing condition of houses in Britannia and Belltown.

Down came the old Water Tower at the Park. With the extension of water mains, it had served its usefulness. A Park landmark for years, the City got \$105 to have it torn down.

Britannia Filtration Plant was officially opened on Sept. 28 in the presence of the select assembly of city officials and guests.

The Year 1962

There appears to be a quiet period. Residents were busy mopping up after getting water and sewer installations. But Britannia and Belltown residents were still concerned about that Urban Renewal Report, and Planning works. It showed Britannia with 148 dwellings, of which 23 listed good, 55 fair, etc. Belltown with 211 dwellings, 45 listed good and 101 fair, etc. But it must be remembered that this area had been a summer resort and many cottages were of limited construction.

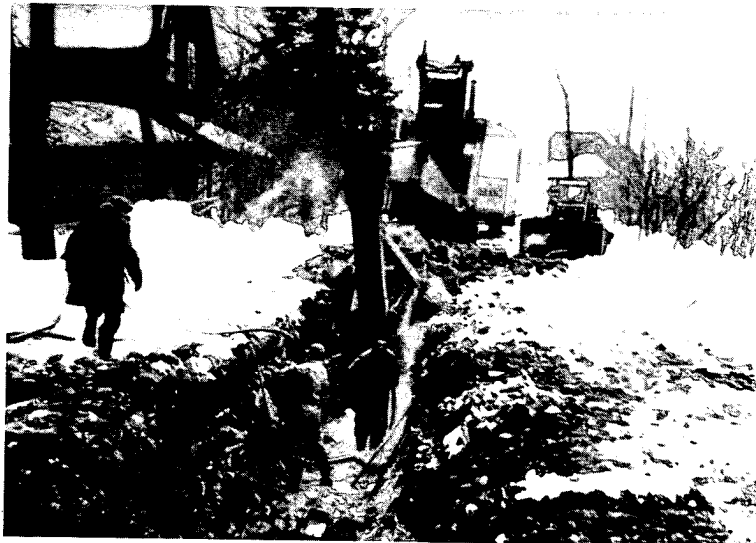
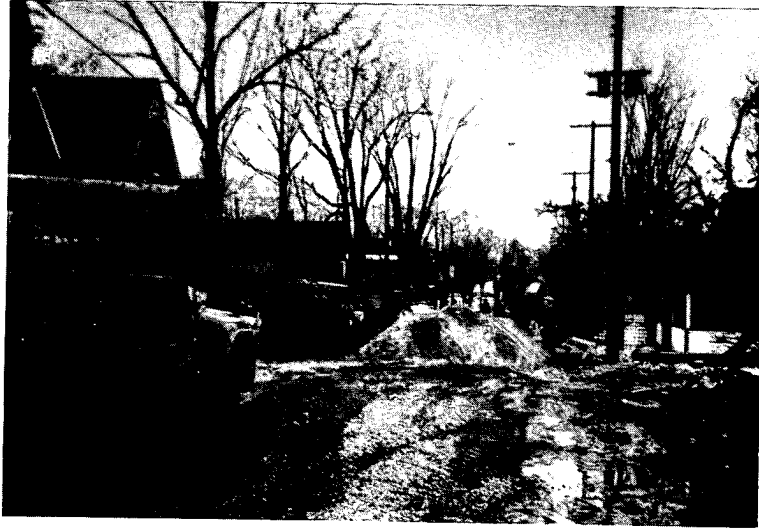
The advent of city comforts brought in developments - a \$10 million Research Centre on NCC lands near Britannia; a 500-home subdivision on Baseline, the old Leslie Farm.

St. Stephen's Anglican Church, Watson Avenue, gave out a contract to build the church proper on its present structure.

The Olde Forge became a City Tourist Centre in June in a colourful ceremony. Mayor Charlotte Whitton performed the ceremony in the presence of a notable gathering. She even wielded a broad axe to cut down a tree there. To add excitement, the old fire engine on display at the Town and Country Restaurant was assembled, drawn by horses, and came down the road belching smoke and bells clanging.

The bones of an old river boat were discovered in the shoals of the Bay, which prompted Harry Walker to write about it.

Thomas Fuller's brigantine, "Black Jack", hit the news. It was completed from the hull of the old tug *G. B. Pattee* of logging days.



Digging for the sanitary sewers on Britannia Road and Cassels, 1960.

310.

In November, Britannia Yacht Club mourned the death of Frank Amyot, champion paddler, who in 1936 at the Berlin Olympics brought to Canada its only gold win.

The birdwatchers were excited in late autumn to see a flock of whistling swans resting in the Bay.

The Year 1963

Voyageur Apartments, a 250-unit building, officially opened (a miniature compared to the ones overshadowing it today).

Schools, Severn and Pinecrest, officially opened.

Housing developments begin at Crystal Beach and Graham Park, being developed by Teron. Highrise apartments near Britannia Park were turned down by the Ontario Municipal Board. In August, a \$40 million Bayshore development was given the green light.

The new Roman Catholic parish on DuMaurier to be named St. Remi, a replacement of the old Britannia chapel. Work has begun on All Saints Lutheran Church on Pinecrest Road.

The Olde Forge was suggested to Mayor Whitton as a Museum, but NCC doubted its historic value.

The story of Mosgrove Vineyard ran in the *Journal* in July complete with photos. That year the Judge's surviving son, William, was living in Florida and he and his wife were celebrating their 50th anniversary (it was written by the writer in this column).

The Year 1964

Opened with Alderman Kay's information that Lakeside Gardens cost \$100 a day to keep open and it was not being used to its full extent. Rent it out. One complaint was that it was overrun with ants, so Council voted \$100 to help exterminate the troublesome things!

St. Leonard's Roman Catholic School overcrowded and the School Board called for help.

The OTC extended its services to Bayshore.

In March, the "Over 60 Club" was formed by Britannia United Church for residents of all faiths.

Graham Park Public School to be opened in September. Regina School to be ready for September, 1965, 12 rooms to cost \$420,000.

New developments were to begin in the Fairfields and Qualicum area.

Pinecrest Terrace Association was formed and a fight is on to get

good playgrounds.

The *Journal* reporter deplored the lack of interest in developing better conditions at the Park - money is the question!

December saw St. Remi Parish sod-turning ceremony on DuMaurier Avenue.



Pinecrest Creek being put underground near the river, August 1966.

312.

Progressive Years in the Area, 1965 - 1969

The Year 1965

More developments were brought in - demolition of the old Magistrate Smith's home at the corner of Richmond Road and Pinecrest, dating back to 1905. A highrise apartment took its place.

Silver Springs Farm is to become a home for retarded children.

The Britannia Yacht Club enlarges its mooring basin by annexing the little island at the crest of the rapids.

August saw a big storm slam the Britannia area, trees uprooted and much damage done. High winds hurled trees across the C.P.R. tracks — power lines down.

Fallis Brothers, Britannia Heights, long-time florists, retired from business.

The big news of 1965 was on October 15th — a \$25 million west end centre was to be constructed with 82 stores, to include Ogilvy's, Loblaws, etc., also a triple theatre (which was scrapped). The location was part of the old Magee farmlands, between Richmond Road, Carling and Croydon. The developer was John Coombs of Willowdale, and the centre was to be known as the Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre!

Death called three Britannia residents. Herbert S. Arkell of Pinecrest Road, Mrs. Scott Richardson, Britannia Road, and Frank Ryan of CFRA, whose farm off the Baseline Road had been sold for a Campeau development.

The Year 1966

Minister of Public Works George McIlraith was considering the construction of bridges across the river, Lemieux Island by 1969 and Britannia by 1971.

In March, Madame Vanier, wife of the Governor-General, officially opened the Regina Public School.

Spring flooding along the river front upset residents.

Along the old Corkstown Road, the NCC began tearing down old homes for the Green Belt.

In July a test run for the Centennial Canoes was made over the Deschênes Rapids, to be in readiness for next year for the Voyageurs coming in from Rocky Mountain House, Alberta.

August saw the Magee's Creek, officially Pincrest, being buried underground in a concrete tunnel from Carling to the river.

Regina Street residents protested City Hall's plans to build a Public Housing development in their area.

Britannia United Church had the dedication of the "Arkell House" which had been presented to the church by the Arkell family.

Britannia mourned the passing of old residents — Robert W. Winthrop of Olde Forge history, Marjorie Kirby, longtime summer and permanent resident, and Mrs. Jennie Powell, wife of Mark Powell, who died in 1965.

"Britannia in the Past" appeared in the press, a poem written by George MacCormac.

Confederation Year of 1967

The year opened with the statement that, "The world will be looking at Canada as it has never done before" — 100 years of Confederation.

Developments continued, the Mines branch on the Corkstown Road, and Bayshore Public School opened, 21 rooms and 875 pupils.

Royalty paid a visit to the Yacht Club in July when Prince Philip made a helicopter jaunt out to present the "Duke of Edinburgh" trophy to winners.

Ottawa River Parkway officially opened by Minister of Public Works.

Ottawa River pollution becomes a major source of worry to officials — hit the news in August.

In August Northern Electric develops a special artificial arm, a breakthrough for the handicapped.

Britannia's great event — The Voyageurs make a triumphant paddle down the lake to make a stop-over at the Park, from Rocky Mountain House, Alberta, a distance of 3283 miles. Some 7000 greeted their arrival at the Bay. I stood beside John Fisher, "Mr. Canada", of beloved memory for his golden voice over the air waves.

I shared his enthusiasm as the great canoes hove into view. And what a thrilling scene as the canoes vied with each other in the final dash to reach the shore, and the cheers of the throngs. It was like old times at the Park. It overflowed, and every street in the village was

314.

full of cars. Lots of fun was had that night as the voyageurs rested!
Soon no more trains to go through and plans to lift the tracks.
“Over 60 Club” put on a fabulous Centennial show at Lakeside Gardens.

“Plans to build a swimming pool at the Park is out of the question”, says the city.

The Queensway-Carleton Hospital to cost \$8 million, with hopes to have it ready for 1982.

It was a great year for celebrations!

The Year 1968

Carleton County's year ends on note of uncertainty, Regional Government for Ottawa and area scheduled for January 1969.

In May, an emotional farewell to John Dawson, judge of the Citizenship Court.

Pinecrest Cemetery plans construction of a \$100,000 chapel and crematorium at 2500 Baseline Road.

June 28th writeup — the old Richmond Road celebrates its 150th year.

The housing development beside the Park nears completion, 180 units, built for the Ottawa Housing Authority, financed by Ontario Housing Corporation, suggests its name be Britannia Woods.

Britannia mourned the passing of Mrs. J.M. Connolly, long-time resident of the Heights, member of the Women's Institute and most active in the good works of the community.

The Year 1969

We entered this year marvelling over the incredibility of man's flight into outer space and returning safely.

Queensway-Carleton Hospital charter granted two years ago, 65 acres above Acres Road and Bruce Farm leased from the NCC.

A Carillon Tower, in memory of Frank Ryan, was erected in Pinecrest Cemetery, and unveiled by his wife Kathleen.

December 9th — “Ottawa River is dying”, University of Ottawa biologist makes this claim after a 3-year study of the river. This is what pollution is doing. Swimming a no-no, unless checked. It is unbelievable that not so long ago, we swam in it, drank its water, and used the ice cut during the winter months to cool our drinks!



The north side of Richmond Road, where Richmond Park Square apartments now stand. The Magee home is on the left (pioneers of 1830) the other two houses were built for family (1965).



The last of the Magee farmlands, on Britannia Road.



8

The 1970s
A Community Involved

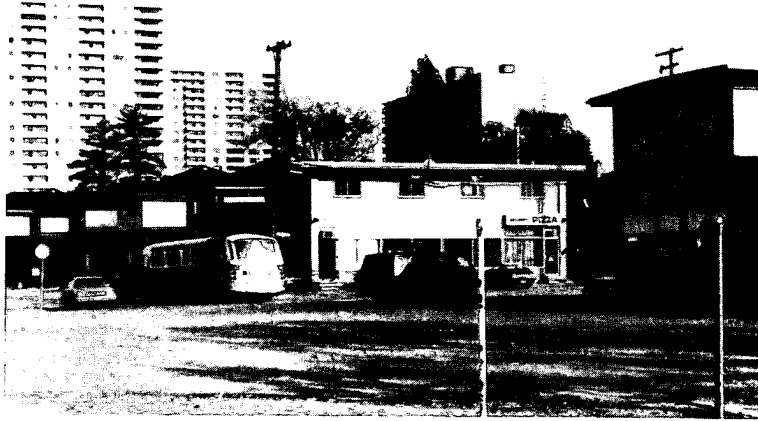
The 1970s

A Community Involved

In the early 1970s, high density residential development in Britannia mushroomed. The first wave of the baby-boom generation grew up, the civil service in Ottawa continued to expand, and more and more single, divorced and young married persons required accommodation. The West End of Ottawa had the affordable vacant land for building apartment buildings.

A cluster of new apartments was built by several large corporations along Richmond and Carling at Britannia, which loomed over the park and the older homes of the area. Unlike the unimposing walk-up apartment blocks built in the sixties, these high-rises dominated the landscape and together added thousands to the population of Britannia. While a small block of 25 units was erected at 2805 Richmond in 1970, the 15 storey Cortina Apartments at 2900 Carling began renting that year. This was followed by the North American Life Assurance Company's 17 storey Richmond Heights Apartments at 2841 Richmond, on the site of the Harmer estate. The Olympia Apartments, a 12 storey building, owned by ASAC Development Ltd., advertised units for rent at the corner of Pinecrest and Carling in early 1972. Urbandale Realty Corporation's twin-towered, 21-storey Northwest One soon followed, with its two and three-bedroom suites on Regina and Poulin Streets. At the same corner, rent-to-income apartments for the elderly were ready for occupancy in the spring of 1973, with a total of 243 units. Not all the new residential construction in Britannia was on this grand scale. Chatway Construction and Roger Meloche Ltd., sold single family dwellings, emphasizing a sense of country and settlement in Lincoln Heights. But the new, tall apartment buildings were numerous enough to worry nearby residents.

Generally, the concerns of residents were channelled to the city government through their elected alderman, but difficulties arose when the constituents were not aware of what was happening. Dr. Ralph Sutherland, alderman for Carleton Ward in the years 1970 to 1972, held the first public information sessions in the city. These meetings, the first of which was held at Regina School, were basically intended to make citizens aware of things happening, or about to happen, that would affect them. He also formed the Carleton Ward Municipal Action Group, which assisted him in informing people, gathering information and helping residents of



The corner of Britannia Road and Howe street with Northwest One apartments and the Senior Citizen's Building, 1981 in the background.

the ward make their feelings known to Council. An example of its effectiveness was Campeau's abortive attempt in 1971 to obtain zoning for three highrises on Gold Crescent, in the midst of his single family development. The community, by attending Planning Board and City Council meetings, had it defeated. This trend of obtaining information, followed up by community discussion and action, helped pave the way to neighbourhood studies.

Other groups besides the people of Britannia had been informing City Council of how they felt on issues affecting them. Action Sandy Hill was one such spontaneous group that gained some political clout. Over time, City Council became inclined to implement the planning structure that had been set up a few years previously, for these groups were expressing their concern at the lack of overall planning for their neighbourhoods.

The Pinecrest-Queensway district comprised the area on both sides of the Queensway between the western limits of the city and the proposed route of the Western Parkway. It had been selected as one of the first studies because it encompassed large pockets of undeveloped land that were targets for developers.¹ The land immediately west of Pinecrest Road and north of the Queensway, for example, was being eyed by the Ontario Housing Corporation for a large project called Foster Farm. Only two years before, it had added 132 townhouse units along extensions of Michele and Penny streets north of Richmond Road. Campeau Corporation also wanted to build a major shopping complex straddling the Queensway east of Pinecrest. Some citizens were opposed to the shopping

320.

centre because of the traffic problems that already affected Pinecrest Road.

A public meeting was called in January 1972 to hear Claude Bennett, the chairman of the Ottawa Planning Board, call for citizen involvement in the neighbourhood planning process. Those attending the meeting demanded an immediate freeze on development and opposed the Foster Farm proposal.²

As a result, a large group of residents organized the Pinecrest-Queensway Citizens' Committee (P.Q.C.C.). This steering committee realized the need to structure itself into its various local neighbourhoods, for each one had its own set of circumstances and problems. As a result the committee divided its district into five geographical sectors and three representatives were chosen by residents of each sector. These 15 representatives and a non-voting chairman made up the committee. Apart from this, study groups of ten members were set up to cover issues dealing with traffic, social planning, population characteristics and physical design with representatives from each sector.

The people north of the Queensway who became involved in the P.Q.C.C. and its fight against excessive development were mainly newcomers who did not reflect the social make-up of the community as a whole, for many earned their living as professionals, such as the committee's first Chairman and lawyer, David Hill.³ It is interesting to note that only two of the 25 had lived in the area for more than ten years, and fewer than half had been area residents for at least five years. Some people became involved because of their interest in a particular concern, as in the example of the Chairman, who did not want to see Foster Farm built.

After the committee was organized, the study groups researched, surveyed and gathered information, and weekly meetings were held with city planners to discuss the issues and examine alternatives. After consulting with local community associations and meeting with concerned residents, a preliminary concept plan emerged, which was presented in November 1972 at a public meeting. In the meantime, City Council approved the committee's recommendation of a one-year freeze on the development of particular parcels of land, for it was thought developers might try to obtain building permits before new zonings could be considered and passed.

In the course of the study, Britannia Village, Belltown and the older Britannia Heights area were singled out as neighbourhoods having unique characteristics worth preserving or enhancing. Zon-

ing at the time permitted single, doubles and row housing in those areas. The P.Q.C.C. wanted to maintain the village-like atmosphere that existed, and feared that the trend to row housing would continue to spoil the attractive appearance afforded by the winterized cottages, older homes, different house styles and vacant lots. The committee therefore requested rezoning to allow only single family dwellings, to keep the population low in those areas and to encourage renovation of older homes.

The move towards high density development along Carling and Richmond Road was also a concern. It was feared that continued building of high-rise apartments would create traffic-congested streets with skyscrapers on either side, and cold, dark houses between them and in their shadow.

The draft neighbourhood development plan presented at the final public meeting in May 1973 did not reflect all the wishes of P.Q.C.C., but in many cases a compromise with the city planners. Over the summer, almost 40 specific areas of concern to the committee were being considered for zoning at a higher density land use than the committee and planners had hoped, but by the end of the year, a new by-law was passed incorporating most of the committee's recommendations providing for lower density development.

The study was short-term, but the committee saw itself as an organization with a long-term role in community affairs. The P.Q.C.C. requested and received from Planning Board status as a continuing special advisory group to the Planning Board and to the community generally, for keeping citizens better informed about



Grenon Street looking north to Carling Avenue. Note the Cortina Apartments on the right.



The Town and Country site on Richmond Road, early 1950s.

city policies. At an information and annual public meeting in November 1974, the P.Q.C.C. recommended that it continue to operate and monitor the rezonings, work out the best use of parkland, and deal with problems of local traffic.⁴ At this meeting, Marlene Catterall, a former school teacher, was chosen as the new Chairman - a position that served to pave the way for her becoming ward alderman.

Although a new complete official plan for the study area had not yet been produced, the City and the P.Q.C.C. continued to battle with new large scale development plans, some of which were on lands on which development had been restricted.⁵

Meanwhile, apartments continued to be built in Britannia. Pinewood West, a nine-storey building began to rent units in 1973 at the end of Pinewood nearest Richmond Road. Forest Manor Apartments was constructed at 370 Forest, between Carling and Richmond. Units in the 17-storey Sunset Heights Apartments were available in 1974, and a new high-rise condominium was erected the following year at the corner of Carling and Britannia Road.

The production of an official plan proceeded more swiftly in 1975 after the P.Q.C.C. expressed their concern to the City Planning Board about the slow pace towards achieving this aim. Once planning branch had written the Official Plan, based on the Development Plan, City Council decided the Development Plan would suffice. The final Pincrest-Queensway Development Plan was approved by the City in October 1976.

Despite the new zoning, residents and planners continued to be stirred by large-scale building projects on unzoned lands and lands zoned for more intensive development. Taxpayers could not stop the issuing of a permit for a 21 storey commercial-apartment building on Richmond Road, just days before the official plan was passed. However, it was not built before the permit expired and the restricted height limit zoning went into effect for that site. P.Q.C.C. was concerned that the increased population would tax area parks, aggravate existing traffic problems and overtax existing services, like water and sewers.⁶ In anticipation of such problems, it was stipulated that major developments must be accepted by site plan control before a building permit is given. The architectural plans and site plans had to be submitted for approval and the responsibilities of the developer established in light of the burden his development would put on the area.

The apartments on the quarry site on the north side of Richmond Road, constructed by Donskill Construction, for instance, were built on the condition that the builder pay two-thirds of the cost of storm sewers on Grenon Street and the land be donated for a landscaped, equipped park at the east end of their property.

As a result of Ottawa's population growth, the wards of the city were redesigned for the 1974 municipal elections; Carleton Ward, in which Britannia was situated, was divided into two wards. The western part became Britannia Ward, bounded by the Queensway, the N.C.C. Parkway, Carling to Clyde, and then north along Frazer Avenue to the Ottawa River.

The problems over planning and development brought public awareness to the foreground and municipal election campaigns were fought on the issues of the need to control high-rise development and of improvements to the park and recreational facilities. Marlene Catterall, a former chairman of the P.Q.C.C., was elected alderman of Britannia Ward in 1976. Community issues in Britannia will probably always be closely associated with municipal politics in the future. The ward boundaries changed once again prior to the 1980 election and defined Britannia as a political unit within Ottawa. The ward now consisted of the area between the Western Parkway, the river, the Queensway and the city limits, which is essentially the area treated as Britannia for this book.

While residential development and commercial facilities continued to grow, two major issues threatened to forever alter some of the most important features of old Britannia, Britannia Park and

324.

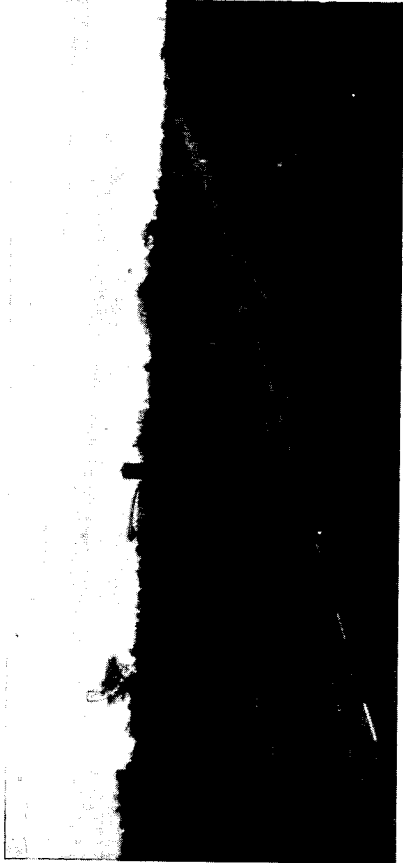
Britannia Woods (Mud Lake). From the early 1950s, planners and residents faced the grim possibility that Britannia would be carved up by major arterials and the Deschênes Bridge, but the situation became serious after 1969.

While Quebec politicians pressed for immediate construction of the bridge, Ottawa politicians grew concerned as residents expressed their worries over the impact of the proposed Deschênes Bridge and the arterial on Britannia. The plan was nevertheless upheld, preventing unwanted development along the anticipated route. The City Council also feared the demise of Britannia Park because of the arterial. Thirty acres of the park were to be gobbled up by the right-of-way, which Ottawa hoped to compensate for by expropriating some Belltown property.

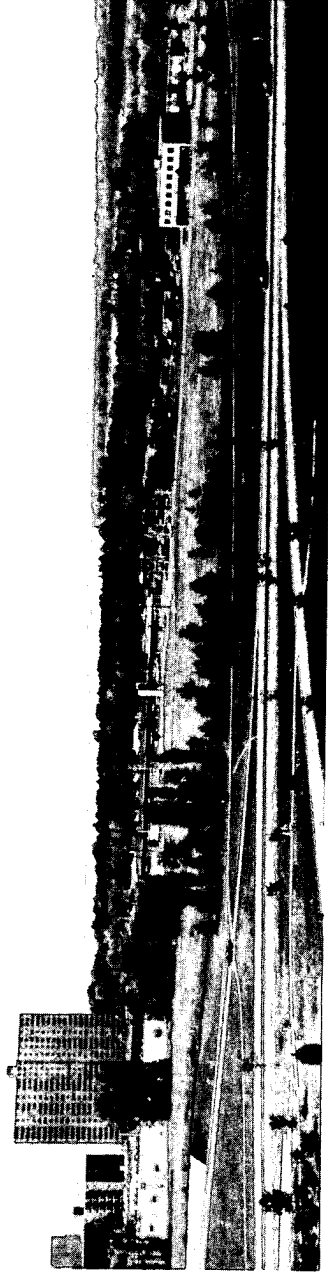
Meanwhile, the Ontario Municipal Board, which had to approve all decisions of this kind, had two alternatives put to it, one by the N.C.C. and the other by the city. The N.C.C. continued to favour a bridge over part of Pinecrest Road while Ottawa preferred one that used Greenbelt land outside the city.⁷ The O.M.B. decided in 1962 to accept the Ottawa access route. As a result, Britannia Heights was saved from the arterial, but the park and Britannia Village were not as fortunate.

Action rather than discussion characterized the bridge issue throughout the remainder of the 1960s. In 1964 the N.C.C. expropriated homes in Deschênes for the proposed bridge. In 1968 and 1969 the city was busy negotiating with owners of properties along Grandeur and Howe streets. It was not until the 1970s that the community organized and expressed opposition towards the Deschênes Bridge and arterial.

While the bridge issue was unfolding, the Greber Plan also resulted in three other changes in transportation routes that altered Britannia's physical appearance. The plan recommended the removal of the city railway tracks and station out of the city centre. In 1956, the F.D.C. announced a five-year plan to remove these tracks. In the late fifties, the Canadian National Railway (formerly the Grand Trunk Railway) tracks to the south of Britannia Heights were taken up. The Queensway, a limited access freeway that crossed the city, took the place of the abandoned railway right-of-way. This was a joint project, begun in 1957 and completed in 1965, involving the City of Ottawa, the Province of Ontario and the Federal Government. The new four-lane arterial alleviated the heavy traffic on Richmond Road, which until then had been the



*The Queensway and Pinecrest
turnoff, early 1970 s.*



The Western Parkway, showing Richmond Road and area north, 1980.

most direct route from the west end to the city centre. Planning delays allowed trains to operate on the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks until 1966. The tracks through Britannia were lifted the following year and were replaced by the N.C.C. bicycle paths in the early seventies.

The F.D.C., later the N.C.C., also placed the Ottawa River and Western Parkways high among its priorities. The federal agency began to acquire land for the parkway on the waterfront between Island Park Drive and Broadview in 1952 and from Woodroffe to Britannia by 1957. The Parkway was completed to Woodroffe by the end of 1964, and was extended to Carling at Lincoln Fields a few years later. It was accompanied later by pedestrian walkways, bicycle paths, picnic grounds and lookout points.

In the late 1960s, another level of government was created and became involved with the planning and reshaping of the area. In 1969, the Province of Ontario established Ottawa-Carleton, the first of 11 regional municipalities, to replace the county level of government and provide integrated planning and services in the larger metropolitan areas. It was composed of 32 members from the local councils of the City of Ottawa and other municipalities formerly in Carleton County.⁸ A year later, the Quebec Legislature established a similar regional municipality, the Outaouais Regional Community. Both of the regional governments boundaries are very similar to that of the National Capital Region and they both have extensive planning and development authority over lands other than federal property.

The major problems over the proposed Deschênes Bridge and arterial arose after 1969. The Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton; a main participant in the matter, approved a regional official plan in October 1974, after being four years in the making.

The process involved in formulating the regional plan included public hearings, public information meetings, full page summaries in newspapers and acceptance of briefs from the public. Later, the Regional Council adopted the Official Plan and submitted it to the Minister of Housing.

This plan provides general policies that govern physical development and protection to the physical environment. It includes policies related to the provision of major roads, transit, water and sewers. Local official plans, such as Ottawa's, must conform with the regional official plan policies and deal with more detailed local planning matters.

The Draft of the Regional Plan and the Official Regional Plan, before provincial approval contained three contentious issues for Britannia residents. They were an extension of the Ottawa River Parkway along the old Canadian Pacific Railway right-of-way (the bicycle path) to join Highway 417 just west of Acres Road; the Deschênes Bridge as an extension of the Ottawa River Parkway; and Britannia Woods to be classified only as a Nature Study and Wildlife Area. (Map XXIV)

Apart from this planning threat, emphasis on another bridge spanning the Ottawa River came from Quebec. Quebec municipalities wanted the N.C.C. to make the Deschênes Bridge its first priority among the proposed interprovincial bridges.⁹ The people of Deschênes felt that the bridge could save the economy of the area from its existing slump because centralized commercial enterprises were drawing customers away from the town. Nevertheless, the downtown Portage Bridge became the N.C.C.'s main concern when federal government offices were being built in Hull. Two years later, traffic congestion on the other downtown bridges renewed efforts by Deschênes and other municipal councils in Quebec to request a prompt start on the Deschênes Bridge. The N.C.C. again sidestepped the issue and admitted that there were other matters that needed resolving before work could begin on the approaches to Deschênes Bridge, which would, in their view, not be built until the end of the decade.¹⁰

Needless to say, the bridge and arterial schemes were considered a threat to the Britannia community. Residents of the area, already involved in the zoning issues regarding high-rise development, mobilized their energies to get the whole community in action against the proposed Deschênes Bridge and arterial. This action was mustered partly by the existing Pinecrest-Queensway Citizens' Committee but mainly by Action Britannia, a group made up of residents of Britannia Village, Lincoln Heights, Belltown and Britannia.

The P.Q.C.C., in its efforts to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the area, objected to any more major roads through Britannia. The committee rejected a proposed rapid transit route in 1973 which would have used the C.P.R. right-of-way between Grandeur and the waterfront, cut across the park and joined the Western Parkway south of the Filtration Plant as suggested in the 1965 Ottawa-Hull Transportation study. It was rejected on the grounds that the arterial would harm area neighbourhoods and the Mud Lake or

328.

Mud Lake Conservation Area, looking south from road to filtration plant, 1982.



Britannia Woods conservation area.¹¹

A more concentrated, local and single-minded effort to counter any plans for a bridge and arterial on environmental grounds came from Action Britannia. This group succeeded in making the immediate community aware of an arousing public interest in the threat hanging over Britannia Woods. They staged a few yearly Britannia Woods clean-up operations with all the publicity they could get before, during and after. A petition was taken from door to door in the Britannia area, north of Carling, to demonstrate a show of support. For at least two weekends, cyclists and walkers along the bicycle path were asked to sign the petition. The groups presented an in-depth report of the effects the Regional Plan proposals would have. The report concluded that an arterial would split Britannia in two, both physically and socially, lead to the destruction of Britannia Woods and disrupt Britannia Park. It also commented on the possible resulting noise levels, pollution and traffic problems. This report was prepared for the January 1974 deadline. Prior to then, Action Britannia organized a demonstration outside the Regional Government offices to emphasize the community support against the draft plan.

Action Britannia also arranged its arguments to support their aim to have Britannia Woods reclassified from a Nature Study and Wildlife Area to the more restrictive Conservation designation giving it maximum protection. The waterfront opposite Belltown had been designated Conservation already because of its importance to breeding waterfowl.

Action Britannia helped influence the Ottawa City Council to pass a motion condemning the Britannia Arterial as a barrier between the residents and the recreational waterfront, as a potential major pollutant and destroyer of the Britannia Woods wildlife area.¹²

At the same time, the small and economically weak municipalities across the river in Quebec made another plea for hasty progress on the bridge. Officials in Quebec, however, were becoming convinced, like their Ontario counterparts, that this bridge was not an immediate necessity. Preliminary reports prepared for the Quebec government in 1975 indicated that existing interprovincial bridges were not being used to their maximum capacity. Ottawa-Carleton councillors also doubted that the Deschênes Bridge would ever be built since there was not yet enough traffic to warrant it.

330.

The Outaouais regional government shelved the bridge scheme for 25 years in the spring of 1976, and the Aylmer Council finally accepted the region's master plan that such a bridge was not of a high priority.¹³ This decision angered Aylmer residents who wanted the bridge in order to relieve what they considered to be a serious traffic condition and to bolster their town's development.¹⁴ When the Champlain Bridge was closed for repairs in 1978, Aylmer residents felt that another bridge across the Ottawa was needed more than ever.¹⁵ Merchants there, who originally opposed the bridge because they felt it would encourage residents to shop in Ottawa, changed their minds. Now they favoured the bridge as a way of encouraging tourism in the Aylmer area and of offsetting any loss of local business.¹⁶

Almost two years later, in August 1976, the Minister of Housing approved parts of the official Regional Plan, with 15 modifications and deferred 100 portions of the text and 42 land and roadway designations, based on objections from 59 parties to the Ontario Municipal Board.

The City of Ottawa, Action Britannia and P.Q.C.C. presented arguments against the arterial and the location of the Deschênes Bridge. Action Britannia pulled out all stops in their presentation; they presented a slide show, had the support of the Ottawa Field Naturalists and called on many other experts to speak on their behalf.

The Britannia-Deschênes Bridge and Arterial issues were finally put to rest in 1979 when the Ontario Municipal Board ruled that the arterial extension of the parkway and the location of the bridge should be redesignated as conceptual links and therefore become a long-term, as opposed to a short-term, objective.¹⁷ The O.M.B. also recognized that extensive studies would have to be carried out before a road could be built through such an environmentally rich area like Britannia Woods.

The natural environment and recreational facilities came to occupy a firm place in government policy for Britannia. The N.C.C. had acquired one-third of Britannia Woods, which was owned by Ontario Hydro, for the planned arterial and in the mid-seventies obtained the rest of the 180 acres in a trade for property southwest of the parkway and Richmond Road intersection. The marshy area had not been suitable for building a transformer station. Britannia had an inadequate power supply for all the recent development, and Ottawa Hydro needed that much more bulk power capacity to

deliver it. Two-thirds of the building was built below ground for esthetic reasons.

This prompted Action Britannia to lobby the N.C.C. to place a fence with a few limited access gates on the west and south sides of Britannia Woods and to post signs to the effect that it was a conservation area. The beginning of the eighties saw the fencing installed, and Action Britannia handed the responsibility of acting as liaison between the community and the N.C.C. to a newly formed group, Conservation Britannia. Action Britannia then faded out of the scene, its aims accomplished.

In the sixties, the federal and provincial governments funded urban renewal projects, like Ottawa's Lowertown project and the study done in part of the Britannia area. In the seventies, the senior governments moved into renovation and improvement of older communities in conjunction with their R.R.A.P. program (Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program). The City of Ottawa did studies of various areas and designated two areas in centretown and Belltown for the Neighbourhood Improvement Program grants. The City saw it as an opportunity to have storm sewers installed in Belltown.

The programme was offered to Belltown residents in early 1975, and a committee looked into the advantages and disadvantages. It recommended that the community accept the program with the proviso that no homes would be torn down.

Residents in Belltown agreed in July 1975 to have a N.I.P. for their area, and another committee was formed to work with a coordinator and city planners to decide on the nature of improvements. A questionnaire was given to each household to discover what the community wanted. Some of the items requested were storm sewers, road construction, street lighting, playgrounds, and a multipurpose recreation facility. The community did not want sidewalks and curbs, trees taken down, or anything that would take from the village atmosphere. Belltown was given \$2,000,000 of which half was dedicated to storm sewer and road construction and the rest to the other remaining items.

Community initiative persuaded the planners to accept a new drainage system, the swail system for east/west roads and storm sewers for north/south roads in view of the slope. In doing so they were able to put the savings made towards the recreational dome.

Like other community groups before it in the Britannia area, the N.I.P. encountered its share of differences with the City of Ottawa

332.

on certain issues. The recreational facility was a bone of contention. The City purchased nine Belltown lots for this structure which would serve as a skating rink in winter and as a multi-purpose gymnasium in the summer. City officials envisioned a large-scale arena while the community wanted a small-scale facility for community use. Finally, after delays and much frustration, community wishes prevailed, and the Belltown geodesic dome, made of fabric hung inside an aluminum tubular frame, situated at the end of Ritchie and Haughton, was opened in January 1979.

During the seventies, community action also brought about improved social services. Until 1974, the Olde Forge, the former Winthrop home at the corner of Richmond and Carling, was used by the City of Ottawa as a tourist reception centre. The P.Q.C.C. approached the City to get permission to use the Olde Forge and to organize a community information centre for the area. The City approved the idea in October 1974, and the new centre, the Olde Forge Community Resource Centre, was opened to provide meeting space for P.Q.C.C., Belltown N.I.P. and other community groups. There is now one paid staff member who co-ordinates community volunteers. The position, currently funded by the city, was formerly a part-time volunteer position. It is administered by a board of local residents who oversee its operation while maintenance is supplied by the city.

The Olde Forge is involved in many activities, of which are recreational programming, income tax services for special groups,



The Belltown Dome, taken from the N.C.C. Bike path, 1981.

babysitting courses, distribution of information to the community it serves, etc. In the beginning it had a Gestetnered newsletter that went out periodically, and with time it graduated to a monthly non-profit newspaper, the *Olde Forge Flyer*, which started publication in September 1978. The *Flyer* is intended as a forum for publicizing community events and activities and for promoting programmes sponsored by the Resource Centre and other local groups. It has also served to focus attention on municipal issues. With continued community and advertising support, the *Flyer* has grown in size and in scope.

Towards the mid-seventies, there were various social service agencies providing an assortment of programmes, activities and assistance. A loosely formed advisory group called COMPAC Britannia evolved from Action Britannia to study a proposal for a multi-purpose building to contain social, health and recreational services for the community. This body felt that the emphasis placed by government on centralizing social services was the wrong position to take. Instead, they wanted co-ordination of such services and a joint service centre.

This particular study did not go very far with its proposal for Lakeside Gardens in Britannia Park, but it started the various agencies, community groups, politicians and residents thinking and talking. A few years of discussion took place, which at various stages involved Regional Government, the City of Ottawa, Children's Aid, Family Benefits, Ontario Housing Authority, Ottawa Boys and Girls Club, the City Recreation Department, local tenants groups, the Olde Forge, P.Q.C.C., Regional Social Services, church groups and interested people.

This led to the formation of the Pinecrest-Queensway Services Centre in March 1979, with funding from the Region. The aims of the Centre were to co-ordinate social services, help residents develop new programs that are neighbourhood based, and to act as a citizen's group to speak for individuals and groups at all levels of government. Its offices were located at the corner of Carling and Grenon. It is administered by a Board of Directors, comprised of local residents and area workers, which oversee the Centre's operations. Members of the Board also sit on various committees of the Board, made up of other local residents and themselves. Some of the programs it has brought about with funding from various governments are, The West End Legal Services, the Second Chance Store, summer recreation programs, project Crescendo, a program

334.

for mothers and preschoolers, Forte groups (Focus on Rights, Talents, Education) which assist women in building self-confidence and perhaps lead to employment in the workforce.

Community action also turned its attention to the lack of recreational facilities. The Ottawa Boys Club expanded to the Britannia area in 1970 to serve the West End. The club provides after-four type programmes of recreational sports, arts and crafts, hobbies and counselling for children. Facilities were first provided by Britannia United Church at Arkell House until it was demolished in 1974. Space for club activities was provided in Britannia Woods for a couple of years, then in offices on Carling Avenue. The club soon expanded and extended its activities to the local schools, holding some classes in conjunction with the Lighthouse program. They offered programmes at Grant, Regina, F.J. MacDonald and Parkway Schools and the Britannia Woods Community House at various times through the seventies.

The Boys and Girls Club, as it became in 1977, raised funds to be matched by a Wintario Grant to build a Britannia Unit. Several properties were looked into, including the Olde Forge triangle and Britannia Park. In the end the Ottawa Roman Catholic School Board rented land south of St. Remi School for a dollar a year for 99 years. The club officially opened January, 1981. Because of the lack of recreational facilities in the Britannia area, such as pools and gyms, the City arranged a purchase of service of 30 hours a week of community access to the club's facilities. A group of local residents monitor the purchase of service agreement.

Recreational facilities were also lacking in the Regina Street-Lincoln Heights area. Land there had been set aside for a park in the 1960's but the city had done nothing to develop it. During Dr. Sutherland's term as alderman, a survey was conducted in the area to discover what the community wanted to do with the parkland north of the Regina School playground. The committee that was formed to carry out the community's wishes was able to co-ordinate the first jointly-built playground in the city involving the Ottawa Board of Education, the City of Ottawa, and the community.

As a result of this co-operation, the playground equipment was built on the school grounds by volunteers. The City provided one thousand dollars, the committee selected the materials, and community workers provided the manpower to build the play-structures. The Recreation Department of the City provided expert advice.

Dr. Sutherland also suggested an entertainment group for senior citizen and nursing homes in Carleton Ward. A talent competition was held throughout the rent-to-income projects in the City, with the finalists performing at the National Arts Centre. Some of those winners and volunteers from the local rent-to-income projects were recruited, and the group, known as the Carleton Cut-Ups was formed. Initially, the Cut-Ups performed only in Carleton Ward, but requests from other senior citizen groups had the Cut-Ups performing city-wide. Unfortunately, the group had no financial support, and were forced to discontinue.

At the same time, the Ontario Government set up a Select Committee on the Utilization of Educational Facilities. The Ottawa Board of Education was also concerned with using the schools more creatively. There seemed to be a need to use Regina School as a general meeting place and for recreation programming. Since recreation was not a Board mandate, the City of Ottawa had to respond. In the end, the Lighthouse Program evolved, with a part-time salaried Community Liaison Officer from the Ottawa Board of Education and a part-time Recreation Co-ordinator paid by the City of Ottawa. The two staff people were to co-ordinate and implement the plans of the local Community Council made up of local residents. The Council provided educational and recreational programming using the school facilities, and kept the school lights burning at night for the benefit of the larger community. Eleven such programs have been established in the city.

Regina School Community Council was formed in 1974 and Lighthouse Programs were offered for children and adults, both after school and in the evenings. The Council helps foster a sense of community with special programs such as bean suppers, craft fairs, carnivals, etc. It was instrumental in arranging for the City to install higher boards, lighting and a changing shack for the Regina School Rink. For a few years the rink was cleared, flooded and supervised by community volunteers, until it became City policy to provide purchase of service to maintain community rinks. The Council has also given a financial start to the Toy Lending Library, a local initiative, Mom and preschooler play groups, and this history of Britannia by way of a loan.

Increasing government planning at the city, regional, provincial and federal level seemed to come to a head in the early seventies for Britannia. As in the past, community groups played an important

336.

role. They responded to the plans, real or anticipated, which they felt threatened the quality of life in the area.

Britannia residents saw that community pressure can, in some cases, bring about change or prevent unwanted change. The positive feeling that a community can achieve results encouraged other groups to solve concerns about the social side of life in Britannia, including recreation and quality of life. This was often accomplished with the assistance and resources of local government.

A Prologue to the 1980s

Changes were coming to pass fast and furiously. Gone was the peaceful west end.

Every vacant piece of land was looked upon as potential tax dollars. Roads were widened to help traffic and the great highway is now the skies! No gas shortage - as yet.

Unto the hills around I lift up mine eyes - towering complexes vie for the best view. Soon a private home will be a dream of the past when we turn into our cosy cubby-hole abodes...

The Year 1970

Entering 1970, our two Ottawa universities paid tribute to "the death of the Ottawa River by pollution". Not too far back in time, we could drink it and swim in it safely. Pity...

The Cortina Apartments on Carling Avenue were renting. Public Works Minister Lang and the NCC predict a bridge by 1974. We mourned the passing of old residents - Ida Jamieson, widow of "Squire" Gerald Jamieson, and David A. Kirby of the Yacht Club.

The Year 1971

January 22, the Drive-in theatre went up in flames - the feature film was "Burn"!

Gladys Blair writing up "Heritage Homes" chose the old Mosgrove School owned as a private home by Mr. and Mrs. J.D. Scammell.

We put in a bad winter, storms almost every day.

Humber Street, east of Britannia Road, is finally closed after three years of "red tape".

The N.C.C. was busy building the bicycle path along the old railroad roadbed.

The City accepted the gift of Westboro Kiwanis, a Children's Safety Village for the Park.

The Year 1972

February — a terrific winter storm closed down everything. The Olympia Apartments on site of the old Heights Post Office now renting.

338.

On Regina Street and Poulin, two complexes to rise, Northwest One, and a senior citizen low-rent - of 14 stories.

“The Laser”, designed by Bruce Kirby of the Britannia Yacht Club, a “boom and a boon” to a Quebec firm building it.

Spring flooding and no swimming at the beach this summer.

July 18 - Britannia area named a ward by City Council, and in December, Marion Dewar was elected its first alderman.

Orval Skuce, longtime resident of pioneer family, passed away at age 79.

The Year 1973

The year opened with much talk fussing for the bridge to be pushed which roused citizens to protest, fearing expropriations.

Britannia United Church celebrated its 100th Anniversary.

Town and Country Motel was sold for \$1 million.

No swimming, but the bicycle path is in operation.

The *Ottawa Citizen* opens its new home on Baxter Road.

And Britannia citizens fight row housing by presenting briefs to City Hall.

The Year 1974

The year opened with the residents putting on their fighting armor - “Save Britannia” is the plea against a planned roadway through old Britannia and the Park. Rejection is based on grounds of its humanity, history and ecology.

News in May, more highrises, three more towers for west end. Council gives approval on 8.6 acres of land east of Lincoln Fields to build.

June brings forth “Save the Britannia Woods Group” against the Arterial, and Mayor Benoit questions the need for this plan.

In August, the City prepares to block high rises proposed to go up where Town and Country Motel located.

In September, Alderman Dewar battled the Arterial by a personal appearance at the Ontario Municipal Board. By November, the Britannia Link loses the favour of the Federal planners, ruling out the controversial arterial as being “incompatible” with their plans — proposed bridge to avoid Britannia.

Britannia mourned the passing of Donald S. Kirby, longtime resident and B.Y.C. member.

The Year 1975

The year 1975 opened with praise for two eateries “Peter’s Pantry and Town and Country”. They were forerunners of many more eating places to come.

The Olde Forge hits the news of May 19th.. “The Olde Forge disguising a hubbub of community activity. They are at it at the tap roots to watch their city grow. The Forge offers some answers. But for Marlene Catterall, who works there, it is the centre of a movement that believes it can, given some breaks, make sense out of the jungle, surrounded by high speed traffic, etc. Marlene is President of the Pinecrest-Queensway Citizens’ Committee. Her citizen participation is a two-way flow, from City Hall to the people and back again. She, with many others, worked on a huge map for over 3 years on a development plan, soon to become official at City Hall..”

A year to remember, the spirit of citizens making their views known.

The Year 1976

January 15 — Queensway-Carleton Hospital admits its first patient.

In April, Regional Council says there will be a 25-year delay for the bridge.

Belltown gets a \$2 million grant for a much-needed improvement plan.

The Boys and Girls Club received a Wintario grant for Britannia Clubhouse.

The Year 1977

We have a new Alderman, Marlene Catterall. Residents are ready to fight to have Britannia Arterial deleted form the Regional plan.

On March 19, Britannia zoning is approved by O.M.B. A master plan for park development is unveiled.

The Year 1978

Backyard Britannia — Alderman Catterall gives a 4-page report covering all aspects of what is going on.

340.

In February, citizens tried every tactic they could think of to convince planners to change already revised plans for the park development. In February, citizens pack meeting to halt Arterial before Municipal Board.

One brief, given by this writer in coloured slides relating to history and ecology, remarked, "I was born here 75 years ago. This is my Britannia. I hope it won't be sliced up like a turkey!"

The Britannia Park uplift plan is finally approved by the community.

A convenience centre, at the corner of Carling and Richmond to begin. Dayton's motel is torn down, but the Town and Country stays.

And in September the *Olde Forge Flyer* makes its debut. With foresight and the remarkable dedication of its volunteers, it became a success, a good community "flyer".

And in December, on Britannia Road, an old cottage once owned by the Conroy family went up in flames.

The Year 1979

Residents protested the Greenview Road entrance, but lost.

February saw Belltown rejoicing over its arena and Dome.

In June, a Corridor Study was held in Regina School when briefs were presented in defence of conservation.

The 1909 house once owned by the Roy family at the corner of Salina and Britannia Road is destroyed by fire.

Old S.S. #3 Mosgrove School is given a heritage label by the Ontario Heritage Conservation Review Board, upholding Council's decision.

Longtime resident on Richmond Road and daughter of the pioneer Graham family, Helen Wimberley died on December 29.

A Heritage area has been rightly named — William Mosgrove Towers, 2881 Richmond Road, named after Judge William Mosgrove who in 1878 came to live and established a thriving vineyard.

Smart thinking by a worker at the Olde Forge who asked the developer the name to be given this complex. On being undecided, he was referred to the Mosgrove story that had appeared in the *Olde Forge Flyer*.

This has been a most interesting and progressive decade, with high praise to the leadership of Marlene Catterall, and especially to



Miss Eva Taylor and the Old Britannia school (School Section #3, Mosgrove School), November, 1979, when it was declared Heritage by the Ontario Heritage Conservation Review Board.

342.

the citizens of the Britannia area who insisted their voices be heard.
Marvellous watchdogs! Keep it up!

9

Britannia Park
The Lakeside Garden

Britannia Park-The Lakeside Garden

Britannia Park - the name conjures up images of a long wooden pier, a long slender golden crescent of sandy beach, the end of a streetcar line, the dance hall and numerous other features. Much of what typified one of Ottawa's most popular recreational spots before World War I, when the park was young and Britannia was the hottest property for summer homes, has gone. What remains has changed remarkably since the heyday of the summer community.

When it opened in 1900, Britannia Park was a bustling 18 acre weekend pleasure spot at the end of the Britannia Line of the Ottawa Electric Railway opened in 1900. A 1,000 foot wooden pier was constructed in its first year, with a base made of stone excavated during the building of the Metropolitan Electric Company canal nearby. Attached to the pier was a breakwater with about 40 dressing rooms for swimmers. Bathing in the long, shallow bay became so popular that 25 more dressing rooms were put up that year between the pier and the lighthouse on the beach. Two octagonal pavilions were built, one housing the food concession which Charles Rogers operated for 35 years, the other housing water closets. A merry-go-round was moved to the new park from the O.E.R.'s Victoria Park off Holland Avenue, after it lost its popularity to the beachfront playground. A footbridge was built in the park to allow people to safely cross the C.P.R. and streetcar tracks that cut through it.

The instant success of the park brought high prospects for its future. The *Ottawa Free Press* concluded in 1901 that the park would undoubtedly within a few years compare favourably with Bar Harbor, Old Orchard Beach, or even the famed Coney Island, three New England coastal playgrounds.¹ Within the next five years, improvements and additions were made to the park. In 1904, the O.E.R. bought the 35 acres of Mosgrove property below Carling Avenue for a picnic area. Paths were soon cleared, lights put up and a new refreshment pavilion erected. The lively interest in the park was given a boost when the O.E.R. decided in 1904 to reduce its fares on the Britannia Line during the summer season to the regular city one-way fare of a nickel.

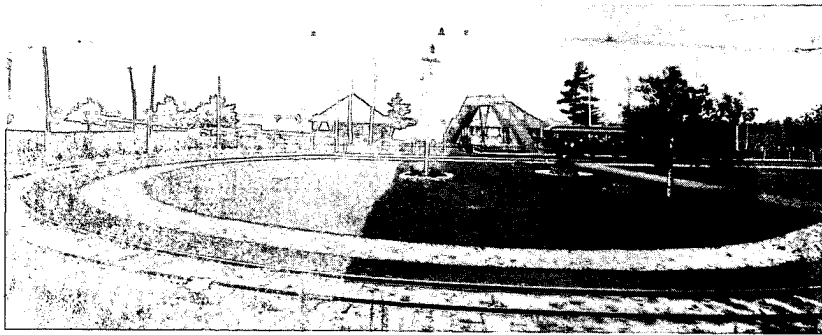


Crowds for the Britannia-on-the-Bay streetcar at Britannia Park, looking east down the track, 1900.

346.

The auditorium at Victoria Park was shut down in 1902 as its popularity continued to dwindle. It was brought to the park in 1905, and an annex built permitting a capacity of 500 orchestra chairs and 600 to 700 common chairs for summer entertainment. Vaudeville shows, touring stock companies, animal shows and acrobatic groups performed for thousands of visitors. Band concerts became a regular seasonal attraction, and moving pictures were introduced to Ottawans on a large canvas stretched between the trees at night.

As early as 1902, the Britannia Boathouse Club approached the O.E.R. with the idea of putting up a building on the pier, for renting out boats and to serve as a new headquarters.² Four years later the pier was extended by 300 feet and the boathouse was built, with a large ballroom and a grandstand for spectators. The clubhouse in the village on Cassels Street was closed and used for storage purposes. The government lighthouse at the end of the pier was placed in a small tower on top of the new building. The pier was again extended another 150 feet in 1907 providing mooring space for several more yachts.



Britannia Park Streetcar loop, 1900.

The club shared in the soaring popularity of the park. Venetian Nights, where boats and people flocked to the waterfront for evenings of entertainment, brought several thousands out to the area. Club membership grew from slightly over 100 in 1900 to 350 in 1907. By 1909, the club boasted a membership larger than all the other aquatic clubs in Ottawa combined.

Here, on summer nights, residents and holidaymakers could board the *G.B. Greene* two or three times a week and cruise



Britannia Pier, 1908. Note the beach on the left side.

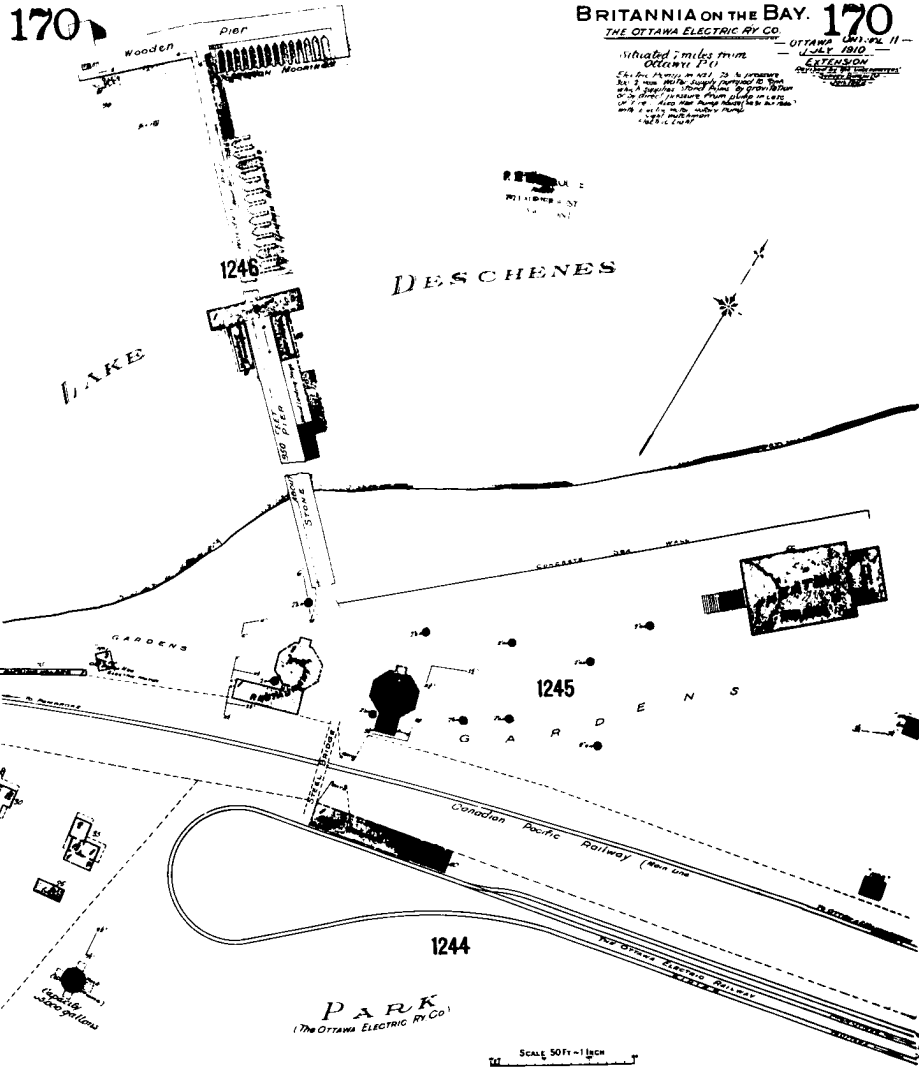


The ice break-up on the pier showing a corner of the Club House and panorama of Britannia Village shore. The sons of Judge Latchford are identified, Jim, Frank and Steve.

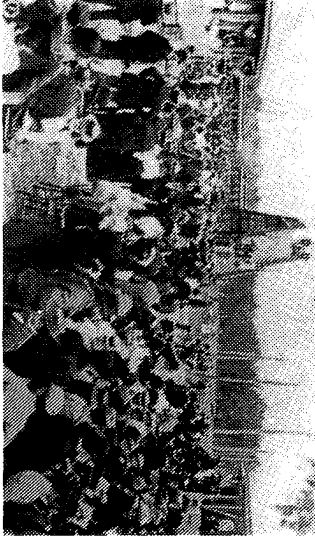
At Britannia-on-the-Bay, Near Ottawa
1910



348. *Britannia Pier with the pavilions in the background. Note the misspelling of Britannia on this postcard. The four young ladies in the foreground facing the camera are Harriet Knox Smittle, Florence Taylor Ellis, Kathleen Alexander and Bertha Prudhomme.*



A 1910 plan of Britannia Park.



Britannia Park with an open air streetcar in the background.



Getting ready for the band concert to begin.



The Britannia Boathouse Club, on the Britannia Pier, approximately 1914.