

The Early History of Bathurst Street between Dundas Street West and Queen Street West (2021):

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Bathurst Street first appears in maps of Toronto in the 1820s. Bathurst Street is named for Henry Bathurst, the 3rd Earl of Bathurst (1762-1834) who served as Secretary of War for the British Colonies during the reign of King George IV (1762-1830) (Wise and Gould 2000, 29).¹ Earl Bathurst – who had also served as Lord Chancellor between 1771 and 1778 and was a member of the British House of Commons between 1783 and 1794 – was put in charge of organizing the migration of settlers from the British Isles after the War of 1812 (Wise and Gould 2000, 29). Although having never visited Canada himself, Earl Bathurst also granted the Charter to establish *King’s College* (now the *University of Toronto*) in 1827 (Wise and Gould 2000, 29). Bathurst Street historically extended from the Waterfront (Government Wharf) to Queen Street West (originally known as Lot Street) (Wise and Gould 2000, 29). Notably, the section of Bathurst Street north of Queen Street West was originally known as Crookshank’s Lane after George Crookshank (1773 - 1859) – who served as the Receiver General of Public Accounts for Upper Canada between 1819 and 1820 and as a member of the Legislative Council between 1821 and 1842 – purchased the west half of Park Lot 18 and the entirety of Park Lot 19 in 1817 (Wise and Gould 2000, 29-30, The Toronto Park Lot Project 2018, Toronto Historical Association 2020).² Bathurst Street marked the boundary between Park Lot 18 (east side of the street) and Park Lot 19 (west side of the street). 304 Bathurst Street is situated on the former lands associated with Park Lot 19. The name Bathurst Street was being used for the section north of Queen Street West (originally known as Crookshank’s Lane) by 1858. Early commercial and residential development had occurred on Bathurst Street – particularly sections south of Queen Street West (originally known as Lot Street) – by the late 1850s. However, much of Bathurst Street – including between Queen Street West and Bloor Street West -

¹ King George IV of England reigned between 1820 and 1830.

² This resulted in Crookshank’s Lane (modern day Bathurst Street) bisecting a significant portion of Crookshank’s property. A section of present-day Dundas Street East – in the Garden District – was also known as Crookshank Street prior to the late 1870s.

remained agricultural and rural until the late 1870s through 1890s, when development along the street intensified. Bathurst Street was progressively extended northward throughout the mid-to-late 19th century with the section north of Bloor Street West remaining a muddy trail into the early 20th century (Wise and Gould 2000, 30).³ However and notably, several properties – including estate houses – had been constructed along Bathurst Street north of Queen Street West by 1858. In 1858, Sir Casimir Stanislaus Gzowski (1813-1898)⁴ constructed the “Victorian Gothic Mansion” known as *The Hall* estate at the southeast corner of modern-day Bathurst Street and Dundas Street West (Lost River Walks 2020). *The Hall* was designed by architect Frederick Cumberland (1821-1881) and included large, landscaped grounds in addition to the prominent estate house (see Appendix B, Figures 21 & 22). Gzowski was the son of a Polish Count and a civil engineer by training (Lundell 1997, 36). Gzowski emigrated to North America in 1833 after fleeing Czarist troops who were pursuing him as a result of his activism and involvement in the Polish Revolt of 1832 while studying at university in Warsaw (Nelles 1990, Lundell 1997, 36). Gzowski became significantly involved in railway and other infrastructure projects in Canada during much of the 19th century and was knighted by Queen Victoria (1819 - 1901) for these activities in 1890 (Lundell 1997, 36-37). Gzowski’s *The Hall* estate became a site central to the upper-class social scenes of Toronto and hosted many “lawn parties, balls, musical soirées, and lavish dinners,” as well as members of royalty – such as the Prince of Wales (later known as King Edward VII) (1841-1910) during his 1860 visit to Toronto (Lundell 1997, 37). Sir Casimir Stanislaus Gzowski died in 1898 and his widow - Lady Maria M. Gzowski (née Beebe) (1819 -1908), who he had married in 1839 - continued residing at the property with one of her sons until 1904 (Lundell 1997, 37). Sections of *The Hall* estate were sold in 1904 to create a park, now known as *Alexandra Park* (Lundell 1997, 37). By 1858, another large house – belonging to Richard D. Murchison and family by 1874⁵ - existed to the

³ Interestingly, neighbouring areas north of Bloor Street – such as the Annex – experienced earlier development than Bathurst Street itself.

⁴ This is the English form of Gzowski’s name. The Polish form of his name is Kazimierz Stanisław Gzowski. Of note is that Casimir Street – located near the intersection of Bathurst Street and Dundas Street West and the former site of *The Hall* – was named after him.

⁵ Further research is required to determine if the Murchison family built this property – as it appears in William Somerville Boulton’s 1858 *Atlas of the City of Toronto and Vicinity* – or whether the Murchisons

immediate south of *The Hall* – near the present-day northeast corner of Bathurst Street and Carr Street. Regarding Bathurst Street between Carr Street / Robinson Street and Dundas Street West: per William Somerville Boulton’s 1858 *Atlas of the City of Toronto and Vicinity* – in addition to Gzowski’s *The Hall* estate and the Murchison House – approximately 6 small, wooden residences had been constructed on the west side of Bathurst Street just north of Robinson Street by the late 1850s. Interestingly, the east-west alignment jog present at the intersection of Carr Street and Robinson Street is a result of Carr Street (formerly known as Elizabeth Street and Eleanor Street) not originally intersecting with Bathurst Street.⁶ A farm and orchard property – belonging to the prominent produce broker R. A. Goodenough – was located on the west side of Bathurst Street just north of Dundas Street West during the mid-19th century; and a large house belonging to the McDonald family had also been constructed on the east side of Bathurst Street just north of Dundas Street West by the late 1850s. After the construction of the above-described properties, development on this block began around the northwest corner of Bathurst Street and Robinson Street and progressed northward through the 1860s. The section of Bathurst Street immediately opposite Sir Casimir Stanislaw Gzowski’s *The Hall* estate – now present-day Alexandra Park – remained undeveloped until the late 1860s and early 1870s. Subsequently, 304 Bathurst Street (originally known as 248 Bathurst Street) was one of the first houses constructed on Bathurst Street immediately opposite *The Hall* and is representative of an early period of residential development along this particular stretch of Bathurst Street. Notably, 304 Bathurst Street originally had “private grounds” – indicating a large yard and/or private gardens – although these were redeveloped in 1891/1892 with the construction of the semi-detached house at adjacent 306-308 Bathurst Street. Further research is required to determine if any of the buildings present on Bathurst Street between Queen Street West and Dundas Street West in 1858 have survived to the present day – as unfortunately it appears that many of these early Bathurst Street

purchased it at a later date. Further research is required to determine what industries the Murchisons were involved in.

⁶ Another east-west alignment jog between Arthur Street and St. Patrick Street was eliminated with the creation and subsequent re-configuration of Dundas Street West during the early-to-mid 20th century. Interestingly, Arthur Street was known as Dundas Street in the late 1850s, before being renamed Arthur Street, and then renamed again as Dundas Street West by the late 1910s.

properties were demolished. Subsequent and steady waves of development and redevelopment along Bathurst Street have seen the addition of a mix of built forms to the streetscape, including various sites associated with commercial, institutional (including *Toronto Western Hospital* in 1895), public, religious, and/or residential uses.

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