

What is Archived is Not Lost: Researching Baseball in London, Ontario

This collaborative talk outlines a variety of resources that baseball enthusiasts and scholars can work from in London, Ontario. It explores the ways that researchers can utilize aerial photographs, geodetic survey maps, business directories and fire insurance plans to uncover stories about players, teams, ballparks and sports facilities. It pinpoints serial newspapers and archival resources at Western University and the London Public Library that pertain to regional baseball leagues and equipment manufacturers. In so doing, it examines the development of Labatt Park, tracking its physical expansion and redesigns.



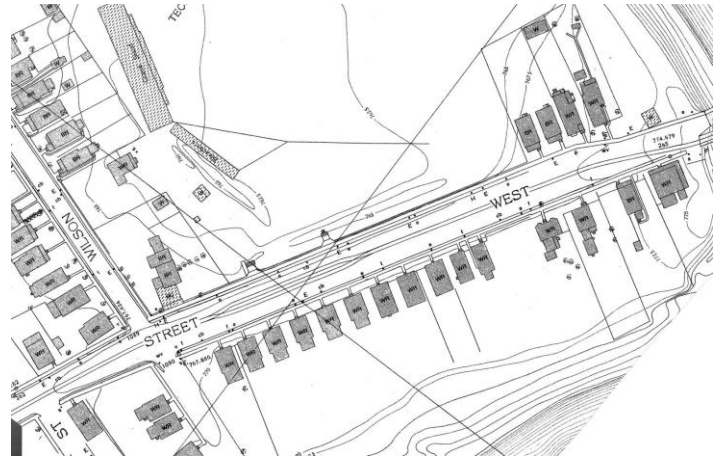
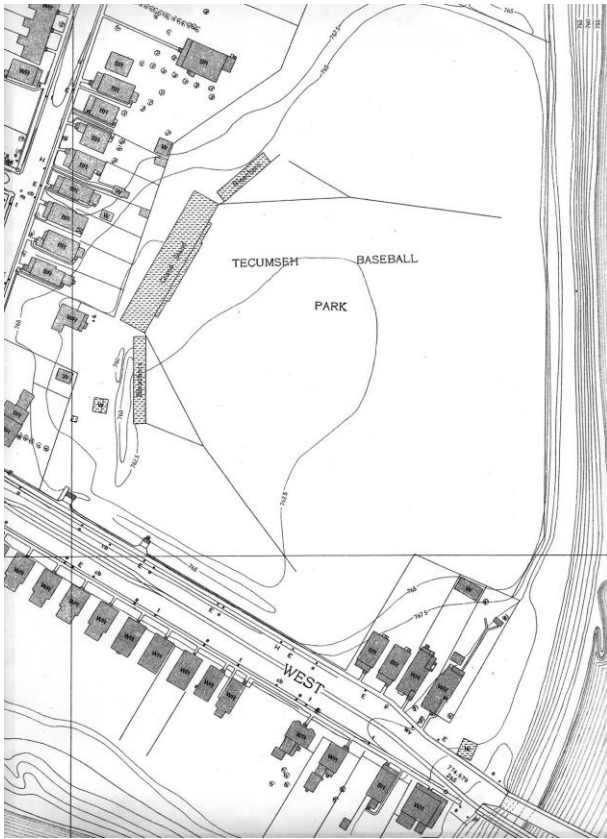
Many of the pictures of Tecumseh Park/Labatt Memorial Park were taken to document flooding. This is **the iconic image** of the flood of April, 1937 (*Wortley Village & Old South Community News*, April 1995). This picture is from Museum London's collection. Others can be found at Western Archives and the Ivey Family London Room.

This photo (right) of the flood of 1906, courtesy of author Jennifer Grainger, is from the Western Archives Collection. The view is looking west along Dundas Street West toward Wharncliffe Road. Note the flooded street, with row boats and canoes being deployed. Tecumseh Park is on the north side of the street, behind the board fence.



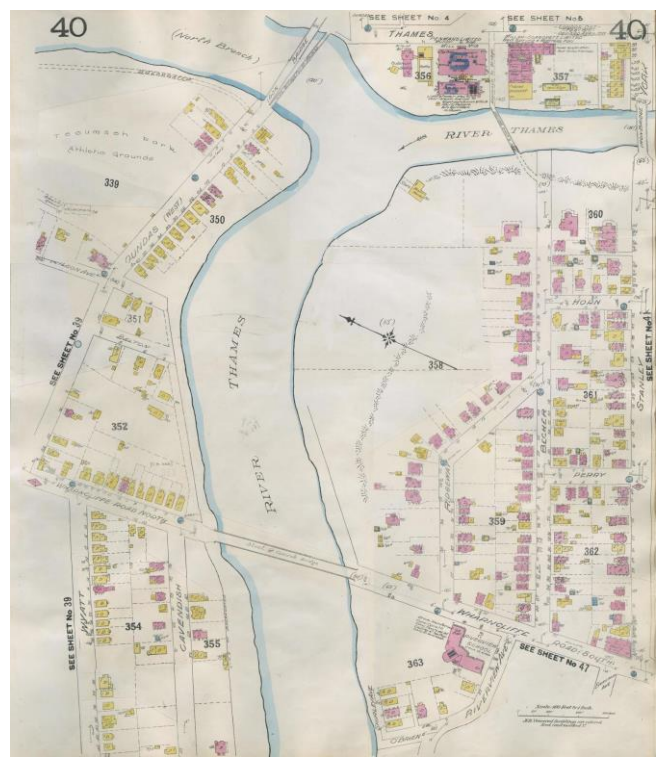
The image at left is Tecumseh Park as captured from the Old Courthouse in about 1920. The photo was found on the Internet and archived by Barry Wells of Friends of Labatt Park.

The pair of geodetic survey maps below are from author Harding's collection. They show Tecumseh Park and Dundas Street West in about 1926. Copies of these maps can be



found on-line in the Western Map and Data Centre; the set is also available for viewing in the Ivey Family London Room at the London Public Library. The maps includes contour lines and other topographic details. Note the streetcar tracks and platform adjacent to Tecumseh Park. Note as well the row of houses on the south side of Dundas West; these have since been demolished or moved

off-site. This documents a significant change in the landscape around the baseball grounds. There were two gates to the Park off Dundas Street: one was for walk-in patrons, the other a driveway for vehicles.



The pair of fire insurance plans above show the north and south halves, respectively, of Tecumseh Park in about 1922. From the Western Map and Data Center, they complement the data available from the geodetic survey maps. The plans give the street address of houses and commercial buildings, as well as other information relating to structural materials, fire risk, and so on. The right-hand image shows the neighbourhood surrounding the Park. Note there are two bridges crossing the Thames, one for vehicles and pedestrians, and the other for use by the London Street Railway's streetcars.

GRIFFITH and IRVINE
DIRECTORS
FUNERALS

DAY and NIGHT
PHONE:
METCALF
4 5 9
104 DUNDAS
STREET

BETTER COAL
S. GILLES, MANAGER
86-90 BATHURST ST. PHONE—METCALF 141

London Ice & Coal Co., Limited
S. GILLES, MANAGER
86-90 BATHURST ST. PHONE—METCALF 141

VERNON'S DIRECTORY

Dundas

1059 Hart, Mrs Violet,
hairdresser
1059 Hart, John
1061 German, L. L.
1063 Williams, C. E., plmbr
†Eva st ends
1075 McKenna, Arthur
1093 Orr, Geo
1107-11 Kellogg Co of
Can, Ltd, Corn
Flake Mfr
†Festus st av begins
1127-31 Middletons, Mills,
Ltd, dyers and fin-
ishers
Dominion Dyers, Ltd
†Eleanor st ends
1133-39 Jones, H J, Sons
Ltd, Lithographers
Jones Box & Label, Ltd
London Paper Co, Ltd
1173 Ford, Edgar
1177 Ryan, Johanna
1179 Teller, J W, service
station
1185 Webster, Miss Emily
1187 Stokes, F H
1189 Forrester, James
1195 Bousence, Emery, gro
1205 Hirschleier, Mrs B
†Ashland av ends
1217 Vacant
1223 Bruner, Mrs Violet
1225 Schaefer, Dr H E
1229 Teale, Chas
1233 Koch, J S
1239 Collins, Jerry
St. Patrick's R C
Church
1251 Redemptorist Fathers
1251 McBratney, Rev A M,
C S S R
†Oakland av ends
1267 Lee, J A
1269 Blake, E J
1273 Vacant
1277 Perkins, W H
1281 Ellis, Stephen
1285 Bail, Mrs Esther
1287 Nuttycombe, Mrs S J
1291 Hopwood, Clifford

295 Kew, Mrs Ellen
1305 Torrains, Wm
1309 Neely, J T
1311 Davis, Wm
1311 Hyatt, Wm
1315 Wright, Archd
1321 McGregor, W J
1321 McGregor, Mrs E G
1321 Cliveden Private Hosp
†Highbury av begins
1331 Hockley, Lloyd
1333 Morrison, M J
1337 Ward, Wm H
1339 Welburn, Robt
1349 Gough, W A
1349 McAtreer, W F
1351 McNab, Herbert
1353 Parker, J V
1357 Beverley, Rev A L
1385 Bennett, Wm T
1389 Beatty, Robt
1407 Marshall, H M
1409 Hunter, Thos J
C N R crossing
1441 Duncan, Jas M, drugg
†Hale st ends
1443 McArthur, C L, gro
1445 Star Oil Co
1447 Barnes House, The
Recreation Service Sta
1455 Scott, Mary J
1457 Bonham, Mrs Annie
1461 Kie, Jas H
1465 Weir, Jos H
1473 Clark, David B
St. George's Presby-
terian Church
1483 Denley, J J
1483 Tremain, Mrs Mary
1489 Bell, Fred
Macdonald, Mrs E
Macdonald, A E
†Spruce st begins
Westman, John
Clark, Thos
Hamblin, John
Clark, J H
Issac, Mrs G

DUNDAS ST WEST, north side from Kensington Bridge to Wharfedale n
1 Link, Reginald, ice cream
5 Linder, R G
7 Williams, Wm
9 Boyd, Ansel
11 Vacant
13 Vacant
15 Vacant
17 Vacant
19 Vacant
21 Vacant
23 Vacant
25 Vacant
27 Vacant
29 Vacant
31 Vacant
33 Vacant
35 Vacant
37 Vacant
39 Vacant
41 Vacant
43 Vacant
45 Vacant
47 Vacant
49 Vacant
51 Vacant
53 Vacant
55 Vacant
57 Vacant
59 Vacant
61 Vacant
63 Vacant
65 Vacant
67 Vacant
69 Vacant
71 Vacant
73 Vacant
75 Vacant
77 Vacant
79 Vacant
81 Vacant
83 Vacant
85 Vacant
87 Vacant
89 Vacant
91 Vacant
93 Vacant
95 Vacant
97 Vacant
99 Vacant
101 Vacant
103 Vacant
105 Vacant
107 Vacant
109 Vacant
111 Vacant
113 Vacant
115 Vacant
117 Vacant
119 Vacant
121 Vacant
123 Vacant
125 Vacant
127 Vacant
129 Vacant
131 Vacant
133 Vacant
135 Vacant
137 Vacant
139 Vacant
141 Vacant
143 Vacant
145 Vacant
147 Vacant
149 Vacant
151 Vacant
153 Vacant
155 Vacant
157 Vacant
159 Vacant
161 Vacant
163 Vacant
165 Vacant
167 Vacant
169 Vacant
171 Vacant
173 Vacant
175 Vacant
177 Vacant
179 Vacant
181 Vacant
183 Vacant
185 Vacant
187 Vacant
189 Vacant
191 Vacant
193 Vacant
195 Vacant
197 Vacant
199 Vacant
201 Vacant
203 Vacant
205 Vacant
207 Vacant
209 Vacant
211 Vacant
213 Vacant
215 Vacant
217 Vacant
219 Vacant
221 Vacant
223 Vacant
225 Vacant
227 Vacant
229 Vacant
231 Vacant
233 Vacant
235 Vacant
237 Vacant
239 Vacant
241 Vacant
243 Vacant
245 Vacant
247 Vacant
249 Vacant
251 Vacant
253 Vacant
255 Vacant
257 Vacant
259 Vacant
261 Vacant
263 Vacant
265 Vacant
267 Vacant
269 Vacant
271 Vacant
273 Vacant
275 Vacant
277 Vacant
279 Vacant
281 Vacant
283 Vacant
285 Vacant
287 Vacant
289 Vacant
291 Vacant
293 Vacant
295 Vacant
297 Vacant
299 Vacant
301 Vacant
303 Vacant
305 Vacant
307 Vacant
309 Vacant
311 Vacant
313 Vacant
315 Vacant
317 Vacant
319 Vacant
321 Vacant
323 Vacant
325 Vacant
327 Vacant
329 Vacant
331 Vacant
333 Vacant
335 Vacant
337 Vacant
339 Vacant
341 Vacant
343 Vacant
345 Vacant
347 Vacant
349 Vacant
351 Vacant
353 Vacant
355 Vacant
357 Vacant
359 Vacant
361 Vacant
363 Vacant
365 Vacant
367 Vacant
369 Vacant
371 Vacant
373 Vacant
375 Vacant
377 Vacant
379 Vacant
381 Vacant
383 Vacant
385 Vacant
387 Vacant
389 Vacant
391 Vacant
393 Vacant
395 Vacant
397 Vacant
399 Vacant
401 Vacant
403 Vacant
405 Vacant
407 Vacant
409 Vacant
411 Vacant
413 Vacant
415 Vacant
417 Vacant
419 Vacant
421 Vacant
423 Vacant
425 Vacant
427 Vacant
429 Vacant
431 Vacant
433 Vacant
435 Vacant
437 Vacant
439 Vacant
441 Vacant
443 Vacant
445 Vacant
447 Vacant
449 Vacant
451 Vacant
453 Vacant
455 Vacant
457 Vacant
459 Vacant
461 Vacant
463 Vacant
465 Vacant
467 Vacant
469 Vacant
471 Vacant
473 Vacant
475 Vacant
477 Vacant
479 Vacant
481 Vacant
483 Vacant
485 Vacant
487 Vacant
489 Vacant
491 Vacant
493 Vacant
495 Vacant
497 Vacant
499 Vacant
501 Vacant
503 Vacant
505 Vacant
507 Vacant
509 Vacant
511 Vacant
513 Vacant
515 Vacant
517 Vacant
519 Vacant
521 Vacant
523 Vacant
525 Vacant
527 Vacant
529 Vacant
531 Vacant
533 Vacant
535 Vacant
537 Vacant
539 Vacant
541 Vacant
543 Vacant
545 Vacant
547 Vacant
549 Vacant
551 Vacant
553 Vacant
555 Vacant
557 Vacant
559 Vacant
561 Vacant
563 Vacant
565 Vacant
567 Vacant
569 Vacant
571 Vacant
573 Vacant
575 Vacant
577 Vacant
579 Vacant
581 Vacant
583 Vacant
585 Vacant
587 Vacant
589 Vacant
591 Vacant
593 Vacant
595 Vacant
597 Vacant
599 Vacant
601 Vacant
603 Vacant
605 Vacant
607 Vacant
609 Vacant
611 Vacant
613 Vacant
615 Vacant
617 Vacant
619 Vacant
621 Vacant
623 Vacant
625 Vacant
627 Vacant
629 Vacant
631 Vacant
633 Vacant
635 Vacant
637 Vacant
639 Vacant
641 Vacant
643 Vacant
645 Vacant
647 Vacant
649 Vacant
651 Vacant
653 Vacant
655 Vacant
657 Vacant
659 Vacant
661 Vacant
663 Vacant
665 Vacant
667 Vacant
669 Vacant
671 Vacant
673 Vacant
675 Vacant
677 Vacant
679 Vacant
681 Vacant
683 Vacant
685 Vacant
687 Vacant
689 Vacant
691 Vacant
693 Vacant
695 Vacant
697 Vacant
699 Vacant
701 Vacant
703 Vacant
705 Vacant
707 Vacant
709 Vacant
711 Vacant
713 Vacant
715 Vacant
717 Vacant
719 Vacant
721 Vacant
723 Vacant
725 Vacant
727 Vacant
729 Vacant
731 Vacant
733 Vacant
735 Vacant
737 Vacant
739 Vacant
741 Vacant
743 Vacant
745 Vacant
747 Vacant
749 Vacant
751 Vacant
753 Vacant
755 Vacant
757 Vacant
759 Vacant
761 Vacant
763 Vacant
765 Vacant
767 Vacant
769 Vacant
771 Vacant
773 Vacant
775 Vacant
777 Vacant
779 Vacant
781 Vacant
783 Vacant
785 Vacant
787 Vacant
789 Vacant
791 Vacant
793 Vacant
795 Vacant
797 Vacant
799 Vacant
801 Vacant
803 Vacant
805 Vacant
807 Vacant
809 Vacant
811 Vacant
813 Vacant
815 Vacant
817 Vacant
819 Vacant
821 Vacant
823 Vacant
825 Vacant
827 Vacant
829 Vacant
831 Vacant
833 Vacant
835 Vacant
837 Vacant
839 Vacant
841 Vacant
843 Vacant
845 Vacant
847 Vacant
849 Vacant
851 Vacant
853 Vacant
855 Vacant
857 Vacant
859 Vacant
861 Vacant
863 Vacant
865 Vacant
867 Vacant
869 Vacant
871 Vacant
873 Vacant
875 Vacant
877 Vacant
879 Vacant
881 Vacant
883 Vacant
885 Vacant
887 Vacant
889 Vacant
891 Vacant
893 Vacant
895 Vacant
897 Vacant
899 Vacant
901 Vacant
903 Vacant
905 Vacant
907 Vacant
909 Vacant
911 Vacant
913 Vacant
915 Vacant
917 Vacant
919 Vacant
921 Vacant
923 Vacant
925 Vacant
927 Vacant
929 Vacant
931 Vacant
933 Vacant
935 Vacant
937 Vacant
939 Vacant
941 Vacant
943 Vacant
945 Vacant
947 Vacant
949 Vacant
951 Vacant
953 Vacant
955 Vacant
957 Vacant
959 Vacant
961 Vacant
963 Vacant
965 Vacant
967 Vacant
969 Vacant
971 Vacant
973 Vacant
975 Vacant
977 Vacant
979 Vacant
981 Vacant
983 Vacant
985 Vacant
987 Vacant
989 Vacant
991 Vacant
993 Vacant
995 Vacant
997 Vacant
999 Vacant

FOR ALL MOTOR CAR REPLACEMENTS

Use PLATE GLASS

NOTHING ELSE IS LIKE IT
LEAVE IT TO US
AND WE'LL DO IT RIGHT

COME HERE FOR YOUR AUTO GLASS REPLACEMENTS

LONDON ART GLASS—REAR
226 TALBOT ST.
PHONE:
METCALF 5516
Nights & Holidays
Metcalfe 4331 and 3891F

ENGLISH AUTO WRECKERS
HOME OF GOOD USED AUTO PARTS
74 FULLARTON STREET PHONE—METCALF 432

DUNDAS ST WEST, south side
2 Wagner, Jos
4 Donohue, W H
8 Link, Regd
10 Leitch, Chas
12 Bridg, Jos
22 Major, Stanley J
24 Fishleigh, F F
26 Major, G L
26 Harbach, Edwd
28 Robinson, J G
30 Vacant
32 Governor, Jas
32 Murphy, John

34 Officer, Alex
36 Carter, J, carter
38 Clue, C W
40 Lowe, Bert
42 Priest, J T
44 Pinto, Angelo, fruits
‡Wilson av crosses
52 Murray, D C
‡Belton st ends
70 Winn, Mrs N
76 Kelly, Mrs E
78 Moorhouse, L P
80 MacKenzie, Earl
82 Burton, C W
84 Barrett, John
86 Bowman, J A, brbr
88 West End Service Stn

The images at left are from Vernon's Directory of 1928. They document the residents and commercial businesses along the North side of Dundas Street West, providing the names of those who lived at each address. The listing for the south side of Dundas Street West features commercial enterprises

including a fruit stand, a barber shop and a service station. Another section of the directory provides the employers or place of business for the individuals listed at each address.

Let's move inside the park and meet

London's entry in the Canadian League, the London Cockneys. The photo, courtesy Jennifer Grainger, is from the Western Archives. The annotation on the photo is in error as to the date; in fact, the league started in 1911, not 1910. Note the large white residence in right field. The outfield fence takes a jog around that house. In the background are factory chimneys; their location and the





businesses they are associated with can be identified by studying the fire insurance plans. The player wearing the white cap was named McIntyre, a pitcher for the Cockneys. His portrait, at left from a photo-post card, is one of five of members of the Cockneys in the Ivey London Room collection.

In this aerial photograph from about 1922, again from the Western University Map and Data Centre (R283), Tecumseh

Park is shown at the bottom right. Note the yard markers, indicating the park was in use for football. The grandstand and bleachers are evident, as are the four houses that formerly stood in the corner of right field.



The aerial photograph at left (Line3 -100, Western University Map and Data Centre) is from 1967. It documents the evolution of the park and surrounding neighbourhood. Note that the infield for softball and fastball was included inside the baseball diamond.



The *London Free Press* faithfully documented local buildings of historical interest when they were moved or demolished. The image below left, from the *Free Press* of March 19, 1947, captures the Riverside Hotel demolition. The negatives for this and



similar pictures can be found in the Western Archives' London Free Press Collection. The right-hand image shows the Riverside Hotel following the flood of 1883. Note that the hotel had a sign on the east elevation of the building that could be seen from across the river in London. The hotel later became a boarding house, according to the fire insurance plan. The street address was number 2, Dundas Street West. There are many pictures documenting flood damage in London West (Petersville). Researchers can find pictures such as this in the Western Archives, Museum London, and the Ivey Family London Room. The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) thoroughly documented damage from the flood of 1937; those images are in the Western Archives PUC Collection.

At right is the Red Star Service Station at the corner of Wilson and Dundas Street West during the flood of 1937. The photo is courtesy of author Jennifer Grainger from the Western Archives collection. Note the “high water mark” on the side of the building. That line indicates that the flood waters almost reached the second story of the building. A tiny section of the flood-demolished grandstand can be seen on the left hand side of the picture. Note the curb-side gas pumps. This and the adjoining structures were demolished in the 1970s and the property added to Labatt Memorial Park. Using the geodetic survey map, the depth of water in the park during the flood, such as that at home plate, can be calculated.



The *London Free Press* of May 14, 1937 (below) announced on its page 7 the discovery of an old map describing the annual flooding of the area then including Tecumseh Park. This map and the accompanying notes, made prior to 1819, document that the river flats were used by the First Nations for growing corn. The Crown facilitated the cultivation of hemp to provide cordage and sails for the Royal Navy in about 1808. However this experiment ended after a few seasons.

“Nearly 2000 Attend Amateur Baseball Opening Here” announced the *London Free Press* on June 21, 1937. This clipping, from the Western Archives PUC Collection, documents the first home game played in Labatt Memorial Park following the flood of 1937. London defeated the Stratford Nations 5-1 in Senior Intercounty action. The PUC assumed responsibility for the Park following its donation to the city by John and Hugh Labatt in late 1936. The PUC maintained scrapbooks to archive press coverage of Labatt Park and the other playgrounds



under their administration. These scrapbooks are very thorough and complete.

The aerial photograph at left shows the Forks of the Thames in about 1922. Eldon House sits directly across the river from Labatt Park. London's first baseball game was played on the river flats adjacent to Eldon House in the early 1850s.

Pictured above are the London Tecumsehs of the



Michigan Ontario League in 1924. This photograph was provided by a descendent of Charlie Gehringer, shown seventh from the left. The team was probably photographed at the conclusion of spring training, before the team came to London to open the season.

Post Script: The evening before our CCBP presentation the press clipping at right came to hand. It's from *The London Weekly Echo* of 1949, Part 8 of a series entitled **London and the Talbot Settlement**, by John Garvey. "In 1896 a bicycle track was built at Tecumseh Park (now Labatt Memorial Park) and a new grandstand was put up facing the east. The old grandstands at the north and south ends were pulled down." This text suggests that the original 1877 structures may have survived the flood of 1883 and not been replaced until 1896. Note the orientation of the bleachers flanking the grandstand in the 1926 geodetic survey map. More research is called for to confirm this possibility.

Notes

Here are the links to the map and aerial photo sites in the Weldon Library at Western University.

Aerial photo index:

Go to City of London under Ontario Urban Coverage:

<https://www.lib.uwo.ca/madgic/airphotos.html#urban>

Fire insurance plans:

https://www.lib.uwo.ca/madgic/projects/fips/london_fip_1888/index.html

Geodetic survey maps:

<https://www.lib.uwo.ca/madgic/geodetic1926.html>

Stephen Harding

November 2018

In 1896 a bicycle track was built at Tecumseh Park (now Labatt Memorial Park) and a new grandstand was put up, facing the east. The old grandstands at the north end and south end were pulled down. Meets at the new tracks would attract great crowds. Bicycle riders would come to London from all over the United States and Canada and Europe. There were some good riders in London then, including Ernie and Frank White. There was Frank McCormick, now chairman of the board of the McCormick Manufacturing Company. He was the champion rider of Canada for years. The same may be said of Frank Hobbs, of Hobbs Hardware Company. Frank Radway (Dr. Frank) was a good rider and carried off many prizes. Other good riders were Edward Abbott, Jack Garvey, Tom McCormick, Frank Abbott, Tom Reid.

The day of the bicycle is not over by any means, but we do not hear any more of bicycle meets. The arrival of the motor car made quite a difference.

To be continued)