

50 CASS STREET – THE CARON HOUSE
Architect Unknown, 1901



The original parish of St. Charles, which included the present suburb of Charleswood, was formed by a nucleus of Metis farmers joined by French-speaking farmers from Quebec. This second group of settlers, lured by free homesteads, included two Caron families of Yamachiche, Quebec. Here they found good land and a burgeoning French-speaking community with its own church and school.

From their arrival in 1880 until 1901, the George Caron family lived in a small wood house on the south bank of the Assiniboine River directly across from the church. The Carons practiced mixed and dairy farming successfully. George Caron progressed from Assessor of the Assiniboia Rural Municipality to become Reeve in 1901. In that same year, the family built their large brick home on the site of the old one. In 1907, George Caron was appointed Provincial Inspector of Public Institutions which involved the operation of Manitoba's three major institutions (in Brandon, Portage and Selkirk) as well as administering the estates of dozens of

incapacitated patients. After his death in 1912, Caron's widow and children continued operating the farm until the 1940s when the house was sold and the river lot subdivided for residential development.

The house is a good example of turn-of-the-century brick farmhouses, most of which were constructed according to plan books. The absence of ornamentation was compensated by the soundness of construction, with a brick veneer. There are elements of fashion in the house, however, with a two-storey balcony finished with handsome posts and balustrades. Gables and windows provide vistas in every direction. Some fine woodwork in the interior remain also.

The Caron farmhouse, the last identifiable element of the early settlement which remains in the boundaries south of the Assiniboine, has been restored by the Charleswood Historical Society and stands as an important remainder of the suburb's past.