

UPPER FORT GARRY GATE

130 MAIN STREET

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings Committee

June, 1991

130 MAIN STREET – UPPER FORT GARRY GATE

A) Description:

This structure is a remnant of a larger complex. It is presently situated in the City of Winnipeg - owned Fort Garry Gateway Park. The holding consists of Lots 304, 305, 312 and 313, Plan 129, 1 St. John, with a portion of intervening back lane, 20' X 100' in size between the paired lots 304/05 and 312/13. This give a total size to this park of 100' (east-west borders) and 260' (north border) by 262' (south border). The gateway is located at the eastern extremity of Lots 304 and 305. (Map 1)

B) History:

The Forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers has had a long history of human commerce and intercourse. Prior to European habitation, the Forks had been an important focus of aboriginal activity, notably as a place of residence, barter and burial.¹ Europeans arrived during the later 1730's when La Verendrye, the French explorer, established a depot for his explorations somewhere near The Forks. This was known as Fort Rouge,² and had disappeared prior to 1800. This was followed by Fort Gibraltar, built by the North West Company in 1810 on possibly the same site as Fort Rouge. This was supposedly southeast of the present Gateway. Gibraltar was destroyed in 1816, but not before its presence had spawned the creation of Fort Douglas about a mile up the Red River. Fort Douglas became the centre of the Red River Settlement from 1817-21. In 1821, the rival Hudson's Bay Company and North-West Company interests amalgamated under the banner of the former organization. Fort Douglas was allowed to go into a slow decline, while Company business was quartered in the rebuilt Fort Gibraltar of 1821. This Gibraltar was renamed Fort Garry, after

¹ Rodger Guinn. The Red-Assiniboine Junction: A Land Use and Structural history, 1770-1980. Manuscript Report Series #355. (Ottawa: parks Canada, 1980). See Particularly Chapter 1. Hereafter, cited as Guinn.

² Charles Napier Bell. The Old Forts of Winnipeg, 1738-1927 (Winnipeg: Dawson-Richardson Publications, 1927). Hereafter acted as Bell. See also William Douglas, "'The Forks' Becomes a City", in Papers read before the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, Series III, No. 1. (Winnipeg: Advocate Printers, 1945). pp. 51-53. Hereafter, cited as Douglas.

Deputy-Governor Nicholas Garry who had overseen the amalgamation (Plate 1).³

Fort Garry was badly damaged in the flood of 1826, and was in a very dilapidated state by 1830. This led Governor George Simpson to begin construction in 1831 of a new Fort Garry about twenty miles up the Red River, north of St. Andrew's Rapids (Lockport).⁴ In Simpson's mind, the new site was not prone to flooding or hostile attacks, nor did it suffer from the navigational problems caused by the Rapids for the Norway House trade. After its 1839 completion, it subsequently became Lower Fort Garry which is, today, a national historic site.

The Forks site was revived because of a change in company policy with the appointment of Chief Factor Alexander Christie in 1835. That year, under Christie's auspices, a new Fort Garry was begun.⁵ With the completion of the Fort near the Rapids, the Forks Fort took the name of Upper Fort Garry. After 1837, the Fort boasted substantial, fifteen foot high stone walls with corner bastions and encompassed a space 240' (north to south) x 280' (east to west). Its front entrance overlooked the Assiniboine River, and over the next two decades, the confines of the Fort were filled with an assortment of log buildings. Two smaller postern gates were located in the east wall and in the north or rear wall.⁶ The new fur post was sited on a slightly higher elevation than the previous fort in anticipation of future floods. The new fort also became the seat of the Council of Assiniboia - the governing body of the time, and had a house for the Governor.⁷ "Upper Fort Garry" became the economic and social centre of the settlement, despite Simpson's wish that the Lower Fort should assume that role.⁸

³ Douglas, *ibid.* pp 60-62.

⁴ *Ibid.* p 66.

⁵ Bell, *op. cit.* p 31.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 36.

⁷ Alexander Ross, *The Red River Settlement* (London: Smith, Elder and Company, 1856). pp 143-43.

⁸ Guinn, *op. cit.* p. 79.

The importance of Upper Fort Garry increased so markedly that by the early 1850's it had outgrown its confines and thus, expansion was in order. The east and west walls of the fort were extended northward 283 feet from the old stone north wall, making the entire fort 573 to 574 feet in length.⁹ This took place during 1852-54, for work was delayed by the great flood of 1852.¹⁰ The new walls did not match those of the original structure. Instead, a hollow core wall was created from fourteen inch wide oak planks. The core itself was filled with packed earth. This made a wall three feet in width and ten feet high. The walls had a very temporary look to them which hinted that they might eventually be replaced by stone materials as construction budgets warranted (Map 3).

Uncharacteristic of these extended walls was the central back gate located in the new north wall (the "front" of the Fort faced the Assiniboine River). It was constructed of a combination of cut limestone blocks and limestone rubble. It had a large central arch, loopholes, a bastion for a guard and a crenellated top. Loewen speculates¹¹ that the arch and crenellations were from the old north wall which was demolished after the new space to the north was enclosed. It is quite possible that the rubble stone for the gate also came from the old wall. This would have represented a ready source of useable stone, especially once the old wall was removed for access between the two halves. With the erection of a new governor's house to the south of this gate at the same time, the grandiosity of this gateway falls into place as the gateway sometimes assumed the name of "Governor's Gate". The remainder of the old north wall was demolished in 1854.¹² Though the exact date of its construction is uncertain, the date of the gateway can be pinpointed generally to 1853. It is certain that the gateway contains remnants of the 1837 walls.

Ironically, the fort had only a few years of prime importance left as an economic entity after the expansion of 1852-54. Changes within the Hudson's Bay Company's operation dictated that within

⁹ Brad Loewen, A History of the Structures at Upper Fort Garry, 1835-1887. Unpublished manuscript on file, Parks Canada, Historic Research Section, Prairie Region p. 57. Hereafter, cited as Loewen.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 57.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 60.

¹² Loc. cit.

two decades, the Honourable Company would no longer be the feudal lord of Rupert's Land. The fur trade had changed greatly. As well, there was a movement in Upper Canada (Ontario) to annex the North-West before it could fall under American domination. As a result, Rupert's Land was annexed to Canada, and this led to the creation of Manitoba in 1870. The Hudson's Bay Company, under the Terms of Surrender of 1869, was allocated a certain reserve of land about each post. In the case of Upper Fort Garry, this was 500 acres. It is clear that the Company now placed more importance upon the monetary value of its lands than it did the fur trade. As a result, Upper Fort Garry was allowed to deteriorate, as it was felt that its prime reason for existence - the fur trade - had deserted it.

Unexpectedly, Upper Fort Garry once more became the seat of government when Adams Archibald, the first Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, removed his headquarters from Silver Heights to Fort Garry in 1872. Silver Heights had been sold by its owners, and the Fort was nearer the population centre - these were the reasons for the shift of localities (Plate 2).¹³ As a result of the vice-regal presence, the northern portion of the fort was maintained until September 1883 when the present Government House opened.¹⁴ This included the north gate.

In the meantime, the stone walls of the 1837 fort (Plate 3) had been dismantled. This had begun in 1871 with the removal of part of the east wall, while two of the bastions eventually collapsed on their own.¹⁵ The remaining stone walls were removed between 1875 and 1880,¹⁶ with the last-named demolition providing rubblestone for several building foundations in downtown Winnipeg. (Plate 4) The wooden walls surrounding the Government House portion of the Fort remained in place chiefly because of the Vice-Regal function. At the end of the government occupancy, the

¹³ Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Recreation. Government House (Winnipeg: Historic Resources Branch, 1984) pp 3-5.

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 8. See also Frances Bowles, Manitoba's Government House, a Special Supplement to the Transactions of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, Series III; No. 25, 1969-70. (Winnipeg: Manitoba Historical Society, 1970). pp 9-10.

¹⁵ Loewen, op. cit. pp 95-101.

¹⁶ Loc. cit. p 101. See also, "To Contractors", Manitoba Free Press, 7 January 1880, p. 1

remaining structures were left derelict. Indeed, the last building that obstructed Main Street had been pulled down two months earlier in July 1883,¹⁷ and this left Government House, the remains of the wooden wall, and the stone north gate rather isolated.

By the spring of 1886, the remains of the fort were a forlorn and dilapidated mess. Newspaper correspondent George B. Elliott contrasted the old with their new surroundings in his article for the Northwestern Farmer and Breeder (Plate 6).¹⁸ Four of the largest remaining structures were sold by auction that December.¹⁹ The final clearance of the Upper Fort site came in the spring of 1888 when the few remaining structures were sold on 26 March. In all, four buildings sold for \$292, with Government House going for the sum of \$100 and a future as firewood.²⁰ The gateway apparently attracted little attention from bidders as it was either not offered for sale, or was considered too insignificant from a salvage point of view to be worth dismantling (Plate 8).

The pending removal of the remaining structures galvanized action among a small number of local citizens interested in the relics of the fur trade. C. J. Brydges, the Hudson's Bay Company Land Commissioner, offered the gateway to the provincial government free of charge, if it were dismantled and re-erected elsewhere.²¹ Brydges' reasoning for the removal of the gateway was that it was in poor condition because of an insufficient foundation, and that the gateway blocked a lane²² which at that time existed only on survey plans. Brydges' offer aroused some latent anti-Hudson's Bay Company feeling in the direction of preserving the gateway *in situ*.²³

¹⁷ MEP, 17 July 1883, p 8.

¹⁸ "Fort Garry", Manitoban, 29 May 1886, p 4.

¹⁹ "By Joseph Wolf", MEP, 30 November 1886 p. 4

²⁰ "Brought \$100", MEP, 27 March 1888, p. 4; also, Morning Call, 27 March 1888, p. 4.

²¹ "Brought \$100", MEP, 27 March 1888, p. 4.

²² Hudson's Bay Company Archives, D 39/4, 1885-89, letter: C. J. Brydges to William Armits, 16 April 1888, pp. 581-2.

²³ "Fort Garry Gateway" MEP, 3 April 1888, p. 2; "Old Fort Garry Gate" and "Turn it into a Park", MEP, 4 April 1888, p. 2.

The Manitoba Historical Society's archaeological committee met with City Council early in April 1888, persuading Council to strike a committee to investigate acquisition of the gate and an acre parcel of land surrounding the relic.²⁴ Early on, the gateway was perceived as being "the only remaining link between the past and present of this country"²⁵ for some people believed that the urbanization of Winnipeg had exacted a certain toll on the area's historic artifacts. Even the highly pro-development Manitoba Free Press came out in favour of preserving the gateway as a worthwhile public project.²⁶ In the meantime, the work of removing the buildings went on, so that by 9 April the gateway stood out "solitary and alone, inviting the intervention of some kindly soul to save it from destruction (Plate 9)."²⁷ By the end of April only the gateway remained.²⁸

City Council's special committee recommended in situ preservation of the gateway with a purchase of lots 301 - 305 and lots 312 - 316 (10 lots) for the creation of a park (Map 4).²⁹ The Historical Society called a public meeting on 18 April at which the general opinion was in favour of the retention on an eleven lot site.³⁰ The dealings on the park site fell through when it was believed by some members of City Council that \$8,000 was too much for the property.³¹ Evidently, the matter was dropped by the City, though the Historical Society made representations to the London headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company for either a donation of the site, or sale at a nominal figure.³² A deputation of stalwarts from the Historical Society, including Charles Napier Bell and Reverend George Bryce, meet with Sir Donald A. Smith in March 1889. At the time, on site

²⁴ "City Council", MFP, 4 April 1888 p. 4.

²⁵ "Fort Garry Gate" MFP, 6 April 1888 p.2.

²⁶ "Fort Garry Gateway", MFP, 7 April 1888, p. 2.

²⁷ "Old Fort Garry", Sun, 9 April 1888, p. 4.

²⁸ Sun, 27 April 1888, p. 4.

²⁹ "The Old Gateway", Sun, 10 April 1888, p. 4.

³⁰ "Fort Garry Gateway", Sun, 19 April 1888, p. 3.

³¹ "Recreation Park Scheme", Sun, 8 May 1888, p. 4.

³² "Fort Garry Gateway", Sun, 13 February 1889, p. 2.

preservation was no longer believed feasible, for the gate might be re-erected elsewhere.³³ Unfortunately, the preservation movement dropped the matter for the next few years.

The issue resurfaced in the autumn of 1893, around the time that an athletic park was proposed for a tract of land opposite the Gateway. This became Fort Garry Park, and was located on a three square block tract on the southeast corner of Main Street and Broadway (Map 5).³⁴ It was developed, in part, by the Hudson's Bay Company. A similar set of public responses to the Historical Society's earlier efforts to save the gate were elicited in 1893.³⁵ A debate even emerged between two eminent Red River scholars of the time - George Bryce and Archer Martin - which indicated that much popular knowledge regarding the Fort had already deteriorated in legend.³⁶ An examination of the structure was done by architect Walter Chesterton, who found it to be very dilapidated.³⁷ By this time, the Historical Society had scaled down their ambitions, only wanting the two-lot site upon which the gate was located. C. C. Chipman of the Hudson's Bay Company quoted the Society \$2,400 as a price for the lots.³⁸ A subsequent public appeal for funds brought little response,³⁹ possibly because of the growing commercial depression of the time. It was suggested, however, that the Gateway be moved across Main Street and rebuilt as the main entrance of the new athletic park.⁴⁰ Fortunately, the gate stayed in place.

Nearly four years later, an amateur organization, the Winnipeg Athletic Association, proposed a

³³ "Fort Garry Gateway", Sun, 12 March 1889, p. 4.

³⁴ Winnipeg Daily Tribune, 13 October 1893, p. 4

³⁵ "Fort Garry Gateway", MFP, 16 September 1893, p. 8.

³⁶ "Fort Garry Gateway", MFP, 25 September 1893, p. 3; "Fort Garry Gateway", MFP, 26 September 1893, p. 3; "Fort Garry Gateway", MFP, 27 September 1893, p. 3; "Fort Garry Gateway", MFP, 28 September 1893, p. 7.

³⁷ "Fort Garry Gateway", MFP, 7 October 1893, p. 4.

³⁸ "Fort Garry Gateway", MFP, 16 September 1893, p. 8.

³⁹ "Save the Gateway", MFP, 18 October 1893, p. 4.

⁴⁰ "Another Gateway Suggestion", MFP, 20 October 1893, p.3

clubhouse and gymnasium for the east side of Fort Street south of Broadway (Plate 10). This was in close proximity to Fort Garry Park, and, of course, endangered the gateway.⁴¹ A week afterward, on the 21 June 1897, City Council petitioned the Hudson's Bay Company for a gift of the gateway lots.⁴² Two months later, on 19 August, the Company gifted lots 304-05 and 312-13 with the gateway to the City of Winnipeg "as a public park forever."⁴³

Work on refurbishing the gate, by then a tottering wreck,⁴⁴ began almost immediately.⁴⁵ As early as 20 August, the Mayor and Aldermen, jubilant over the acquisition, visited the site in order to plan the park layout. Plans formulated included sodding, a fence and repairs to the gateway.⁴⁶ By early October, the local press noted that the gateway had "been restored from its tumble-down condition to its former noble and war-like aspect"⁴⁷ (Plate 11). It was even suggested that some of the Old Fort Garry cannons, then owned by several Winnipeggers, might be repatriated to the park.⁴⁸ All told, \$500 was spent in 1897, probably just to stabilize the ruin.

The City obtained the Deed to the property in February, 1898.⁴⁹ Naming the new park caused some debate the following year. Initially, the Public Parks Board favoured the name "Strathcona Square,"

⁴¹ "Athletic Association", *MFP*, 14 June 1897, p. 6; "Athletic Association", *Tribune*, 12 June 1897, p. 14. The structures were not built.

⁴² City of Winnipeg, *City Council Minutes*, 1897-98, Meeting 21 June 1897, p. 102, no. 355. Hereafter, cited as *Minutes*.

⁴³ "Old Fort Garry Gateway", *MFP*, 21 August 1897, p. 2; "Fort Garry Gateway", *Tribune*, 20 August 1897, p. 1; "Fort Garry Gateway", *Nor'Wester*, 21 August 1897, p. 5.

⁴⁴ "City and General", *MFP*, 28 June 1897, p. 8; "Fort Garry Gateway", *Tribune*, 7 June 1902, p. 10.

⁴⁵ "Fort Garry Gateway", *Tribune*, 20 August 1897, p. 1.

⁴⁶ "The Gateway Park", *MFP*, 31 August 1897, p. 3.

⁴⁷ "City and General", *MFP*, 6 October 1897, p. 6.

⁴⁸ *MFP*, 27 October 1897, p. 8.

⁴⁹ *Minutes*, 28 February 1898, p. 225; nos. 845; 849.

in honour of Lord Strathcona, the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company and the ultimate donor of the gate and lots.⁵⁰ However, the name "Fort Garry Park" won out, two months later, in City Council.⁵¹ In the ensuing several years, the gateway grounds were developed as another popular civic park (Plate 12). By 1902, a visitor was given to observe that:

An oblong space about the gateway was enclosed with a neat wire fence and the place tastily fitted up. The old timer took on a new lease on life and bids fair to stand for many a day as a silent reminder of stirring days in our history.

Souvenirs had been carried to many Canadians, British and American homes and there shown with pride and delight. (...) Cut into the woodwork are several names and initials. Perhaps their owners thought this their only chance of ever having a monument.⁵²

The next significant act in the story of the gateway was the ceremony to unveil a commemorative plaque placed by the Canadian Club of Winnipeg. This took place on 27 August 1909, with Lord Strathcona (Donald A. Smith) performing the honours (Plate 13).⁵³ Pursuant to this, the Department of the Interior, through the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, placed a tablet on the Fort Garry Gate on 14 May 1926.⁵⁴ This commemorated the significance of Upper Fort Garry in the development of Western Canada (Plate 14).

Over the past ninety years, this park has been maintained and developed by the various descendants of the Public Parks Board. The existence of the gate as a solitary relic has been threatened from time

⁵⁰ City of Winnipeg, Public Parks Board Minute Book, 1893-1901. Meeting 1 March 1899, p. 153. Hereafter, cited as Parks.

⁵¹ Minutes, 8 May 1899, p. 80, nos. 287-288.

⁵² "Fort Garry Gateway", Tribune, 7 June 1902, p. 10.

⁵³ "Historic Rebel Flag will Drape Tablet", MEP, 25 August 1909, p. 1; "Memorial of Old Forts Unveiled", MEP, 28 August 1909, p. 11; "On Historic Ground", Tribune, 27 August 1909, p. 5.

⁵⁴ Dominion of Canada. Annual Report of the Department of the Interior, for the year ended 31 March 1926. (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1927), p. 111. Also, "Fame of Western Pioneers Commemorated by Tablets at City's Historic Points", MEP, 15 May 1926, p. 4; and "Old Fort Sites Marked with Bronze Tablets Amid Impressive Ceremonies", Tribune, 15 May 1926, p. 6.

to time by well-meaning individuals and groups. Recreations of the Upper Fort have been suggested several times. The first, in 1902, would have had a miniature fort rebuilt on a somewhat extended park site.⁵⁵ A more elaborate scheme made public in late 1912 had the gateway as an entrance to an historical park with a central museum (Plate 15) structure not unlike the new Legislative Building in appearance. This proposal would have taken most of the block between Main and Fort Streets, and the alley behind Broadway and Assiniboine Avenue.⁵⁶ This did not come to fruition, though a Fort Garry Athletic Park was built on the empty land immediately south of the gate in the years after 1914. This was, until about 1940, a notable spot for lacrosse, hockey and toboggan-sliding (Plate 16).

The City of Winnipeg did not always maintain the gate in the best condition. By the mid-1940's, the gateway was apparently in a poor state of repair. Then, it was sandwiched between a gasoline station and an empty lot covered with billboards (Plate 17).⁵⁷ Three years later in 1949, it was revealed that one of the outer gates and both inner gates had disappeared in 1930's with no clues as to the perpetrator. At the time, money was spent to renovate the structure, and this included rebuilding the gates.⁵⁸ The centenary of the gate passed almost unnoticed in 1953, except for the fact that the Fort Garry Chamber of Commerce took a fancy to the structure, wishing it to be moved to the Chambers' recreation centre on Pembina Highway. The justification for Winnipeg not having the gate was the rather tenuous reason that the city had forfeited its right to the gate by not adopting the name Fort Garry!⁵⁹ Civic Finance Committee rejected the proposal, calling upon the Manitoba Historical Society to prepare plans for further development of the site.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ "Fort Garry", MEP, 8 September 1902, p. 3.

⁵⁶ "Plans for Fort Garry Park Presented to Sir Thomas Skinner", Telegram, 5 October 1912, p. 10.

⁵⁷ Henry N. Mayne, "Fort Garry Gate", Tribune, 12 August 1946, p. 6.

⁵⁸ "Mystery Unsolved...City to Replace Fort Garry Gates", Winnipeg Free Press, (MEP), 28 May 1949, p. 3.

⁵⁹ "Fort Garry Chamber Upset About Getting the Gate", WEP, 8 April 1953, p. 3; "Fort Garry Gate's Future Up To Council", WEP, 13 April 1953, p. 3; "Fort Garry Hasn't Bid for Gate", WEP, 14 April 1953, p. 1; "Fort Garry Can't Have Famed Gate", Tribune, 14 April 1953, p. 1.

⁶⁰ "Historic Fort Gate Stays in Winnipeg", Tribune, 17 April 1953, p. 21.

Little else was done with the park until the early 1960's. By that time, the small parcel of land was badly overshadowed by the Imperial Oil Building, 100 Main Street (1948; 1956) and the Grain Exchange Curling Club, 75 Fort Street (1948-49) (Plate 18). With these structures added to earlier ones such as the Manitoba Club, 194 Broadway (1903-05) and the Fort Garry Filling Station - SW Broadway and Main Streets (1924; 1954), the small park was engulfed. As well, a heavy covering of trees and foliage in the park made the gate invisible from the street. In May 1962, a proposal was made by the Parks and Recreation Department to expand the park over the filling station site, in order to accommodate the Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain (1897) which was being displaced from the front of the City Hall, then being demolished (Map 6). The proposal called for a new landscaping of the grounds. Unfortunately, the proposal did not proceed, and the following year, the property was reworked with the removal of seven trees and their replacement by a low hedge. The vines were removed from the gateway, the grounds resodded, and new flower beds planted. Lastly, Alderman Walter Crawford donated a plaque depicting the history of the Upper Fort. It was mounted on a boulder at the Main Street park entrance.⁶¹

The old gate was left alone for another two decades, until a plan was devised under the Agreement for Recreation and Conservation (ARC) Program. Under the ARC terms, the gateway was to be restored as part of a multi-million dollar revitalization of the Red and Assiniboine River forks area. The plans of landscape architects Hilderman, Fier, Witty and Associates were adopted for the restoration of the gateway. The \$160,000 job entailed face-lifting the gate, removing fill from around the structure, erecting 165 feet of replica wooden fencing to simulate the 1850's north wall, and provision of a mural to the south of the gate to approximate the view as it might have been around 1881.⁶²

Since 1983, the Gateway has remained in its restored state. Weathering is evident in the untreated wooden components, while vandalism has brought some defacement and theft has robbed the site of

⁶¹ "Plans for Fort Garry Park Presented to Sir Thomas SKinner", Telegram, 5 October 1912 p. 10.

⁶² Agreement for Recreation and Conservation Program. Upper Fort Garry Gate Restoration (pamphlet) c. 1983.

a 19th century brass cannon.⁶³ It does not appear that anything beyond normal park maintenance is conducted upon this unique reconstruction. This perhaps mirrors the earlier existence of the gate under first the ownership of the Hudson's Bay Company and later the City of Winnipeg where it was left to 'fend for itself'.

C. Style

The Upper Fort Garry gate is of a vernacular styling with overtones of Norman architecture. This latter feature is seen in the crenellated battlements which were finely executed despite the frontier setting of the Fort (Plate 19). The large, rounded archway entrance is reminiscent of Italian Renaissance forms of the 16th century. Known at various times as the "Governor's Gate", the structure was intended to convey a sense of dignity to the end of the Fort complex which housed the Governor of Assiniboia.

C. Construction

The Upper Fort Garry Gate is a stone shell structure with a small second story meant as a gallery for a guard and flag-pole. This gallery is partially screened from view from the south by a log wall or embrasure. In the past, this embrasure appears to have been of the Red River Frame or "piece sur piece" construction prevalent among Hudson's Bay Company structures of the nineteenth century. Stone construction was used infrequently in Rupert's Land as stonemasons were neither plentiful or cheap. Stone was used in the erection of more substantial dwellings at the Red River Settlement prior to Confederation. Several of these still exist today near St. Andrews, as well as in St. Boniface, namely the Archbishop's Palace (1864), Avenue Tache.

D. Design

The gate is but a remnant of a larger complex which was demolished between 1875 and 1888. This gate had a double-leaf, centre-opening doorway which lead into the fort. Above was a wooden gallery for a guard, complete with loop-holes for firing upon insurgents. The gate was more ceremonial in nature than anything else, for its heavily-fortified appearance did not extend to the

⁶³ Doug Spiers, "Historic Cannon Stolen", WEP, 16 June 1984, p. 3.

neighbouring wooden walls.

E. Interior

The Fort Garry gateway is a shell-structure with minimal interior adornment. Presently, any decoration upon its bare stone walls consists of various commemorative plaques placed on the structure by different jurisdictions.

E. Integrity

As noted earlier, the Upper Fort Garry gateway has managed to survive upon its original site despite different attempts to place it elsewhere. It is in good structural condition because of the periodic maintenance of the Parks Board. Past repairs have adhered fairly well to the original design of the gateway, with the 1982-83 renovations giving the structure some type of historic ambience through the restoration of the wooden walls and placement of graphic images of the Fort interior.

G. Streetscape

Upper Fort Garry Gate is situated on a small island of a park surrounded by buildings of various ages. It relates to few of these historically, and none architecturally. A namesake is the Fort Garry Hotel on the opposite side of Fort Street (Plate 20). The gateway is linked historically to Hudsons' Bay House (1911, 1970) on the east side of Main Street, and to the Bridge of the Old Forts (1931) which spans the Assiniboine River to the south.

H. Architect

It is believed that Alexander Hunter Murray (1818-1874) was responsible for the design of the Upper Fort Garry Gateway. (Plate 21) Born in Scotland, Murray emigrated to the United States as a young man, as was employed by the American Fur Company. In 1845, Murray joined the Hudson's Bay Company, being made senior clerk for the Mackenzie River District in the Yukon. Between 1847 and 1851, Murray built and was in charge of Fort Yukon near the junction of the Yukon and Porcupine Rivers.

Failing health brought Murray and his family to Fort Garry in 1851 where they remained until the following year. It was at this time that local legend states that Murray supplied the design for the gateway. Subsequent to this, Murray was in charge of various Company posts until his retirement in 1865. He died near Lower Fort Garry in April 1874.⁶⁴

L Builder

Unknown. It is believed that day labourers were recruited from among the Chelsea Pensioners military regiment for work on the fort expansion. The Pensioners were recruited in England to help defend the Red River Colony from various types of human peril.

L Person/Institution

The Hudson's Bay Company is commonly known as having the greatest association with the Fort Garry gateway. The Company was an oligarchic and monopolistic corporation founded in 1670. As such, the Company had sweeping powers over trade, commerce and authority over the scattered inhabitants of Rupert's Land prior to 1870. Upper Fort Garry was the most important post in the Company's chain of enterprise, and for that reason was the seat of government for the river settlements as well as for Northwestern Canada. For that reasons, the Hudson's Bay Company is very important in the early history of Winnipeg. Because of those reasons, the gateway was chosen as the site to "pay the rent" to various monarchs during their visits to Winnipeg (Plate 22).

K Event

Upper Fort Garry was the scene of many stirring events that made up the early history of Manitoba. These include the Sayer Trial of 1849, which broke the Hudson's Bay Company trade monopoly; the establishment of Louis Riel's provisional government of 1869-70; the execution of Thomas Scott by Riel's government in March 1870, and the founding of Canadian civil government later that year. As well, the gateway was the specific object of Winnipeg's and possibly Manitoba's, first heritage preservation campaign from 1888 to 1897. Significantly, the gateway was preserved because of its

⁶⁴ Kenneth L. Holmes, "Alexander Hunter Murray", in M. La Terreur (ed.), Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. X, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972.) pp. 540-41.

historical associations. At the time, such associations were perceived by the practical-minded of society as sentimental clap-trap. Therefore, it is significant that any type of conservation of this type met with the recorded degree of success at that time.

L. Context

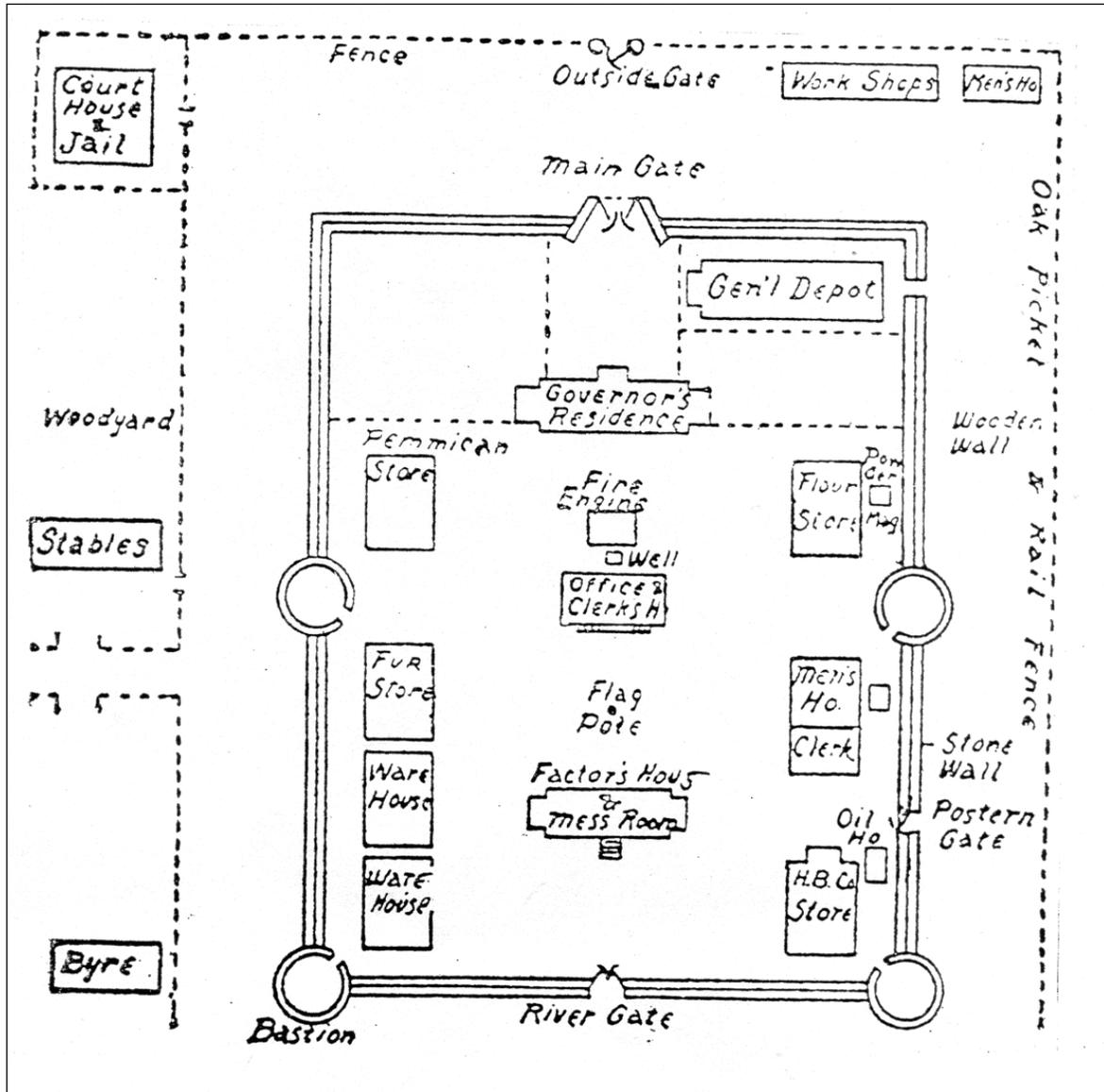
The gateway reflects the themes of the fur trade and of the urbanization which cast out the old order at Red River. Upper Fort Garry, as the chief entrepot to the Northwest of the Hudson's Bay Company, was the premier economic presence for that Company. The Fort was the victim of urbanization, because it no longer existed in the rural pastoral setting in which it had been conceived. Ironically, the gateway was a beneficiary of the same forces which had destroyed the rest of the fort, for the "sentimentalists" who advocated its salvation were also products of Winnipeg's rapid urbanization of the 1870's and 1880's.

M. Landmark

Visually, the Upper Fort Garry gateway is semi-hidden behind trees and buildings. Once inside the small enclave which is the park, the gateway takes on a more regal appearance with its large arch and handsome crenellations. In a sea of urban elements, this is a rustic relic which evokes another era in the history of Winnipeg. It is a well-known landmark in downtown Winnipeg.

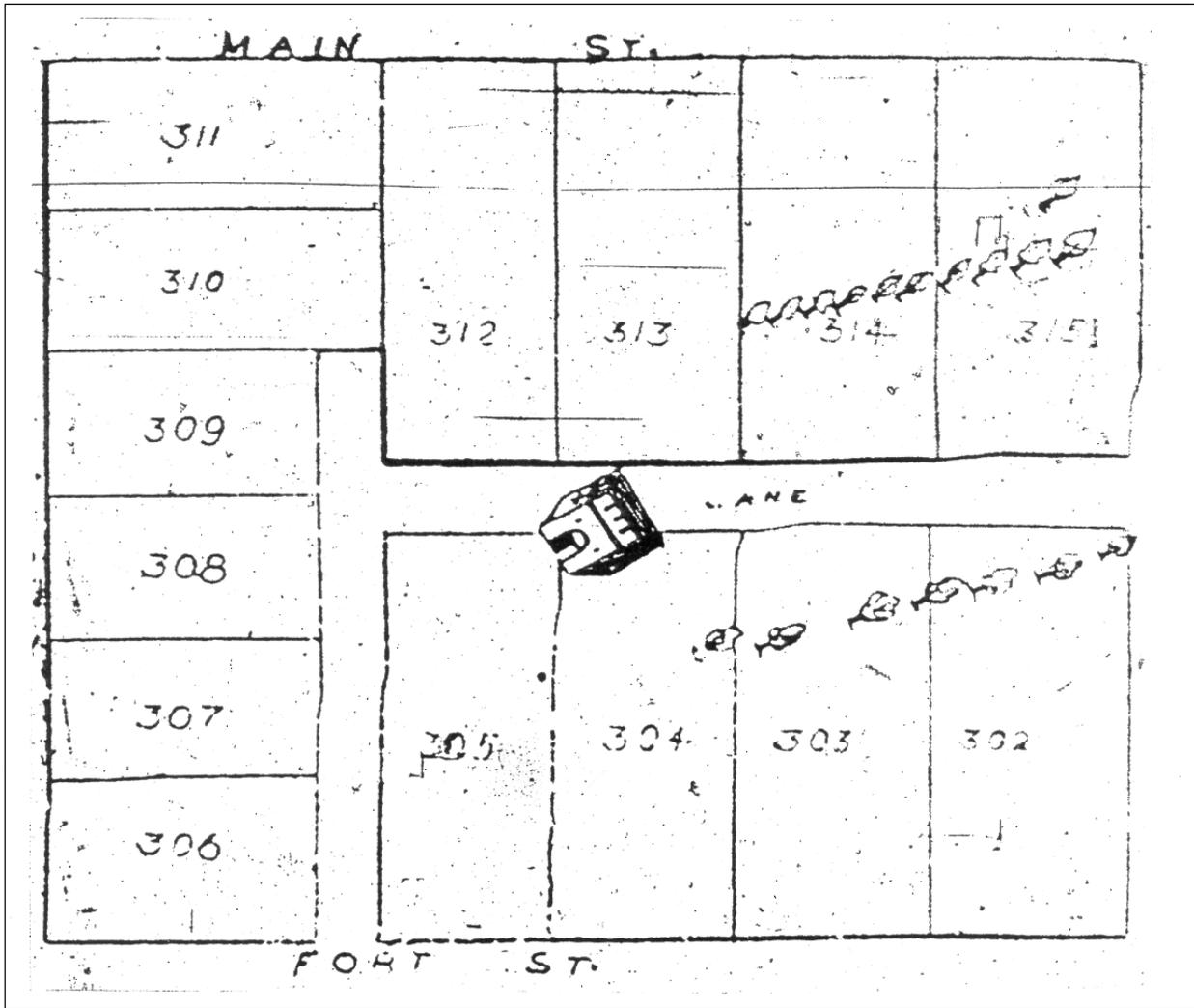
The author would like to acknowledge and thank Mr. Randy Van Vliet for his preliminary research work toward this report.

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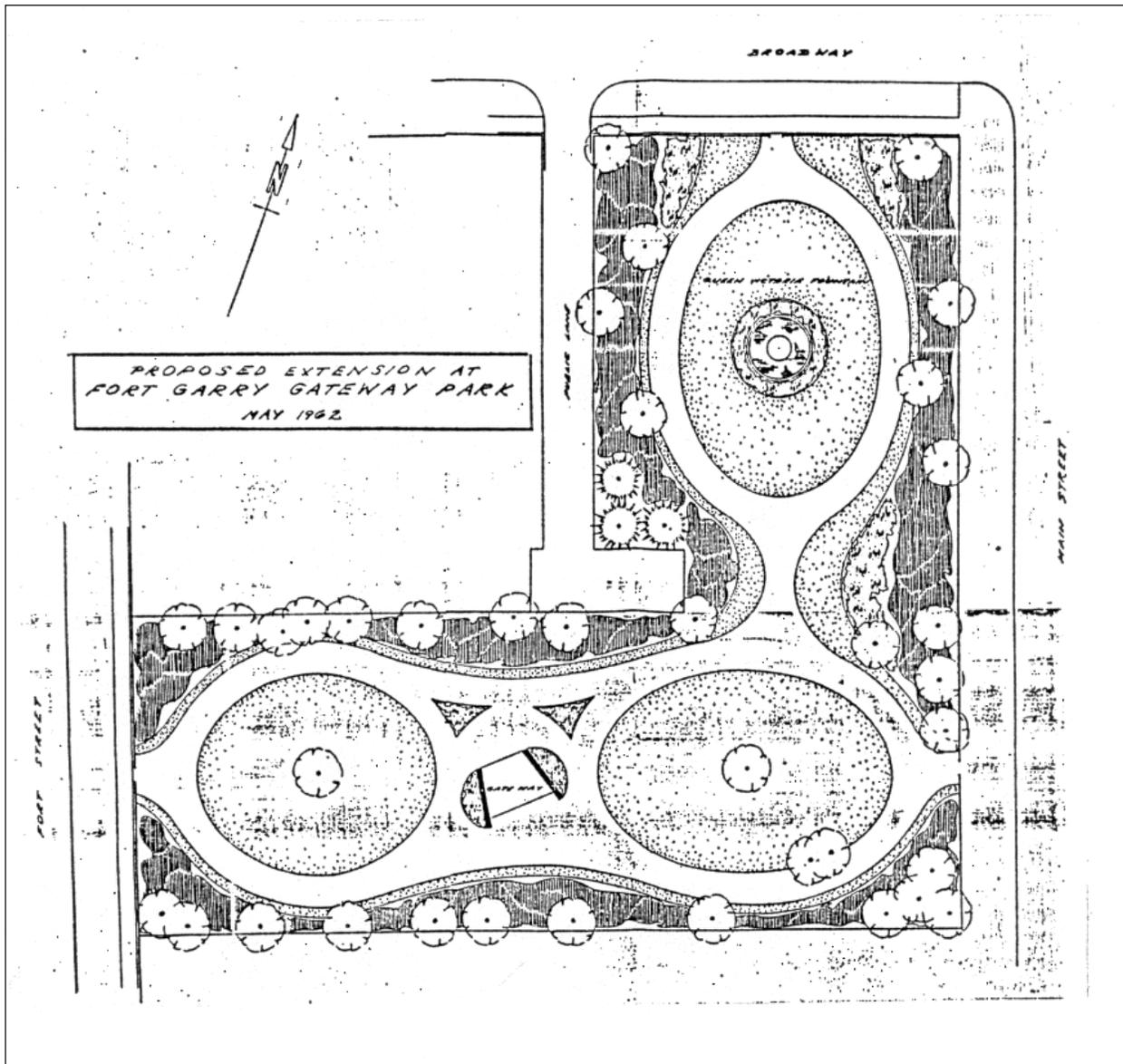
MAP 3 - Plan of Fort Garry, 1836 - 81. The layout of the fort is quite apparent in this plan. (Legislative Library of Manitoba, Manitoba Free Press, 14 January, 1905, p. 15.)

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MAP4 - Park Proposal, Old Fort Garry Gateway, 1888. The initial idea for this park was somewhat more extensive than it ultimately developed. (Legislative Library of Manitoba, Manitoba Sun, 5 May, 1888, p. 4.)

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MAP 6 - A 1962 proposal by the City of Winnipeg's Parks and Recreation Department for the extension of Fort Garry Gateway Park, to the filling station site at SW - Broadway and Main. The proposed extension would have accommodated the Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain (1897) displaced by the City Hall demolition. Not proceeded with. (Parks and Recreation, City of Winnipeg)

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PLATE 1 - Nicholas Garry (1782? - 1856). The first Fort Garry and its successor were named in honour of this governor of the Red River Settlement. ([Manitoba Archives](#))

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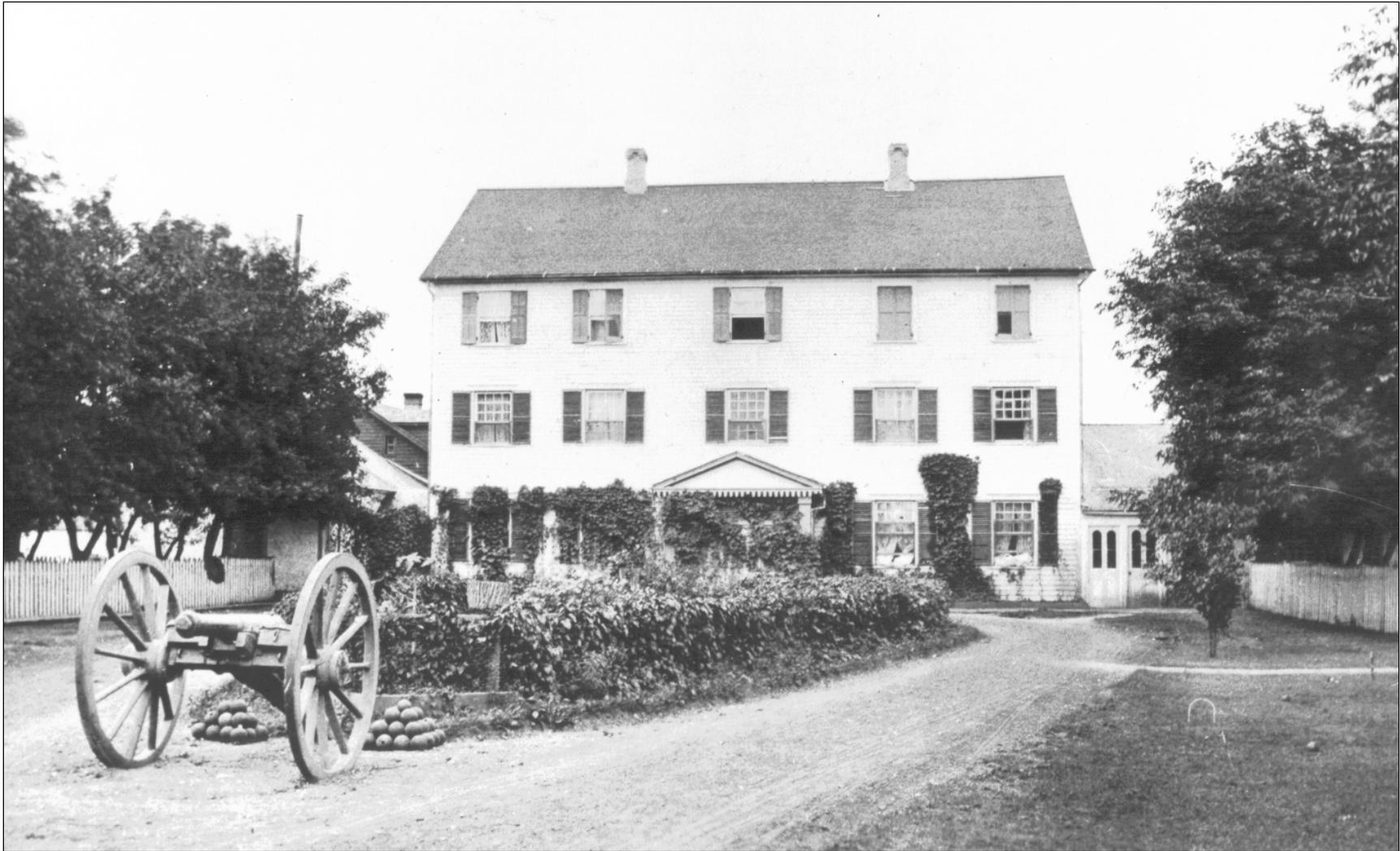


PLATE 2 - Government House, at 100 Main Street, Winnipeg, ca. 1878. Demolished. This building was built as a two storey structure in the 1850's, and was enlarged by the Dominion Government in 1873. ([Manitoba Archives](#))

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PLATE 3 - Upper Fort Garry, Main Street South, Winnipeg, Manitoba, ca. 1874. Demolished. This was the fort, viewed from the south, on the eve of the removal of its walls. ([Manitoba Archives](#))

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PLATE 4 - Upper Fort Garry, Main Street South, Winnipeg, Manitoba, ca. 1880 - 81. Demolished. A wooden fence replaced the stone walls. Viewed from the south, the shabby appearance of the complex is evident. ([Manitoba Archives](#))

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PLATE 5 - Governor's Gateway, Upper Fort Garry, Main Street south, Winnipeg, Manitoba, ca. 1875. The regal appearance of the gateway as opposed to its modest surroundings is quite evident. ([Manitoba Archives](#))

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PLATE 6 - Interior, Upper Fort Garry, looking north from the south wall. c. 1881. Most of the buildings in this view were sold at the November 1886 auction. The structures were more dilapidated by that time. (Manitoba Archives)

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PLATE 7 - Governor's Gateway, Upper Fort Garry, Main Street South, Winnipeg, Manitoba. c. 1885 - 86. By this time, the old Government House in the background had been abandoned for a few years. The gateway was beginning to show signs of structural failure, and the wooden wall had all but disappeared.

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PLATE 8 - Governor's Gateway, Upper Fort Garry, Main Street South, Winnipeg, Manitoba. c. March - April 1888. Demolition work had already commenced when this view was made. The forlorn atmosphere is apparent, and one can see the wooden gates formerly found in the archway, stored to the right of the gateway. (Manitoba Archives)

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PLATE 9 - Old Fort Garry Gateway, Main Street South, Winnipeg, Manitoba c. 1890 - 95. By the early 1890's the gateway stood alone on its site, and appears to have been in deteriorating condition. ([Manitoba Archives](#))

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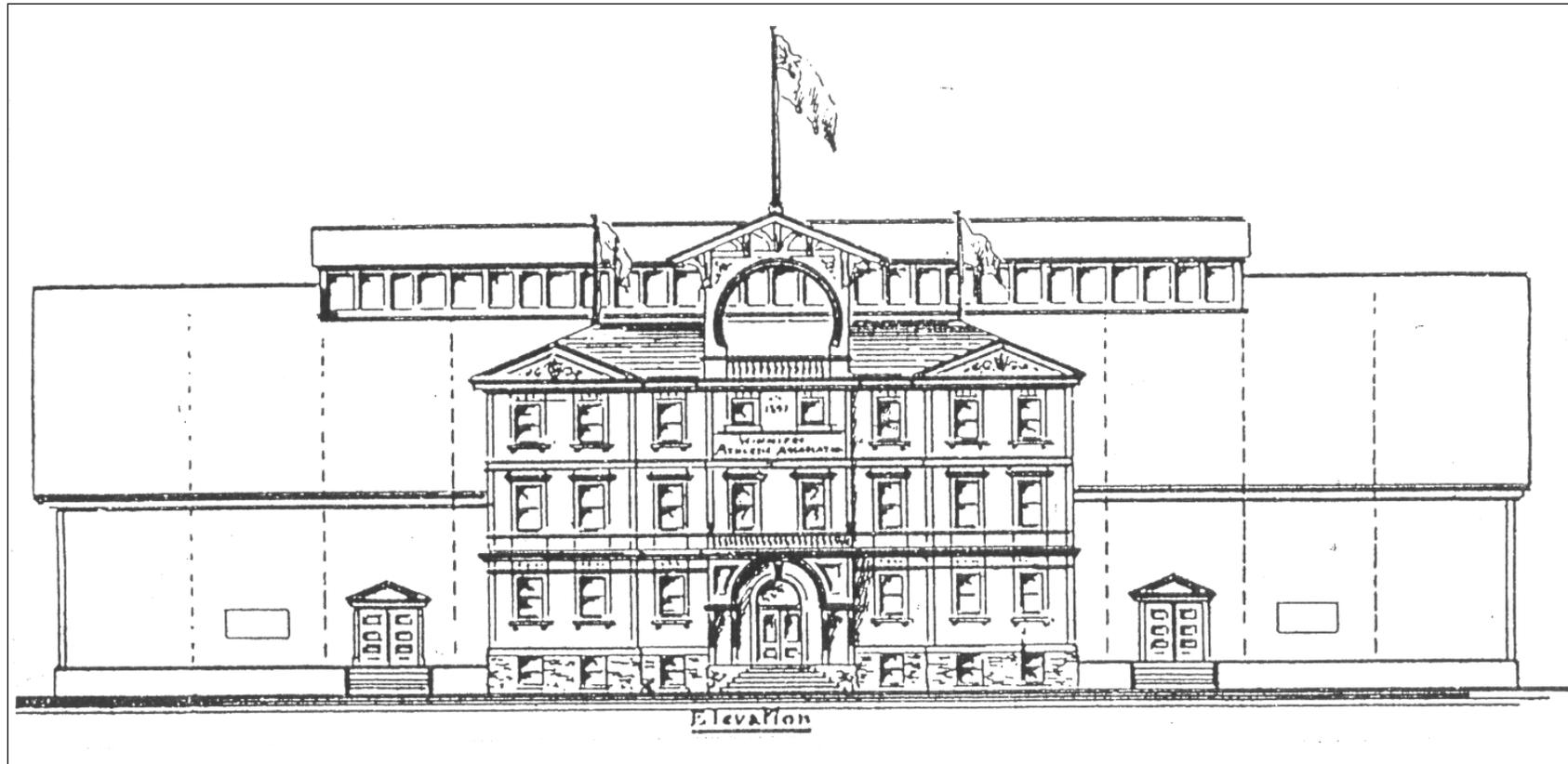


PLATE 10- Proposed Clubhouse, Winnipeg Athletic Association, Fort Street South, 1897. Not built. This would have displaced the gateway had the project gone ahead. (Legislative Library of Manitoba, Manitoba Free Press, 14 June, 1897. p. 6.)

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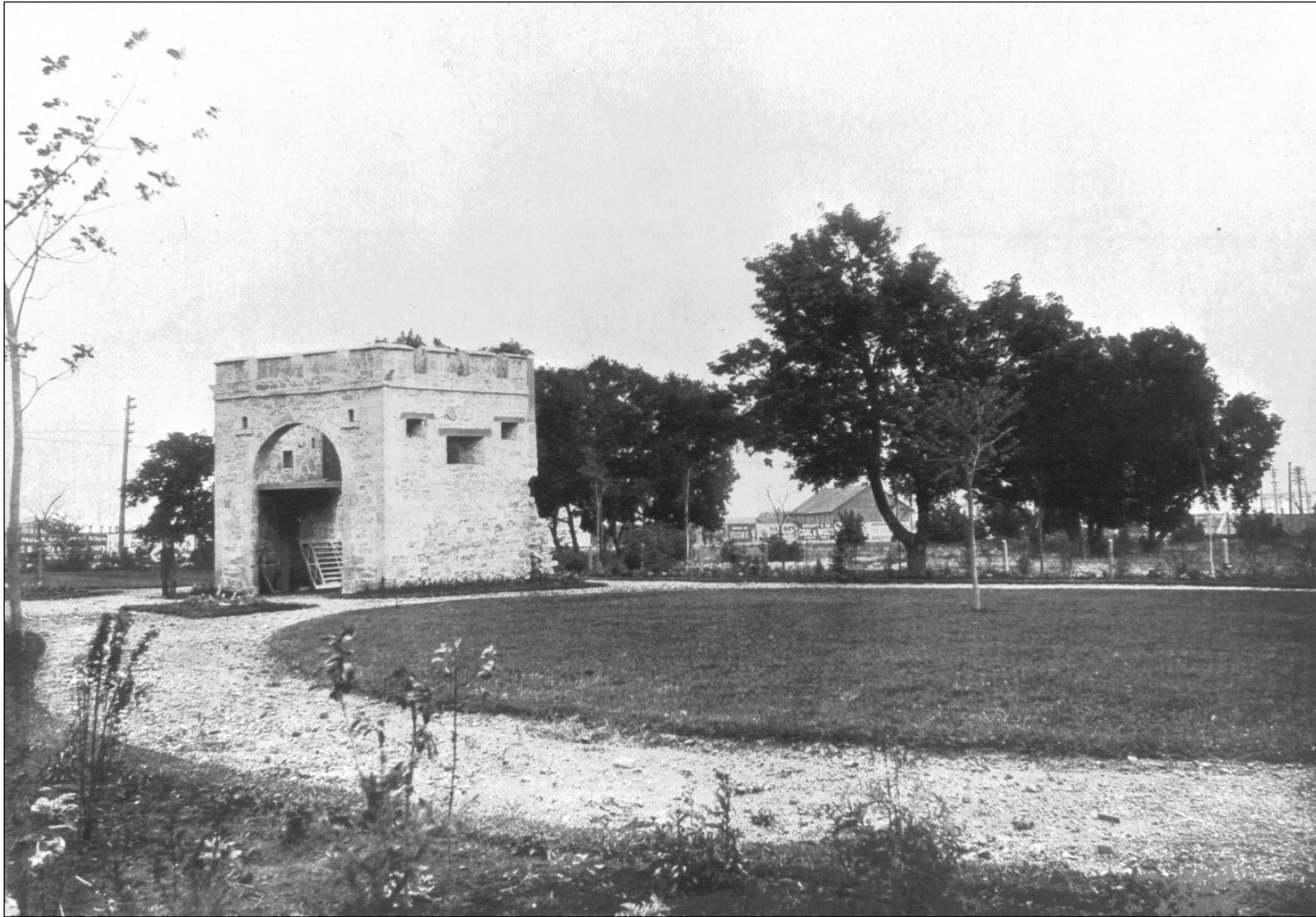


PLATE 11- Fort Garry Gateway Park, Main Street South, Winnipeg, Manitoba, c. 1902. By this time, the condition of the structure had been stabilized by repairs, and the early form of landscaping is here visible. ([Manitoba Archives](#))

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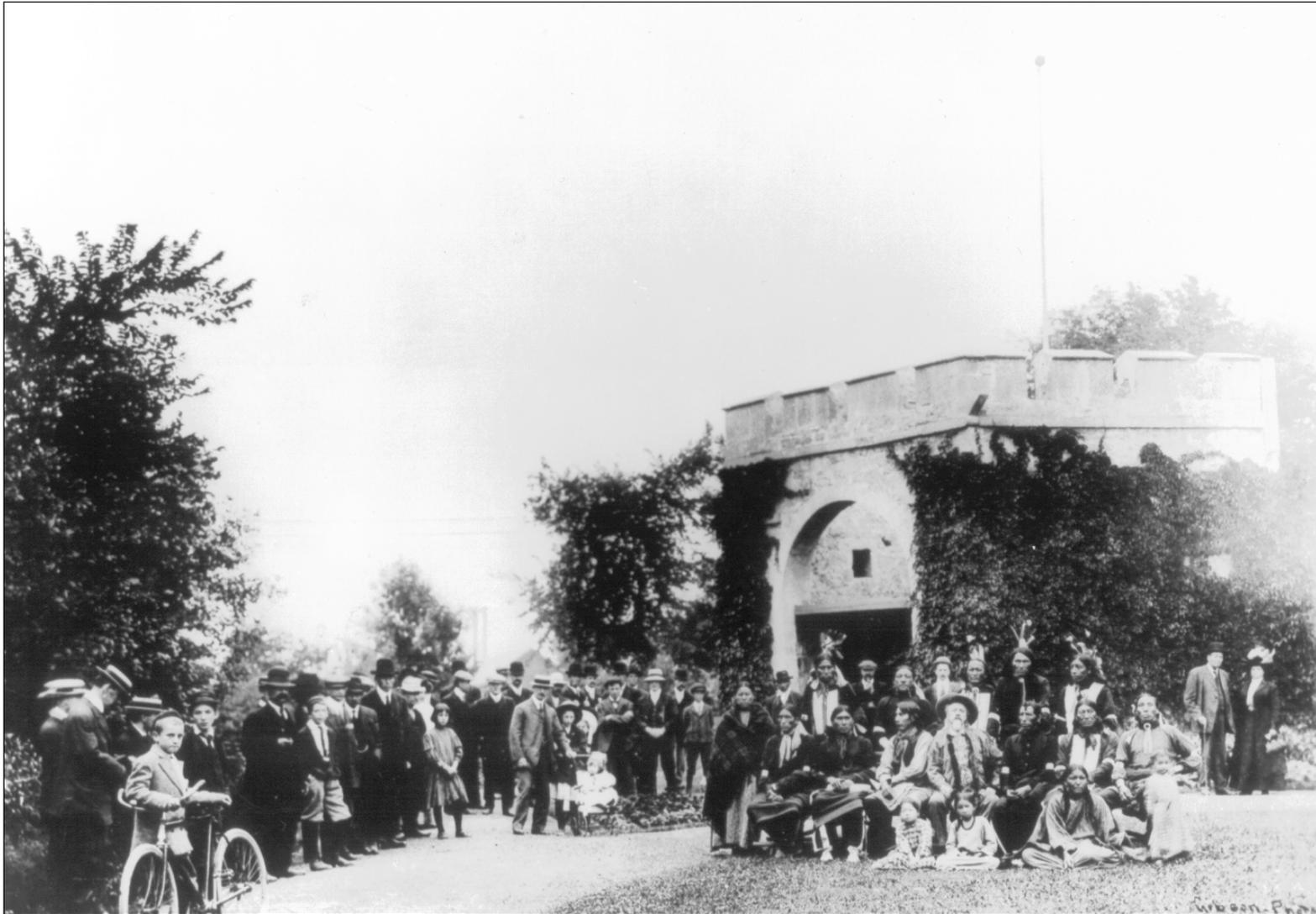


PLATE 12- Buffalo Bill and his Indians at Old Fort Garry Gateway, 22 August 1910. The attractiveness of the structure for tourists of all types is demonstrated in this view. (Manitoba Archives)

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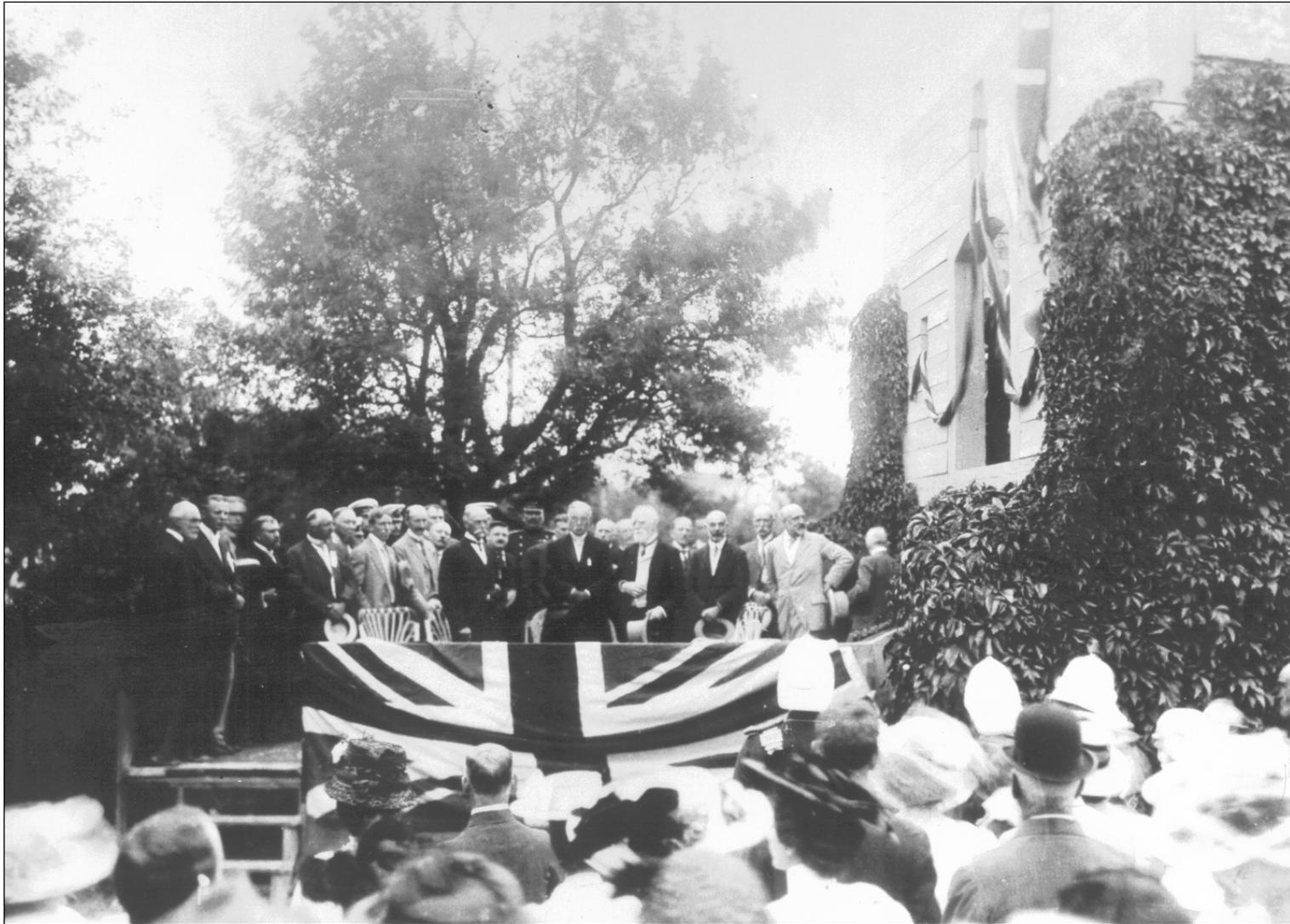


PLATE 13- Canadian Club of Winnipeg Plaque Ceremony, Old Fort Garry Gateway, 27 August 1909. Visible on the platform (centre) were: Lieutenant Governor D. H. McMillan; George F. Galt, and Lord Strathcona (Donald A. Smith). (Manitoba Archives)

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PLATE 14- Historic Sites and Monuments Board Plaque Ceremony, Old Fort Garry Gateway, 14 May 1926. (Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987, 363 - F - 134.)

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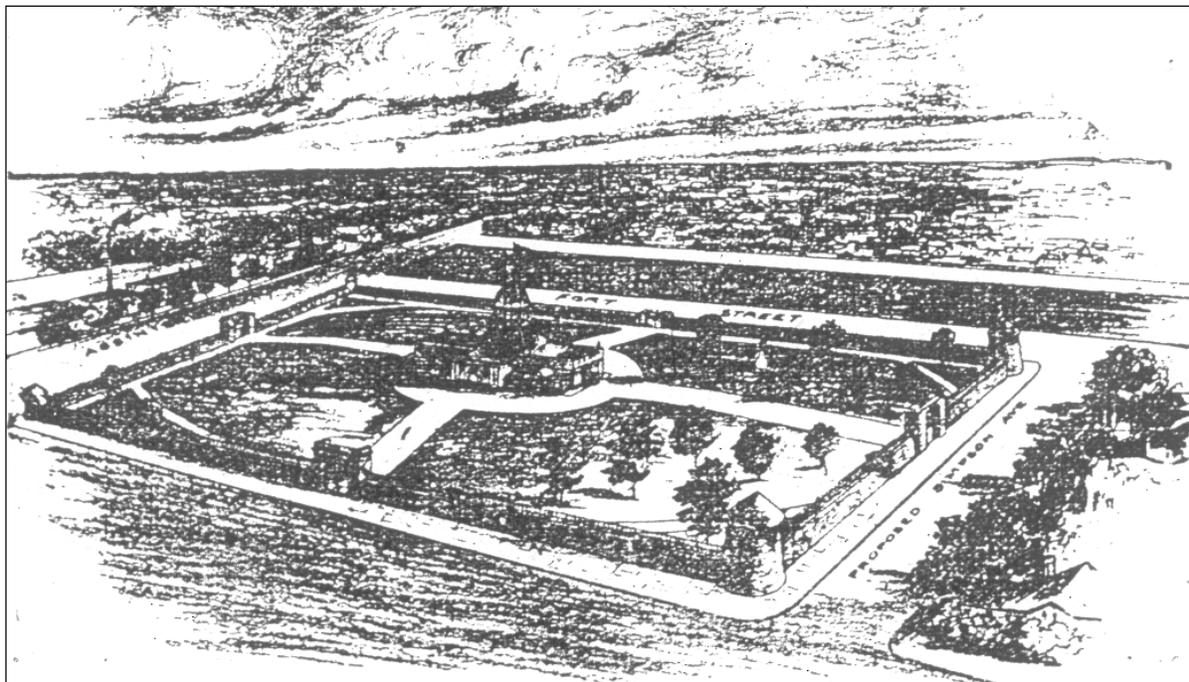


PLATE 15- Proposed Fort Garry Park, Main Street South, Winnipeg, Manitoba, October, 1912.
(Legislative Library of Manitoba, Winnipeg Telegram, 5 October, 1912, p. 10.)

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PLATE 16- Fort Garry Athletic Park, Main Street South, from the roof of the Fort Garry Hotel c. 1930. (Manitoba Archives)

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PLATE 17- Fort Garry Gateway Park, Main Street South, looking east from the Fort Garry Hotel, c. 1922. The environs of the park are visible here. (Western Canada Pictorial Index, 232 - 7445.)

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PLATE 18- Construction, Grain Exchange Curling Rink (left) and Imperial Oil Building (right), 100 Main Street, October 1948. After 1849, the old gateway as surrounded by buildings. (Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987/363 - F - 131.)

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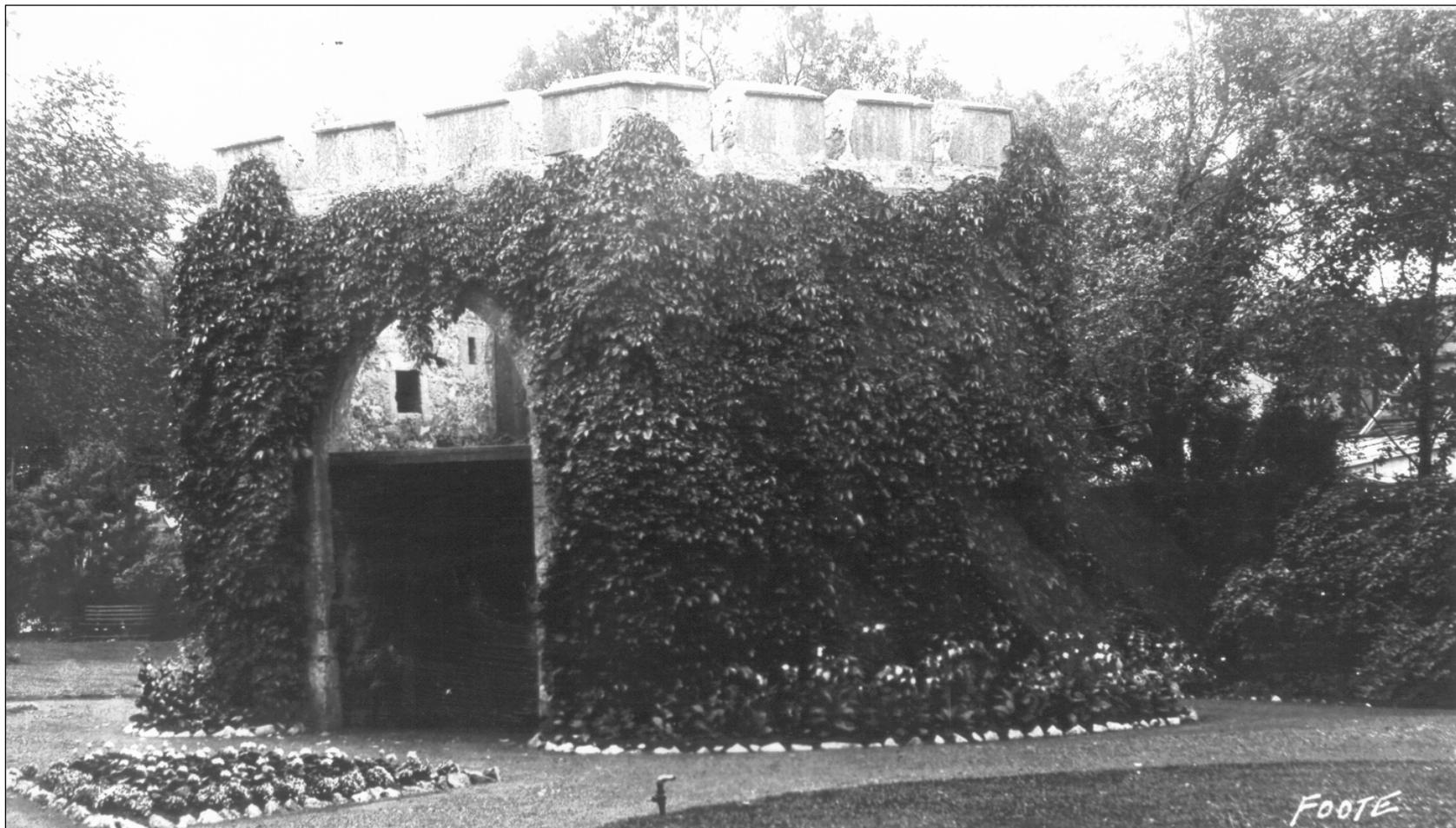


PLATE 19- Fort Garry Gateway, Main Street South, Winnipeg, Manitoba, c. 1920's. (Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987/363 - F - 134.)

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PLATE 20- Fort Garry Gateway and Hotel, c. 1930. (Manitoba Archives.)

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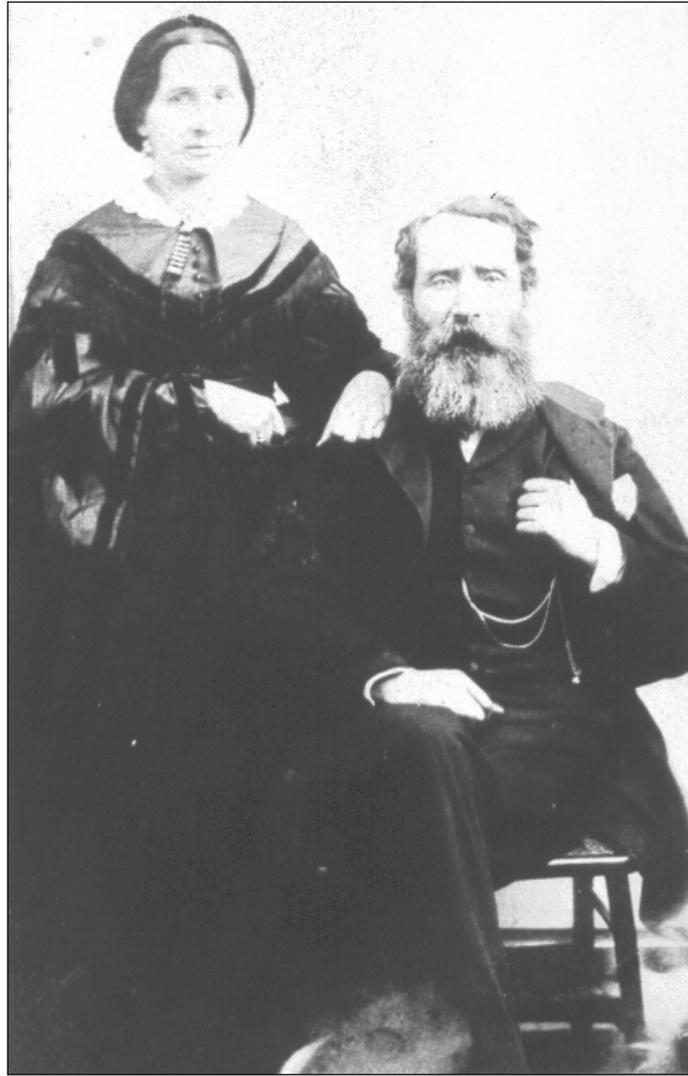


PLATE 21- Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Hunter Murray, c. 1860s. (Manitoba Archives.)

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PLATE 22- “Paying the Rent,” Old Fort Garry Gateway, May 1939. Part of the Hudson’s Bay Company Charter of 1670 states that a ‘rental payment’ for the occupancy of Rupert’s Land shall be paid to the reigning monarch if that monarch should ever visit the territory. This was to consist of beaver skins and elk heads. The first reigning monarch to visit Winnipeg was King George VI (left of table) with his wife, Queen Elizabeth (below the elk head to the right), and the payment was accepted. The ‘rent’ has also subsequently been paid to their daughter, Queen Elizabeth II. (*Hudson’s Bay Archives*, 1982/23-3.)