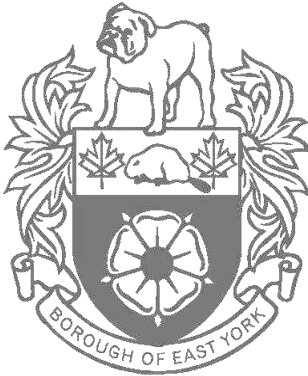


East York Tidbits

Stories About East York Presented by the East York Historical Society

DOMINION DAY CELEBRATION, AN EAST YORK FIXTURE



If you ask long time East Yorkers to name one event that they associate with their community, it would be no surprise that a frequent response would be the Dominion Day celebrations held on July 1, to mark our nation's birthday. No account of East York would be complete without a description of East York's Dominion Day celebration. To this day the celebration, now called Canada Day, remains a significant event, cementing the people that make up the community of East York.

Most June issues of the old *East Yorker* newsletter devoted a page to outlining the upcoming Dominion Day events. The events remained generally unchanged during the 1960s and most still take place today. The daylong celebration starts with a parade featuring floats, firetrucks, girl guides, boy scouts and veterans. Those who witnessed or perhaps participated in the parades in the 1960s may recall the astonishing number of veterans marching in what appeared to be the thousands. Once in a while a veteran in the parade, in the fashion of those who are proud yet modest in their demeanour, would give onlookers a wink, a smile, or a quick nod in appreciation of the clapping and waving.

Local kids with decorated bicycles would join the parade. Prizes were given to the best decorated bicycles. The parade route changed yearly, but it usually started or ended at Cedarvale Park (now Stan Wadlow Park), Memorial Park or Dieppe Park.

After the parade, the afternoon would include stage shows of folk dancing, concert bands and precisionettes. A swim meet for kids would be held at the Kiwanis Pool. The track meet at East York Collegiate stadium was a popular afternoon event. Local athletes like Bruce Kidd and Bill Crothers would compete against runners from the USA and Britain.

The evening included dancing "under the stars" at the Dominion Store (now Shopper's Drug Mart) parking lot at Woodbine Avenue and O'Connor Drive with celebrated square dance caller Margaret Hough. In addition to square dancing, the 1969 *East Yorker* mentions that "modern" dancing would be available at Cedarvale Park. The June 1970 issue of the *East Yorker* went a bold step further than "modern" dancing, as it announced that a "Rock Concert" was to take place in the valley.

A “mammoth fireworks display” at Cedarvale Park capped off every Dominion Day, as it still does today. The daylong July 1 celebration continues to be an integral part of the community’s fabric. The celebration maintains its small town feel: proud, upright folks gathering to celebrate their nation's birthday.

**Prepared by John Michailidis
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The East York Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and sharing information about East York’s rich past. The Society meets 5 times a year usually on the last Tuesday in January, March, May, September and November.

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