



History of the house at 70 Oriole Road

THE ARCHITECT:

(William Rufus Gregg 1852-1930)

70 Oriole Road was designed and built in 1909 by architect, William Rufus Gregg. Gregg was born in Bellville, Ontario and moved from Belleville to Toronto in 1872. Following a period articling for the firm Smith and Gemmell (1872 to 1875), he then relocated to Montreal, Chicago and finally Boston before returning to Toronto in 1882. After returning to the city Gregg then established his own firm which he ran for approximately 13 years before forming a partnership with his brother Alfred H Gregg. The arrangement between the two lasted until 1904 at which time the partnership dissolved and Gregg went into business with A Frank Wickson with whom he collaborated until his retirement circa 1914. After retirement Gregg moved to Oakville where he passed away in 1930.

Wickson & Gregg designed at least three houses on Oriole Road. In 1905 a building permit was issued to Edward Musgrave at 30 Oriole Road, to be designed by W R Gregg. Two years later Gregg was asked to design another house on the street for John F Austin located at 65 Oriole Road. Frank Wickson also designed a house on the street in 1908 for James Grand at number 28. Most importantly, in 1907 a building permit was issued

to Mrs A. Hewett for a 2-storey house to be designed by W R Gregg and built by Toronto builder J W Ham. This house which became 70 Oriole Road was built circa 1909.

THE RESIDENTS

The first residents of 70 Oriole Road were a publisher, Alfred Ernest Hewitt, and his family. The mainstay of Hewitt's publishing firm was publication of the Canada Yearbook. He and his family lived at 70 Oriole Road from the time of its construction until sometime shortly before his Alfred's death in 1921. The house was then sold to Arthur W Scripture, who was a partner with Wood Gundy, the prestigious financial management firm. Next Douglas Ridout, member of the York pioneer family, the Ridouts and President of Ridout Strickland Co, Insurance and Investment Brokers. The most notable of those who lived at 70 Oriole Road, however, was Desmond Morton, noted academic historian, lawyer, professor at Osgoode Law School, and staunch advocate of Canadian nationalism. He and his family lived in the house from the early 1970's to the mid-1980's.