

96 NIAGARA BOULEVARD

Written by Eugene Montillon son of George & Abbie.

In the spring of 1900 we moved from West Avenue in Buffalo and from the Cottage on the Garrison Road to 96 Niagara Boulevard in the then Village of Bridgeburg.

around 1930's
I think
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Years ago the Village of Bridgeburg was annexed by the Village of Erie. There are still two post offices, Fort Erie South, the Old Fort Erie, and Fort Erie North previously Bridgeburg.

Early in 1900 father bought this property, about one mile down river from the dock in Fort Erie of the Buffalo-Fort Erie Ferries.

96 Niagara Boulevard was a property of about 3 acres, 180 foot frontage, and 500 to 600 feet deep. A large brick frame house stood about 100 feet back from the road midway in the width of the property. Behind the house was a barn. There were several large old trees and huge lilac bushes in front of the house. To the east across the Niagara River, a half mile away was, still is, the U.S.A. and the City of Buffalo. Otherwise, the property was open fields. The rear of the property was bounded by a single track line of the Grand Trunk Railroad, a freight line from the Bridgeburg Railroad yards to the ferry dock in Fort Erie. Beyond, to the west was farm land.

This section of Niagara Boulevard was known as Quality Row. For several hundred feet southerly to the Bowen Road the land was vacant. To the north along Niagara Boulevard was several other large properties; next to us, the Walter Curtis family, also Americans. Mr. Curtis owned the farm land to the west of our property. Then came the Grahams, then the Miss Hersheys, two middle aged maiden ladies. Jack Mann, a nephew lived with his aunts.

or Binner
Next to the Hersheys were Mr. and Mrs. Binner. The Binnars lived more or less unto themselves and did not participate in our social activities. Next north was a property, 80 Niagara Boulevard, which changed ownership several times and in later years was the residence of my sister and her husband, Jack FitzGibbon. Then came the Charles Lewis family, then the Henry Lewis family. These families were cousins. Quality Road ended with a property of large frontage occupied by the Warren family. Quality Row extended for about a quarter of a mile along Niagara Boulevard.

The Niagara Boulevard home was my father's opportunity to indulge his gardening and landscape development hobby. Also he saw the fruits of his labor. He lived on this property for forty years.

At the side and rear of the house father planted several sugar maples. They were not more than two to three inch caliper when planted. During father's lifetime, they grew to be large trees; one of them in particular was very large, the trunk was almost three feet in diameter. The tree had a spread of at least forty feet.

The entire property was fenced. Father planted the boundaries with tall shrubs and small trees next to the fence, material of medium height and low growing plants in front with packets of barberious material such as peonies and phlox. The entire composition was carvelinian in silhouette and ground line.

Liberty Hyde Bailey, Professor of Horticulture, Cornell University, later first Dean of the New York State College of Agriculture at Cornell University was father's inspiration. Father owned and read all of Professor Bailey's books on landscape gardening.

At the south side of the barn father located the vegetable garden. At the north side he built a chicken coop and chicken yard. Back of the barn in an area of at least a half acre, father planted an orchard and a vineyard. There were apple, peach and plum trees. The grapes were Concord and Niagara.

Fenced, at the far rear of the property, was the pasture for our horse.

The home on Niagara Boulevard was a large part of father's life. During the spring, summer and autumn father got up at five or six o'clock in the morning, worked in the garden for an hour or more, had breakfast, went to Buffalo and was at his office at nine o'clock or soon after. I think that father thoroughly enjoyed the manner of living which he had achieved.