

Education Sub Committee Minutes – November 5, 2018

Attendance: H.Garrett, R.Armistead, H.Elmslie, J.Manness, M.Tovey and K.Gowan.

The committee met on November 1st to review and provide comments for the attached interpretive signage. The projects have funding but R.Armistead would like them to be reviewed for historical inaccuracies.

The committee also discussed reprinting and reinstalling lost signs in Harris Park, replace Gibbons Park plaque on the Bathhouse to John Gibbons Counsel (disabled WWI veteran) and to provide funding for a sign for the Graham Arboretum in Springbank Park.

Krista is going to provide further information about the cost of the above noted signage to allow LACH to determine if all three can be funded or just one or two.

Possible Motions:

MOTION – The Education Sub Committee recommends LACH reviews the information for Bishop Hellmuth Boy's College, Richmond Village and Saunders Pond for historical inaccuracies, and to provide support for the signage. Any comments can be forwarded Robin Armistead, Manager of Culture.

MOTION – The Education Sub Committee recommends LACH provide \$ _____ to each of the signs to help with funding.

Hellmuth Boys College

Hellmuth Boys College was a private school on the block bounded by Wellington, Waterloo, Grosvenor, and St. James. It was founded by Isaac Hellmuth, who would later found Western University. Hellmuth Boys College was intended as a feeder school for Huron College.

Originally named The London Collegiate Institute when it opened on September 1, 1865, it was not merely the first school called a "Collegiate Institute", it may well have been the first school organized around Egerton Ryerson's ideas of what such a Collegiate Institute should be like. The London Collegiate Institute was, in effect, a private school version of what would, in 1871, be mandated as the model for public secondary education throughout the province of Ontario. Ironically, the advent of public education in the Province signaled the death knell for Hellmuth Boys College.

The first (and most noted) pupil was Judge Talbot Macbeth. Macbeth remembers as a young boy attending the laying of the corner stone for Hellmuth Boys College "in a field of clover where the only building was a small cottage," on the 17th of October, 1864. Talbot Macbeth eagerly awaited the opening of the school so that he could enroll, and was the first pupil to register. The school was to be ready to receive pupils by September 1st, 1865. On Talbot's first day, he was apparently so anxious to start at the College that he arrived "with his trunk many hours ahead of the next boy to enter". The trunk would have been necessary because the College was a boarding school, initially accommodating 150 students.

The formal opening, in the autumn of 1865, was attended by "ladies and gentlemen to the number of about one hundred and fifty", who witnessed "a few pleasing experiments together with revolving views, and interesting objects by means of the magic lantern."

Initially, the boys were mostly from Canada, but by 1870, there were a "large number" from the United States. By all appearances, the Hellmuth College of 1870 was thriving.

In 1871, however, the *Common Schools Act* was declared, creating free public education in Ontario. As a private school in a new era where free education would become the norm, the days of the school as a Boys' College were numbered. By 1875, a mortgage for \$12,000 was taken out, increased to \$22,000 by 1877. Hellmuth tried unsuccessfully to persuade the province to purchase the building and turn it into a Normal School (or teachers college).

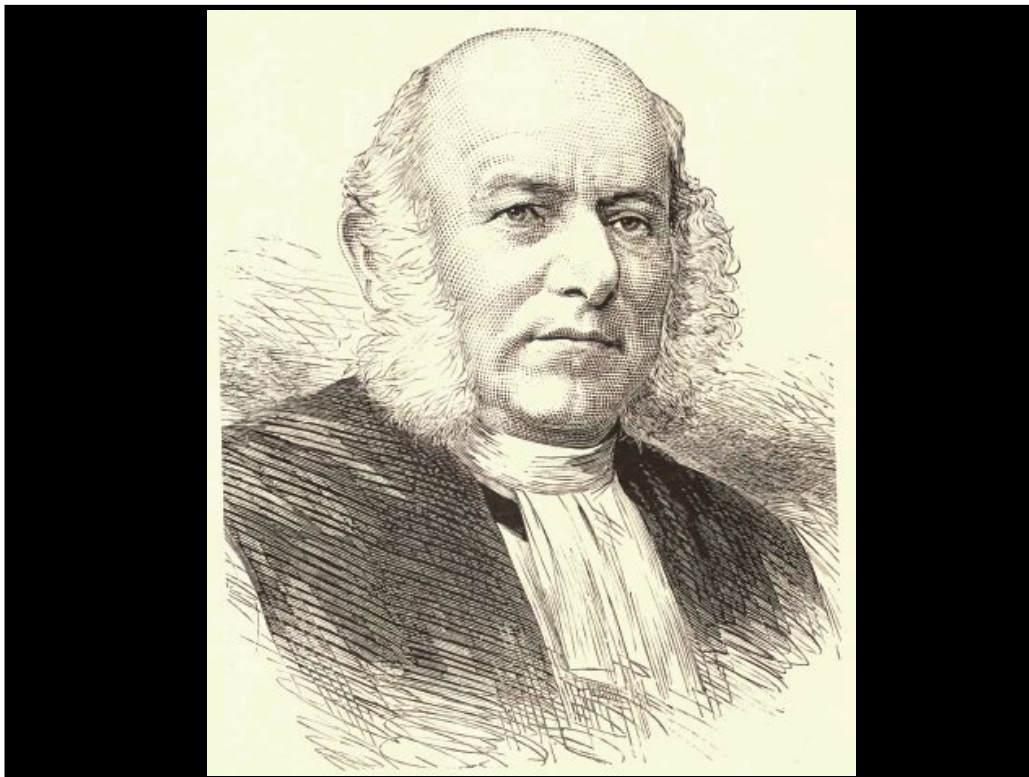
A new use was found for the school as the first home of Western University, which was incorporated in 1878. Hellmuth pledged \$10,000 of his own money towards the new University. However, in 1883, Hellmuth found a new post and moved back to England. Without its energetic founder and fundraiser, the fledgling University ran into trouble. The Faculty of Arts closed in 1885, and the building fell into disrepair. Western University moved to the St. George Street campus of Huron College until 1925, where it would eventually thrive.

Hellmuth Boys' College Heritage Interpretive Sign

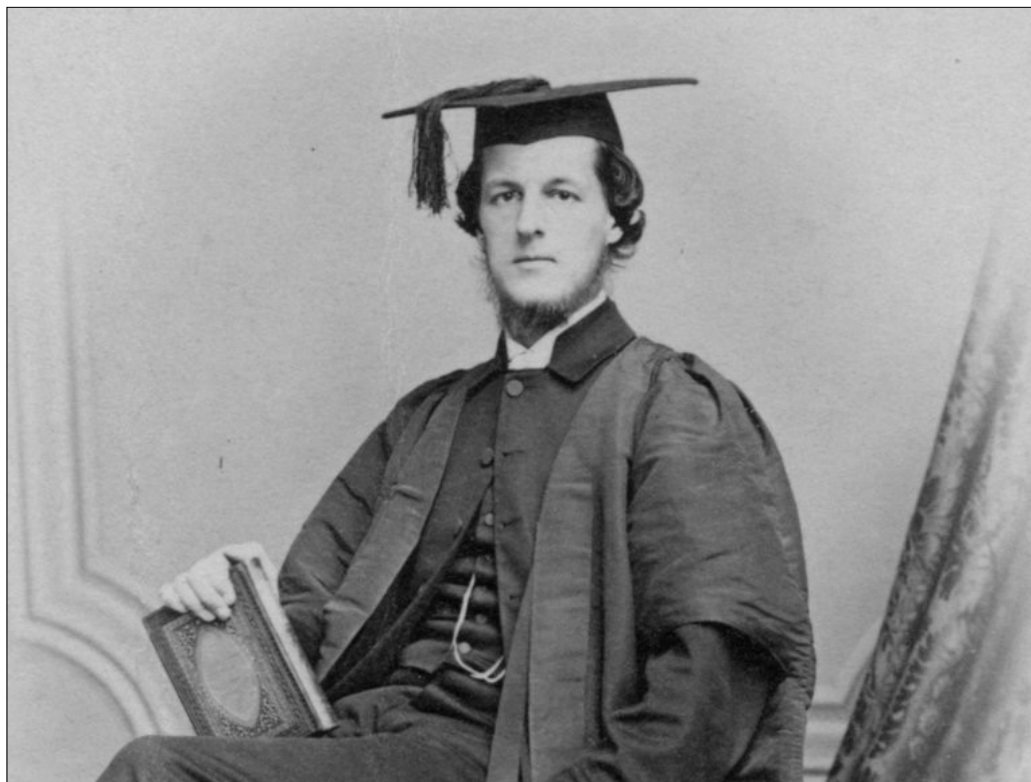
Illustrations with captions



Hellmuth Boys College in 1864. Situated on 10 acres (Gwynne-Timothy, 67), the College was a “four-storey white brick building and could accommodate 150 students and staff in more than 70 rooms.” (Turner). Courtesy: Western Archives, Western University, RC41507c.



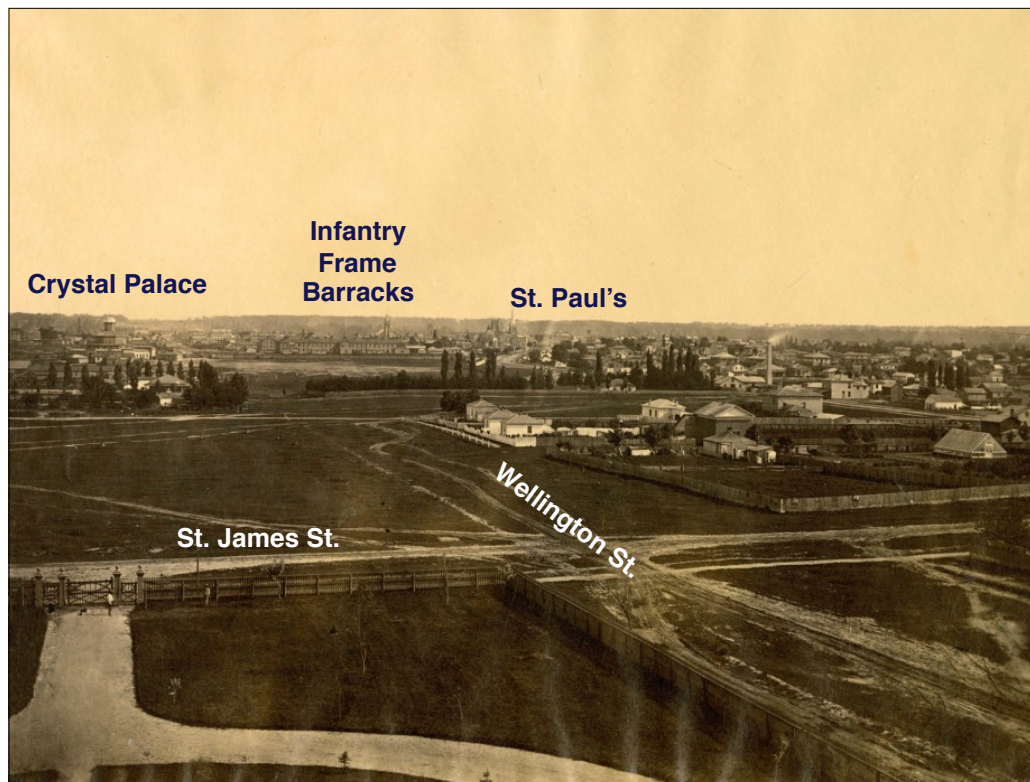
Isaac Hellmuth was the Principal of Huron College, and the founder of the Hellmuth Boys School and Western University. Dr G. J. Low, an early student at Huron College, recalls: "Principal Hellmuth was a remarkable man, his personal magnetism was immense. He had a wonderful pair of dark brown eyes – large, mobile, luminous, penetrating, yet kindly." (Western's First Century, Gwynne-Timothy, 64).



Arthur Sweatman, around the time he was Principal of Hellmuth Boys College. Rev. Sweatman (1834–1909) later served as Archbishop of Toronto, and Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada.



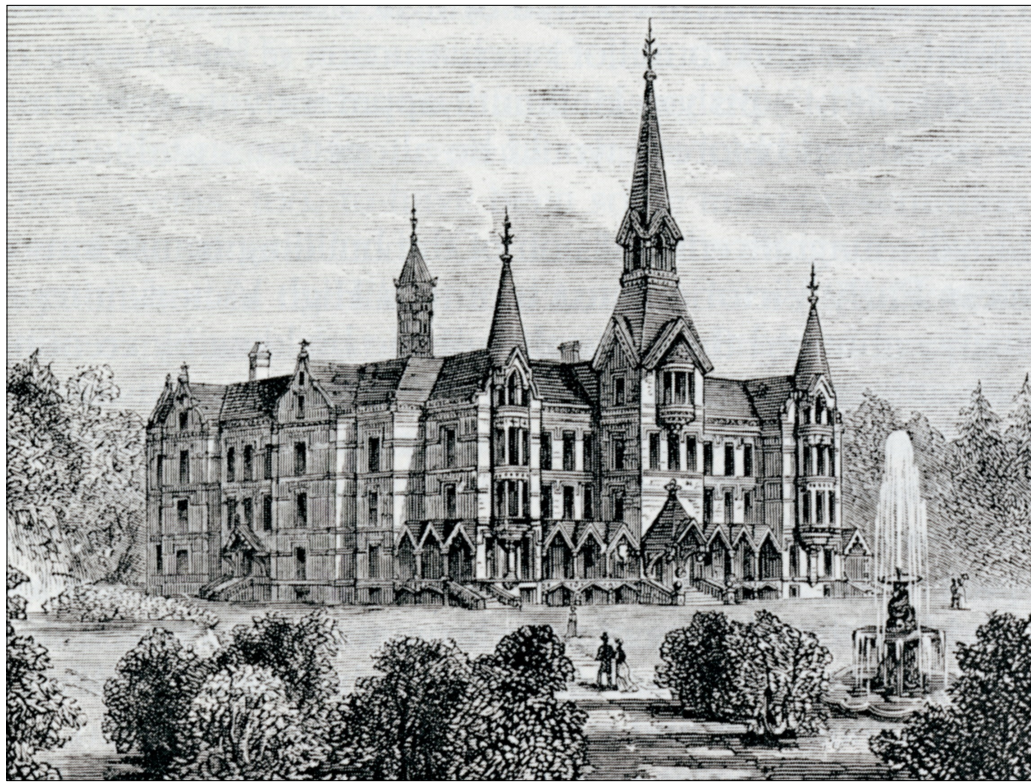
Cricket being played on the lawn of Hellmuth Boys College. Apart from a cricket field, the school's amenities included a gymnasium, a racket court, and a pond for swimming. (Joyce, *At the Close of Play: The Evolution of Cricket in London Ontario, 1836-1902*, 77). Detail. Courtesy: Western Archives, Western University, RC40847.



View from Hellmuth Boys College shortly before the College became the first campus of Western University. In the foreground on the left is the College's circular drive, exiting onto St. James Street. The muddy street that emerges from the bottom right corner is Wellington Street. In the distance on the left is the Crystal Palace Barracks. In the centre distance is the Infantry Barracks of the British Garrison. On the right in the distance can be seen St. Paul's Cathedral. Image: View of Central London including Crystal Palace, Military Barracks (now Victoria Park) from Hellmuth Boys College. Courtesy: Western Archives, Western University, RC 60179.



For a time, St. John the Evangelist Church (built in 1888) and the College (demolished in 1894) were both situated on the block bounded by Wellington, Waterloo, Grosvenor, and St. James. Courtesy: Western Archives, Western University. RC40957.



Hellmuth commissioned noted architect Gordon Lloyd to redesign the facility in a way that would be suitable for a university. A design was duly produced, above. Although funds were raised for the reconstruction, the actual renovations were never carried out. In spite of this, in 1881, Western University held its first classes in Hellmuth Boys College Building as it originally stood, and by 1882 there was a Faculty of Medicine. Illustration: *Illustrated London News*, November 23rd, 1878.



By the 1890s, the tile company that ran a nearby quarry (in what is now Doidge Park), was using the basement for storage. In 1894, the mortgage was foreclosed, the building sold to a contractor, and the building demolished, leaving only the chimney of the heating plant to temporarily stand as a testament to what had once been. Some of the bricks form part of the Parish Hall of St. John's Evangelist Church. The property was subdivided into lots for residences, and the area now forms the core of the Bishop Hellmuth Heritage Conservation District. Courtesy: Western Archives, Western University.