

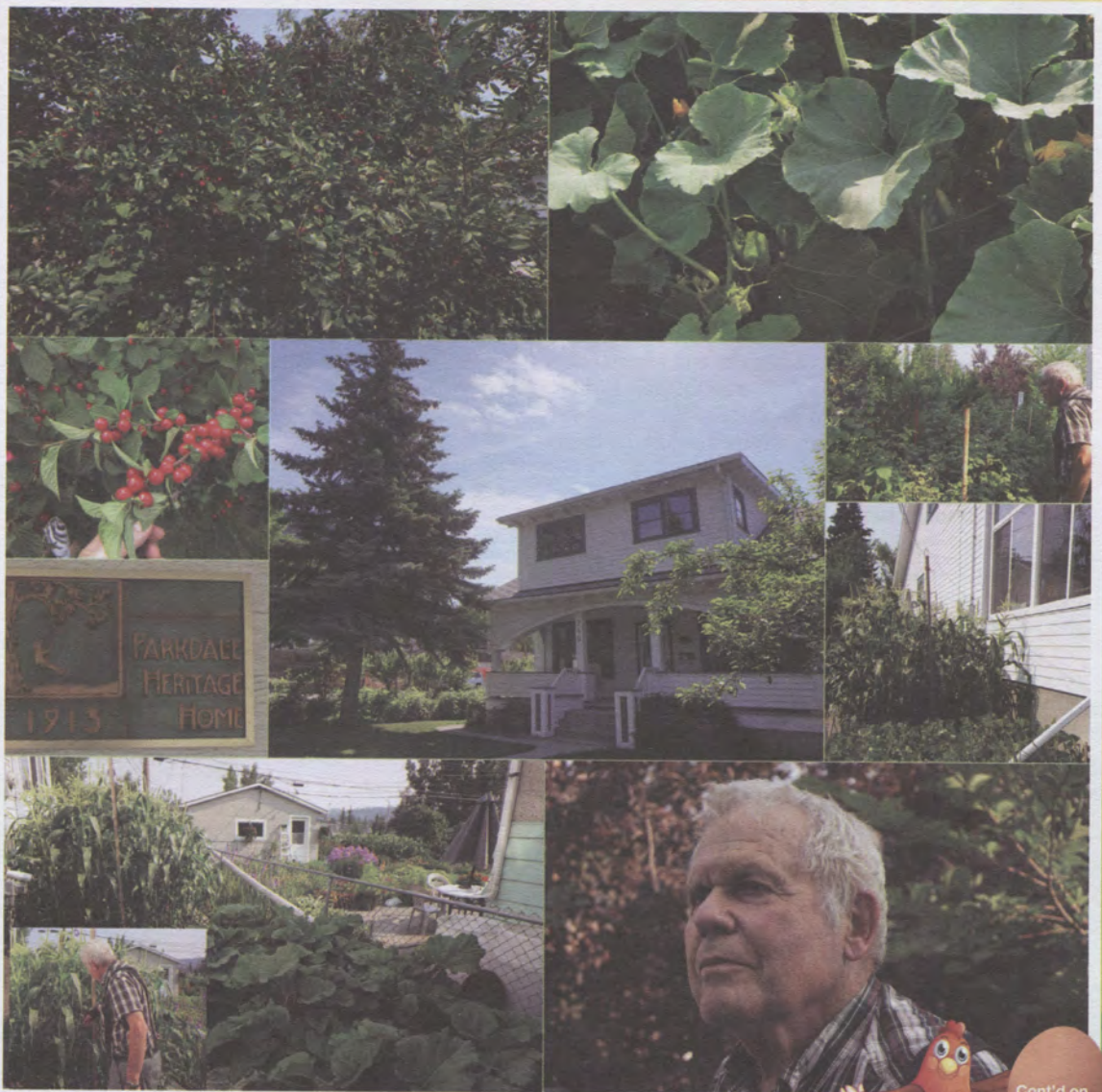
Parkdale Heritage: The Jones' Farm (1972-2018)



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Parkdale Heritage: The Jones' Farm (1972-2018) cont'd

by Maureen Flynn-Burhoe, Parkdale Community Garden volunteer with contributions from Nonavee (Jones) Dale and Sabynthe Jones

Along the lane abutting the Parkdale Community Garden are two of Parkdale's finest examples of urban agriculture where Heber Jones and his longtime neighbour David K. Weisbeck* have been cultivating food with high density plantings for decades on their parallel lots. Over the years, the corner property at 740 35 ST NW, purchased by Heber and Ann Jones in 1972, became known locally as "The Jones Farm", with its handsome, solidly-built two-story house (now) under the shade of a towering blue spruce, a welcoming porch, a white picket fence, surrounded by fruit-laden berry bushes and trees, and a healthy and abundant crop of produce. Working together with their eight children, they were able to produce much of their own food on their micro farm, which surrounded the house on all sides.

On the front porch, beside the front door of 740 35 ST NW is the historical plaque "Parkdale Heritage Home 1913", a reminder that the house built and occupied by Hope Grant, is a Parkdale Century Home, one of the oldest residences in Parkdale. Both Ann and Heber have honoured its historical significance through research and restoration. They are now moving from the old family home. A young couple have bought it and plan to restore it and have it designated as a heritage home.

The house was perfect for the Joneses. It was close to the University of Calgary, so Heber could walk to work. Heber had wanted an "older fixer-upper" and together with their children, he removed paint to restore window and door trimmings, and refinished the original maple floors. Other features, such as the cast iron sink and clawfoot bathtub, hot water radiators, and an imposing massive cabinet with decorative grillwork on the glass doors, were maintained and in use in 2018. The original fireplace had to be replaced but it was rebuilt using the original design based on an early photo of Mrs. and Mr. Grant seated by a roaring fire.

Two of their adult children, Nonnie and Sabynthe, recently shared some fond memories of growing up in this remarkable family. Nonavee said, "My dad was a teacher. When our cousins visited and tried to get out of doing something by saying they didn't know how, he just delightfully responded, "Great!" I will show you how." Even when a friend visited he might get them digging something or learning how to rototiller."

In my last tour of Heber Jones' garden, the chokecherry trees were heavy with fruit and the large, juicy, sun-warmed raspberries were deliciously sweet. Heber, who is a natural teacher, explained how they made chokecherry syrup for pancakes, crabapple jelly, and raspberry freezer jams and he shared some final gardening tips. He described how he prevented blackberries from beginning to grow in a midwinter chinook warm period, by covering them with heavy mulch. He said that the honeysuckle berries would only give fruit if there were several varieties in the garden. He demonstrated how and where to cut back on the old wood of raspberry plants leaving the fresh green shoots for next year's harvest. Raspberries were even growing in the shade of the blue spruce planted by Colin when he was in Grade 2. Heber's winter onions stood in straight rows along the fence. He rotated crops like potatoes and perennials like raspberries regularly. His grandchild-friendly strawberry cages with lids were just the right height to deter squirrels, notorious for their long reach. His carrots were also protected in four-sided plastic cage to prevent carrot flies from laying their eggs. His rhubarb stalks were still red in August.

Among the last items to be packed away as they prepare to leave, are family photos and Heber's well-maintained tools, looking sharp and lined up perfectly sequenced by size along the orderly workshop walls.

Their daughter, Sabynthe, was grateful for her father's inspirational love of gardening. She wrote, "My Dad was tirelessly looking for ways to extend the growing season by starting seeds in the house and planting them outside with various protection like walls of water and planting inside black tires to keep them warm." She remembered "seeds in dirt in wooden or-

ange boxes set to germinate on all the radiators all over the house. They created an earthy smell that meant gardening season was on its way." She has "fond memories of all the kids planting the seeds directly into the soil later in the spring. Of course, it's famous that we kids would spread manure from the trailer all over the garden and boulevard. Remember the year we got 700 pounds of potatoes out of the Boulevard? (They had a cold room in the basement and they converted a grease pit in the garage into a root cellar to hold the abundant produce.) Raspberries will forever be the flavour of home as we would pick them for dessert and go to the corner store for a pint of half and half cream to eat from a cereal bowl. Harvest memories include bringing in all the tomatoes before frost, even the green ones, to ripen on newspapers all over a basement floor. We would snap beans and shell peas in front of the TV, so mom could blanch and freeze them. Last to come in were the carrots. We would wash them outside with the garden hose. SOMETIMES It was so cold by then, my fingers were freezing numb. All the values of home-based food production, gardening, harvesting, canning and freezing, for self-sufficiency, for working together, for nutrition, and for stretching our budget, were entirely lost on me as a child, but are a big part of who I am today, and I cherish it."



Notes

*David K. Weisbeck's step-father owned the four lots; early in the 60's he sold the northern two lots, the 1913 house, and built their present home, where David lived, on the southern two lots. The Jones' bought the 1913 house in 1972. David, who has been called the Community Garden's "guardian angel" by Sandi Loschnig and Marcel Hebert (Loschnig and Hebert 2014) was profiled in a 2016 Parkdale Post article.

740 35 ST NW was part of the 2013 Century Homes initiative and is listed on this interactive map. <http://www.centuryhomes.org/house2012/740-35-street-nw/> <http://www.centuryhomes.org/tourmap/>

See also

Loschnig, Sandi. September 15, 2014. "History of the Parkdale Addition." Parkdale Post. With files from Marcel Hebert. <http://parkdalecommunity.com/history-parkdale-addition>

"Several farmers began homesteading in the Parkdale area during the early 1900's. The house next door (740 35th street NW) to our community garden's guardian angel Dave is the location of one of the original farm houses of this era. This is one of Parkdale's earliest houses, dating from the first half of the 1910s. The first aerial photo from 1924 shows the location (Loschnig and Hebert 2014)."

Flynn-Burhoe, M. October 2016.

"David K. Weisbeck Urban Farmer homestead land". Parkdale Post. p.11.

<http://www.great-news.ca/Newsletters/Calgary/NW/Parkdale/2016/October.pdf>

