

HOMELAND MINUTES



Mary Pickford

The Canadian Roots of America's Sweetheart

Blonde-haired movie star

Mary Pickford (1892–

1979) born at 211

University Avenue in

Toronto where SickKids

Hospital sits today had an

international popularity in

her time that goes well beyond what any movie star today commands. Forget Katherine Hepburn, Marilyn Monroe, Sandra Bullock, Jennifer Aniston and Angelina Jolie. Mary Pickford, America's Sweetheart, outdid them all.

Mary Pickford starred in over 50 movies at a time when movies were first making their way into North America's heartland. She quickly became a household name in Canada and the US. However, by the 1930s when she could no longer play the child and ingénue roles of her youth, even after founding the United Artists Studio with her husband the action hero Douglas Fairbanks Jr. and silent movie star Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford was retired from movies by the ticking of the clock.

In spite of her personal difficulties with aging, with marital difficulties and with the movie industry, when WWII beckoned, Mary Pickford was there to help. In May 1942 she visited DIL, an Ajax Munitions Plant, with American movie star Ralph Bellamy to promote their Victory Bond Campaign.



*Mary Pickford War Funds bungalow opening May 26, 1943
www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca*

In May 1943 she was there for her own cause. The Gerrard Business Men's Association in Toronto and Lions International were prepared to help her raise funds to aid British War Victims. They sold \$1.00 raffle tickets for a bungalow at 90 Glenwood Crescent in Toronto. Mary toured Ontario to aid the cause. Eventually they raised \$250,000.

When her family home on University Avenue was about to be taken down, in respect for her immense international stature, Mary Pickford was offered a few bricks in memoriam. Those few bricks are long gone, but not the bricks of the bungalow Mary Pickford raffled off in support of the war effort.

The permanent proof that the roots of America's Sweetheart were in Canada remain on view at 90 Glenwood Crescent in Toronto. They are testimony that Mary Pickford could ACT when needed—not just act.