CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

i. Sense of Place--Defense of Place: An Overview:

Using the Toronto Island as a case study, this investigation argues that there is a dialectical relationship between sense of place (i.e., strong emotional attachment to a place of personal significance and meaning) and defense of place (i.e., specific political, legal and other actions taken to protect a place that is threatened). That is to say, when a place to which a person or group of people is strongly attached is threatened in some way, the sense of place may lead to and condition the nature of the defense of place; and, when a place is threatened and defended, that defense of place, in turn, conditions and influences the nature of sense of place. It is impossible to fully comprehend individual and collective responses to a threat without understanding the nature of the individual and collective attachment to that which is being threatened. Actions taken in defense of place, therefore, cannot be fully understood without appreciation of the participants' sense of place. Similarly, the very actions and experiences associated with defense of place may, in turn, heighten and/or otherwise influence participants' sense of place. In a situation where defense of place has occurred, therefore, participants' sense of place cannot be fully comprehended without a parallel understanding of their defense of place. It follows from this that in order to properly study a dialectical relationship between sense of place and defense of place,

both the specific nature of the sense of place and the specific nature of the defense of place must be investigated in depth (as in the case study presented here).

Sense of place is a phenomenon of considerable interest and importance to geographers and a phenomenon which may exist in the absence of any severe threat or any defense of place. When defense of place, however, is evident, sense of place is the foundation upon which that defense of place is built. Sense of place, therefore, is given a position of primary importance in this investigation. It is argued that sense of place is a subjective phenomenon and is composed of six inter-related major components, which have been termed: sense of history, sense of identity, sense of community, sense of environment, sense of control and sense of change.

It is also argued that in a dialectical relationship between sense of place and defense of place, the concept of threat occupies a place of central importance as the catalyst to action and a continuing influence. There would be no need to defend a place if there were no threat to change or destroy it. The threat, it is noted, must be perceived by the defenders as a severe one before action is taken. It is further noted that the specific nature of the threat and the context of the threat (e.g., the general political environment, the past experiences and resources of the major participants, and so on) also condition the nature of the response to threat. No argument, therefore, is advanced that sense of place alone conditions the nature of the defense of place--only that it does exert an important, frequently unrecognized, influence.

These relationships are diagrammed in Illustration 1, "Dialectical

Relationship of Sense of Place and Defense of Place". On the left is the box representing Sense of Place and its six major, interrelated components. This may exist in the absence of a severe threat or of any defense of place. But, when a major threat is posed (represented by the box at the top), and is perceived as severe, this threat acts as the precipitating event (represented by the dark, wavy line), as well as a continuing influence. When this happens sense of place leads to and conditions the nature of defense of place. This relationship is represented by the dark arrow leading from the threat line toward the box marked Defense of Place. As the defense of place occurs, it, in turn, conditions the nature of sense of place, which is represented by another dark arrow leading back to the Sense of Place box. In addition, during the course of defense of place, each of the major components affects and is affected by those defensive actions. These relationships are represented by the dotted, two-way arrows.

The study which follows is based on a detailed investigation of the Toronto Island. It argues and presents evidence: that Toronto Islanders have experienced a sense of place composed of six major components; that Toronto Islanders have perceived a series of severe threats to their special place; that Toronto Islanders have mounted a series of defenses of place in response to a series of threats; that Toronto Islanders' sense of place has led to and conditioned the nature of their defense of place; that Toronto Islanders' defense of place has conditioned the nature of their sense of place; and that the specific nature of the threats have conditioned the nature of both sense of place and defense of place.

In line with the aforementioned priority given to sense of place,

this study is organized around the six major components of sense of place, devoting a chapter to each one. Each chapter gives evidence that Toronto Islanders do in fact experience the particular component under consideration; describes and analyzes the nature of the component and how it is expressed on the Island; and, finally, discusses the ways in which each component is engaged in a dialectical relationship with defense of place, by examining appropriate examples drawn from the political history of the Island. The remainder of this chapter introduces sense of place, defense of place and the Toronto Island in greater detail.

ii. Introduction to Sense of Place:

What makes people feel they "belong" in one place and feel "strange" in another? What makes people stay in a particular place, refusing evacuation, in spite of potential danger (e.g., from advancing lava or rising flood waters)? What makes people rebuild houses, villages or cities destroyed by natural hazards that are a constant threat, like floods, earthquakes and volcanoes? What makes people fight tooth and nail over long periods of time--often at great personal cost--against proposals to evict them from their homes or neighbourhoods or land? What makes people experience longing or nostalgia for a former place? What makes people refuse to move in order to enjoy a possibly easier, more affluent life elsewhere? What makes people reluctant to visit the site of former homes or neighbourhoods which have been radically changed or destroyed--or break down when they do return?[1]

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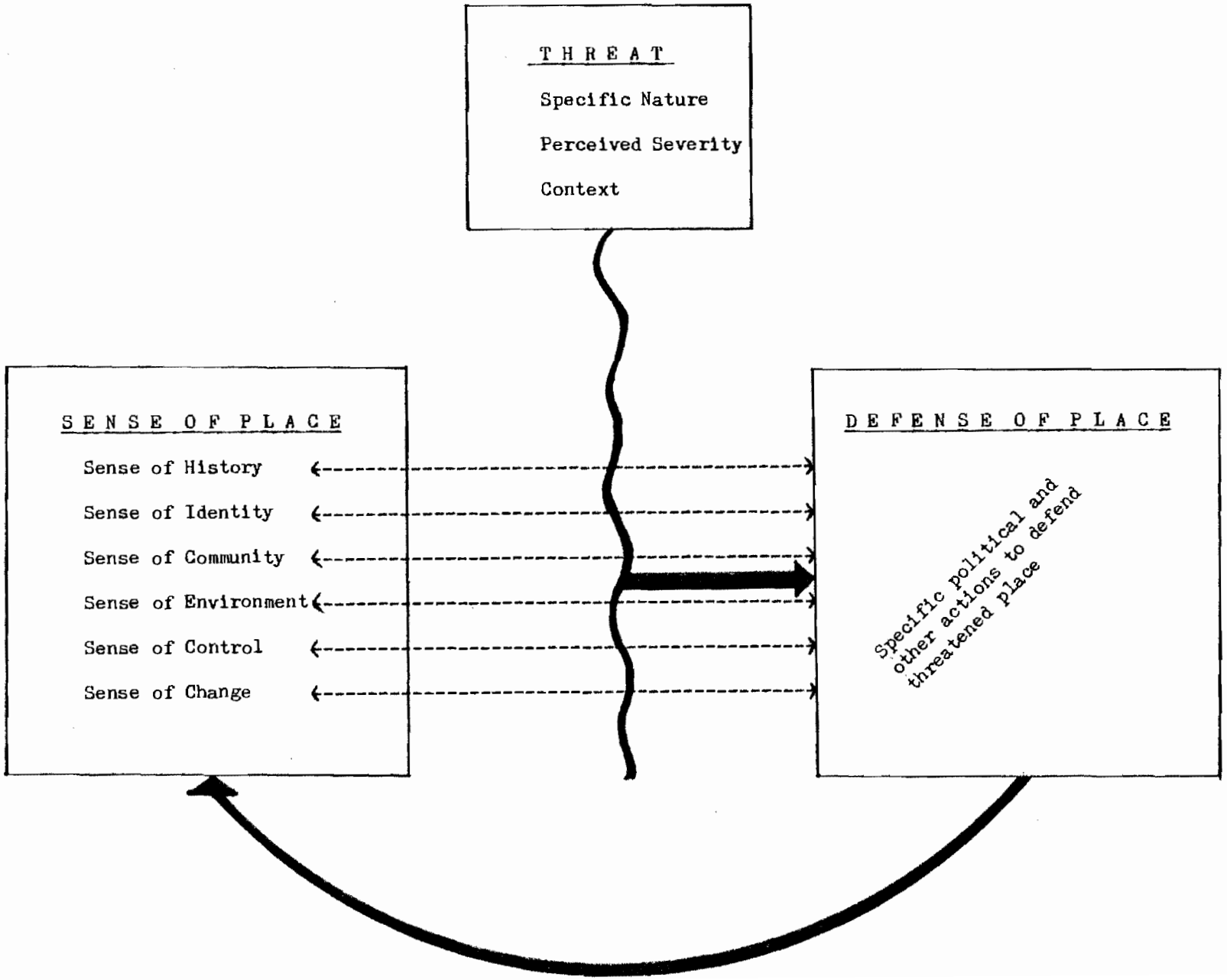
[1]See also Appendix A "Examples of Sense of Place" for specific examples from around the world.

ILLUSTRATION 1

DIALECTICAL RELATIONSHIP OF SENSE OF PLACE AND DEFENSE OF PLACE



a. Definition of Sense of Place:

Recent writings have referred to copious evidence that places are much more than neutral backgrounds for human activity, but may be "centres of meaning",[1] or "centres of felt value",[2] or even "profound centres of human existence"[3] and that people, under various conditions, develop what may be called a sense of place: i.e., a feeling of belonging in and having a deep emotional attachment to a place of personal significance and meaning. Edward Relph, in his study of "place" and "placelessness", argues forcefully that "there are profound psychological links between people and the places they live in and experience"[4] and, further, that:

distinctive and diverse places are manifestations of a deeply

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[1] Yi-Fu Tuan, "Place: An Experiential Perspective," Geographical Review LXV (April 1975), p. 156.

[2] Yi-Fu Tuan, Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1977), p. 138.

[3] Edward Relph, Place and Placelessness (London: Pion Limited, 1976), p. 43. Relph expands upon the definition of "place" (p.22):

> Places in existential space can therefore be understood as centres of meaning, or focuses of intention and purpose. The types of meanings and functions defining places need not be the same for all cultural groups, nor do the centres have to be clearly demarcated by physical features, but they must have an inside that can be experienced as differing from an outside. For many religious peoples places are holy and within the context of a powerful and sacred space. For the contemporary European or North American most places have a much weaker symbolic context than this and are defined largely by the meanings or significant associations attached to buildings, landforms, or areas in specific locations. But in both cases places constitute significant centres of experience within the context of the lived-space of the everyday world.

[4] Ibid., preface.

> felt involvement with these places by people who live in them, and that for many such a profound attachment to place is as necessary and significant as a close relationship with other people.[1]

Definitions of sense of place (either implicit or explicit) have ranged from simple recognition of place (either that this building, clearing, town, etc., is a distinct "place"[2] or that "this place" is different from "that place"[3]) through to a more profound feeling of personal attachment to a particular place which has

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[1] Ibid.

[2] For example, Donlyn Lyndon, Charles W. Moore, Patrick Quinn and Sim van der Ryn, "Toward Making Places," Landscape (Autumn 1962), pp. 31-41. Moore writes (p. 34): "the strong sense of place and of city in downtown San Francisco" results from the strong "demarcation of edges" provided by the "rival gridiron plans on opposite sides of Market street" and "A sense of place might conceivably exist independent of such traditional ordering devices as processional axes, boundaries and landmarks; but basic to it is the division of inside from outside"; and van der Ryn writes (p. 37): "We require architecture, as distinct from building, to create a singular sense of order: a sense of place".

[3] For example, recognizing the special qualities of "this city" or "this district" that make it different from "that city" or "that district". Asa Briggs, "The Sense of Place," in Fitness of Man's Environment, Smithsonian Annual II (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 78-97, uses the term sense of place primarily in this way, referring to "sense of identity" of cities (p. 85) or the "identity of particular place" (p. 88) or "distinctiveness of places" (p. 90).

personal meaning and significance.[1] This study is concerned primarily with this deeper meaning of sense of place.[2]

b. Subjective Nature of Sense of Place:

"Place may be said to have 'spirit' or 'personality'," Tuan has written, "but only human beings can have a sense of place."[3] Sense of place is essentially an individual and subjective phenomenon and may only be adequately studied by studying individuals and how they relate

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[1]For example, Robert Aiken, "Toward Landscape Sensitivity," Landscape, 20 (Spring 1976), pp. 20-28, speaks, in passing, of "affection for place"; Harvey Cox, "The Restoration of a Sense of Place: A Theological Reflection On The Visual Environment," Ekistics, 25 (June 1968), pp. 422-424, discusses "the disappearance of a sense of place, of the significance of particular spaces and locations" (p. 422) and sees "the sense of continuity [of places]" as being "necessary to people's sense of reality" (p. 423); Tuan, Space and Place, op. cit.; and Relph, Place and Placelessness, op. cit. Of this deeper meaning of sense of place, Relph writes (pp. 65-66):

> An authentic sense of place is above all being inside and belonging to your place both as an individual and as a member of a community and to know this without reflecting upon it. This might be so for home, for hometown or region, or for the nation. Such an authentic and unselfconscious sense of place is perhaps as important and necessary in contemporary societies as it was in any previous societies, for it provides an important source of identity for individuals, and through them for communities.

[2]The term "sense of place" has been used interchangeably with a wide variety of other phrases, including: spirit of place, personality of place, genius loci, awareness of place, identity of place, place consciousness, experience of place, identity with place, field of care, rootedness in place, sense of belonging, and attachment to place. Not all of these phrases, however, are interchangeable with sense of place as it is used here. For example, place consciousness, awareness of place and experience of place apply more to recognition of place than to attachment to place; and spirit of place, personality of place, genius loci, and identity of place apply more to definitions of "place"--i.e., the distinctive qualities of the place--than to the relationship between people and place or the subjective experience of sense of place.

[3]Yi-Fu Tuan, "Space and place: humanistic perspective," in Progress in Geography," vol. 6, eds. C. Board, R.J. Chorley, P. Haggett, D.R. Stoddart (London: Edward Arnold, 1974), p. 235.

to particular, meaningful and well-loved places. Tuan argues in favour of adopting an "experiential perspective" to augment other, perhaps better known, perspectives adopted in the study of geography:

> To the geometrical and ideographic perspectives that already exist in the discipline, a third is here added: the experiential perspective. Place is created by human beings for human purposes ....To remain a place it has to be lived in....To live in a place is to experience it, to be aware of it in the bones as well as with the head. Place, at all scales from the armchair to the nation, is a construct of experience; it is sustained not only by timber, concrete, and highways, but also by the quality of human experience.[1]

Mercer and Powell echo these sentiments:

> We must try...outlining some suggestions for research guidelines in human geography which have emerged from our lengthy review. The first is simple and will be expected, no doubt: the aims of society and human geography are to understand as well as predict. In order to do this it is essential that we make every effort to view problems and situations not from our perspective, but from the actor's frame of reference; not from the perspective of how some new theory says the individual ought to perceive reality but from the position of how he actually does so. It is vital that this realism be firmly incorporated into all our analyses, by whatsoever method we can employ.[2]

This study of a sense of place among Toronto Islanders adopts, as much as possible, an experiential perspective--i.e., it tries to understand the phenomenon of sense of place from the perspective of the experiencing individuals--using their words and their actions as

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[1] Tuan, "Place: An Experiential Perspective," op.cit., p. 165. Tuan, in "Space and place: humanistic perspective," op. cit., p. 213, also writes: "Place is not only a fact to be explained in the broader frame of space, but it is also a reality to be clarified and understood from the perspectives of the people who have given it meaning."

[2] D.C. Mercer and J.M. Powell, Phenomenology and Related Non-Positivistic Viewpoints in the Social Sciences (Melbourne: Department of Geography, Monash University, Monash Publications in Geography, no. 1, 1972), p. 48.

clues to how they relate to their Island.[1] (See also Chapter 2, Methods and Approach.)

c. Modes of Experience:

Sense of place, like experience of place, is a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon, which is built up not only from visual impressions, but also from auditory, olfactory, tactile, kinesthetic and even taste sensations. Every place and every individual's experience of place has its special sights, sounds, smells, feels, and kinesthetics. Aiken, for example, discussing the more general phenomenon of landscape perception comments on this:

> These different images remind us that landscape is more than what we see. Our impressions of it are also compounded of sounds and silence, the tactile experience of wind, rock, and water, of movement, mood and atmosphere, of olfactory associations with nature and man's activities, and in some surroundings--the seashore being

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[1] Obviously, it is impossible for one person to "see" the world or "experience" the world as another person does. (See, for example, David Lowenthal, "Geography, Experience And Imagination: Towards a Geographical Epistemology," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 51 (1961), pp. 241-260.) But, by asking them how they feel and how they view the Island and related phenomena, by listening to what they say spontaneously in various situations and by observing how they behave, the researcher can approach the ideal set forward. In addition, to augment this where appropriate (e.g., when discussing reactions to the physical environment of the Island), the researcher may include some of his or her own reactions to the place under investigation, not as someone who has a deeply felt sense of place there, but at least as an "experiencing individual"--as someone who has made a point of experiencing the place under many different conditions. (See also Chapter 2, Methods and Approach.)

one--the taste of the elements.[1]

Beyond this, sense of place (as well as experience of place) is fashioned not only by direct perception,[2] but also by memory, imagination, vicarious experience and so on. An individual develops bonds with a particular place not only through direct, contemporaneous perception of its physical attributes, but also through memory[3] (e.g., remembering lost childhood places or recalling particular

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[1]Aiken, "Toward Landscape Sensibility," op.cit., p. 24. As another example, Tuan, in "Space and Place: humanistic perspective," op. cit., p. 242, writes about developing "the feel of place":

> What are the means by which affective bond reaches beyond human beings to place? One is repeated experience: the feel of place gets under our skin in the course of day-to-day contact....The feel of the pavement, the smell of the evening air, and the colour of autumn foliage become, through long acquaintance, extension of ourselves--not just a stage, but supporting actors in the human drama.

See also Yi-Fu Tuan, Tophophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974) and Tuan, Space and Place, op. cit., and Edward T. Hall, The Hidden Dimension (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1966).

[2]Direct perception itself is, of course, an extremely complex phenomenon which is affected not only by the nature of the physical stimuli, but also by such other factors as the culture, motivation, present (social and physical) condition, past experience and so on of the perceiver. See, for example: William N. Dember, Perception (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964); Julian E. Hochberg, Perception (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964); and Marshall H. Segall, Donald T. Campbell, Melville J. Herskovits, The Influence of Culture on Visual Perception (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1966)

[3]David Lowenthal, "Past Time Present Place: Landscape and Memory," Geographical Review LXV (January 1975), pp. 1-36, discusses some of the distinctive attributes of memory as a mode of experience, such as highlighting some features and diminishing or eliminating others.

sensations[1] or significant personal events and associations with an existing place), through imagination (e.g., imagining some historical events or conditions which occurred in a well-loved place or imagining some possible future events or conditions which might occur), through vicarious experience (second-hand experience obtained through such media as books or verbal accounts or paintings, which may augment one's own direct experience), and so on. Study of sense of place must try to take into account these various modes of experience.

d. Time and Place:

It takes time to know a place and to develop a sense of place. This is true both because the place changes and because the person in the place changes over time.

First, consider place itself. Any place changes in the course of the day (day in the city or on the farm or in the wilderness is vastly different from night); over the course of the year (summer in the city or on the farm or in the wilderness is vastly different from the winter), and even, in many cases, during the course of the week (the Sabbath in the city or elsewhere may be radically different from the other days of the week; or, at the very local scale, various activities, like deliveries,--may occur at particular times and give structure

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[1]Direct perception passes almost immediately into past perception, so present perception is almost always buttressed by past perception (memories of sights, sounds, smells, etc.).

to the local rhythms of the place).[1]

Places also change over time in less structured or systematic ways. For example, weather conditions change the nature of places (a foggy day on the waterfront is vastly different from a sunny day; a rainy day in the forest is vastly different from a dry day, and so on), because the range of experiences (the characteristic sights, sounds, smells and so on) change radically. And, over longer periods of time, of course, the nature of places may change:[2] architectural styles may change, landforms may alter radically, significant historical events may occur, and so on, all of which contribute directly or indirectly (through perusal of such second-hand historical records as books, photographs, paintings, and old newspapers). All of this may influence a person's sense of place.

Second, consider the person in the place. Tuan emphasizes that

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[1] Yi-Fu Tuan, for example, emphasizes the importance of these cyclical changes, both seasonal and diurnal, in "Man and Nature," Landscape 15 (1966), pp. 30-36. Kevin Lynch, What Time is This Place? (Cambridge, Massachusetts The MIT Press, 1972), illustrates these diurnal and seasonal rhythms in a photo essay and commentary on "Boston Time" (pp. 135-162). Similarly David Seamon and Christina Norden, "Marketplace As Place Ballet: A Swedish Example," Landscape 24 (1980), pp. 35-41 illustrate the weekly and seasonal variations of a periodic market in a small Swedish coastal town. And, for a rural example, Allan Anderson illustrates seasonal rhythms on the farm by the first-hand accounts of farm life contained in Allan Anderson, "To Everything There Is A Season," Remembering the Farm (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1977), pp. 50-61.

[2] See, for example, Lowenthal, "Past Time Present Place," op. cit. See also Robert Sommer, Design Awareness (Corte Modena, California: Rinehart Press, 1972), pp. 67-81, where he discusses the "relevance of time to environmental experience and action" (p. 67) and points out that "time is a major constituent of architectural experience. People's reactions to a building are influenced by the past, the present and the future as well as its physical dimensions, color, material and style" (p. 70); and that "Environmental experience is affected by such attributes as duration...tempo...sequence...chronicity...and familiarity" (p. 70).

it takes time for people to experience or "to know a place". He writes:

> Experience takes time. Sense of place is rarely acquired in passing. To know a place well requires long residence and deep involvement. It is possible to appreciate the visual qualities in one short visit,[1] but not how it smells on a frosty morning, how city sounds reverberate across narrow streets to expire over the broad square, or how the pavement burns through gymshoe soles and melts bicycle tires in August.[2]

Tuan adds an important qualification to this statement, however:

> If it takes time to know a place, the passage of time itself does not guarantee a sense of place. If experience takes time, the passage of time itself does not ensure experience. One person may know a place intimately after a five year sojourn; another has lived there all his life and to him it is as unreal as the unread books on the shelf.[3]

Finally, of course, the person changes over time, and these changes will also influence her or his sense of place.

Ideally, any study of sense of place must remain aware of these changes over time and try to take them into account.

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[1]This is a debatable point. One may be bombarded by more distinctive visual stimuli than olfactory stimuli in the course of one visit, but whether one can truly "appreciate the visual qualities" in one visit is another question. Surely it takes time to sort out the important from the unimportant and to understand the pattern, rhythms, or structure of the visual experience. Surely some important sights would be missed altogether. And certainly one visit would not allow the visitor to see the place under the full range of conditions (summer-winter, night-day, sun-rain, and so on) necessary to build up a full range of visual experience.

[2]Tuan, "Place: An Experiential Perspective," op. cit., p. 164.

[3]Ibid., p. 164. On Toronto Island, therefore, it is possible that some people who have lived there only five years may have a sense of place which is as strong as, if not stronger than, some people who have lived there for twenty years.

e. Case Study Approach:

It is evident from the examples already given and the literature already cited that sense of place is important. But why does it develop? Under what conditions does it develop? Of what does it consist? Can it be created or encouraged to develop where it does not already appear to exist? It is one thing to say that places are "meaningful" or "important"; but it is another to understand in what ways they are meaningful and important. Although writers on sense of place have demonstrated this importance and have drawn examples from many cultures and many periods of time and many types of places, there has been a singular lack of detailed case studies of sense of place among people in one place.[1] It is through such case studies that we can enrich our understanding of sense of place in general and begin to answer the questions noted above. Beyond this, it is only by studying defense of place in detail that the dialectical relationship between sense of place and defense of place stands out clearly. It is only by adopting this approach that the numerous, sometimes apparently small, interactive links between particular aspects of sense of place and particular political and other defensive decisions and actions can be identified, analyzed and set in a broader context.

It is for these reasons, therefore, that this case study of the

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[1] On the need for case studies, for example, Thomas F. Saarinen, Environmental Planning: Perception and Behavior (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976), p. 90, writes:

> It seems likely that people of all types and classes develop a strong attachment to place....It seems worthwhile to try to investigate this type of attachment more carefully in all sorts of settings, to determine what needs must be provided for in the largely artificial environment of the years ahead.

Toronto Island was undertaken. It was conducted not only to understand particular people and a particular place and a particular defense of place (an aim of some significance in itself), but also to contribute to the over-all understanding of sense of place and defense of place in general.

f. Toronto Islanders' Sense of Place:

Do residents of Toronto Island feel a sense of place? This is naturally the first question that must be answered. It cannot be said for certain that every one of the approximately five hundred adults feels a sense of place; but there is abundant evidence, both in word and deed, that many Islanders do in fact feel a strong sense of place.

First their defense of place itself is evidence of their sense of place. Perhaps the best evidence that Islanders feel a strong sense of place comes from the fact that they have been fighting fiercely, and often at great personal cost (in terms of time, energy, and even health), the policy adopted by Metropolitan Toronto to evict them, demolish their homes and community, and extend the Island park. Relph comments on this type of protest as being evidence of sense of place:

> It is therefore disturbing that so much planning and remaking of the landscape proceeds apparently in ignorance of the importance of place, even though the protests of the expropriated and uprooted demonstrate this very importance....
>
> That the significance of place in human experience goes far deeper than this [differentiating between different places] is apparent in the actions of individuals and groups protecting their place against outside forces of destruction, or is known to anyone who has experienced homesickness and nostalgia for particular places.[1]

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[1] Relph, Place and Placelessness, op. cit., preface and p. 1.

The Metro policy was adopted in 1956.[1] Since then, over four hundred houses have been demolished, the last major clearance being in the late 1960's. The remaining residents, who now occupy only the eastern end of the Island, really began their own battle to prevent the evictions and to change the Metro policy in 1967. Since then, and especially since the reaffirmation of the policy in December 1973, Island residents have dug in their heels and managed to delay (but not change) the policy. This opposition (as will be shown later) has actively involved most Island residents in one way or another. Obviously, a smaller group has been especially heavily involved; but most Islanders have contributed something--attended political meetings, appeared in demonstrations, telephoned supporters, written pamphlets or newsletters, typed transcripts and press releases, babysat for the children of people going to meetings, and so on. All of this may be construed as evidence of their attachment and commitment to the Island.

A second piece of evidence reflecting a sense of place among many Islanders is the fact that in spite of all the tension, uncertainty and stress associated with living in a place slated for demolition, Islanders have not moved off in great numbers. Some people, of course, have moved--some in the normal course of events (and for reasons similar to the reasons people in other places move--change of job, growing family, change in life cycle or life style, and so on) and some no doubt have moved because of the political uncertainty. But, in spite of all the tension and uncertainty, there has been no mass exodus from the Island.

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[1] As indicated later, Islanders prior to 1956 also opposed earlier schemes to radically change the Island as they knew it.

Islanders have also spoken about their attachment to the Island. For example, in November 1973, the Chairman of the Toronto Island Residents Association, Maureen Smith, addressed the Metro Parks Committee in an (unsuccessful) effort to persuade it to change the Metro policy of acquiring and demolishing Island homes. She said in part:

> Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. My name is Maureen Smith and I am here to represent more than 700 people who live in the Island community. In an attempt to save our homes, we have grouped together as the Toronto Island Residents Association and I am chairman of the organization. I want to make my presentation brief, but I would ask you to bear with me if I sound emotional at times, for I am here on an emotional errand, to try to save my home and the homes of my friends and my children's friends, all the 750 people who make up our community. Some of these families have lived there a very long time. The Wards for instance, after whom one of the islands is named, first came in 1830 and there have been Wards living on the Island ever since then....You know, it is all very easy to be a planner and say "We'll have to clear these houses off. They're in the way." But these are not just "squatters' shacks" as some people, who should know better, have claimed. It is not houses we are talking about. Not their lots. Not a prime piece of real estate. It is a living community whose character has been shaped over the years, generations in some cases, by the people who live there....I want to make it clear to you that we are not some kind of freaks or opportunist squatters or rapacious land speculators--just ordinary people. We want to stay on the Island because it is our home and because it seems unreasonable to destroy a community at this time.

In the interviews with Islanders that were conducted for this study, a number of people also spoke about the Island in such a way as

to confirm that they felt a sense of place.[1] Some of the more general statements are included here. It is important to note that they are made by all types of Islanders: summer and year-round, old and young, present and past, blue collar and white collar, and so on.

The Island seems almost to have cast a spell over many people who live, or have ever lived there. Alan Howard, who lived at Centre Island for forty-one years, from 1918 to 1959 when his family's house was expropriated, describes the hold that the Island has on people, even on those who have left:

> The cameraderie which was developed is manifested in a very strange way. I haven't lived there since 1959. If I meet any old Islander that perhaps I knew by sight and didn't know to speak to, now this is an old and valued friend and you must get together and discuss whatever became of this one and that one. I had this happen in the Horticulture Building at Exhibition time. I was in there one afternoon and a lady and gentleman came up and were most effusive and I remembered them vaguely as a middle-aged couple that lived on the Island. I don't think I ever spoke to them in my life. But they

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[1] Sense of place, as Relph and Tuan both emphasize, may be both consciously and unconsciously felt. Direct statements are often (but not always) expressions of conscious feelings of sense of place. But just because someone does not talk about sense of place does not mean that she or he does not feel a sense of place. The unspoken, unconsciously felt sense of place may be as strong as, if not stronger than, the consciously expressed feeling. Tuan, "Space and Place: humanistic perspective," op. cit., p. 235 writes:

> But we can have a sense of place in perhaps the deeper meaning of the term, without any attempt at explicit formulation. We can know a place subconsciously, through touch and remembered fragrances, unaided by the discriminating eye. While the eye takes in a lovely street scene and intelligence categorizes it, our hand feels the iron of the school fence and stores subliminally its coolness and resistance in our memory....Through such modest hoards we can acquire in time a profound sense of place.

And Relph, Place and Placelessness, op. cit., p. 65, discussing "unselfconscious sense of place", writes:

> An authentic sense of place is above all that of being inside and belonging to your place both as an individual and as a member of a community and to know this without reflecting upon it.

> told me their name and it had a vaguely familiar ring and automatically we're old and valued friends meeting, simply because of the bond of this community living on the Island. And I think if you talk to the average old Islander, no matter where he is, Victoria or Montreal, he will tell that there really is no place anywhere quite like Toronto Island, right to this day. There's a kind of distant look that comes into their eyes and a sort of a suggestion of a tear when they think of how good things were in those days. Well, not everybody thinks of his old community in quite that way.

"Daddy Frank" Staneland, who had spent summer on Ward's Island since 1899, illustrated his, and his wife's, profound attachment to the Island by having a picture of their cottage engraved on his wife's grave stone. He kept a small copy of it in his garden:

> This is my wife there [in a photograph]. She passed away a year ago last October. Well, she was so fond of the Island. She was so fond of the Island that I had a photograph taken of our cottage and that's on the [grave] monument. [Showing a copy of the stone], that's my cottage here. She loved the cottage so much and loved the Island so much that I had this all carved on the monument. This is a sample that they gave me first, to show me how it would look.

Wendy Hanger, a Ward's Islander who grew up on Centre Island during the 1950's, described how one Ward's Islander broke down crying at the Christmas church service following the decision by Metro Toronto in December 1973 to go ahead with the park policy. At that time, some Islanders thought that this might be their last Christmas on the Island:

> Two Christmases ago [1973], gosh, I can remember one day at Church, _____, who's been here for years, you know.... You know, there's been mixed feelings [about the 1973 Metro vote]. Some people took an optimistic view, some a very pessimistic view. I can remember_____ reading something in Church and starting to cry during it. And that was really something. You know, everybody went "oh"... half of them started to cry too. Because that's really something, to see a man cry, doing something like that.

Jimmy Jones and Maxine Wilson, both former Hanlan's Pointers who live on Ward's Island, described the intimate relationship of people and place:

JJ: You can't take this way of life and put it somewhere else and come up with the same feelings.

MW: Over here we're all paying the same thing, you know, and we all live in the same sort of houses, you know. There's the rich and there's the poor. There's the people on mother's allowance, people on welfare, and people make really good money. It's just a thing that happens, because the houses are the way they are, the fact that you have to rely on your neighbours, you know, like being cut off from stores and things. It's just something you can't put into something or something that just happens because it's the Island.

Another former Hanlan's Pointer, Tom Swalwell, who then moved to Algonquin Island, responded in 1974 to the prospect of having to leave the Island by simply saying, "I was born in my parents' house at Hanlan's Point in 1921. I'd be lost if I had to leave. It's not just a home to me, it's my way of life."[1]

Elizabeth Amer has lived year-round on Ward's Island for over twenty five years (and spent summers there before that) and is a member of an old Island family. She describes her sense of rootedness, of being a part of the Island and of caring deeply for it:

> It's very nice living in a house that was built by your grandfather, and a little unusual, I think, for Toronto people. They don't usually have those kind of roots where they're living. Some do, I imagine. But I think it's a bit unusual....For a house to stay in a family for generations is rather unusual and I find it satisfying to live in a house that he built.
>
> I have a great sense of being part of the organism of the physical Island and the whole business of the house is an extension of that. I really feel that the house and everything is a part of the organism...and you and the house and the Island all being part of an organism.

Sometimes people reveal their sense of place when they are asked what they would miss if they had to leave. Some examples follow.

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[1] Quoted in Cathy Berry, "Islanders Burn Their Eviction Notices/ Now An All-Out War As Leases Expire," Star, September 2, 1974.

Ron Mazza, who grew up on Angonquin Island, summarized his feelings:

> [I'd miss] the solitude. Being able to get away by coming home and being able to get out of the city every time you come home. The sense of community. Having a very familiar area, where you've grown up. Basically, coming "home". I think if I didn't have the Island, if the Island was destroyed, and became simply memories instead of a physical fact, as a residential area, I think I might be somewhat disoriented in space and time.

Mrs. Hopp, who lived on the Island year-round for many years while she and her husband ran a store on Ward's Island and who has spent summers on Algonquin Island since her husband died in 1964, commented on what she would miss:

> This house particularly. And the Island has a tremendous emotional ... it's full of memories. I'm quite content to be here all by myself, because it's just full of memories, not that I want to live in the past, but that's just the way it is.

Jenny DeTolly, who moved to the Island in 1969, was one of several people who summarized their feelings by describing the Island as "home":

> Everything. I'd miss my house. I'd miss my view. I'd miss summer. I'd miss the sense of community, which I do feel, though I know it's not totally non-existent in the City. I suppose you'd miss a place that you consider "home". I'd miss the physical aspects of it as well as the community aspects.

Mardi Webster, a member of a large, old Island family, had spent summers (and some winters during the '40's and '50's) on Ward's Island since 1924 and had trouble describing precisely what she would miss:

> Oh, that's kind of your right arm. I mean, how can you describe it? I've had it all my life. I've never missed a summer over here all my life. That's 52 years [in 1974]....I couldn't describe it. I guess you'd have to adjust to it, but it would be like taking the right arm off anybody who had it before....We all feel that way. I don't know any other way to describe it. My dad calls it "God's country", always has. This is his 75th year. Our family, as you may have gathered, is a real close family....Over here, every time you walk out the door you're with your relatives. I couldn't even begin to count how many are over here now. I think it's about ten houses.

And Mary Madrick, who decided to move at the end of the summer of 1974

(but not to sell the house), described what she thought her children would miss:

> It's hard. It's been her home all her life. It's even hard for our eldest daughter who lives down in Lindsay to realize that this will not be her home. It is. It always will be and if the situation changes and the kids want the house, they can have it.

Actually seeing the houses being demolished may trigger strong responses in people. For example, Fram Ward, who spent almost his entire long life on Ward's Island (which was named after his family), described how he reacted to the destruction of his son's, and other adjacent, houses in the late 1960's:

> My son Bill, he's the lawyer, he lived right next door here in this lot behind me and his house was a compensation house so they knocked it down, December 1968. And I stood out here and watched it and I had a heart attack. [Looking at pictures of the demolition], you can see, there's my house there. This is the white house right here and there's his house. That's the way they're burning it.... Now here's the start. They come up with this big thing here and they dig a hole in the ground with that shovel thing, they just tear it apart....Here it is, just ripping it apart. Had the house demolished in one hour. So that's the style of it. And as they go along, they shove all the rubble into this hole and they set fire to it and there it is burnt and there's the sand from the hole, you see. So here it is practically all finished and there's the end of it and then about the end of the day there's just a few smouldering embers, and they just push the sand in again. There's your house. Of course they paid [compensation] for it, so what can you do about it? They take my house, they're not paying [compensation] for it. Mind you, they might have paid for it by letting me stay here five years longer than him. I appreciate that part of it. I really do. But I still don't like them smashing something I've built.

Some of the strongest and most poignant expressions of sense of place come from people who have already experienced a loss of place. (See also <u>Sense of Change</u>: "Human Costs".) Alan Howard described his former Centre Island home and his reluctance to return to the spot where it used to stand:

> We stayed until we were practically the last house in the area. We could look three-quarters of a mile to the east before we could see a house. We were the last one remaining. Until the last possible day. The house was torn down in a little over a week from the day

> we moved out....No, I've never really been back to look at the property. It's too sad a sight for me. Somehow when you don't see it cleared, you can imagine it as it always was. It's a quirk of the mind. You think of it as being unchanged. I know it isn't there, but you just somehow feel that you can see every blade of grass almost as it was. I had a sort of good pictorial memory. I can visualize things, right back to the time I was a tiny child, so that it's very real to me even now. And if you live in a house for 41 years, you can virtually sense every corner of it. You know where every creak is. You know what every door sounds like. Different rooms have a slightly different odor or smell. And this is all vivid to me right to this day. I can mentally go through the house and sense every corner of it. So I'd rather not go and look.

Jimmy Jones described a recent visit to the site of his former home on Hanlan's Point, which is now completely devoid of any of the houses that once stood there:

> My mind is constantly going back to Hanlan's Point. And that's my favourite place. And if we had a chance to live back on the Island and they put houses back, I'd want to live back on Hanlan's. I feel very strange about [walking around there]. I've taken a walk over to Hanlan's. It was just last year, wasn't it Max, when I told you about walking from the wall up to where we used to live at Hanlan's and I stood at the tree that was only about maybe six inches in diameter and I remember when my brother tried to tap that tree and I stood leaning against that, which would be the fence line between our property and the man next door. I could just visualize. I could see the house and the house next to us, which was 602, and_____, which was down the street, 612. Ya, I feel very...it gets me emotionally. And there was a tree on the beach that I watched Vern Thompson, Gordon's younger brother, it was a very small sapling to begin with and he would go out and take the small branches off the bottom of it, it was a poplar tree, and now that tree is in full bloom and as big as the tree in the backyard and the branches are quite high because he pruned the trunk so that it would grow bushy at the top.

Finally, another former Hanlan's Pointer described her former home and the devastating reaction her mother had the first time she went past the place on Hanlan's Point where it once stood:

> It's dreadful [going back]. My mum at Hanlan's, in our house... well, first of all, the man who owned the house, Sam Stevenson, he'd come from the [Western Sand] Bar [part of Hanlan's Point now incorporated into the Island Airport]...and his wife had brought with her lilac trees that she had started on the Bar and there must have been ten of them all along our fence, you know, which, when

> they had blooms, they were about ten inches long. I never saw lilacs like them. They were absolutely gorgeous....And then Mum started peach trees from seeds along the other fence. She's got them over here too, that she started and crab apple trees. But the peaches on them were huge, like they'd hang over the fence and the kids would always steal them and that and they were just gorgeous and I think she had about five of those going. And when they took our house, they tore all that down. They tore the peach trees out and they tore all those lilac trees down. That had to be seventy years old. They left this one spindly pine tree that was dead when we lived there and that's what they left out of all the trees that were in there. And the first time that we had to go back to Hanlan's, from Ward's, to get a boat out of Hanlan's [because the Ward's dock was iced in], my mum was on the bus and she just absolutely went off her head, to the point that the people on the bus didn't know what was happening. They thought she was having a heart attack. She lost her breath and was crying and yelling and everything like that when they went by her house. And even now if the boats are going to Hanlan's, she won't go to the City. Like, she phoned me tonight and said, "Are the boats still going to Hanlan's?" And I said, "Yes." And she said, "I guess I'll wait and go and see Grandma", because every time she goes, she just breaks up. She can't bear to go to Hanlan's, past, you know, where our house was. Or she'll sit on this side of the bus and look out the window and pretend she doesn't see.

The trauma of losing a well-loved place can be great indeed.

g. Components of Sense of Place:

This case study of the Toronto Island has indicated that there are six fundamental components of Islanders' sense of place. These may be termed: sense of history (chapter three), sense of identity (chapter four), sense of community (chapter five), sense of environment (chapter six), sense of control (chapter seven) and sense of change (chapter eight). Each of these components is defined and described at some length in a separate chapter. Here, following some more general remarks, each component is described briefly by using non-Toronto examples.

First, it is important to emphasize that these six components were derived from an inductive process. As noted elsewhere, because of the relative lack of investigation into the phenomenon of sense of place,

there existed little theory to guide this research. What was required--and attempted here--was an exploratory study to generate new theory (rather than a study to verify existing theory). These six components arose from "hard study of much data", as Glaser and Strauss phrase it in their treatise on the value of the inductive approach to theory development[1] and seemed "consistently able to embrace the data in a useful way, without strain", as Lynch wrote about his own five major elements of city images.[2] Although subsequent analysis of a diverse literature relevant to study of sense of place seems to confirm the existence of six components, the components were initially identified by analyzing the data collected about the Toronto Island.

Second, although these components have evolved from the analysis of the Toronto Island and describe fairly comprehensively Toronto Islanders' sense of place, they may be generalized to other people and to other places. Whether they comprehensively describe sense of place elsewhere--or whether there are major omissions--remains to be seen and awaits the appearance of additional case studies. Nevertheless, the following examples are drawn from different scales (e.g., from individual homes to large tracts of wilderness or coastline), from different types of environments (e.g., village, city, farm, wilderness, sea, and so on), from different cultures (e.g., western European, North American, Indian), and from different periods of time (e.g., nineteenth century peasant villages and twentieth century urban neughborhoods). In short, there is good reason

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[1]Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies For Qualitative Research (New York: Aldine Publishing Company, 1967), p. 4.

[2]Kevin Lynch, The Image of the City (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1960), p. 154.

to believe that they apply not only to the experience of sense of place on Toronto Island, but also to the sense of place more generally.[1]

Third, while these six components are evident and strongly felt by Toronto Islanders generally, this does not mean that every Islander who feels a sense of place feels equally strongly about each component (e.g., some might have a stronger sense of environment than sense of community, and others might have a stronger sense of community than environment). The individual's sense of place is simply, and fundamentally, individual. But keeping these different components in mind facilitates describing and understanding these individual feelings. Beyond this, identifying six components of sense of place does not mean that they all apply equally well to every other, non-Toronto Island situation. Lighthouse keepers may have little sense of community, but a very strong sense of environment; residents of remote peasant villages may have little sense of change, but a strong sense of identity; and residents of an urban neighbourhood under the threat of redevelopment may have little sense of control, but a strong sense of community, and so on. Using the various components, however, to a large degree may facilitate the description and comparison of different people

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[1] Two excellent "natural examples" of this framework are Boyce Richardson, Strangers Devour the Land: The Cree Hunters of the James Bay Area Versus Premier Bourassa and the James Bay Development Corporation (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1975) and Robert Coles, Migrants, Sharecroppers, Mountaineers: Volume II of Children of Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971). Although done for different reasons and from different perspectives, each of these studies illustrates each of the six components of sense of place. Richardson's study concerned Cree Indians "in the bush" and, to a lesser extent, on the reserve. Coles' study concerned migrant farmworkers moving from farm to farm, Southern tenant farmers on "their" small farms and Appalachian mountain dwellers living in their hollows. These studies, therefore, concern scales, types of environment and types of people very different from Toronto Islanders and support the conclusion that the six components discussed here may be generalized beyond the Toronto Island situation.

and their places. (Studying, for example, in what ways the sense of place of residents in village A compares with the sense of place residents in village B or the sense of place of residents in urban neighborhood C.)

Finally, although six fundamental components of sense of place are identified, this should not be taken to imply that they are separate and unrelated. The phenomena under investigation are too complex for that. As each chapter makes clear and as is discussed at greater length in the concluding chapter, the six components are related to one another in a complex variety of ways. For example, sense of history may reinforce sense of identity; sense of change may heighten sense of community; sense of environment contributes to sense of community, and so on. Nevertheless, a separate discussion of each one is possible and clarifies the understanding of sense of place.

Some examples of each of these components of sense of place follow.

(1) Sense of history: Yi-Fu Tuan quotes the moving address of an American Indian chief, who spoke eloquently about his people's attachment to their ancestral land. His profound sense of his people's history is clear:

> On the sad occasion when native Americans had to cede land to Governor Stevens of Washington Territory, an Indian chief is reported to have said:
>
> > ...Every part of this country is sacred to my people. Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove has been hallowed by some fond memory or some sad experience of my tribe. Even the rocks, which seem to lie dumb as they swelter in the sun along the silent seashore in solemn grandeur, thrill with memories of past events concerned with the lives of my people. The very dust under your feet responds more lovingly to our footsteps than to yours, because it is the ashes of our ancestors, and our bare

> feet are conscious of the sympathetic touch, for the soil is rich with the life of our kindred.[1]

Wallace Stegner writes with some feeling of bitterness about the lack of a sense of history he felt as a child growing up in a frontier town on the Saskatchewan prairies. No one taught him about the colourful local history. It was only later that he discovered it. He relates both the frustration and the joy of the discovery:

> Once discovered, history is not likely to be lost. But the first generation of children to grow up in a newly settled country do not ordinarily discover their history, and so they are the prime sufferers from discontinuity....
>
> It seems to me now an absurdity that I have felt it necessary to go as far as the Hardanger Fjord [in his mother's native Norway] for a sense of belonging....The very richness of that past as I discover it now makes me irritable to have been cheated of it then. I wish I could have known it early, that it could have come to me with the smell of life about it instead of the smell of books....All of it was legitimately mine, I walked that earth, but none of it was known to me....
>
> [Recalling one dramatic incident of local history] I know how that October river bottom would have looked and smelled with the skin lodges and the willow fires and the roasting meat--the smells of autumn and the muddy banks, the Indian summer pungency of drying leaves and rose hips, the special, secret smell of wolf willow, the glint of yellow and red leaves shaking down over the camp in a chilly night wind. It is an actual pleasure to think that their boots and moccasins printed the gray silt of those bottoms where my bare feet would kick up dust years later.[2]

(2) Sense of identity. Ronald Blythe, in his composite portrait of a Suffolk village, describes the villagers' sense of identity:

> The villager who has never moved away from his birth place for anything more than military service retains the unique mark of his particular village. If a man says he comes from Akenfield he knows

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[1] Tuan, Space and Place, op. cit., pp. 155-156.

[2] Wallace Stegner, Wolf Willow (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, Laurentian Library #59, 1977), pp. 11, 112, 118.

> that he is telling someone from another part of the neighbourhood a good deal more than this. Anything from his appearance to his politics could be involved.[1]

Robert Coles quotes a black tenant farmer from Tennessee, whose sense of identity is deeply rooted in "his" land and way of life:

> I have to get the water [first thing in the morning] and that comes next. I take my oldest boy with me. He talks about going to a city one day, but I have an answer for him. I say: go, go North, go to Chicago or a place like that, and you'll pine for it here and you'll be sorry and you'll ache; you'll hurt, real bad it'll be. We're born to this land here, and it's no good when you leave. I did once; I was in the Army. I know what I could have done. I know how I could have stayed there, in the state of Indiana, up toward Chicago. But I asked myself if I wanted to be in a place I didn't want to be in--even with a check from the welfare people, or a job if I could get one or if I wanted to be back here, doing what I was taught by my daddy to do. You can see how I answered myself.... But [my son] knows what I'm telling him; for us it's a choice we have, between going away or else staying here and not seeing much money at all and living here, where you can feel you're you, and no one else, and there isn't the next guy pushing on you and kicking you and calling you every bad name there ever was. If you go, that's what you go to. If you go you can't hardly breathe, there are so many people, and you never see the sun, you never do. I used to wake up, when I was in the city on leave, military leave, and I'd ask myself, where is that sun, where does it hide itself from you?[2]

And Tuan describes how the Australian aborigine's identity comes from his and his ancestors' relationship to the landscape:

> Landscape is personal and tribal history made visible. The native's identity--his place in the total scheme of things--is not in doubt, because the myths that support it are as real as the rocks and waterholes he can see and touch. He finds recorded in his land the ancient story of the lives and deeds of the immortal beings from whom he himself descended, and whom he reveres. The whole countryside is his family tree.[3]

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[1] Ronald Blythe, Akenfield: Portrait of an English Village (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 18.

[2] Coles, Migrants, Share-croppers and Mountaineers, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

[3] Tuan, Space and Place, op.cit., pp. 152-153

(3) Sense of community: Oscar Handlin describes the attachment to the land and sense of community felt by European peasants of the pre-North American migration era:

> Stability, the deep cushiony ability to take blows, and yet to keep things as they were, came from the special place of these people on the land....The bonds that held these men to their acres were not simply the personal ones of the husbandman who temporarily mixes his sweat with the soil. The ties were deeper, more intimate. For the peasant was part of a community and the community was held to the land as a whole.
>
> Always, the start was the village. "I was born in such a village in such a parish"--so the peasant invariably began the account of himself. Thereby he indicated the importance of the village in his being; this was the fixed point by which he knew his position in the world and his relationship with all humanity.
>
> The village was a place. It could be seen, it could be marked out in boundaries, pinned down on a map, described in all its physical attributes....All these could be perceived; the eye could grasp, the senses apprehend the feel, the sound, the smell, of them....
>
> Yet the village was still more. The aggregate of huts housed a community. Later, much later, and very far away, the Old Countrymen also had this in mind when they thought of the village. They spoke of relationships, of ties, of family, of kinship, of many rights and obligations....
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> They would say then, if they considered it in looking backward, that the village was so much of their lives because the village was a whole. There were no loose, disorderly ends; everything was knotted into a firm relationship with every other thing. And all things had meaning in terms of their relatedness to the whole community.[1]

And Michael Young and Peter Willmott, describing a very different place, discuss the strong sense of community felt by residents in the working class, East London district of Bethnal Green. First, they give some general, rather amusing anecdotes of people who have moved from one area to another, which illustrate these people's strong sense of community:

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[1]Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2nd edition, 1973), pp. 7-9.

When people have to move away from one part of the borough to another, they can appreciate the difference. Mr. Gould, when he married, moved away from his parents and went about ten minutes' walk away to live near his wife's parents elsewhere in the borough, in this case in Bow. "I'd like to be back in Bethnal Green," he said. "I would really. In Bethnal Green we have good neighbours better than those in Bow I can tell you." Mrs. Tawney had moved as unwillingly in the other direction.

> "We're both from Bow. We're not very well known around here. We've only lived here since we got married, you see. In Bow you knew everybody, grew up with everybody, everybody recognized you. Over here they're a bit on the snobbish side--they know you're a stranger and they treat you like one. They cater for you more in Bow. You like the place where you're mostly born, don't you?"[1]

They then go on to discuss sense of community in general:

> In Bethnal Green the person who says he "knows everyone" is, of course, exaggerating, but pardonably so. He does, with various degrees of intimacy, know many people outside (but often through) his family, and it is this which makes it, in the view of many informants a "friendly place". Bethnal Green, or at any rate the precinct, is, it appears, a community which has some sense of being one. There is a sense of community, that is a feeling of solidarity between people who occupy the common territory, which springs from the fact that people and their families have lived there a long time.[2]

(4) Sense of environment: Boyce Richardson contrasts two views of "the bush", the intimate knowledge and love of the "insider", the Cree Indian, with the superficial disdain of the "outsider", the white pilot:

> A young pilot efficiently hauled us into the air, and with bored indifference carted us upriver. Only the day before, we had been on the river with the old man, watching how every channel, island, sand bar, even every submerged rock was known to him and loved by him. Now we were in a machine, a marvelously ingenious machine that could hover, move sideways, climb quickly, drop suddenly, do everything but dance, and to the men running such machines the superb wilderness below was featureless, boring and meaningless.... "This is some of the most barren country in the world today," he

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[1] Michael Young and Peter Willmott, Family and Kinship in East London (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1957). pp. 111-112.

[2] Ibid., pp. 112-113

said. "It has all been scraped clean by glaciers years ago and virtually nothing has grown since." The other day, he said, he had flown inland to a Lake Vincelotte. "Now I know where nowhere is."[1]

Dewey Nickerson describes the intimate knowledge of the sea and the coastline necessary for survival as a fisherman off Nova Scotia:

> I started out in the fishing boat with my father before I could walk--just the same as he did with his father. I grew up listening and paying attention to everything he had to say....When they went out in those boats they were on their own--just themselves against the sea. A gale of wind might come up--we called them the "August twisters" in them days--they'd come up suddenly and the best you could do was make for shore as fast as you could. You had to know that water and every inch of shore like the back of your hand. There was no electronic equipment, not even a weather forecast. There was only yourself and what was inside your head. Sometimes I didn't know if I was gonna make land or not. See, the mainland of Nova Scotia might be eighteen or twenty miles away when one of these sudden gales would come up and there would be no way we could make it back. That's when we'd have to turn in to Sable [Island] to land our boats. If we didn't know the waters there, that would be the end of it.[2]

And John McPhee describes "piney" Bill Wasovwich's ability to find his way unerringly around in the New Jersey Pine Barrens:

> His name is Bill Wasovwich, and he lives alone in a cabin about half a mile from Fred....When he is not working in the bogs, he goes roaming, as he puts it, setting out cross-country on long, looping journeys, hiking about thirty miles in a typical day, in search of what he calls "events"--surprising a buck, or a gray fox, or perhaps a poacher or a man with a still. Almost no one who is not native to the pines could do this, for the woods have an undulating sameness, and the understory--huckleberries, sheep laurel, sweet fern, high-

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[1]Richardson, Strangers Devour the Land, op. cit., pp. 156-157. Richardson's book is full of examples of the Indians' keen sense of environment: e.g., their remarkable ability to find their way across miles of, to the outsider, apparently featureless wilderness (p. 13); or their intimate knowledge of, deep personal association with, and memories of past events which had occurred along the river (p. 165).

[2]Bill McNeil, Voice of the Pioneer (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1978). pp. 72-73.

> bush blueberry--is often so dense that a wanderer can walk in a fairly tight circle and think that he is moving in a straight line State forest rangers spend a good part of their time finding hikers and hunters, some of whom have vanished for days. In long, pathless journeys, Bill always emerges from the woods near his cabin--and about when he plans to.[1]

(5) Sense of control: One young man, a sixth generation Newfoundlander, describes a fishing trip he took with his father, a fisherman for over fifty years, in order to understand why his father continues to undergo the rigours and dangers of a fisherman's life:

> And I said: "Why do you do this? You know you've been almost fifty years out here? You've had countless opportunities to work on the shore, because you're a good worker." "My son," he said, "there's a freedom out here, a freedom. I don't answer to nobody but me." And I said, "You've almost drowned out here." "Oh, a couple of times, you know a lope, a big wave come over; I was a bit worried about it, and you bailed like crazy and you come out of it. But nobody has ever told me that I've got to be out at 8 o'clock in the morning, and nobody is not going to tell me, either. If I want to get up at three o'clock in the morning and go fishing I'll get up. Nobody ever calls me. I'm never going to have them call me."
>
> And I said: "Well, what about the dogfish and the hazards and the sore hands and all that?" "You take that as it comes, that's part of it, part of the kind of life that I chose to live. I brought up five children, educated you all the best I could, and I take some satisfaction in that I was able to accomplish that without having to take the dole." And he said, "There's something about being out here, so wonderful, that I can't put it in words. I can tell you when she's going to blow; when there's going to be fish and when there's not going to be fish. I can get out here in a fog bank and I'll find my way home; all I need is a compass."
>
> That's the kind of challenge I suppose he saw.[2]

And John McPhee describes the relatively isolated, but independent and self-sufficient life led by residents of the Pine Barrens. Their

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[1] John McPhee, The Pine Barrens (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1968), pp. 8-9.

[2] Quoted by Allan Anderson, Salt Water, Fresh Water (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1979), p. 29.

pride in being able to survive in this unusual environment is also evident:

> As the last of the iron furnaces gradually blew out and the substitute industries failed, people either left the pines or began to lead self-sufficient backwoods lives, and while the rest of the State of New Jersey developed toward its twentieth-century aspect, the Pine Barrens all but returned to their pre-Colonial desolation, becoming, as they have remained, a distinct and separate world. The people of the pines came to be known as pineys--a term that is as current today as it was at the turn of the century. After a generation or two had lived in isolation, the pineys began to fear people from the outside....
>
> The pineys had little fear of their surroundings, from which they drew an adequate living....Another man, Scorchy Jones, who works for the state Fish and Game Division, said this to an interviewer from a small New Jersey radio station: "A sense of security is high among us. We were from pioneers. We know how to survive in the woods...."[1]

(6) Sense of change: Herbert Gans generally plays down any sense of attachment to the West End that might be experienced by its residents. But he presents this striking example, which was inspired by the announcement of the urban renewal scheme which threatened to (and ultimately did) not only change, but destroy the area:

> Subsequently I heard more anguished remarks that indicated how important the area and its people were to the speaker. In December 1957, the day after the federal government gave the city the go-ahead, one young Italian man said:
>
> > I wish the world would end tonight....I wish they'd tear the whole damn town down, damn scab town....I'm going to be lost without the West End. Where the hell can I go?[2]

Boyce Richardson illustrates the effect that sense of threatened change may have on heightening a sense of place by quoting Charlie Bossum, a young Cree in his mid-20's who works part-time in the white man's mines and hunts and traps as much as possible on his father's territory and

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[1]McPhee, The Pine Barrens, op.cit., pp. 42, 56.

[2]Herbert J. Gans, The Urban Villagers (New York: The Free Press, 1962), p. 289.

who feels at "home" in the bush. Charlie Bossum talks about the possible destruction of his land:

> It made me wonder and wonder a great deal when I heard they were going to flood and destroy the land....It seems like I'm somebody cornered, an animal so desperate to get back to my land, because I have that feeling that I might lose it at any time. I guess I will feel desperate in the future, when I do actually see the land going underwater, which would be the end of it....The white man, you see, is already here. But I still have that love and respect for my land.[1]

Sense not only of change but of imminent loss may heighten sense of place and even lead to "irrational" behaviour, such as remaining in a place of danger. Betty Kennedy, writing about Hurricane Hazel's battering of Toronto on the night of October 15, 1954, gives the following examples of people who refused to leave their homes even as the flood waters were rising around them:

> Jim McArthur and his family had a very different experience [from the motorist swept into the turbulent Don River]; their home was in the Don Valley north of the Prince Edward Viaduct for over fifty years. "... This homestead was a wild and beautiful oasis in the middle of the city as we grew up. Our homes were located on an elevated plot of land which became an island each spring. We were accustomed to the annual spring flooding of the Don River and would just wait it out. That Friday in October was something else again....
>
> "My uncle Bill, who had lived in the valley all his life, refused to leave with us. He sat on the stairs to the second floor of his house and watched the water creep up, one step at a time. He tells of watching everything turn upside down. The lights began to pop and finally all went dark as the water shorted out the fuse box. The water eventually rose five and a half feet on the first floor and ruined everything."
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>
> Joan Prezzio's family lived on a section of land where Scarlett Road crossed the Humber River. For over forty years her great-grandparents ran an ice cream parlour at that location. During the hurricane her old granddad decided that if he had lived by the river most of his life, he'd die by it. But his sons liter-

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[1] Richardson, Strangers Devour The Land, op. cit., pp. 99-100.

> ally carried him from the house. In the hours that followed, the water rose up to the eavestroughs.[1]

Other examples--both general and specific to the Toronto Island--are given in the chapters devoted to each component of a sense of place.

h. Sense of Place: Motivation for Defense of Place:

As noted earlier, sense of place both provides the motivation for, and conditions the nature of, defense of place. With respect to motivation, Relph writes:

> The places to which we are most attached are literally fields of care, settings in which we have had a multiplicity of experiences and which call forth an entire complex of affections and responses. But to care for a place involves more than having a concern for it that is based on certain past experiences and future expectations--there is also a real responsibility and respect for that place both for itself and for what it is to yourself and to others. There is, in fact, a complete commitment to that place, a commitment that is as profound as any that a person can make, for care-taking is indeed "the basis of man's relation to the world"....[2]

Islanders' care for and sense of responsibility toward the Island (as they know it) and toward other Islanders is well demonstrated by their long fight to prevent the demolition of their homes and to be allowed to remain there, which is discussed below.

iii. Introduction to Defense of Place:

a. Definition of Defense of Place:

Defense of place is composed of the specific political, legal and other actions taken by individuals or groups to protect and defend the integrity of a place to which they are emotionally attached. The scale of the place defended may range from individual homes and

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[1] Betty Kennedy, Hurricane Hazel (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1979), pp. 53-54, 56.

[2] Relph, Place and Placelessness, op. cit., p. 38.

properties,[1] to neighbourhoods,[2] to townships,[3] to broad regions[4] and nations.[5] The defensive actions themselves may range from taking

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[1]English common law recognizes the sanctity of the home and the right of individuals to protect it from intruders, as in the famous seventeenth century legal phrase "An Englishman's home is his castle." At a more emotional level, John McPhee describes the attachment to his land of Pine Barren native Bill Wasovwich and his willingness to defend it, if necessary. Mr. Wasovwich had been engaged in the back-breaking job of clearing out a four acre bog given to him by his employer in order to grow cranberries and expressed the following sentiments:

> I asked him if the land was actually his. He said that his employer had given it to him, but that he had no deed. "It's as good as my bog," he went on. "They can't take it away from me. They could legally, but they'd have to get the state troopers. They take this bog, they take me with it. I'll get up here with my rifle. I took out stumps in here the size of chairs." McPhee, op. cit..

Kouchibouguac National Park in New Brunswick provides another example. During the 1960's and early 1970's, 260+ landowners were expropriated to create a national park. Toward the end of the 1970's, a few of the former owners tried to return to their land:

> Edward Gaunce, co-ordinator of the Kouchibouguac Committee for Justice for the Expropriates, says: "Let me say it in plain words. We either get the land back or we destroy it completely. Fire in the woods, oil to pollute the rivers."
>
> John (Jackie) Vautour, a 51-year-old father of 10 who has been heading the move to reclaim the land, speaks of the growing possibility of murder. "If they want this land back, they'll carry bodies out of here," he says motioning toward the four chipboard shanties he built for his family [on his former land] and stocked with 23 rifles.

Barbara Yaffe, "Squatters Pledge To Continue Fight As Tension Mounts At Troubled Park," Globe and Mail, April 26, 1980.

[2]The urban renewal and redevelopment literature provides numerous examples of this scale of defense. See, for example, Graham Fraser, Fighting Back: Urban Renewal in Trefann Court (Toronto: A.M. Hakkert, Ltd., 1972) and J.L. Granatstein, Marlborough Marathon: One Street Against A Developer (Toronto: A.M. Hakkert Ltd. and James Lewis & Samuel, 1971).

[3]The Pickering Airport controversy outside Toronto is an example.

[4]See for example, Richardson, op. cit..

5As an obvious example, nations at war, when one responds to invasion by another.

appropriate political and legal action through to civil disobedience and even violence (either individual or collective). On the Toronto Island, the scale involved is neighbourhood and individual homes and the type of action taken (as of summer 1980) has been primarily political and legal. Civil disobedience and individual violence have been discussed in recent years, but not yet resorted to, since the political and legal actions have delayed any possible confrontation between residents and those sent to evict them.

b. Threat:

In a dialectical relationship between sense of place and defense of place, the concept of threat occupies a position of central importance, both as a catalyst to action and as a major influence on that action.

First, threat as a catalyst to action. Obviously, there would be no need to defend a place if there were no threat to change or destroy it. The existence of a threat, however, is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for defense of place. A threat (even a severe one) may exist without stimulating any response to defend that place. In order to stimulate a defensive response, the threat must first of all be perceived as being a severe one and the general context or political environment must be conducive to taking action. For example, in the West End of Boston described by Herbert Gans,[1] there was a severe threat (an urban renewal scheme to demolish the area), which was even perceived by some as being a severe one (albeit only at a

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[1]Gans, The Urban Villagers, op. cit.

relatively late point in time).[1] But relatively little (and certainly little effective) defensive action was taken, primarily because the general context of the threat was not conducive to such action being taken. For example, the potential defenders (the ethnically diverse, working class residents of the area) were unorganized, unable to organize, distrustful of the few leaders who did emerge and relatively fatalistic about the scheme.[2] Meanwhile, those who developed and supported the scheme (largely middle-class professionals and businessmen) were not sensitive to notions of the value of community preservation: they perceived of the area as simply a "slum" and as deserving of redevelopment;[3] and generally felt no political pressure from the West End to change their views. As a result, the urban renewal scheme went forward and the West End as it existed in the 1950's was destroyed.

Second, threat as continuing influence. The nature of the threat also influences the nature of the response to that threat.[4] Sense of place, as noted elsewhere, is not the only influence on defense of place. Any study of the relationship between sense of place and

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[1]Many West Enders, however, did not perceive the scheme as a severe threat. "[T]hey could not quite believe that it would happen," Gans wrote. (Ibid., p. 290.) They therefore did not take action to prevent it from happening.

[2]They shared the belief that "it was impossible to fight city hall." (Ibid. p. 296.)

[3]Gans' book did much to alter perceptions of so-called "slums" and to fuel the community preservation movement which emerged from urban renewal experiences such as this.

[4]This discussion emphasizes political threats and political responses (rather than natural environmental or other types of threats), because the case study has a high political content. The general points, however, would seem to apply in other types of situations.

defense of place must also carefully analyze and take into account the nature of the threat being posed. Obviously, the specific nature of the threat itself directs and conditions the actions taken to defend the place: whether it is a federal decision to build an airport, a provincial decision to construct a hydro-electric scheme, a municipal decision to build an expressway, or a private decision to construct a highrise apartment complex; whether it proposes immediate or only long-term change; whether it proposes relatively minor change, radical alteration, or total destruction; whether it affects a small group or a large group; whether it involves provincial legislation or procedural matters or municipal by-laws; whether a decision has already been made (and must be changed) or is simply in the planning stage; and so on. The specific nature of the threat, in sum, necessitates certain types of actions, encourages some types of actions, limits the range of possible actions and completely prevents certain other types of actions.

In addition, the general context of the threat, naturally, shapes the nature of the response: the attitudes and resources of the defenders (e.g., whether they have the money; the numbers; the political, professional, organizing and other skills; and the over-all will to try to counter the threat); the attitudes of the threateners toward the defenders and toward the issues being raised (e.g., whether there is a long history of conflict, whether they share common values and images of the place being threatened, whether there is an element of personal bitterness or antagonism); the structural relationships within the political system (e.g., whether there is a strong mayor or weak mayor system; whether there is a single party, two party, multi-party or non-partisan system; whether decision-makers are appointed, directly elected

or indirectly elected); the formal and informal nature of the decision-making process (e.g., whether there is a right to appeal to some other authority; whether the formal decision-making body is simply a "rubber-stamp" for decisions made elsewhere; whether decisions are made at the top and flow down, or vice versa); the informal, political relationships (e.g., whether the elected representatives follow the bureaucrats; whether one or two politicians dominate the others; whether the political representatives respect and listen to residents' or other special interest groups); the more ephemeral situational conditions (e.g., whether an election is imminent); the accepted code of political behaviour (e.g., whether mass demonstrations or direct challenges to authority are tolerated--if not encouraged); the prevailing political ideologies (e.g., whether there is a sense that it is possible to fight City Hall or a sense that historic buildings or viable communities should be preserved); and so on. These are the sorts of factors which may fall within the general context of a threat and which may also influence the nature of the defense of place.

c. Toronto Islanders' Defense of Place:

Islanders' sense of place has been the foundation upon which their defense of place has been built. As this investigation indicates, when their special place has been threatened with radical change or destruction, Islanders have been strongly motivated to try to defend and protect it.[1]

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[1]Copious evidence that Islanders have defended (successfully and unsuccessfully) their place against outside threats is also presented in the rest of this investigation. See below, "Brief History and Description", pp. 47 - 60, as well as the final section of each chapter describing a component of sense of place.

For example, in 1937, when the City decided to build an Island Airport at Hanlan's Point, which required the removal of over fifty houses along West Island Drive, Island residents did not quietly stand by and watch their houses be destroyed. They responded by forming the West Island Drive Association and taking quick action to counter the threat and obtain new Island sites for their homes. They presented briefs, sent large delegations to City Hall, and lobbied and negotiated with politicians and civil servants. Eventually, the City was persuaded to open up Sunfish Island for cottage development and over forty of the threatened houses were floated over to Sunfish (which was renamed Algonquin).[1]

In the late 1940's and early 1950's, Islanders opposed a series of plans to radically alter the Island as they knew and loved it. In 1947, the City Planning Board presented a proposal to demolish all the existing Island houses,[2] to build highrise apartments and hotels, and to construct a tunnel, a cross-Island Boulevard and large parking lots (Map 21). Island residents (most especially the year-round residents) responded by forming the Inter-Island Council (IIC) in 1948 and opposing the Planning Board. In 1949, when the City Planning Board made Official Plan recommendations based on its 1947 proposal, the IIC again opposed the recommendation and presented its own plan (Map 22), which was basically to improve the status quo: the park and beaches would be improved, the existing residential areas would be retained and enhanced,

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[1] The others were moved to new sites on Hanlan's Point or demolished.

[2] By this time, because of a severe housing shortage, many people had moved to the Island for year-round living and the year-round community was growing rapidly. As this study indicates elsewhere, the growth of the year-round community had major political consequences.

and no cars would be allowed to sully the natural character of the area. No final decision was made by the City. In 1951, a Joint Plan by the City Planning Board and the Toronto Harbour Commission was presented, which was similar to the 1947 plan in most respects (it also proposed radically altering the lagoon system: straightening and enlarging part of it and filling in part for car parking lots and amusement areas). (Map 23) Again, the IIC fiercely opposed it. Again, no final decision was made. In 1953, Mayor Allan Lamport made the most radical proposal of all to change the Island: not only did he recommend demolishing existing housing and building a tunnel, roadway and parking lots, but he also recommended building docking facilities and warehouses. (Map 24) Once again, Islanders (as well as others) fiercely opposed what they regarded as desecration of the natural beauty of the Island and the IIC, again, issued a counter-plan, which was similar to its 1949 plan.

It is interesting to note, however, that Islanders did not oppose the proposal to transfer the Island from the City to the newly-formed Metro for "parks purposes only". Prior to the transfer, they had been battling with the City for many years over a variety of issues, such as winter transportation, inadequate flood protection and these radical plans to change the Island. Islanders apparently hoped (even expected) that Metro would treat the Island (and the Island residents) with more respect (i.e., would avoid destroying the natural character of the Island, etc.) and did not realize that transfer to Metro would mean the destruction of their houses and community. Even after the decision to demolish all the houses, in stages over the next 10-15 years, was made (in late 1955), Islanders did not mount a concerted,

effective campaign against the decision or against the reality of the demolitions. As noted elsewhere, the political environment of the late '50's and early '60's was not conducive to successful opposition. For example, there was a strong M tro Chairman (Fred "Big Daddy" Gardiner) who was intent on building up the power of Metro, partly by producing impressive physical projects (like the Island Park) and intent on eliminating Island houses. In addition, there was no prevailing sense that Islanders (or others) could successfully fight City Hall.

With the assistance of their politically astute alderman, David Rotenberg, Islanders began to oppose the continued demolition of Island houses. The Lakeshore battle of the mid-60's was fiercely fought and only came to an end with the demolition of the final Lakeshore houses in 1968. Meanwhile, residents at the eastern end of the Island on Algonquin Island and the eastern end of Ward's Island finally began to become politically active. As discussed elsewhere, these residents had remained relatively uninvolved in the earlier political battles. But, in 1967, faced with the termination of their own leases in 1968 (a clearly perceived threat), they banded together and gained an extension to 1970. In 1969, with the rise of the citizens' movement on the Mainland, the growing feeling that community preservation itself was a desirable goal and the growing sense that residents' groups could indeed fight City Hall, the remaining Islanders formed the Toronto Island Residents Association (TIRA) to organize the political (and any other necessary) defense of the Island. From that time on, Islanders mounted a strong defense of their place.

In 1970, 1971 and May 1973, Islanders and their political

supporters succeeded in winning short-term lease extensions. But, on December 11, 1973 (shortly after the City had finally taken a strong official position that the community should be preserved), Metro Council refused to extend Islanders' leases, for a variety of reasons that are discussed elsewhere. This decision radically changed the situation. Islanders were no longer covered by even a short lease extension. To survive on the Island, they would either have to change that decision or find a way around it (e.g., by legal actions or by persuading the Province to intervene on their behalf). Since 1974, rather than becoming intimidated by the heightened threat and leaving the Island, Islanders have continued to fight, have become ever more determined to stay and have been both resourceful and energetic in the defense of "their" Island. They mounted a major campaign in the spring of 1974 to change the policy of Metro Council (which failed to attain this political goal); they launched a series of legal actions in the summer of 1974, which protected them until Ocotber 1978; they began putting pressure on the Provincial government to intervene on their behalf (with mixed results); and they again launched legal actions in the summer of 1980. From all of this, it is clear that Islanders have had a strong commitment to the Island and a strong desire to defend their place from the outside threats.

In conclusion, Islanders' defense of place has been a long and complex one. The Island issue has come before various City and Metro Committees and Councils literally dozens of times in the last forty years or so. And, in recent years, it has even come before a variety of Provincial groups (including the Legislature, the Cabinet, and the Party caucuses). This study does not attempt to explain all aspects

of Islanders' defense of place in terms of their sense of place. Other factors (such as force of personality, political inertia, the building of Metro power, the rise of the citizens' movement, personal bitterness, and so on) are certainly important and are noted where appropriate. But looking at defense of place from this perspective casts light on some aspects of the political history of the Island that might otherwise remain in the shadows and clarifies some responses that could only be inadequately understood by other means.

iv. Introduction to Toronto Island:

a. Torontonians' Fascination With the Toronto Island:

Yi-Fu Tuan has observed that "the island seems to have a tenacious hold on the imagination."[1] Certainly, in Toronto, for well over a century, Torontonians have felt a fascination, bordering on obsession, with "their" island, the Toronto Island.[2] On July 18, 1856, for example, the Leader published an editorial which bemoaned the condition of the Island (then actually still a peninsula, but popularly referred to as "the Island") and recommended that action be taken "to render it an attractive place of public resort". Since that time, an extraordinary amount of newspaper space has been devoted to the subject

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[1]Tuan, Topophilia, op. cit., p. 118.

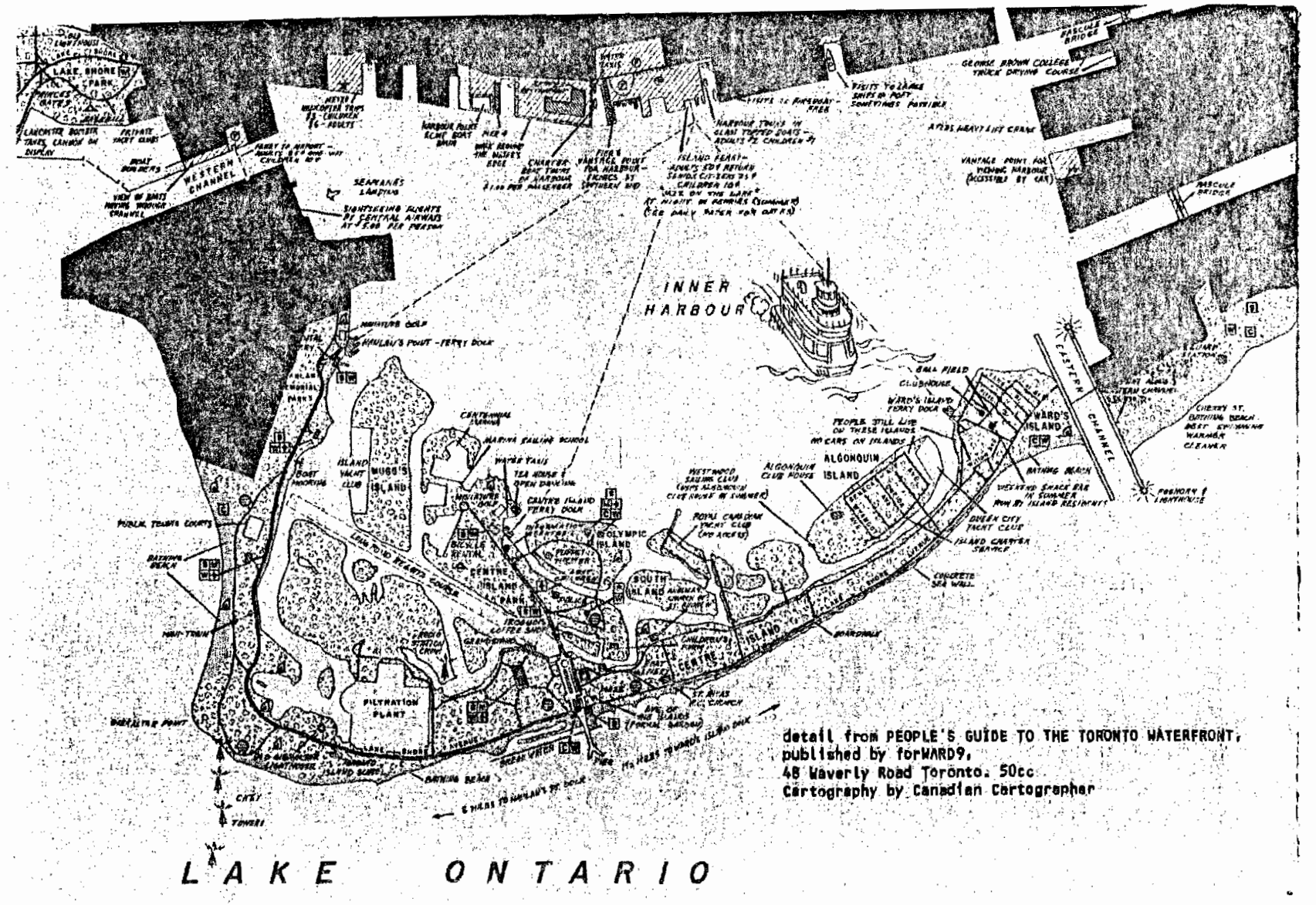
[2]As Tuan implies, islands generally are seen as exciting, mysterious, exotic places. Over the centuries, novelists, philosophers and ordinary people have held many images of the island: an earthly paradise, a place beyond the law, a place of abandonment or imprisonment, a place of adventure, a utopia, a return to nature (either "red in tooth and claw" or nature simple and virtuous), a place of romance or holiday or retreat, and so on. Investigating these images would make a fascinating study. In any event, such popular and literary images may consciously or unconsciously have contributed to Torontonians' fascination with the Toronto Island.

of enjoying and/or improving the Island, and a great deal of time has been devoted to this subject by politicians, bureaucrats and others. This has been especially true since 1956, when Metro Toronto took over the Island from the City of Toronto and adopted a policy of demolishing the houses in order to extend the Island Park (which had been established in the 1880's). This policy decision, of course, sparked the controversy which was still unresolved in the summer of 1980. The Toronto Island issue, in fact, is probably the longest-standing unresolved issue in Metro's history and every well-informed citizen probably has an opinion on the subject. It is, clearly, much more than "just another local issue". This is not to belittle the importance of such "local issues", but only to emphasize that in the history of Metro Toronto, the Toronto Island issue (in terms of its duration, the number of participants involved and the political passions aroused) is in a class by itself.

b. Brief History and Description:

The Toronto Island is really a complex of smaller islands which is about 3½ miles long (excluding the Island Airport), contains approximately 600 acres and lies about a mile south of the City of Toronto in Lake Ontario. (See Map 1.) The Island is accessible only by boat and no private cars are allowed on it.

The first permanent white settlers on Toronto Island (or Peninsula, as it was until 1858) were scattered fishing families, one of whom was named Ward. Ward's Island was named after him and some of his descendants still live on the Island. By 1833, a hotel was opened and the era of the Island as a popular resort was established. In 1867, what was once romantically known as "the Island of Hiawatha" came into



Source: Students of Toronto Island Public School, A History of the Toronto Islands, 1972

MAP 1

City ownership. At the same time, a plan was registered and cottage development (on publicly-owned land) officially began. In the 1880's, the City established Island Park (at Centre Island), which covered 200 acres and still forms the nucleus of the later, expanded park. Meanwhile, the scramble for Island lots continued and residential development grew on land owned by the City and leased to individuals.

Three residential areas developed--Hanlan's Point at the western end, Centre Island, and Ward's Island at the eastern end. Hanlan's Point was the site of the first summer cottage community, as well as of a major amusement area (which had, among other well remembered wonders, an elaborate hand-carved merry-go-round), a baseball stadium, a large hotel (Hanlan's Hotel) and related facilities.

The Centre Island community along the Lakeshore included many large cottages built by wealthy Torontonians, like the Gooderhams and the Masseys. Eventually, when the wealthy owners departed for more fashionable summer resorts north of Toronto (in the late '20's or so), many of these large houses were converted into apartments and rooms, which were rented to eager young bank clerks and secretaries and other more "middle class" summer enthusiasts. Manitou Road, popularly known as the "Main Drag", with its hotels, entertainment spots, shops, fire and police stations, was strategically located to serve both residents and visitors. This road is now the rather stark, formal garden promenade, Avenue of the Islands.

The Ward's Island community developed later than the Hanlan's and Centre Island communities and was physically sharply divided between the relatively large houses of the western stretch of Lakeshore Avenue and "tent city" further to the east. Most of the large cottages were

built between 1910 and the early 1920's, although some were built much more recently. The tenting area, with approproately diminutive lots, was staked out around the turn of the century and by 1918 over 80 tents were in place. The two main residential areas of Ward's Island were separated by a village green, which also contained the Ward's Hotel (1883) and the Wiman Baths (1881), Wiman Terrace and Wiman Shelter (1885).

By the 1880's, the summer people on the Island were numerous enough to support an Anglican Church, St. Andrews-by-the-Lake, which was moved many years later by Metro from its original location west of Manitou Road to its present more eastern location. By 1888 there were also enough residents to support a one-room schoolhouse (although in 1901 the enrollment was still only 12). And by the turn of the century, there were some 3,000 summer residents, as well as many enthusiastic park visitors. Local historians claim that in its heyday the Island, with its parkland, beaches, residents and amusement areas, was visited by as many as 100,000 (and, more frequently, by 60,000) on a peak day. Now the peak reached is about 40,000.

Island life continued on basically unchanged until the 1930's when the Toronto Island Airport was constructed (1937) at Hanlan's Point, on the site of part of the residential and amusement areas. As a result of political pressure created by Island residents, the City allowed the affected Islanders to move their cottages to other lots on the Island. Over forty of the Hanlan's Point cottages were floated to previously uninhabited Sunfish Island (now known as Algonquin Island), where they can still be seen on the perimeter lots. It was during the 1930's as well that wooden cottages replaced canvas tents on Ward's

Island and that cottage owners on both Algonquin and Ward's signed ground leases with the City, which formed the basis of subsequent leases with Metro. The leases signed in 1938 were for 21 years (with up to 10 years extension) on Algonquin and for only yearly tenancy in the former tenting area of Ward's. They contained, among other conditions, a clause stating that the Lessee (i.e., the cottage owner) would receive no compensation if and when his land lease was terminated (residential leases in other parts of the Island were compensatory--cottage owners would, and did, receive compensation). The remaining residents on Algonquin and Ward's would therefore receive no compensation for their houses if Metro did acquire them.

During the '30's and early '40's, the winter community was still very small, numbering only a few hundred. Then during the later War years and especially immediately after the War, year-round occupancy began in earnest. When Toronto was feeling the pinch of an acute post-War housing crisis, many Islanders winterized their cottages and either spent the winter there themselves or rented to other people who did. The City fathers initially acquiesced in, and even encouraged the development of the winter community. And by the early 1950's, the winter population is said to have reached a peak of 3000-4000 (while the summer population reached a peak of some 8000-10,000). The Island school population, which now numbers about 100, climbed to over 500 in the early '50's. But the development of the winter community brought with it certain problems, most notably the need for (and the demand for) improved winter transportation services. This was a major factor in the transfer of the Island from the City to Metro in 1956.

The modern era of planning for the Island began in 1947. In

that year the City of Toronto Planning Board presented a proposal which envisioned replacing the cottages with more solid residences (including apartment buildings), developing more parkland, constructing a highway and providing parking for 5000 cars. (Map 21) The Planning Board did not endorse this proposal (although they later endorsed a similar one), but simply presented it to stimulate debate. And stimulate debate it did. Islanders responded with their own plan, which basically supported the status quo. They advocated maintaining (but improving) the existing residential areas, keeping the Islands free of private cars, and developing the wilder parts of the Island parkland. (Map 22) A number of other plans were proposed, and these took a different approach. They included proposals for highways, warehousing, highrise apartments, luxury hotels, and so on. With the exception of the Island residents' own plans, plans proposed for the Island prior to the creation of Metropolitan Toronto in 1953 and the transfer of the Island to Metro in 1956 were aimed at overcoming the financial drain (caused by the cost of winter transportation) on the City, the Toronto Transportation Commission and the Toronto Harbour Commission.

Meanwhile, Metropolitan Toronto[1] was created in 1953 and, under the strong (some would say autocratic) leadership of Metropolitan Chairman Fred "Big Daddy" Gardiner, was beginning to flex its muscles. The appeal of redeveloping the Island exclusively as regional parkland was considerable. Not only did the provision of additional regional

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[1]A federation of the City of Toronto and the surrounding suburban municipalities. Metro had control over certain designated functions and shared control over others with the local municipalities.

parkland on the waterfront appear to be inherently "good", but the "pure park" concept also had the virtue of simplicity. For a variety of reasons, the idea of transferring the Island from the City to Metro was a mutually attractive one. From the City's perspective, it was unloading a financial burden onto a larger body that presumably could more easily carry it. From Metro's perspective, it would be gaining a large, potentially highly attractive regional park (as well as building up its own power base). Spurred on by the high water and flooding of the Island in the early 1950's (which, among other things, were nuisances and expensive to cope with), the City in 1954 asked Metro to assume control over the Island and develop it for park and non-commercial purposes only. Metro Council acceded to this request in 1955 and the transfer was accomplished in 1956.

With this transfer from the City to Metro in 1956, a new chapter in the history of the Toronto Island commenced. Initial plans for the Island included raising the level of the area to prevent future flooding and developing it as a recreational resource. The presence of the 600-odd cottages was seen as an impediment to both aims; and the demolition of the houses began. Removal of the buildings started at Centre Island and Hanlan's Point and swept along the Lakeshore to just west of the remaining Ward's Island houses. The ground leases for most of these houses had been for 21 years with a right of renewal for another 21 years. The Lessor (Metro), however, was not compelled to renew and if the leases were terminated (as they were) the Lessees were compensated for their buildings. The lease terminations and demolitions proceeded with relatively little opposition from Island residents throughout the late '50's and early '60's. (See Appendix I ,

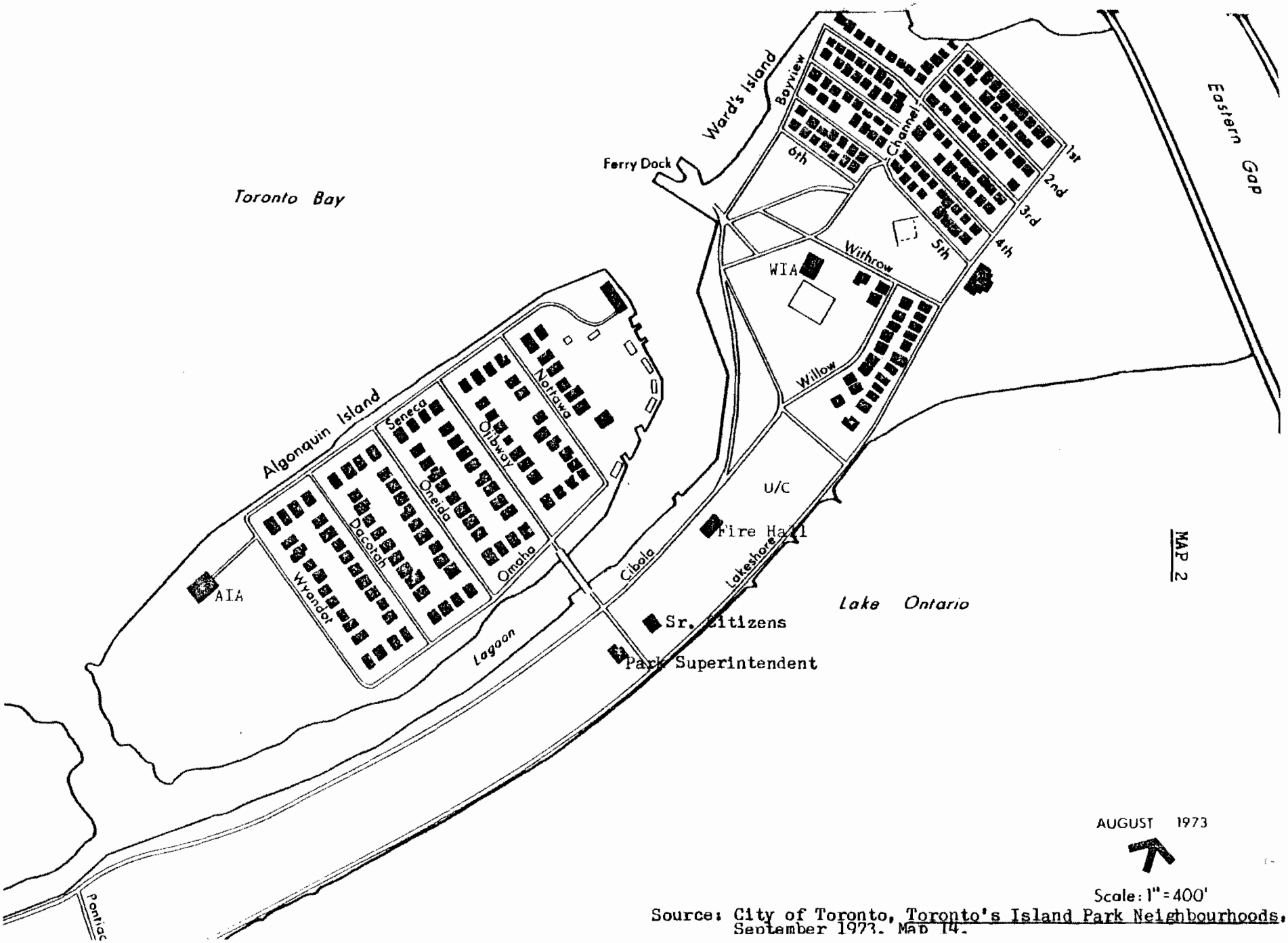
"Demolition of Island Properties".) But, as they proceeded visibly and, at least at first, seemingly inexorably along the Lakeshore east of the "Main Drag", Islanders began to protest. Initially, their opposition was unsuccessful, and houses continued to come down. But, as the 60's proceeded, their protest became fiercer, more expert and more successful. Guided and represented by their sharp-witted and sharp-tongued alderman, David Rotenberg, they managed to delay the demolition of a number of the Lakeshore houses on Ward's Island for several years. But, ultimately, in 1968, these too were lost and demolished (bringing the total of demolitions to over 400). This was the last large-scale demolition of Island houses.

Only two groups of houses totalling approximately 250) now remain clustered under a heavy growth of trees at the eastern end of the Island complex: a group of 104 one to one-and-a-half storey frame houses on Algonquin Island and another group of 147 houses on Ward's Island. Altogether the residential areas occupy less than 5% of the Island. The hotel and other commercial facilities that used to grace Ward's Island have been demolished. Each Island has a large, frame Clubhouse used for a variety of community activities and Ward's Island has tennis courts, bowling greens, and a baseball diamond set in "the park". The present, relatively spacious arrangement of houses on Algonquin was laid out in 1938 when the first cottages were floated over from Hanlan's Point. The houses are now set on lots of 50' x 100', which are arranged along a regular grid system of fairly broad pedestrian streets. The eastern tip of Algonquin is occupied by the Queen City Yacht Club, many of whose boats are moored picturesquely along the lagoon separating Algonquin from Ward's Island. Algonquin is

connected to the main island by a steeply-arched wooden bridge. The houses on Ward's are set in two clusters. A small group of 24 houses lies between the Ward's Island Clubhouse and the Ward's Island beach. And the main Ward's Island neighbourhood--123 houses, which line narrow, irregular, carless streets--lies across the green. On Ward's, the houses are set on extremely small lots (generally 40' x 45') which reflect the tent origins of the community. The physical impression left by the two communities--Ward's and Algonquin--is therefore quite different. (See Map 2.)

The ground leases for the remaining residences were due to expire in 1968 and Metro originally set this as the time for the removal of these houses and their residents. In 1967, however, the residents in this part of the Island dug in their heels and managed to gain an extension until 1970.

After this initial success at the eastern end of the Island, the political climate on the Mainland began to change. In the late '60's and early '70's, fuelled by opposition to public and private redevelopment schemes in the City's core and to transportation plans (notably the Spadina Expressway proposal), the "citizens' movement" was growing in the City of Toronto, as in other major North American cities. Islanders both benefited from and contributed to this development. As a reflection of this new mood, the remaining Island residents (on Ward's and Algonquin Islands) formed the Toronto Island Residents Association (TIRA) in the summer of 1969 and became more outspoken in their political dealings with City Hall. Because values seemed to be changing and the issues were becoming more complex, Metro was persuaded to grant additional temporary stays of execution in 1970 and 1971.



Source: City of Toronto, Toronto's Island Park Neighbourhoods, September 1973. Map 14.

Meanwhile, the burgeoning neighbourhood preservation movement (closely related to the more general citizen participation movement) culminated in the December 1972 municipal election, when Islanders' staunch supporter, David Rotenberg (ironically also the prime target of many "reform" politicians and their supporters because of his "pro-development" stands on Mainland issues), was defeated by David Crombie (an equally strong Island supporter) and a "reform" City Council, sympathetic to community preservation arguments, was elected. Islanders now had very strong support at the City level.

The mood of reform and sensitivity to community preservation arguments, however, did not extend to Metro Council. During the early 1970's, therefore, City and suburban politicians on Metro Council clashed over a variety of issues, including the Island issue, which came to a head in 1973. In the spring, Islanders and their political supporters, buoyed by the electoral success of "reform politicians" at the City level in 1972, tried to persuade Metro to grant them not just a one year extension, but a five year extension. Metro politicians were unwilling to grant this, but, in May, they were persuaded to give Islanders another one year extension (to August, 1974) and also to ask both the City and the Metro Parks Commissioner to prepare reports on the future of the Island residential areas. The City's staff report, Toronto's Island Park Neighbourhoods (September 1973) recommended that the Island residential areas be returned to the City and retained as a permanent community. The Metro Parks Commissioner recommended that the Metro policy of acquiring and demolishing the remaining houses in order to expand the Island Park be reaffirmed and carried out. City Council, by an overwhelming majority, endorsed the report prepared by

its staff; but Metro Council (in an almost straight city-suburban split), on December 11, 1973, rejected the idea of a permanent life--or even an extended life--for the Island community and set August 31, 1974 as the date when all Island leases would be terminated.

Recovering swiftly from the shock of this loss, Island residents launched a major campaign in the spring of 1974 to reopen the issue and change the policy of Metro Council. After months of exhausting work (rallying public support, gaining endorsations from numerous residents' groups and special interest groups, such as Labour and Church organizations, lobbying politicians, and so on), Islanders again went down to defeat at Metro Council. First, on May 31, 1974 and again on June 18, 1974. On both occasions, they failed to even have the issue reopened, let alone have the policy changed.[1]

At this point in time, summer 1974, Islanders went to the courts and launched various actions, which took another several years to run their course. Again, they ultimately lost. But they managed to delay the execution of the policy for another four years, until the end of October of 1978. They then decided not to make the final legal appeal (which would have only gained a short delay), in order to put the issue back in the political arena, the only place where an ultimate solution could be won.

With the Islanders back in the political arena, the Provincial government (being in a minority government position and faced with the fact that both opposition parties were in favour of retaining Island

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[1]In April 1975, Islanders again tried to get a motion through Metro Council. This time it was a relatively weak motion, which would have delayed the termination of the leases and demolition of the houses until the issue was studied by a special committee. Again, they were soundly defeated.

homes) reluctantly entered the fray. But rather than acceding to the request of Islanders and the City and to a resolution passed by the Provincial legislature to introduce legislation to transfer the land from Metro to the City in order to create a permanent residential community, the Provincial government announced in December 1978 that it would act as a mediator in the dispute between the City and Metro. The City's negotiator, Mayor John Sewell, made three offers to Metro's representative, Metro Chairman Paul Godfrey, including offers to buy all or part of the Island. No offer was accepted. With the failure of these negotiations to reach an agreement, the Provincial government introduced a bill containing its own proposal on October 19, 1979. It proposed that present Island residents be allowed to remain as long as they wanted, but, as soon as they died or moved, their property would be transferred to Metro, which could either demolish the houses to extend the park or, less likely, keep the houses to provide accommodation for such needy people as senior citizens. The plan was labelled a "slow death" for the community and was vociferously rejected by the Provincial opposition parties, City politicians and Islanders alike. As a result, the Province did not press forward with its plan, but let it die at the end of the session.

Before the Provincial legislature reconvened in 1980, Mayor Sewell decided to approach Metro Council directly with his offer that the City buy Ward's and Algonquin Islands from Metro. On February 26/27, 1980, however, Metro Council narrowly rejected a compromise motion (to set up a committee to investigate the details of a transfer) and voted instead to enforce the writs of possession (i.e., to evict Islanders) if the Province did not pass legislation similar to its

October 1979 proposal by June 31, 1980. Shortly after this Metro meeting, the Province did reintroduce its original proposal. This was once again soundly rejected by the Opposition parties, City politicians and Island residents, for the same reasons as before, since it meant that, ultimately, the community would disappear.

As the June 30, 1980 deadline set by Metro Council approached, Mayor Sewell, backed by Island residents and a large group of City politicians, was determined to make another attempt at Metro Council. In concert with other City altermen, he prepared a proposal for the City to buy back Algonquin Island and Ward's Island east of Pontiac Avenue in order to preserve the existing residential areas and to expand the community (by as much as 250 housing units). City Council endorsed this proposal on May 14, 1980. But the Mayor was unable to find any member of Metro Council who was willing (and procedurally able) to sponsor a motion to re-open the issue at Metro Council so that the City proposal could be presented.[1] The City proposal, therefore, could not be put before Metro Council.

Meanwhile, at the Provincial level, Islanders and the Opposition parties continued to reject the proposed Bill (Bill 5). Finally, on the last day of the session, Intergovernmental Affairs Minister, Thomas Wells, announced that because of this opposition, the Government would not bring Bill 5 forward for second reading . He also announced

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[1]According to Metro rules of procedure, since the Island issue had already been discussed and a decision made during this term of Council (in February 1980), the subject could only be discussed again if someone who had voted with the majority (i.e., against Islanders in February) changed his or her mind and was willing to sponsor a motion to reopen the issue.

the formation of a five-person commission under lawyer (and former Conservative candidate) Barry Swadron to study and report on the future of the Island residential areas by the fall. Mr. Wells asked the City and Metro to each appoint two members and asked Metro not to enforce its writs of possession (i.e., not to evict Islanders) in the interim. At the last Metro Council meeting before the June 30 deadline, Metro Council on June 24 simply "received" the letter from Mr. Wells and took no action (e.g., to stay the execution of the writs or to appoint representatives). Metro was determined to proceed with evicting Island residents. In the face of this extreme threat, Islanders held a large public rally, which attracted over 2000 supporters on July 1, 1980, to demonstrate both public and political support (e.g., Mayor Sewell, M.P. David Crombie and other politicians made speeches of support) and their own determination to stay. Islanders (supported by the Provincial Attorney-General's office) then launched another court action, arguing that Metro's writs of possession were not valid. On July 27, the Ontario Supreme Court ruled, however, that Metro's writs were valid and the Sheriff prepared to enforce them. Islanders immediately sought leave to appeal this decision. Before this request was heard by the Ontario Court of Appeal, the Acting-Sheriff decided to try to serve the eviction notices on July 28, 1980. Islanders, upon hearing that the Sheriff was about to land, put into operation their elaborate defense system (which included transporting workers and supporters back from the City, patrolling the Island itself, communicating via a CB radio system and so on). TIRA representatives--backed by several hundred Islanders who were linking arms and singing "We will not be moved"--met with the Acting-Sheriff at the Angonquin Bridge and persuaded him

not to try to proceed until the leave to appeal was decided. On July 31, the Ontario Court of Appeal granted the Islanders leave to appeal the earlier decision and ordered Metro not to proceed with the evictions until the appeal case was decided. The appeal was not expected to be heard until at least the end of September, so Mr. Wells announced that, since Metro had refused to appoint two representatives to the provincial commission,[1] Mr. Swadron would proceed as a one-man commission and would try to report before the appeal was heard in the fall. Islanders would have a temporary breathing space since the writs could not be served at least until the fall. The next round would depend on the operation and results of the Swadron Commission.

c. Social Profile:

The following is a brief social profile of the community today. Much of it is based on the 1973 City report, Toronto's Island Park Neighbourboods (September 1973).[2]

The Island population varies both seasonally and from year to year (largely because of the attrition due to the demolitions during the '50's and 60's), so it is nearly impossible to arrive at a precise figure. In 1973, the total summer and year-round population was between 700 and 750. There are no reasons to believe that this figure has changed substantially. (See Appendix G , "Problems in Estimating Island Population".)

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[1] On July 21, 1980, City Council, which was eager for the Commission to be set up and start working, appointed two members, as requested by Mr. Wells.

[2] The City Planning staff organized a survey in July 1973. Useable returns were received from 192 or 78% of the houses on both Islands--81 on Algonquin and 111 on Ward's. They contain information on 556 people on both Islands (225 on Algonquin and 331 on Ward's). Not every respondent answered every question, so the totals for each question may vary somewhat.

The Toronto Islanders form what is mostly a year-round community, with a large proportion of the houses (80%)[1] being occupied during both summer and winter and a large percentage of the population living there year-round (75%). There are, however, significant differences between the two Islands. Algonquin is almost completely a year-round community (91% of the population), whereas Ward's has a larger number of summer-only residents (34% summer-only).

The age profile developed indicates, among other things, that the percentage of young adults aged 20-34 is higher on the Island (35%) than in either the City (29%) or the suburbs (23%); and that there are differences between the year-round and the summer-only groups. Children and the elderly make up a greater proportion of summer-only residents than year-round residents (summer-only: 32% aged 0-15 and 15% aged 60+). The young adults group, however, is significantly larger among the year-round residents (year-round: 32% aged 25-39; summer only: 24% aged 25-39). As the City report hypothesized, the summer climate provides a healthy environment for the young and the old; but the winter climate is perhaps too harsh for the elderly; and the general climate of uncertainty about the future perhaps does not encourage families with young children to come or to stay. Young adults, particularly those with no children are more mobile and therefore perhaps more able to withstand the climate of uncertainty.

A relatively large percentage of Islanders could be classified

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[1]The Toronto Island Residents Association (TIRA) reported that 87% of all the houses were occupied during both the summer and winter in 1973.

as middle to upper income: 21% (of the 187 households that replied) had a total 1973 annual household income of $9,000 - $11,999 and another 46% earned $12,000 or more (the amount estimated as necessary to be able to purchase a house in Metro in 1973). One third earned less than $9,000 and 14% less than $5,000.

Islanders are a relatively well-educated (only 10% of the responding adults had less than a high school equivalent), essentially white collar group of people (only 6% of the occupations reported were classified as "blue collar"; 40% were general white collar, another 40% were professional and, interestingly, a full 13.4% were in the arts).

Finally, despite the uncertainty of recent years, many members of the Island community have deep roots and a remarkable number of people have lived on or come to the Island for a long time. Only 36% of all the people covered by the 1973 survey had been there for less than 5 years (this figure included young children as well as adults) and 44% had been on the Islands for more than 10 years. Once again, there is a significant difference between year-round and summer residents. A larger proportion of the year-round residents have been on the Island for less than 5 years (38% compared with only 15% of the summer residents) and a smaller proportion for more than 10 years (42% compared with 56% of the summer residents) and for more than 20 years (23% compared with 40% of the summer residents). This is perhaps not surprising, since year-round residents, particularly those with children, are likely to be more affected by the uncertainty than the summer residents.

In short, the Toronto Island community is predominantly a year-round, relatively well-educated, middle-class community of approximately 700 people, many of whom have relatively deep roots there.

The next chapter discusses the methods and approach adopted in order to study both sense of place and defense of place on the Island. This is followed by six chapters, each of which discusses a separate component of sense of place and how it relates to defense of place.