

DID YOU KNOW ?

Argyle Mall used to be a Drive-In Theatre.



The Tale of the Skyway Drive-In, by Bruce Nolan (London Township, A Rich Heritage, Vol 1)

In the spring of 1947, a strange looking structure started to take shape at the south-east corner of Clarke Sideroad and Dundas Street. Up until that time, the only buildings in that area were the cabins operated by Ted Vining on the south-west corner....the Vining cabins were reputed to rent by the hour as well as overnight. Ted was well known as a 'bootlegger' in those days when the LCBO kept very short hours of sale. I was able to watch the progress of the new structure from my bedroom window on the second floor of our house on Calgary Street, since there were almost no other buildings to block my view. My curiosity got the better of me, and I rode my bike out to the site to find out what was being built. The ground around the structure was well covered with gravel, making it easy to drive or ride on. There was a large, new looking Cadillac parked near a small office building. As I approached, a man dressed in a suit and wearing a 'ten-gallon Stetson' came out of the office. I asked him what it was they were building and he told me it was a drive-in theatre. He proceeded to tell me how cars would be parking on the ramps and speaker boxes would carry the sound into the cars. I asked if there were any jobs for teenagers, and he said, 'Yes, we need ushers to show the drivers where to park and how to use the speakers.' He told me his name was 'Doc' Manley and that he was the owner of this new Skyway theatre, which was only the one to be built in Ontario. He had previously built one in Hamilton, and had a chain of them in Ohio, which is where he came from.