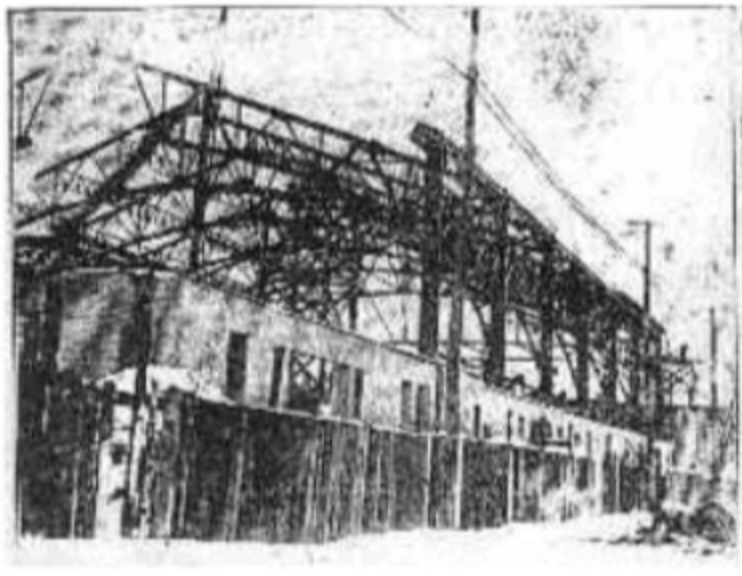




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MUTUAL STREET ARENA - Pre-Leaf History

Toronto Arenas

Although the team wasn't a founder member of the National Hockey League it joined the NHL in its first season back in 1917. The team held the Stanley Cup for two seasons, although they only won it once, because the health department halted the Montreal Canadiens (NHL) vs. Seattle Metropolitans (PCL) final of 1919 after five games because of the flu epidemic in which Montreal player Joe Hall had died. The team changed its name to Toronto St Patricks for the 1919-20 season.

Home Ice: Mutual Street Arena

Team colours: Blue and White

Honours: Won the Stanley Cup in 1918.

Toronto St Patricks

Played in the National Hockey League from 1919-26. The team was formerly known as the Toronto Arenas. Name changed to the Toronto Maple Leafs in 1926.

Home ice: Mutual Street Arena

Team colours: Green, White

Arena Gardens: Toronto's original wrestling palace (1922-1938)

Maple Leaf Gardens is Toronto's most storied wrestling venue and is one of a handful of arenas that can credibly be called a pro wrestling mecca. For 64 years, the Gardens was host to hundreds of wrestling matches, including four NWA world title changes.

Mutual Street Arena Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Built in 1911. Used for hockey between 1912 and 1931 - when the Toronto Maple Leafs transferred to the new Maple Leaf Gardens. The arena was originally called Arena Gardens. Home ice for : Toronto Blueshirts (1912-17), Toronto Arenas (1917-19), Toronto St Patricks (1919-26), Toronto Maple Leafs (1926-31) Capacity : 8,000

The building was demolished in 1990. The building was demolished in 1990.

But before there was Maple Leaf Gardens, there was another Gardens that was Toronto's primary wrestling venue -- the site where major league pro wrestling became established in the city. That was Arena Gardens -- later known as Mutual Street Arena.

Arena Gardens was where Ivan Mickailoff began promoting weekly shows in 1929. It was also where he presented his final Toronto show in 1938 -- the last time the building was used for pro wrestling.

Even before Mickailoff came to town, Arena Gardens had been the site of two matches between Stanislaus Zbyszko and Canadian champion George Walker in 1922 and 1924 (see ad at right). Some of the names that Michailoff presented at the Arena included Strangler Lewis and Toots Mondt, as well as reigning world champions Gus Sonnenberg, Ed Don George, Henri Deglane, Jim Londos, Ali Baba, and Everett Marshall, who all defended their title in the building (as did light heavyweight champion Billy Weidner). Toronto-made world champion Vic Christie defended his title there once as well.

Rival promoter Jack Corcoran also promoted some shows at the Arena in 1931 before moving over to Maple Leaf Gardens when it opened in November of that year.

Arena Gardens was built in 1912 for \$500,000 and was at the time the largest indoor arena in the country. It was located east of Yonge on Mutual Street between Dundas and Shuter, not far from Massey Hall, which was also used at times for pro wrestling shows, particularly when the Arena was closed for repairs. Sir Henry Pellatt, the man behind Casa Loma, was one of the Arena's primary backers.

The NHL's first Stanley Cup winners, the Toronto Arenas (1917-18), were named after the building and played their home games there, as would the Toronto St. Pats and the Toronto Maple Leafs.

In 1938, the Arena was leased to William Dickson who turned it into a recreation facility offering ice skating in winter and roller skating in summer. Dixon bought the building in 1945 and it remained in the family for the next 43 years. Curling sheets -- 18 of them -- were added in a 1962 renovation, and the building was renamed The Terrace, a name it kept until it was sold in 1988 to become the site of a condominium complex. It closed its doors on April 30, 1989 and was demolished a few months later.

In the Toronto Star, Jim Proudfoot wrote:

The birthplace of professional hockey in Toronto is about to disappear - torn down and replaced by, yes, yet another picturesque pile of residential condominiums.

Before long, people will dwell at Cathedral Square and they'll have no idea, most of them, that their homes sit precisely where so much of this city's history took place. A Stanley Cup was won there and the Maple Leafs started out there. Sammy Luftsprung fought there and Frank Sinatra sang there. The Harlem Globetrotters entertained there and Torchy Peden rode his bike there. Foster Hewitt broadcast his first hockey game there.

Soon it'll be gone and shortly after that, forgotten.

And so it's goodbye forever to another chunk of what's made Toronto what it is today, about to join Sunnyside [amusement park], Thorncliffe [racetrack], Dufferin [racetrack], Icelandia [skating rink/arena], Ravina [Gardens -- one-time practice rink for the Leafs] and Long Branch [racetrack] in a dim and distant past - just a trivia question of the 21st century.

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commitment to viewers visual enjoyment, and sports that are not fans upon entering will be when they leave our site.

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