THE GRANGE

VOLUME SEVEN

LEGEND OF THE MISSISSAUGA MIRACLE
November, 2019.

Celebration Square, Mississauga.

You know what’s boring?

Civics!

Yeah...

You know what else is boring?

Civics projects!

Where are we going to find out about emergencies in Mississauga?

Whoa... wait a minute. What are they showing up there?

Oh, my Mom told me about this.

Some kind of mass evacuation 'cause of some train derailment.

Seems like there’s lots of stuff on this train derailment.

Yeah. Wikipedia has lots of info.

Score!
Alright, let's get cracking on this tomorrow morning.

Sure. Wanna split an Uber?

Yeah.

Could you imagine being there for that train thing?

It'd be like being in a movie!

So cool!

Cool? It was scary times back then.

Largest peacetime evacuation ever at the time.

People panicked but no one was harmed.

Uh driver? I think this is the wrong way. My app is telling me...

Welcome to 1979...

Oh my g...

...and that phone won't help you here.
There's something seriously wrong with that train!

Whoa! Look out for that car!

10 November 1979. 11:55 PM
Yes, Ma'am! Right away. Everyone alright? Come with me!

Hurry! It isn't safe here.
"KRRRT" HEAD TO COOKSVILLE STATION --BREAK "KRRRT"

GO AHEAD

"KRRRT" ...TRAIN MANIFEST "KRRRT"

COPY. ON OUR WAY.

WHAT ABOUT THE ...
WHERE'D THE UBER GO?

...train manifest
COPY. ON OUR WAY.

THE TRAIN ENGINEER AND BRAKEMAN HAVE DECOUPLED THE REST OF THE TRAIN AND ARE HEADED TO COOKSVILLE STATION.

WE HAVE BEEN DISPATCHED TO RENDEZVOUS THERE AND GET THE TRAIN MANIFEST FROM THEM. IT'S IMPORTANT WE KNOW WHAT'S IN THOSE DERAILLED CARS.

EVERYTHING IS GOING SO FAST!

IT'S NOT LIKE THE MOVIES AT ALL.

11 November 1979. 12:30 am

ERINDALE STATION.
"KRRT" All available officers report to the Emergency Command Centre.

11 November 1979. 1:00 am

We have the train’s manifest!

Emergency Command Centre
Mavis Rd. North of Dundas St.

Hmmm... It’s not looking good.

Eleven of the derailed tankers contain propane and one with 90 tons of chlorine.

We need to assess the danger we’re dealing with here.

I need to get this message to Captain Arnold at the derailment site.

We’ll go!
Captain Arnold!

We have a message for Captain Arnold!

The Captain is busy. I can't let you get any closer. Show me the message.

Hmm...you should put these on just in case. With Chlorine in those tankers, it can turn into a toxic gas.

How is the fire fight going?

It's too early to say, but with the propane tankers, our priority will be to keep it from leaking and exploding.

That probably means maintaining a long, controlled burn.

Captain, the Chief sent this.

This is my assessment. Please take this back to Chief Bentley.
Then it’s settled. The risk of chlorine gas is unavoidable.

There’s no other choice but to evacuate.

We did a good job, huh?

Yeah, but I’ve never seen the streets so busy and then suddenly so empty.
Hey, what’s going on?

We’ve received an order to expand the evacuation area.

With the increasing winds and the threat of toxic gas, this place isn’t safe anymore.

How can we help....

This is bad.

Oh no!

Come with me.

We are moving everyone further away.
12 November 1979. 12:30 am

2nd Emergency Command Centre, Press Conference

Be careful, Mayor, you sprained your ankle.

I'll be fine!

The primary worry is still the chlorine tanker.

If it spills its contents or the wind shifts, we have to be prepared.

If this had happened farther down the track, we would have seen thousands of people wiped out.

It's a miracle it happened here.

I am SOOO tired.

Thank you for all your effort, you were both a great help!

Same.

[Yawn]
Isn't there anything else we can do?

No, you deserve a rest. That car there will take you to get some food and get you home.

This has been a crazy experience.

Hey wait, you're our Uber driver!

So was this all for real?

You've experienced it first hand, but so much more happened.

In total, over 220,000 people were evacuated.

Police coordinated the effort with the help of city buses, ambulance, and the Red Cross.

Firefighters fought the propane-fueled blaze for several days.

Chemical experts were called in to help. An estimated 75% of the chlorine escaped into the atmosphere and another 35 pounds continued to leak even after the fire was out.

It took 7 days before it was safe to allow evacuees to return home.
It truly was an incredible effort.

I'm just thankful no one was hurt.

Present day, November 2019.

Good luck on your Civics project!

Just remember, in times of emergency, it takes coordination and cooperation from officials and citizens alike, to ensure the safety of everyone.

Is it just me or did that driver look a lot like the mayor at the press conference?

Nah, they look totally different!

Hmm... maybe you're right.
On the evening of November 10th, 1979, citizens in the young City of Mississauga were unaware that something catastrophic was about to occur.

Freight trains frequently carry hazardous materials through the City of Mississauga. CP train #54 was carrying 106 rail cars from Sarnia to Toronto on a weekly scheduled run. Thirty-eight cars were carrying cargo that the Canadian Transport Commission designated as hazardous materials, including liquid styrene, caustic soda, liquid petroleum products, including highly explosive propane and butane, and liquid chlorine.

At approximately 11:53 pm, as the train crossed Burnhamthorpe Road, an axle bearing failed and one rail car lost a pair of wheels. The train continued until, at approximately 11:56 pm at the Mavis Road crossing, 24 rail cars derailed. Massive explosions, caused by ruptures in butane- and propane-carrying rail cars, were seen more than 100 kilometres away. One explosion hurled a 90-ton tanker car filled with liquid propane more than 675 metres away from the derailment site. The night sky shone orange in the fire, and Mississauga residents could see, hear and feel the evolving emergency.

The initial cause of the derailment was a “hot box” – or an overheated journal box that connected the moving axle of the wheel to the car above. Car 33 had an older model journal box that had failed. When the dangling undercarriage of the damaged car left the rail tracks, 23 other cars followed it, 19 of which carried dangerous commodities.

In the midst of the burning wreckage was a leaking chlorine car. This, coupled with the magnitude of the accident and changing wind patterns, resulted in a series of expanding evacuations, which by Sunday evening had encompassed much of the City of Mississauga. The emergency response saw an evacuation of more than 226,000 residents.

The first policeman on the scene, having seen the initial explosion, arrived at 11:58 pm, while firefighters arrived by 12:04 am. Emergency personnel initiated the Peel Regional Police Disaster Plan, which coordinated the immediate emergency response. Once the Peel Regional Police had established a Command Post, the Emergency Operations Control Group, dubbed the “Think Tank”, began to evaluate the situation and direct mitigation procedures.

As the threat of the fires was quelled and the chlorine car eventually sealed, the evacuation orders were gradually lifted, and residents were allowed to return to their homes in stages beginning on Tuesday, November 13th. The final evacuation order was not lifted until Friday, November 16th, six days after the initial derailment.

The derailment tested our young City and our citizens as they had never been tested before. It forced our citizens to flee. This first major emergency faced by the young City tested its mettle, its leadership, its emergency services, its organization, and its citizens – all of which passed the test with flying colours. Referred to as the “Mississauga Miracle”, there was no loss of life, and no permanent scarring on the land, the people, or the collective psyche.
Founded in 1960, Heritage Mississauga is a not-for-profit charity whose focus is researching, recording and celebrating Mississauga’s vibrant and diverse heritage. Heritage Mississauga is known for its research programs, publications, outreach presentations, community partnerships and unique events.

Located in the historic Robinson-Adamson House, known as “The Grange” (built circa 1828), Heritage Mississauga is a passionate advocate for history and heritage in the City of Mississauga.

With the support of the City of Mississauga, our partners, members, donors, corporate sponsors and volunteers, Heritage Mississauga continues to accept the challenge of promoting awareness of our heritage, and a sense of place and time in our city.