

# BEATRICE

# LILLIE

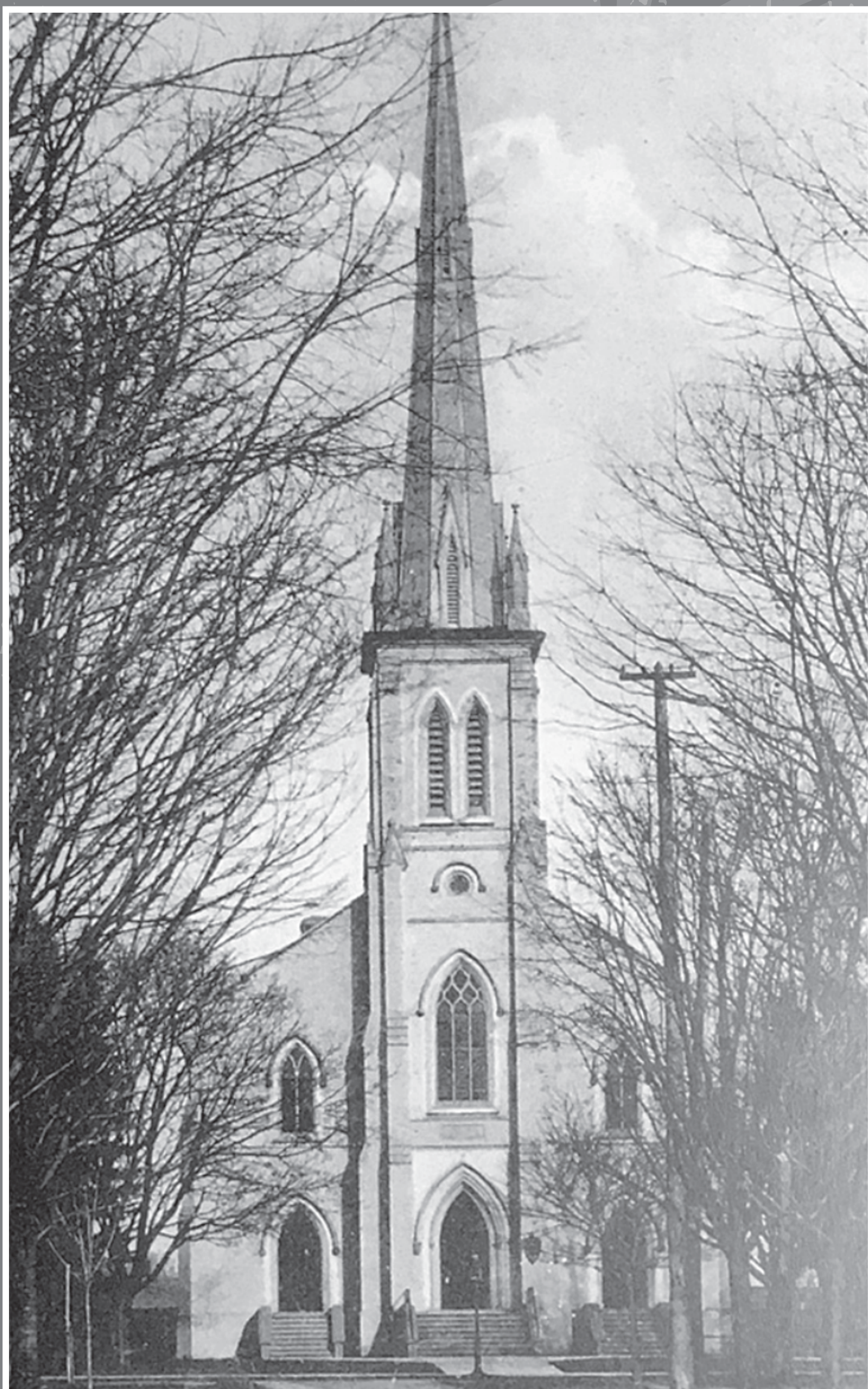
“THE FUNNIEST WOMAN  
IN THE WORLD”

## THE EARLY YEARS - IN TORONTO AND COBOURG

Beatrice Gladys Lillie was born in Toronto, May 29, 1894 to John Lillie, a British Army Officer turned government employee, and Lucie-Ann Shaw, a concert singer. The Lillies lived in the Davenport area of Toronto.

The Lillies were not well off, but both Bea’s mother and her sister Muriel had considerable musical skills. **Young Bea herself mustered spending money by entertaining the local merchants, the green grocer and the laundryman among them.** Perhaps it was there that her skill in impersonation emerged. She also joined a local church choir, where slapstick was apparently on her curriculum for she was **kicked out more than once for unbecoming behaviour.**

While Mr. Lillie was employed as a prison guard, his wife had higher aspirations. For a number of years the rest of **the family entertained locally as “The Lillie Trio”** or, if the social standing of the clientele got a little too low for Mrs. Lillie, as “The Francis Trio”.



Between 1907 and 1909 the Lillies moved to Cobourg where Mrs. Lillie had been hired as organist at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church. Bea was in high school when the family arrived and attended St. Agnes’ School for Girls in nearby Belleville, coming home for school holidays. **The Lillie Trio performed in Cobourg’s Opera House**, at least once in April 1910. The 1911 Canadian Census has the Lillie family living on George Street near Buck Street.

St. Agnes' School for Girls, Belleville - 1904



WINTER VIEW FROM THE NORTH

