**William Peyton Hubbard: Alderman and Vice-Chairman, Toronto Board of Control**

**William Peyton Hubbard** (January 27, 1842 – April 30, 1935), a [Toronto](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toronto) [alderman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alderman) from 1894 to 1914, was a popular and influential politician, nicknamed [Cicero](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cicero) for his oratory;[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Peyton_Hubbard#cite_note-historicist-1)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Peyton_Hubbard#cite_note-starpark-2) he was one of the first politicians of [African descent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Canadians) elected to office in [Canada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada).

Hubbard was born in a cabin in what were then the outskirts of Toronto, in a rural area called "the Bush" near the intersection of what are now [Bloor Street](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloor_Street) and [Bathurst Street](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bathurst_Street_(Toronto)).[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Peyton_Hubbard#cite_note-hubbardbio-3) His parents were refugee American slaves who had escaped their plantation in [Virginia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia) and reached [Canada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada) in 1840 via the [Underground Railroad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Underground_Railroad).[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Peyton_Hubbard#cite_note-hubbardbio-3) Raised a devout [Anglican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglican), Hubbard was trained as a [baker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baker) at the [Toronto Normal School](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toronto_Normal_School).[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Peyton_Hubbard#cite_note-science-4) He invented and patented a successful commercial baker's oven, the Hubbard Portable.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Peyton_Hubbard#cite_note-hubbardbio-3)[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Peyton_Hubbard#cite_note-science-4)

By his thirties, he had married Julia Luckett. After having worked 16 years as a baker, he joined his uncle's horse-drawn livery [taxi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taxi) service.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Peyton_Hubbard#cite_note-hubbardbio-3) According to what may be an apocryphal story, one winter night, he rescued another cab and its occupant, newspaper publisher [George Brown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Brown_(Canadian_politician)), from drowning in the [Don River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_River_(Ontario)). A grateful Brown hired Hubbard as his driver. Hubbard himself, however, said that he was not present at the accident but that the incident upset Brown so much that Hubbard agreed to become Brown's driver as a favour to his brother, who operated the livery service that Brown used.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Peyton_Hubbard#cite_note-globepark-5) Regardless of which version is correct, Brown and Hubbard became friends and the publisher later encouraged Hubbard to seek public office.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Peyton_Hubbard#cite_note-globepark-5)[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Peyton_Hubbard#cite_note-historicist-1) His lifelong friend was [Anderson Ruffin Abbott](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anderson_Ruffin_Abbott), Canada's first black physician.

## City politics[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=William_Peyton_Hubbard&action=edit&section=2" \o "Edit section: City politics)]

Hubbard first sought public office in 1893 at the age of 51, running in Toronto's Ward 4, where he lost by 7 votes. Encouraged, he ran again in Ward 4 in 1894 and was elected to represent the quiet, tree-lined ward of grand homes; it was one of the wealthiest and whitest wards in the city (encompassing an area between University Avenue and Bathurst Street). He was elected to city council a total of 15 times in his career.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Peyton_Hubbard#cite_note-hubbardbio-3)

A reformer armed with a sharp wit and a powerful oratory skills, which earned him the nickname "Old [Cicero](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cicero)",[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Peyton_Hubbard" \l "cite_note-science-4) Hubbard was known for his strong sense of public duty. He made his name fighting for public ownership of Toronto's water and hydroelectric supplies. Hubbard was appointed to the [Toronto Board of Control](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toronto_Board_of_Control), the city's powerful executive body, in 1898 and agitated to have the body directly elected by the people.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Peyton_Hubbard#cite_note-historicist-1) He won election to the body in the first citywide election in 1904, the first person of colour to win a citywide election in Toronto's history.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Peyton_Hubbard#cite_note-hubbardbio-3) Hubbard topped the polls in the election to the Board in 1906; as vice-chairman of the board, he served as acting mayor on occasions when the mayor was absent. He was re-elected in 1907 but defeated in 1908, and again in the [1909](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1909_Toronto_municipal_election) and [1910](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1910_Toronto_municipal_election) municipal elections.

Despite being a city official, Hubbard needed to obtain a letter from Mayor [Emerson Coatsworth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emerson_Coatsworth) vouching for his character when travelling to [Washington, D.C.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington,_D.C.) for a business meeting in 1906. (read more):

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Peyton_Hubbard>