



OXFORD COUNTY LIBRARY

The Stone Houses of Zorra Project

The Stone Houses of Zorra Project is an effort to document pioneer field stone farm houses in Zorra Township, Oxford County. Gathering information from published local history books, newspapers, land records and present day owner interviews, this work hopes to consolidate the chronicles of stone houses in one place. With new photography, combined with historical imagery, a visual path to the past is established. Sincere appreciation to all of the stone house owners who contributed to this project. Thank you to Doug A. Huntley & Joyce McCorquodale Groves (1935-2013) who have researched & documented the stone houses of Zorra over the decades. Acknowledgement to the work of Karen E. Armstrong (1936-2022) who uncovered the legacy of Zorra stone mason, Crellin, referenced frequently in this project.

Text & photography by Vicki Brenner
2022

Photograph contributions by:
Doug A. Huntley
Joyce McCorquodale Groves



The Stone Houses of Zorra

With regard to architectural style, the stone houses of Zorra typically fall into one of three forms.

Ontario Farmhouse Georgian

Ontario Farmhouse Georgian is a two storey design and is distinguished by a central front door, flanked by two windows with a flat front facade. Three second storey windows were evenly spaced and centred to create pleasing symmetry. Low ceilings on the main level, kept heat where it could be appreciated by the occupants.

Twin chimneys on each gable end funneled smoke from living space fireplaces. Windows from this early era were commonly twelve over twelve, upper windows being slightly smaller. Front doors were often flanked by sidelights and transom windows. Interiors were commonly divided by a central hall, which housed the staircase. Typically there were four rooms on the main level and four rooms upstairs. The kitchen was often located in a tail or ell, stretching from the back of the house to reduce the chance of fire and transfer of heat in the summer. A slate or wood shake roof was common to this style.

Ontario Farmhouse Cottage

Ontario Farmhouse Cottage is characterized by a central front door, flanked by two windows. This architectural style was the natural progression from a log house, the original farm dwelling. Built on a small scale, these homes had a flat front facade and were one and a half storey, with slanted ceilings in the upstairs rooms. Low ceilings on the main level, kept heat where it could be appreciated by the occupants. Twin chimneys on each gable end funneled smoke from living space fireplaces. The limited number of windows were 12-paned or commonly referred to as six over six. Front doors were often flanked by sidelights and transom windows.

Interiors were commonly divided by a central hall, which housed the staircase. Typically there were four rooms on the main level and four rooms upstairs. The kitchen was often located in a tail or ell, stretching from the back of the house to reduce the chance of fire and transfer of heat in the summer. A wood shake roof was common to this style.

Ontario Farmhouse Gothic Revival

Ontario Farmhouse Gothic Revival is characterized by a central gable over the front door, arched windows, steep roofs, finials, decorative porches and trim, often referred to as 'gingerbread'. These homes had a flat front facade and were one and a half storey, with slanted ceilings in the upstairs rooms. The windows were 12-paned or commonly referred to as six over six, up to 1870. Front doors were often flanked by sidelights and transom windows. Interiors were commonly divided by a central hall, which housed the staircase. Typically there were four rooms on the main level and four rooms upstairs. The kitchen was often located in a tail or ell, stretching from the back of the house to reduce the chance of fire and transfer of heat in the summer. This farmhouse style was popular with the rural farm community through the designs of James Avon Smith, a Toronto architect, publishing his design plans in 'The Canada Farmer'. Gothic revival homes were rarely pure renditions, with each home being a reflection of the owner's taste and suggestions of the builder. A slate or wood shake roof was common to this style.



The Stone Houses of Zorra

Stones

The building of stone houses in Upper Canada was never undertaken haphazardly. The settler's first dwelling was a log cabin; the materials and skills needed to construct it were available to all but the most inexperienced of pioneers. His next dwelling was his first real home. Something went into these homes that was beyond mere shelter. The stone house was built deliberately and was built to last. It isn't by chance that so many of our early stone houses have survived the passage of time. The settler's stone farmhouse was his commitment to his new land. He meant to stay.

It wasn't enough that he merely wished to establish his permanence in Upper Canada. He had to find the materials to build his house. Fortunately, for the settlers there was an abundance of stone readily available.

Fieldstone boulders remained in the newly cleared fields of the early settlers. They had been deposited by the retreating glaciers of the early Ice Age. The stone was close at hand and the settlers did not have to transport it any great distance.

Stone houses: stepping stones from the past by Ruth Moffat, 1984

Stone Masons

The abundance of stone houses in Zorra can perhaps be explained by happenstance: that many immigrants from Scotland claimed land in the township and some were skilled stone masons. Another theory, is that some of the Scottish stonemasons who had come to Canada West to work on the Erie and Welland Canals, railway bridges and other infrastructure engineering projects moved into the business of building stone houses in Zorra when these larger scale enterprises ended. These professional masons from Scotland may have influenced their farm neighbours, who after the 1850s began to consider upgrading to a farm house that would stand the tide of years and provide shelter for their growing families. Many of the stone houses of Zorra were built by the farmers themselves. Perhaps the stones picked from fields and piled around the perimeter, provided inspiration and motivation. Graduating from a log house to a stone edifice demonstrated the upward mobility and prosperity of the Zorra farmer.



Photograph from the collection of Joyce McCorquodale Groves



Photograph from the collection of Joyce McCorquodale Groves



Photograph from the collection of Robert Montague

The Stone Houses of Zorra

Tools & Construction

The Upper Canadian stonemason did not have a wide assortment of tools at his disposal. He had to be very creative in his management of these heavy stones. Plugs and feathers were used in splitting the stone; stone boats transported the boulders from the fields. A hammer and a chisel were the available tools for trimming the stones and giving the window and door openings a decorative finished appearance.

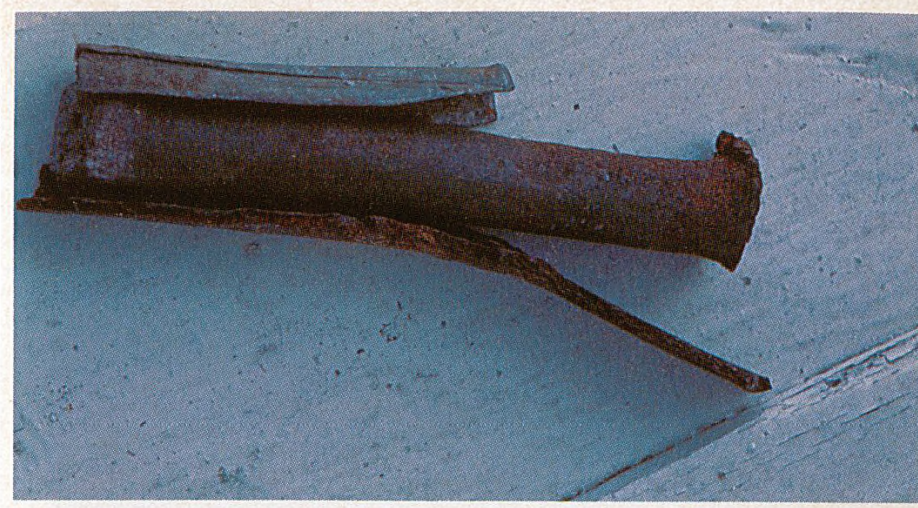
The rubble stone wall was really two walls, an inner and an outer wall; it was held together with "tie stones" which stretched between both walls. The space between the two walls was filled with leftover bits of stone and mortar. The master mason would work on the exterior wall while his apprentice worked on the inside wall. The construction of a stone house required a great many labourers. It took many men, months and even years to complete the building of a stone house.

Stone houses: stepping stones from the past by Ruth Moffat, 1984

The stone was manually split with stone hammers, chisels, axes, to create the squared "dressed" stone needed to make the walls. The same stone that would break the ploughshare provided the sturdiest of shelters.

*The Stone Houses of Old Townsend
by Carole Barber (1985)*

Stone houses: stepping stones from the past by Ruth Moffat, 1984



A Plug and Feathers



Marks in Stone where it was Split



Exposed interior of a Stone Wall

The mason has scaffolding, which runs right around the house. The platform with the scaffold is raised every second layer of stones.

Stones are hoisted to the platform, and a wheel barrow is used to move them around to all sides. The corner stones are laid with length going in one way, then the other direction for the next layer. The same method is used with the windows, but here it is not as obvious because the length is turned into the thickness of the wall. There are three sets of stone to the thickness of each wall - the outer layer which we see, the inner layer which is covered with plaster, or lath & plaster, and a middle layer of stone rubble. Tie stones are used at regular intervals to go from the outside right through the wall to provide lateral structure. From the exterior, the tie stones appear to be just small stones, but their true size is hidden within the wall. Tie stones were sometimes used at an interval of every three large stones.

*The Townline of West Zorra & East Nissouri, 1820-1900: the McCorquodales & their Neighbours
by Joyce McCorquodale Groves,*

The Stone Houses of Zorra

Stone masons, Tools & Construction



1891 Construction of the Lawrence house, 205 Allen Street, Thamesford. John Thompson Crellin, stone mason, can be seen front left, splitting a large stone.

Crellin found most of his stone on the property where the building was being erected. The stones were fresh from the ground and still held moisture. Field-stone left in piles became dry and brittle and were of no use. Using a hammer and chisel the mason would tap the stone until he found the grain line then, with a blow of the sledge hammer, he would split the rock. A good stone mason could split a 200 pound rock with six good blows. This process might result in two usable blocks, but often only one. Occasionally the stone would shatter. If a piece was suitable, a square, flat-faced hammer was used to remove the sharp edges. The stones were then carted up to the work area using pulleys and horses.

*John Thompson Crellin, 19th century stone mason: a profile
by Karen E. Armstrong*

Photograph from the collection of Lisa Bicum

The Stone Houses of Zorra

Stone masons, Tools & Construction



1891 Construction of the Sutherland house, 744356 Road 74. John Thompson Crellin, stone mason, can be seen front centre, splitting a large stone. Note the ramp & pulley system transporting a stone to the upper storey.

On the front façades of Crellin's houses, each course begins with a white limestone quoin, followed by three small square snecks of black basalt over pink granite over black basalt stacked to the height of the quoin. The larger stones vary in colour, suggesting that each was selected at the moment of construction from piles of stones collected from the farm fields and transported by horses and a stone-boat to the building site.

John Thompson Crellin, 19th century stone mason: a profile by Karen E. Armstrong

Photograph from the collection of Karen E. Armstrong

The Stone Houses of Zorra

Corner stones

The 1850s Pelton cottage has huge blocks in the corners. The rest of the stones average half to one third the size of the corner stones. An attempt has been made to have the stones in rows, with the best ones to the front of the house, but here is little evidence of the stones being cut to shape, except the corner stones.

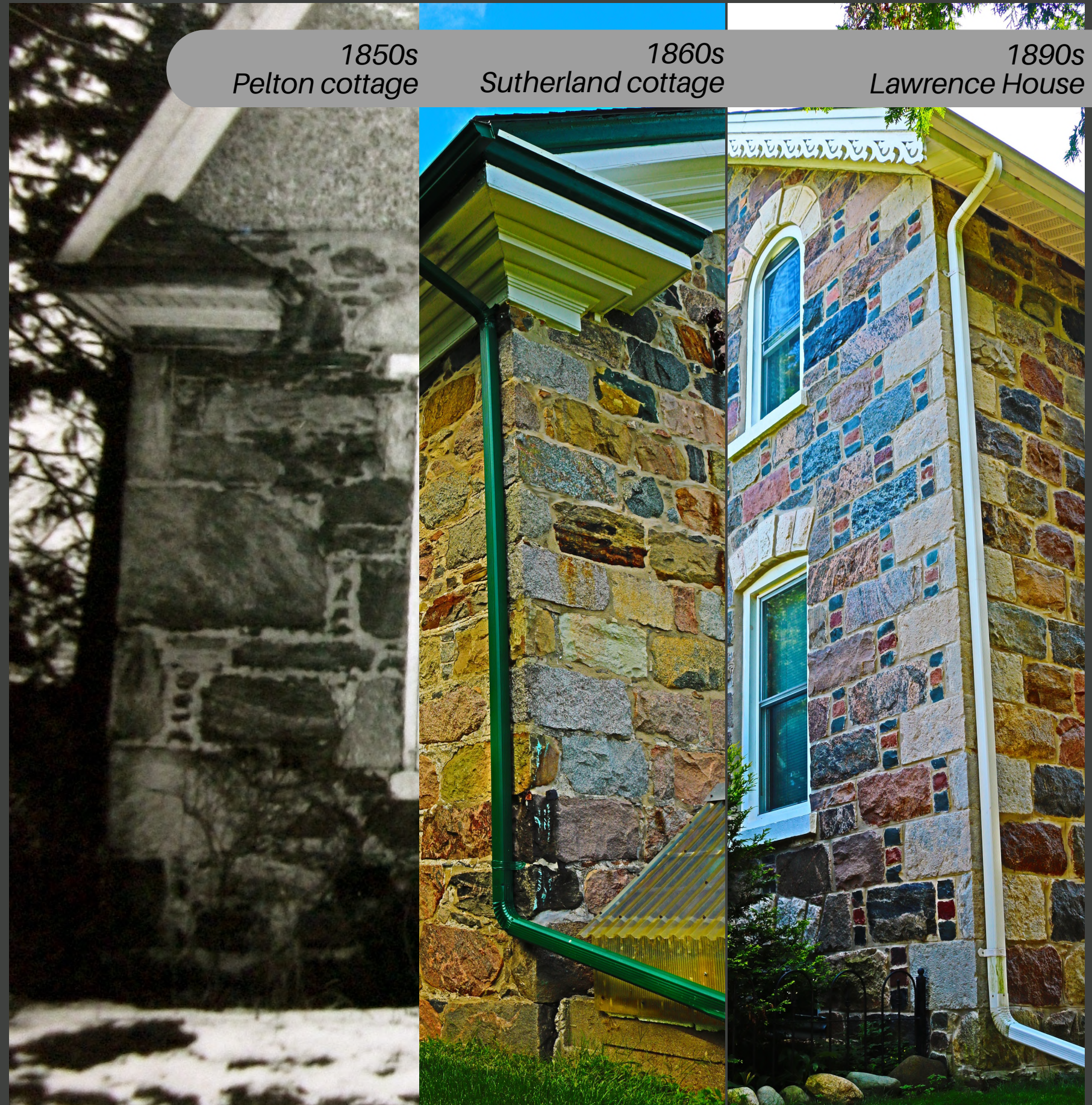
It was the practice to use less desirable stone, and the stone cuttings on the sides away from view. What was lacked in stone, was made up with in mortar and small infill stones, called snecks.

The 1860s Sutherland cottage has quite different masonry. The corners are about 12 stones high, with relative uniformity between the corners & body of the house.

The Townline of West Zorra & East Nissouri, 1820-1900: the McCorquodales & their Neighbours by Joyce McCorquodale Groves

The 1890s Lawrence House, built by stonemason John Thompson Crellin, utilizes Aberdeen Bond which emphasises the colour and the natural cleavage of stone that signals his distinctive style to passers-by. He began at each corner of the house front with a squared block or quoin of St Marys white limestone. Immediately adjacent to each quoin he stacked three small squared "snecks" of black basalt over pink granite over black basalt. The stack of snecks is followed by a single large block of rough stone, followed by three snecks, and so on across the house front. Aberdeen Bond was used by other stonemasons in Ontario, but none used a regularized colour pattern. All of Crellin's works feature St. Marys limestone corner stones.

The Late Nineteenth-century Stone Farmhouses of John Thompson Crellin by Karen Armstrong



135714 13th Line, Zorra



2022 west elevation

Location: Lot 12
West, Concession 9,
East Nissouri
Architectural style:
Ontario Farmhouse
Gothic Revival
Notable features:
tracery window in
front gable
Construction date:
1860
Original owner: Adam
Henderson, 1821-
1899
Stone Mason:
purportedly, John
Thompson Crellin,
1837-1922

135714 13th Line, Zorra

Adam Henderson (1821-1899), emigrated to Zorra from Scotland and erected a log cabin in 1846 on Lot 12, Concession 9 in the former East Nissouri Township. He returned to his homeland to marry Janet Chisholm (1811-1878), and bring her to the farm he had built for their family, christened *Maple Lodge*.

2022 north elevation



1890s north elevation

Henderson family
Photograph from the collection of Bill Henderson



135714 13th Line, Zorra



1950s

Photograph from the collection of Bill Henderson



1970s

Photograph from the collection of
Joyce McCorquodale Groves



2022 south elevation

135714 13th Line, Zorra

Adam & Janet Henderson, our ancestors chose this tract of land because they wished to build beside the creek. There were 100 acres in the original tract of land deeded from the crown. The first log house was situated about 50 feet east of the current stone house and was built in 1846. The first livestock at Maple Lodge Farm was a flock of sheep. A pig barn was built in 1891, the straw barn in 1898, drive barn, also known as the sheep shed, and horse barn and workshop in 1846. The large cow barn, was built in 1848 and raised to hip roof in 1914, this work was undertaken by David McClure [Barns depicted below]. The first water source was a dug well to be followed by a drilled well in approximately 1914 or 1915. Electricity was installed in 1927. The silo was built in 1939, one of the largest at that time. Through the years we engaged in mixed farming. About 1870, 25 acres was purchased at the back of the original one hundred. There was a half acre of orchard north of the stone house until 1960. It was not uncommon for funerals to held in the home. At Adam Henderson's funeral, Charles N. Henderson and Joe Henderson counted 110 horse drawn vehicles leave the farm gate in February 1899. *Written by Shirley & Mac Henderson, 1988.*

Kintore Tweedsmuir Histories, Kintore Women's Institute



1990 storm damage



1890s

Photograph from the collection of Bill Henderson

135714 13th Line, Zorra

Five generations of Hendersons have lived at *Maple Lodge Farm*. Current owner, Bill Henderson acquired the farm in 2006 and has worked diligently to restore & preserve the stone house. This farm was designated as a Century Farm in 1967.

Adam Henderson
1820-1899
+
Janet Chisholm
1812-1878

William Adam
Henderson
1850-1920
+
Elizabeth Catherine
Tay
1849-1937

Charles Malcolm
Henderson
1890-1961
+
Janet Mae (Jennie)
McClure
1890-1981

William (Mac)
Henderson
1921-2002
+
Mary Shirley
Fitzsimmons
1926-2005



1930s Henderson
family gathering

Photograph from the collection of Bill Henderson

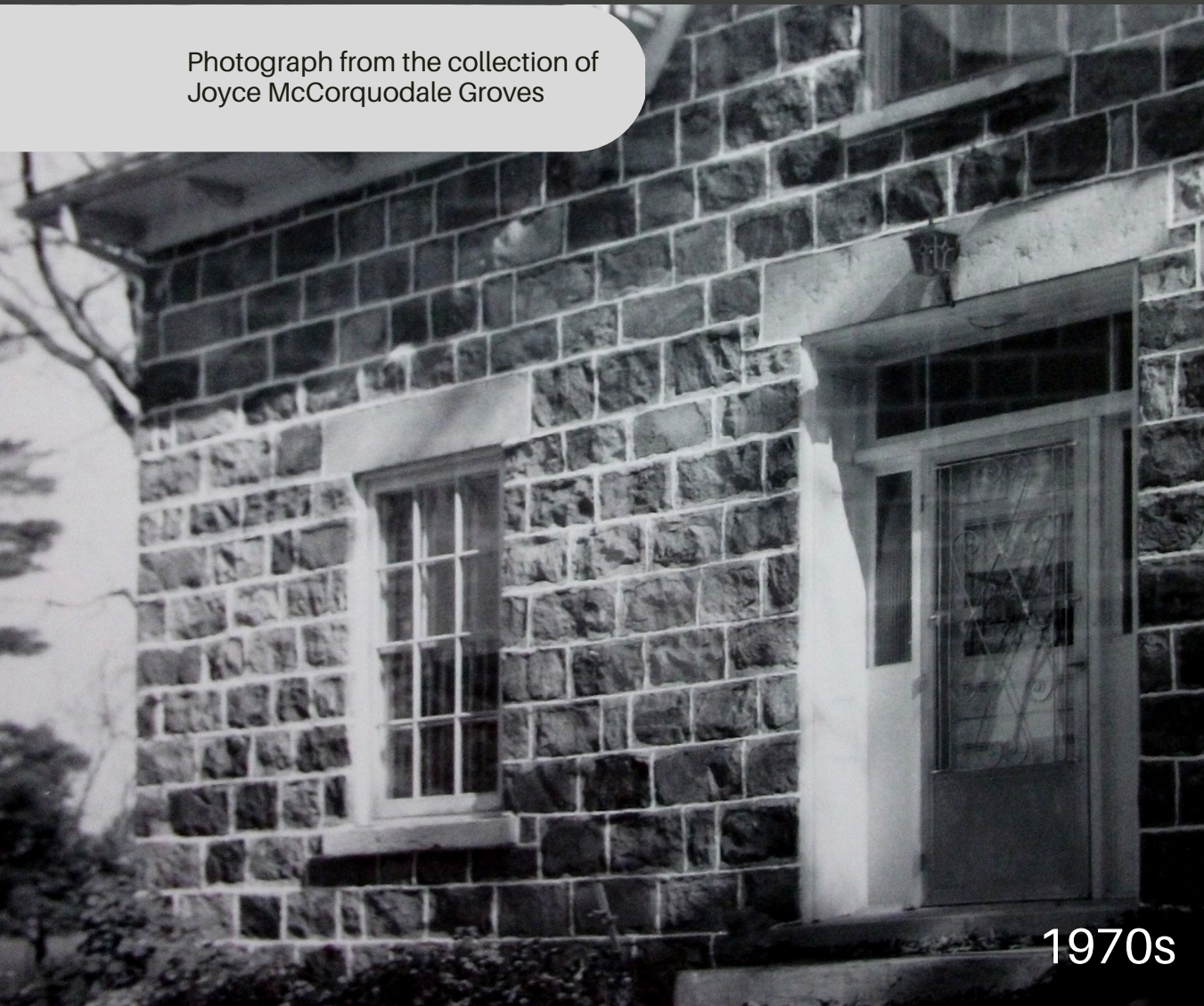
Ingersoll Chronicle, 14 February 1899

The death is announced of Adam Henderson, East Nissouri. An operation had been performed by Dr. McWilliam, Thamesford, assisted by Dr. Wishart of London, but it proved to be too late. Mr. Henderson was one of the best known men in the township of East Nissouri. He was formerly a member of the Township Council, and also sat in the County Council as Reeve of Nissouri. He was also prominent in agricultural and church affairs, and was a man of the very highest character. A native of Roxburgh, Scotland, he had an abiding affection for the old land, and has visited it now three times in recent years. Along with his brother John and their families Mr. Henderson has done his full share to make East Nissour the splendidly tilled and highly progressive township that it is to-day.

135714 13th Line, Zorra

The masons from Scotland brought with them to Canada the skills needed to fashion even the hardest stones, such as granite, into regular blocks. This evidenced in the Henderson stone house. Extremely even blocks were created, with no discernably large corner stones. Lintels and window sills are quarried limestone, which arrived by wagon from St. Marys. Limestone is relatively soft and can more readily be shaped into precise blocks that window encasements demand. The gothic arched window in the front gable has been framed by shaped stones fashioned to highlight the curve. The mortar has been coated with plaster of Paris - stone masons were constantly searching for methods of weather proofing their work. The original roof appears to have been covered in wood shake shingles. The Ontario Gothic Revival Farmhouse was not complete without decorative wood trim to accent the gable, this ornamentation was known as barge board or gingerbread. Between 1840-1880, barge boards became a medium of artistic expression for individual carpenters, who turned their saws to the wide virgin pine boards that had been felled to clear farm land. The Henderson house had lacy barge boards, with an elaborate finial at the peak that extended above & below the roof line. The Henderson family felt that John Thompson Crellin was the stone mason of this house, and while it does not bear the distinctive pattern he favoured later in his career, it may have been an early example of this work.

Photograph from the collection of Joyce McCorquodale Groves



1970s



2022



2009

Photograph by Doug A. Huntley

Fine Old Furniture and Rare Old Books A Background For Chatelaine of Maple Lodge

Mrs. Elizabeth Henderson of East Nissouri Couples House-wifely Arts with Culture; Daughter of Pioneer Family, Now 85, Rode Many Miles on Horseback to Her 'Music Lessons'

On concession 7, East Nissouri township, four miles north of the Dundas Highway, is located Maple Lodge, the beautiful old Henderson home, where Mrs. Elizabeth Henderson, mother of Mrs. Bolton Fitzgerald Western Ontario president of the Women's Institute, resides with her son and family.

Here, in a delightful setting, stands the stately stone residence with its long side halls, double living rooms on either side, and handsome staircase. On the second floor, opening off the hall are the eight bright spacious bedrooms and large bath room, overlooking the green lawn bordered with a profusion of bloom.

Prettily decorated and attractively furnished are the rooms of the employees of this grand old home. In one was noticed an antique walnut desk, walnut bedroom suite, dainty curtains, and two handsome hooked rugs, artistically designed and made by the pioneer lady of the home who recently celebrated her eighty-fifth birthday.

When interviewed at Maple Lodge, Mrs. Henderson, becomingly gowned in black with cuffs and collar of fine lace and wearing a brooch, an heirloom, over two hundred years old, was poring over a book of sermons recently presented to her. Modest and of a retiring disposition, this cultured lady has taken no part in public life but has preferred her home, carrying on her many household duties and teaching her daughters the art of good housekeeping.

SKILLED NEEDLE WOMAN

In the early homes of East Nissouri, sewing, mending, baking, and preparing meals for bees occupied much of the time but in her leisure hours Mrs. Henderson made many beautiful rugs and quilts, embroidered fine linens, and delighted in her tatting. Despite her advanced age, she continues to spend much time at her needlework and tatting, completing many beautiful designs each year. Her husband, the late William Henderson, who was the owner of 425 acres of land, erected several fine farm buildings, the ones on the homestead resembling those seen on a model farm. On his sons' farms, he also built barns, employing gangs of men, which necessitated extra work in the home. During one summer, Mrs. Henderson's young daughter, now the Western Ontario president of the Women's Institute, set out each morning on her bicycle for one of the farms, six

miles distant, where she prepared breakfast for her father and six men. However, at the end of the season, she was informed that if she so desired she might attend Alma College. Mrs. Fitzgerald that this was one of the important days of her life as she had been journeying each week on the stage to London, a distance of 17 miles, to take her music lessons from Thomas Martin, the well known musician, and was delighted at the thought of continuing her study of music at Alma under the same instructor.

RARE OLD BOOKS

In visiting the library at Maple Lodge, one finds many rare old books of law, historical volumes, and works of standard authors, including 24 volumes of 'Border Tales' presented to Mrs. Henderson's father-in-law, Adam Henderson, one of the pioneer builders of Oxford County, by the Nissouri Mutual Fire-Insurance Co. of which he was one of the first officials, on the occasion of his return from a visit to his home in Scotland.

Mrs. Henderson was born in 1849 on concession 7, East Nissouri, north of her present home, and is the daughter of the pioneers, Mr. and Mrs. John Tay. Her father, graduating from college and imbued with the spirit of adventure, left his home in Oxfordshire, England, and set sail for Oxford County, Canada, settling in East Nissouri, where he erected a saw mill, known as Tay's mill. In the new land where there was little opportunity of acquiring an education, the pioneer was called upon to perform many duties, serving as treasurer of Nissouri prior to the division into East and West Nissouri townships, and also acting as magistrate. In his later years, he retired to the town of Ingersoll.

Referring to her childhood days in the home, Mrs. Henderson stated that her mother insisted on each daughter learning the art of housekeeping. This splendid training served her well in later years when rearing her own family.

136462 13th Line, Zorra



Location: Lot 24
West, Concession
9, East Nissouri
Architectural
style: Ontario
Farmhouse Gothic
Revival

Notable features:
Arched window in
front gable

Construction date:
1860s

Original owner:
Alexander McKay,
1820-1907

Stone Mason:
unknown

2022

136462 13th Line, Zorra

Alexander McKay (1820-1907), son of John and Christy, came from Scotland with his family in 1829. Many years later Alexander would tell his grandchildren of leaving Scotland as a little boy. He remembered his grandfather Donald McKay crying on the dock because he could not go with his family to Canada and felt he would not see them again. Alexander married Janet Sutherland in 1850, she was born in 1832 Scotland. They had four children: John, Donald, Hugh, and Christina. Janet died in 1863.

In 1865, Alexander married Fanny McKay (1833-1918) a daughter of Alexander and Bessie McKay who had come from Scotland. Alexander and Fanny along with the children moved to Lot 24 Con 9. They had a family of six: Elizabeth (1865-1945); John Alexander (1867-1944); Angus (1870-1941); James (1872-1951); Walter (1875- 1950); and Annie (b. 1885). Alexander died in 1907 and Fanny in 1918. The stone house remained in the McKay family until 2006.



2006 west elevation
photograph by Doug A. Huntley

136462 13th Line, Zorra

2007 west elevation, photograph by Joyce McCorquodale Groves

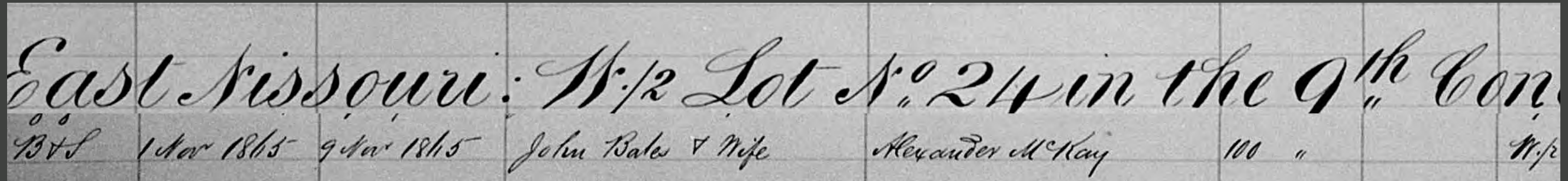


2022 west elevation



2022 south & east elevation

136462 13th Line, Zorra



Oxford County land registry records indicate that Alexander McKay acquired the 100 acre farm in November of 1865. The stone house was likely built in the 1860s by McKay or a stone mason he hired. It does bear a resemblance to the Henderson stone house further south on the 13th Line. Extremely even blocks were created, with no discernably large corner stones on the main house. Lintels and window sills are quarried white limestone, which arrived by wagon from St. Marys. Limestone is relatively soft and can more readily be shaped into precise blocks that window encasements demand. The gothic arched window in the front gable has been framed by shaped stones fashioned to highlight the curve. The original roof was likely covered in wood shake shingles. There is still evidence of plaster of Paris covering the mortar joints - though a repointing job has obscured much of this. The Ontario Gothic Revival Farmhouse was not complete without decorative wood trim and the elaborate finial at the peak that extended above & below the roof line is somewhat still in evidence. The McKay house has a stone tail section with rustically laid stone courses of a more irregular nature - the window & door openings here are framed by shaped stones laid vertically.

A Scottish form of loose bonding called 'Random Rubble brought to Courses'. The material is split granite boulders from the clearing of the fields. [There are] large, roughly squared stones at the corners (quoins), then if you look closely you will see a horizontal joint line running between the tops of each quoin to it's counterpart at the other corner. This is a style used extensively in Scotland for castles and large houses from the end of the first millennium right up until the 19th century. Most farm houses built in the 17 and 18 hundreds are done in this style. The boulders were cleared out of the fields, split to give them one flat face, and then laid up with the longest side down to provide a base. The biggest stones are laid onto the wall and then 'built in' using the chips and smaller stones to create the effect.

The Stone Houses of Old Townsend by Carole Barber (1985)



136462 13th Line, Zorra

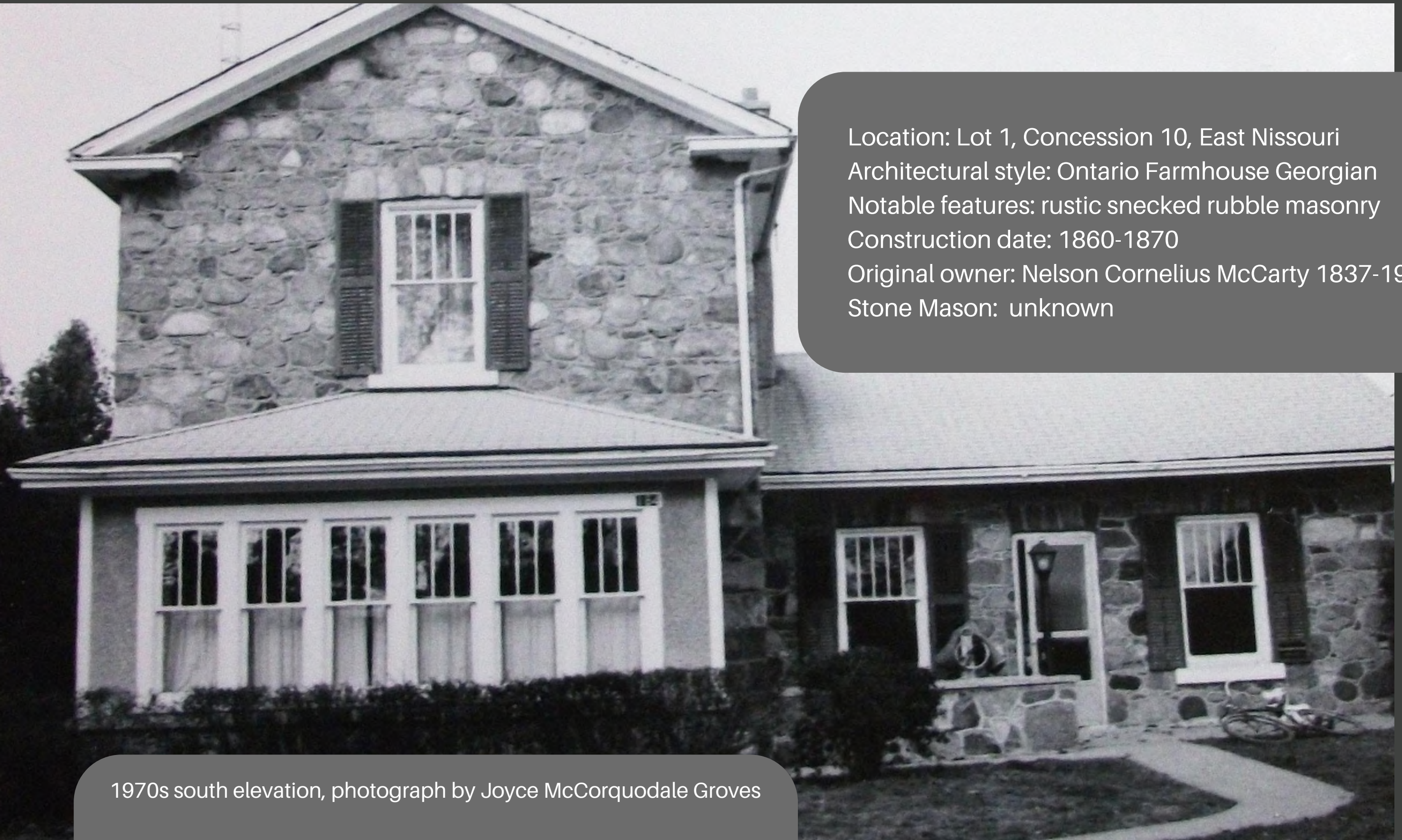
2022 north
elevation



EAST NISSOURI.

There died at his home on lot 24, con. 8, on Sunday, one of this township's highly esteemed residents in the person of Mr. Alexander McKay, in his 84th year. He had been ill only a few days. Mr. McKay was a native of Sutherlandshire, Scotland, and came to Canada when a small boy. His father settled in West Zorra, and there Mr. McKay grew to manhood. He lived in London for a few years and then took up a farm in East Nissouri, where he has since resided. He is survived by his wife, and a family of six sons and two daughters. They are — John, of Chicago; Hugh, West Nissouri; J. A., East Nissouri; Angus, of Prospect Hill; James and Walter and Misses Ena and Lizzie at home. The late Mr. McKay was a fine type of citizen, honest and honorable in all his dealings with his fellowmen. He was a Presbyterian in religion and a staunch Liberal in politics. His funeral took place to Kintore cemetery Tuesday and a large number of friends were present to pay their last respects. The Rev. Mr. Hannahson conducted the services.

184 Washington Street, Thamesford



Location: Lot 1, Concession 10, East Nissouri
Architectural style: Ontario Farmhouse Georgian
Notable features: rustic snecked rubble masonry
Construction date: 1860-1870
Original owner: Nelson Cornelius McCarty 1837-1915
Stone Mason: unknown

1970s south elevation, photograph by Joyce McCorquodale Groves

184 Washington Street, Thamesford

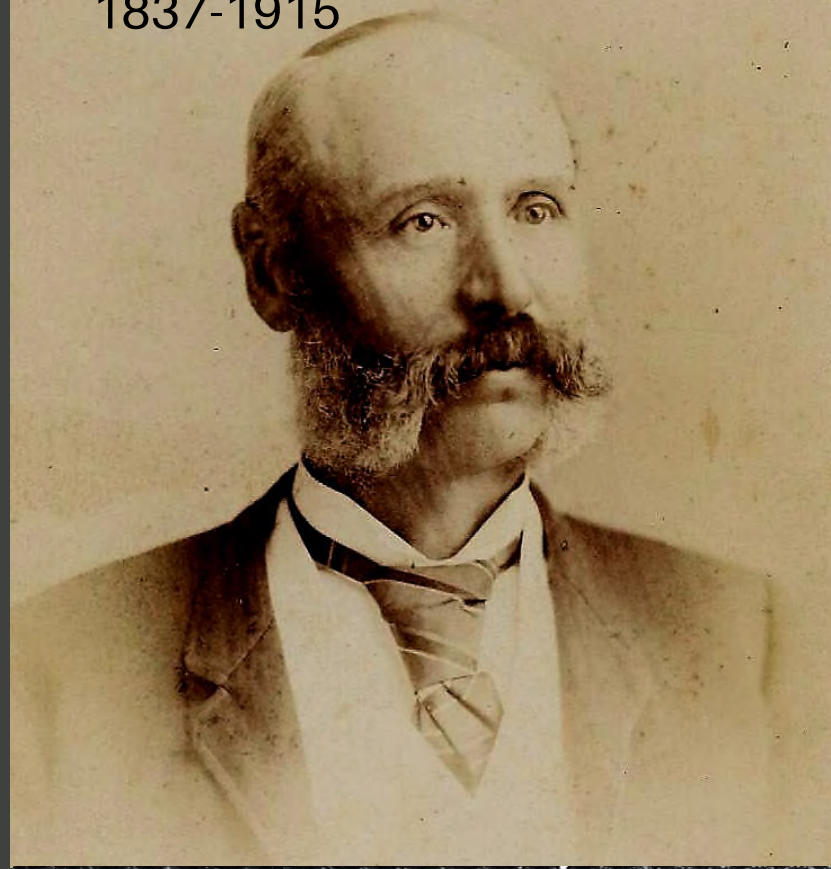
Sons of Eleazer McCarty (1780–1814) of Rideway, New York: George McCarty (1809–1851), Eleazer McCarty Jr. (1811–1883) & Joel Joseph McCarty (1813–1898) came to Zorra in the early 1840s. They purchased Lot 1, Concession 10 and subdivided it to ultimately become the town of Thamesford.



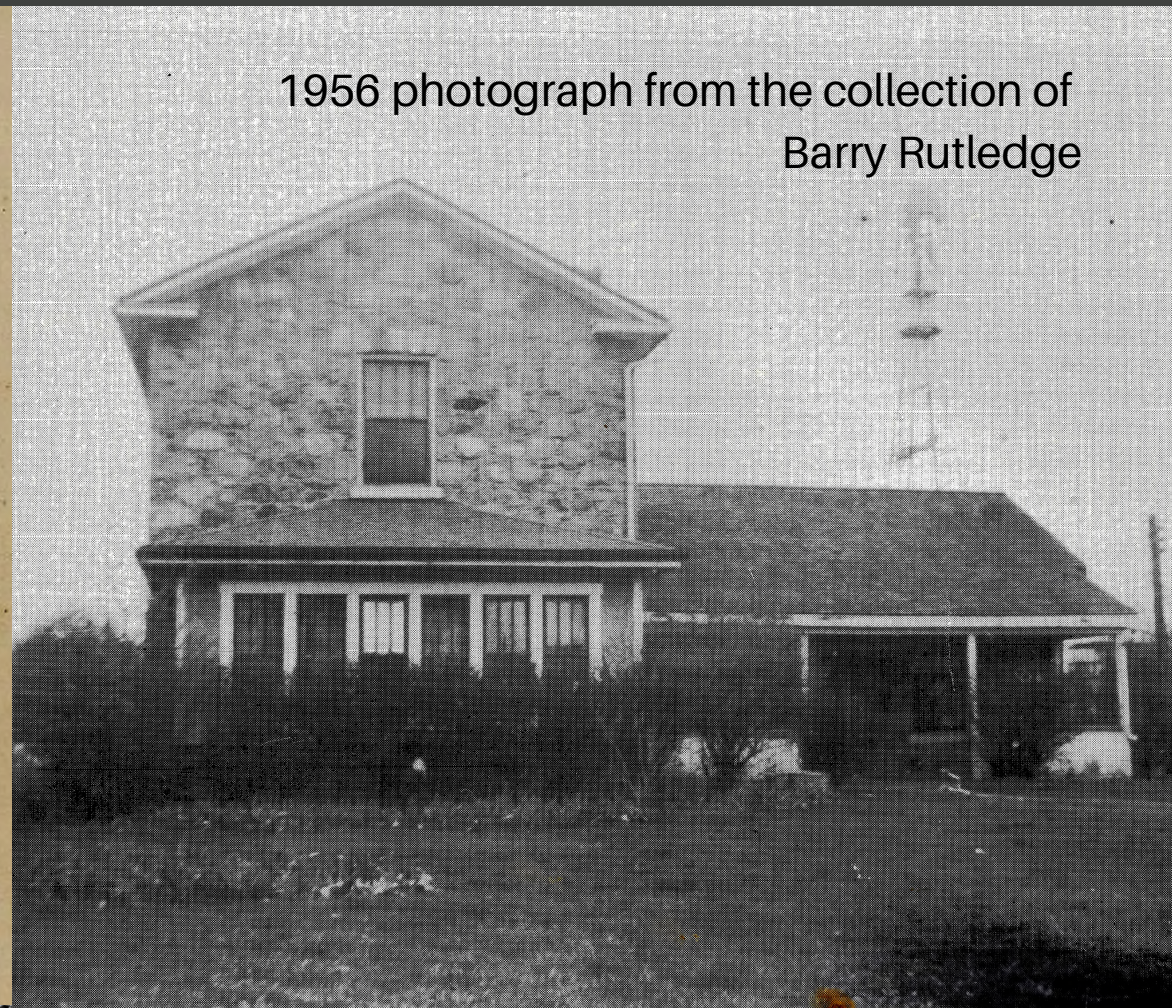
2022 south elevation, photograph by Barry Rutledge

184 Washington Street, Thamesford

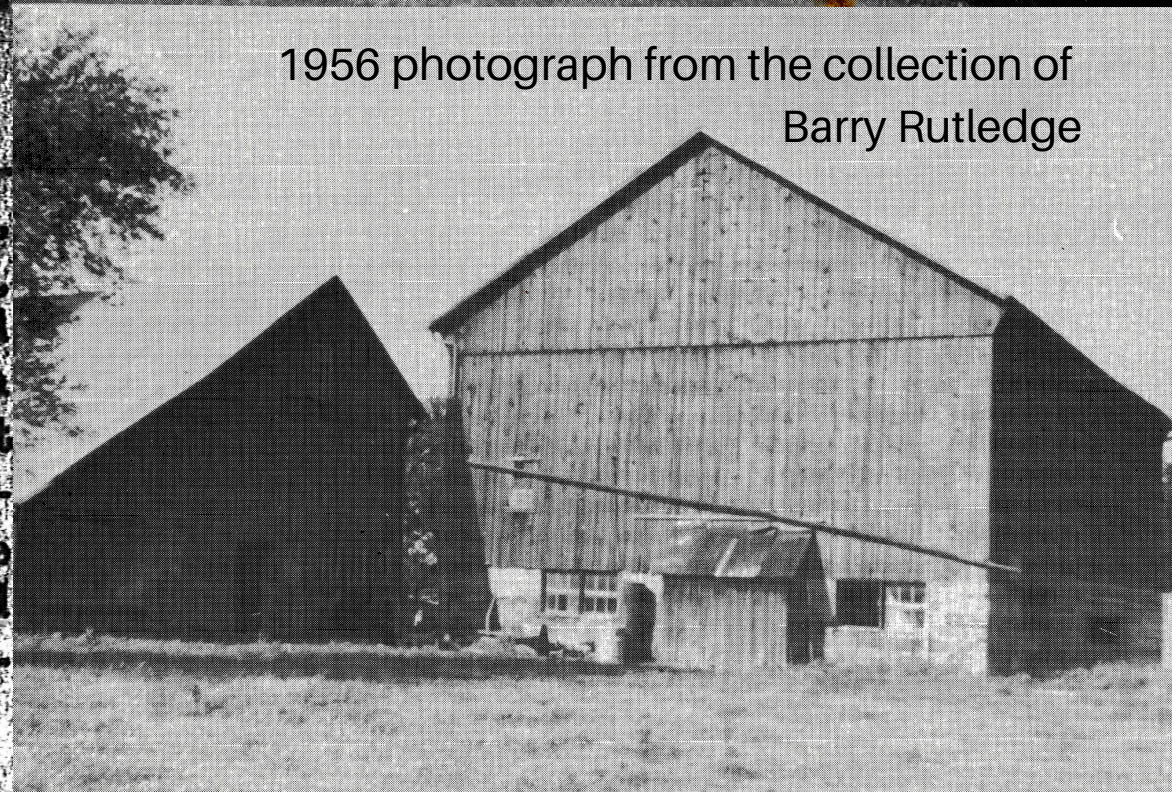
Nelson Cornelius McCarty
1837-1915



1956 photograph from the collection of
Barry Rutledge



1956 photograph from the collection of
Barry Rutledge



DEATH OF N. C. McCARTY.
The death of Mr. Nelson C. McCarty, father of Mr. H. D. McCarty, of this town, occurred Tuesday night, at his home at Thamesford, aged 78 years. Deceased was born in Thamesford, and for the greater part of his life had been successfully engaged in the mercantile business. He was widely known both in Oxford County and throughout Western Ontario. Ingersoll Chronicle; 29 July 1915

Son of Zorra pioneer Joel McCarty, Nelson Cornelius McCarty purchased the farm at Lot 1, Concession 10 - now 184 Washington Street in August 1872. The property covered fifty acres and extended north of the railway tracks. In 1865, Nelson took over his father's store at the northwest corner of Dundas and Allen Streets. The first telegraph office was here as well as the first telephone office. Nelson was postmaster for forty years and also a Justice of the Peace. The McCarty store was the largest and most successful country general mercantile store in the district. The current owner reports that barns were still on site on the northwest corner of George and Washington streets when the house was purchased in 1960 and there was still a path from the house to the barns - note the windmill behind the house.

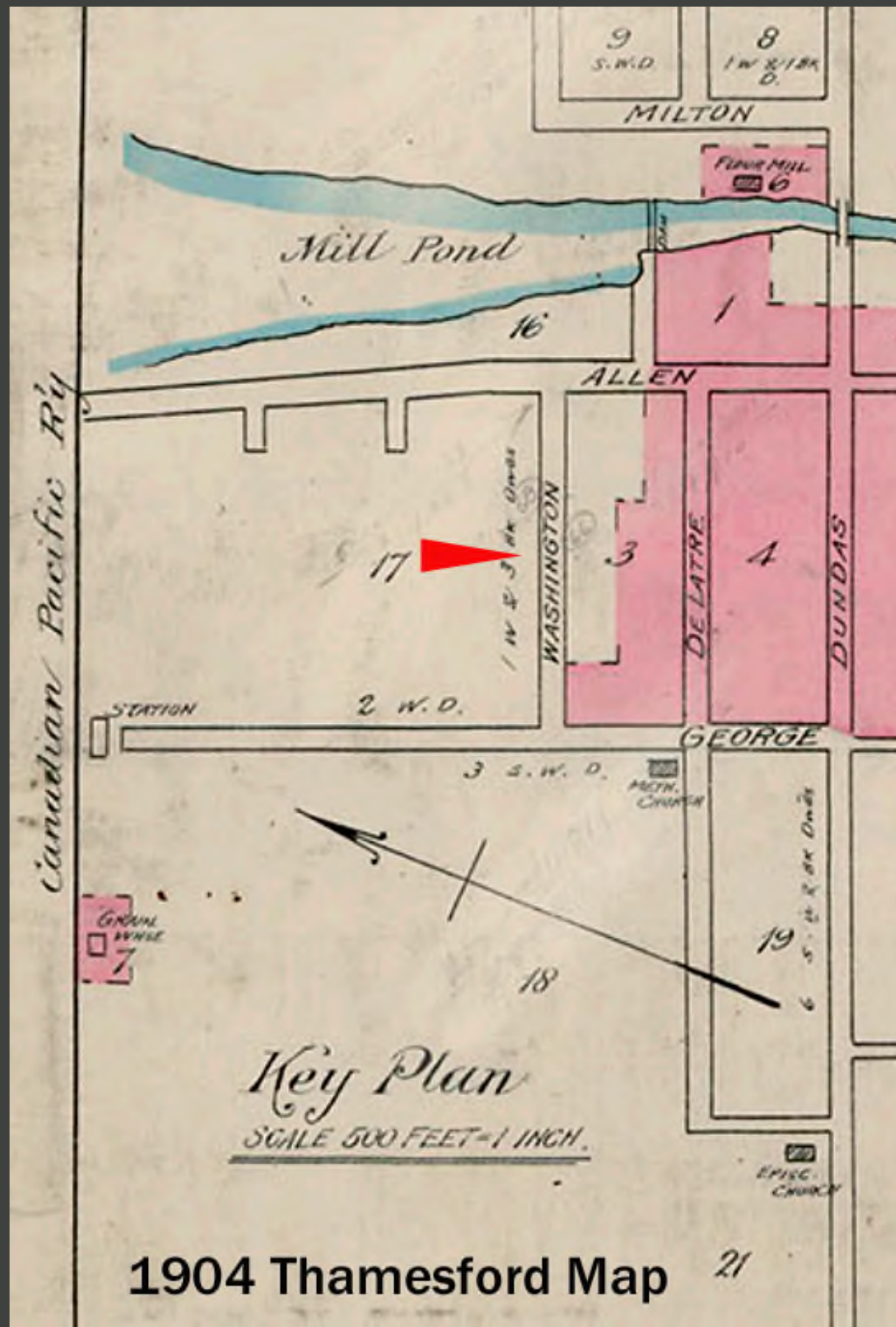
184 Washington Street, Thamesford

1970s west elevation, photograph from the collection of Joyce McCorquodale Groves



Built in the manner of early stone houses, it is an example of snecked rubble masonry: stones are roughly dressed and laid in courses. Snecked rubble features stones of varying sizes with small supporting fillers or snecks between them. The 1901 census stated that the house had five rooms, it is thought that the addition to the two story section was built previous to this date. The original roof was likely covered in wood shake shingles. Doors and windows were modified at some point in time, as evidenced in the photograph, showing vertically laid stone window lintels, where there are no longer windows present .

184 Washington Street, Thamesford



Current owners, The Rutledges, were told that originally the house consisted only of the two storey section, the east extension being added later and the sunporch sometime afterwards. In 1965, an old woodshed along the north side of the house was torn down and replaced with an 18 x 36 addition built by Don McCall Construction. This was originally built to accommodate an expanded showroom and service area for the television sales and service business.

Owners and Tenants of the stone house at 184 Washington Street:

Nelson McCarty	1891 – 1915	owner
John and Emma Bent	tenants -	1901
Byron McCarty.....	1915 – 1937	owner
Charlie Towle family.....	tenants-	years unknown
Baigent family.....	tenants-	years unknown
Harry and Emma Noad.....	1937-1955	owners
Allan & Erma Noad	1955-1957	owners
Dave and Emily Brown.....	tenants-	1955?
Max Douglas	1957-1960	owner
Barry & Marion Rutledge.....		
.....	1960 to present-	owners

*East Nissouri
Township: People,
Perseverance,
Progress*

205 Allen Street, Thamesford

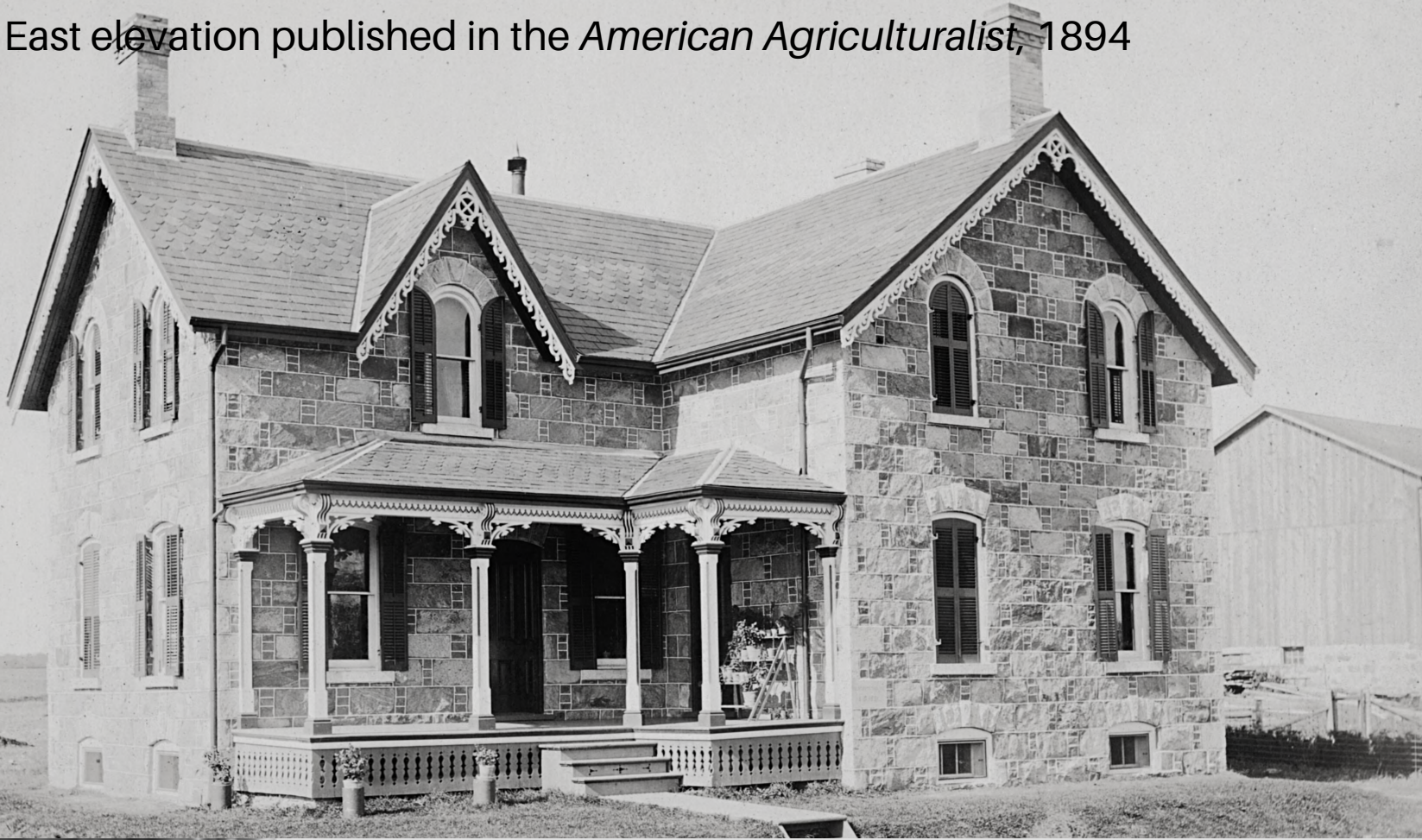
Location: Lot 2 East, Concession 10, East Nissouri
Architectural style: Ontario Farmhouse Gothic Revival
Notable features: Aberdeen Bond masonry
Construction date: 1891
Original owner: David Lawrence, 1849-1915
Stone Mason: John Thompson Crellin, 1837-1922



2022 east elevation

205 Allen Street, Thamesford

East elevation published in the *American Agriculturalist*, 1894



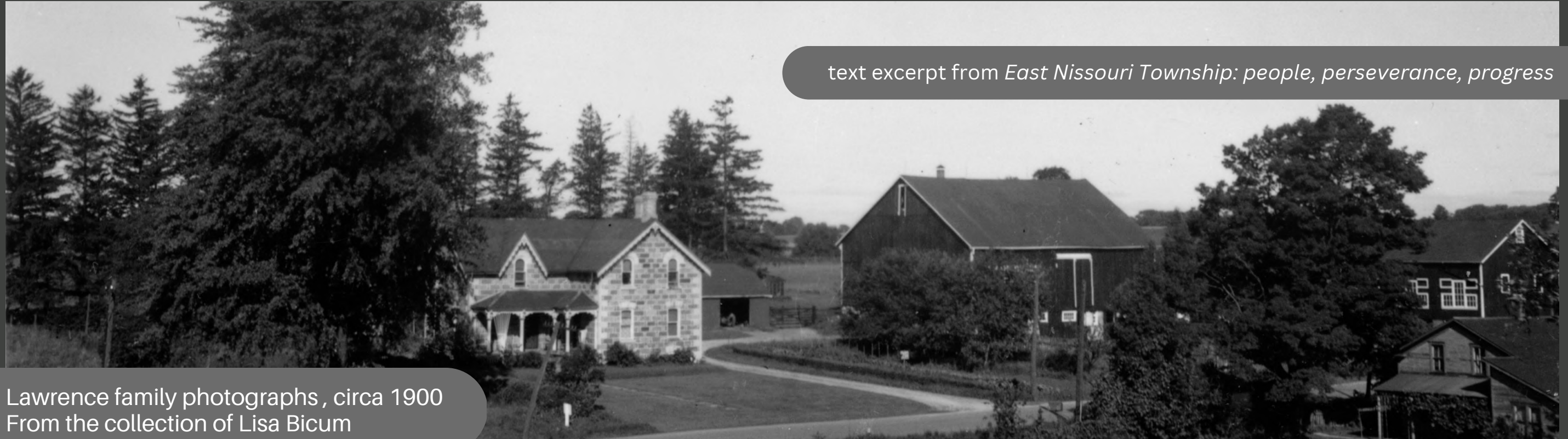
2006 east elevation photograph by Doug A. Huntley



Lawrence family photograph, circa 1900
From the collection of Lisa Bicum



205 Allen Street, Thamesford



text excerpt from *East Nissouri Township: people, perseverance, progress*

Lawrence family photographs , circa 1900
From the collection of Lisa Bicum

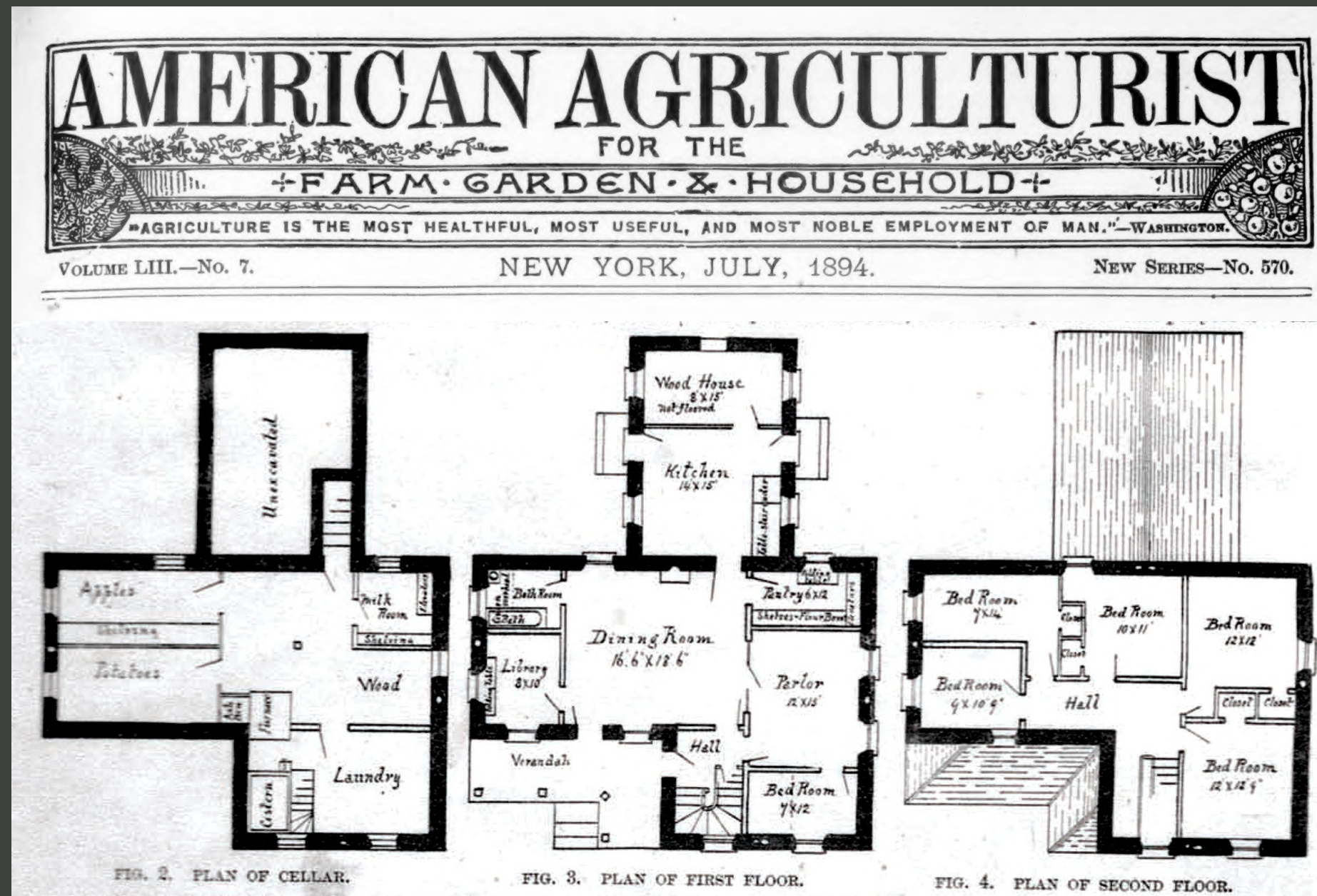


David Lawrence

David and Christina (MacKay) Lawrence

David Lawrence came to Canada in 1869 and worked on a farm near Brooklin for about three years until his health failed and he returned to Scotland. After regaining his health, he left Scotland in 1873 and returned to Canada. He purchased a farm beside the village of Thamesford at Lot 2 Con 10. In 1874, he married Christina MacKay (1848-1932) the only daughter of Donald and Grace MacKay of Con 13. They had six children: Alexander, Grace, Jessie, Anne, John, and Margaret. David took an active role in his community. In 1875, he was secretary of the building committee for the Thamesford Presbyterian Church, secretary-treasurer of the Township of East Nissouri for many years starting in 1881, and secretary of the Thamesford Cheese and Butter Mfg. Co. starting in 1885. As a writer, he contributed local news, articles, and letters to many publications including the *Sentinel Review*, *Farmers Advocate*, *American Agriculturist*, and *Canada Farmer*.

205 Allen Street, Thamesford



HOW THE NEW HOUSE WAS BUILT

by David Lawrence, Ontario, Canada

We were eight, all told, six children, my wife and myself. We were living in the house that was moderately comfortable and quite large enough for two when we went into partnership, but as our number kept gradually increasing, the aspect of things began to change. It was argued that, if we wished, the old house, being a frame one could be enlarged to suit the exigencies of the case; but the ceilings were much too low to comply with proper health regulations, and, in order to get that defect remedied, we would have to tear almost the whole house to pieces, and would consequently have no place to live in while we were rebuilding. And then to make a good, conveniently large house of the old one would involve an outlay of about two-thirds the cost of a new one. Being in the suburbs of a thriving village, it was expected that if we built a new house to suit our requirements with all the modern improvements, we could rent the original home as it was for as much yearly rental as the additional expenditure incurred in the erection of a new house, over and above the cost of enlarging and improving the old one. So we decided for a new house.

And as we had on the farm a collection of good field stones which were really in the way, we ultimately concluded that it would be better to use them in building a house, and then they would be useful as well as ornamental, in place of being an eyesore lying in the fence corners; stone house was decided upon. Now for the plan. Having spent a small portion of my life in an architect's office, it was concluded not to let the job out. I first went around to see the greater part of the best houses that I had heard of, in order, if possible, to be able to group as many of the latest improvements and conveniences into one complete whole, and then I set to work and put the house on paper, as it is on the accompanying plans. The dining room is centrally located and is easily accessible from all parts of the house, the bathroom is, we think, much more useful and convenient on the ground floor, and is supplied from a cistern overhead that is filled from the roof. The pantry is of easy access from either the dining room or kitchen and has ten drawers, four flour boxes and a liberal allowance of shelving, besides elevator shelves which can be let down to the cellar and pulled up again. The library, or office, is a very useful, convenient, and, to me, indispensable part of the house. Large folding doors between the dining room and parlor allow us to throw these two rooms into one, for prayer meetings or family gatherings. The spare bedroom is off the parlor. There are five bedrooms of good size upstairs, and a large hall. The cellar is divided into five compartments, one for potatoes, one for apples, one for milk, one as a laundry, where the clothes are washed—the water being obtained from a cistern, supplied from the roof. The kitchen at the back is only one story without any cellar.

Now as to cost. A stone house is not a cheap one, by any means, even if one has the stones for nothing. There are about four hundred and fifty perches of stone work, which, in this part of Canada, costs about one dollar per perch; this includes the dressing of corners and arches, but not sills. The slate and slating cost over two hundred dollars, The carpenter work, without any furnishing, cost about two hundred dollars, the plumbing over sixty dollars. Then there are over fourteen thousand feet of pine lumber, besides the finishing, base, wainscoting, casings, etc., which are of black ash, varnished, but not painted. The flooring is of maple, basswood and elm.

American Agriculturist, July 1894

David Lawrence documented his stone house design process & construction in the July 1894, American Agriculturist. Lawrence engaged local stone mason, John Thompson Crellin, who had developed a resume of stone houses in Zorra township. In the article Lawrence states: "So that altogether two thousand dollars did not pay for all that had to be paid for, and without taking into account what work I did myself. I might mention that there were something like one thousand six hundred meals served to the tradesmen while working at the house, so it is obvious that our cooking and baking departments were not idle. Although a stone house is not the cheapest, I believe it is the best, being cool in summer, warm in winter, and dry at all times"

205 Allen Street, Thamesford



The Lawrence Ontario Farmhouse Gothic Revival was built in 1891 by stonemason, John Thompson Crellin, in his distinctive Aberdeen Bond masonry style. Hand hewn granite blocks were carefully selected by colour, given a woven appearance. Lawrence perhaps directed Crellin to only use Aberdeen Bond pattern on the front of the house. The north side that today borders the driveway is constructed in plain hewn block bond. The south side of the house, that is visible from the railway, features a diminished Aberdeen Bond - with only two snecks supporting hewn granite blocks. The kitchen & pantry tail section is constructed in a more rustic fashion, with minimally shaped stone with supported with random rubble stones. Corner blocks, lintels and window sills are quarried white limestone, which arrived by wagon from St. Marys. Limestone is relatively soft and can more readily be shaped into precise blocks that window encasements demand.

205 Allen Street, Thamesford



2022 south elevation



Lawrence family photograph , circa 1900
From the collection of Lisa Bicum

The original banded fish scale patterned slate roof has been maintained, including the hip roof over the front porch. The front door can be seen at left and gives access to the main entrance hall; another door allows access directly to the dining room from the porch. The Ontario Gothic Revival Farmhouse was not complete without decorative wood trim and the elaborate finial at the gable peak that extends below the roof line and features the Scottish Cross of St. Andrew. The porch is ornamented by decorative corbels that feature a thistle motif. Along with being an exacting stonemason, Crellin was a skilled carpenter who constructed all the woodwork for his houses. This included decorative bargeboards for the roof gables as well as interior components such as spindles for staircases.

205 Allen Street, Thamesford

Many chimneys are in evidence in the image at left. Crellin and his clients realized that fireplaces were not adequate during the cold Canadian winters, so before 1882 his houses were heated exclusively with cast-iron stoves. Crellin installed the new "free or hot air" furnaces in his cellars that burned wood or coal and relied on con-vection to distribute heat throughout the house, also continuing to include cast-iron heating stoves in principal rooms.

The Late Nineteenth-century Stone Farmhouses of John Thompson Crellin
Karen Elisabeth Armstrong

Lawrence family photograph , north elevation, circa 1900
From the collection of Lisa Bicum



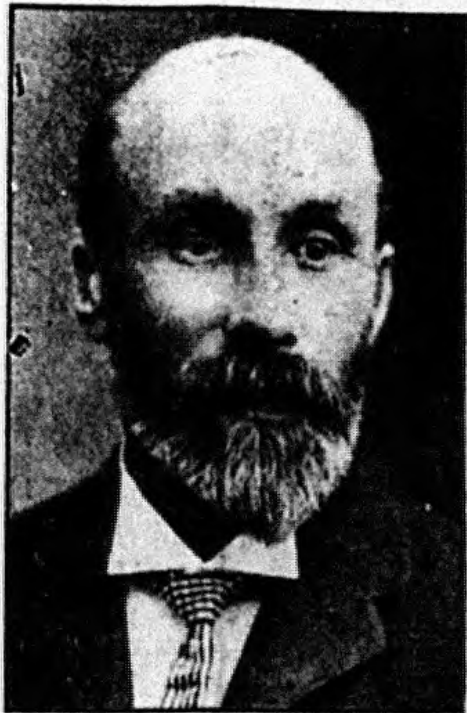
2022 north elevation



205 Allen Street, Thamesford

DAVID LAWRENCE CALLED SUDDENLY BY DEATH

Deceased Was For Many Years Prominent in the Public Life of East Nissouri—Died in Half an Hour After Seizure.



THE LATE DAVID LAWRENCE.

(Special to The Sentinel-Review.)

Thamesford, May 17.—Death came with startling suddenness on Saturday evening to one of Thamesford's most prominent and respected citizens in the person of David Lawrence. Mr. Lawrence was working on the roof of his garage along with James Patterson, when he was seized with dizziness. This was about six o'clock on Saturday evening. He was able to descend from the roof and to enter his house where he died in about half an hour, having been seized with convulsions. News of his sudden death spread rapidly throughout the village and district and caused a feeling of painful surprise and regret among a wide circle of friends.

The late David Lawrence was one of the best known men in Oxford County. Through his connection with many institutions and by virtue of his many sterling qualities he occupied a high position of influence in and around Thamesford, where he had lived for many years. Born in the north of Scotland he came to Thamesford about forty years ago and quickly won his place as one of the leading citizens of the village and township. For upwards of thirty years he was the treasurer of East Nissouri, a position he filled with great ability and faithfulness. He was secretary of the Thamesford Cheese Manufacturing Co. and a prominent member and worker in the ranks of both the Oxford Prohibition Association and the North Oxford Reform Association. For many years he was the efficient correspondent of The Sentinel-Review, many of his contributions being welcome literary efforts. He was a member of the Methodist Church, where he was an active worker and his work as a lecturer at Farmers' Institute gatherings did much to advance the interests of the farming community.

The fact that Mr. Lawrence had been in comparatively vigorous health makes the suddenness of his taking all the more painful. It is recalled that his death removes a man of strong personal character and a man who was absolutely sincere in his convictions. His many sterling qualities as a man, as a neighbor, and as a friend were indicated in both his public and his private dealings. He died after nearly 67 years of useful life.

Besides his widow, whose maiden name was Christina McKay, a family of two sons and four daughters are left. The sons are John and Alexander of Nissouri, and the daughters are Mrs. J. E. Wilson of Drumbo, Miss Lawrence, principal of the Tavistock Continuation School, Miss Ann Lawrence of Memphis, Tenn., and Margaret, of Medicine Hat. The funeral will take place on Wednesday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock to the Kintore Cemetery.



Lawrence family photograph, circa 1910, taken from the railway embankment, looking north. From the collection of Lisa Bicum

Lawrence was a progressive and embraced modernity. His development of complex, functional cellar arrangements lit by prominent windows and paved with newly available Portland cement floors. Lawrence emphasized this on his house exterior by showing all six, partially above ground cellar windows, each articulated with prominent flattened segmental arches embellished with the same white St. Mary's limestone voussoirs as the windows above. It is clear that in 1891, cellars were becoming more functional and that plumbing was finding its way into new homes in rural Ontario.

194933 19th Line, Zorra



Location:
Lot 23 South,
Concession 1,
North Oxford
Architectural style:
Ontario Farmhouse
Cottage
Notable features:
Addition to a brick
structure
Construction date:
1862
Original owner: Rev.
John Fraser, 1819-
1893
Stone mason:
unknown

2022 east elevation

194933 19th Line, Zorra

circa 1900 east elevation



REV. JOHN FRASER, M.A., OF THAMESFORD

The first manse for St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Thamesford was built by Reverend John Fraser, M.A. in 1862, with a little help from his congregation. Ebenezer Golding donated one acre of land to the Presbyterian Church of Canada on the Ingersoll gravel road one-half mile south of the village. The property backs onto the Middle Branch of the Thames River. The one and three-quarter storey double brick house was built on stone footings. A single storey field-stone addition with an outside basement access was added to the south side of the house in later years.

From Forest to Farm, the Story of North Oxford Township

REV. JOHN FRASER'S connection with Zorra sees him as an important factor in the upbuilding of the sturdy Presbyterianism of that day. His commanding figure, his stately bearing, his powerful voice, his vigorous delivery, and his impressive discourse will long be remembered. He was a son of Mr. John Fraser, banker, of Inverness, Scotland and emigrated to Canada in 1845. His induction into Thamesford, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church was on April 4th, 1859, and his resignation in July 1866.

*Pioneer Life In Zorra
by MacKay, W. A.*

194933 19th Line, Zorra

The Fraser Ontario Farmhouse Cottage stone addition has a pleasing façade, with carefully chosen stones, evenly distributed for their colour and carefully crafted into similar sizes. It is an example of Coursed Random Rubble Masonry. Stones, hammer-dressed by the mason were laid in even layers with small sneck stone supporting the wall. Hand wrought stone lintels support windows, with what were perhaps originally wooden sills. The corner blocks are evenly hewn and of a size corresponding to the stones in the field. The replacement windows mimic what were likely original six over six paned. The original roof was likely wooden shake shingles.



The brick portion of this early Oxford County cottage has been sided with board & batten by current owners, the Stewart family, who are preserving & maintaining this historic property with an eye to past, as well as the future.

196150 19th Line, Zorra

1903 photograph by
Carter & Isaac, St.
Marys.
John Thompon Crellin
& Elizabeth McComb
Crellin seated under
bay window.



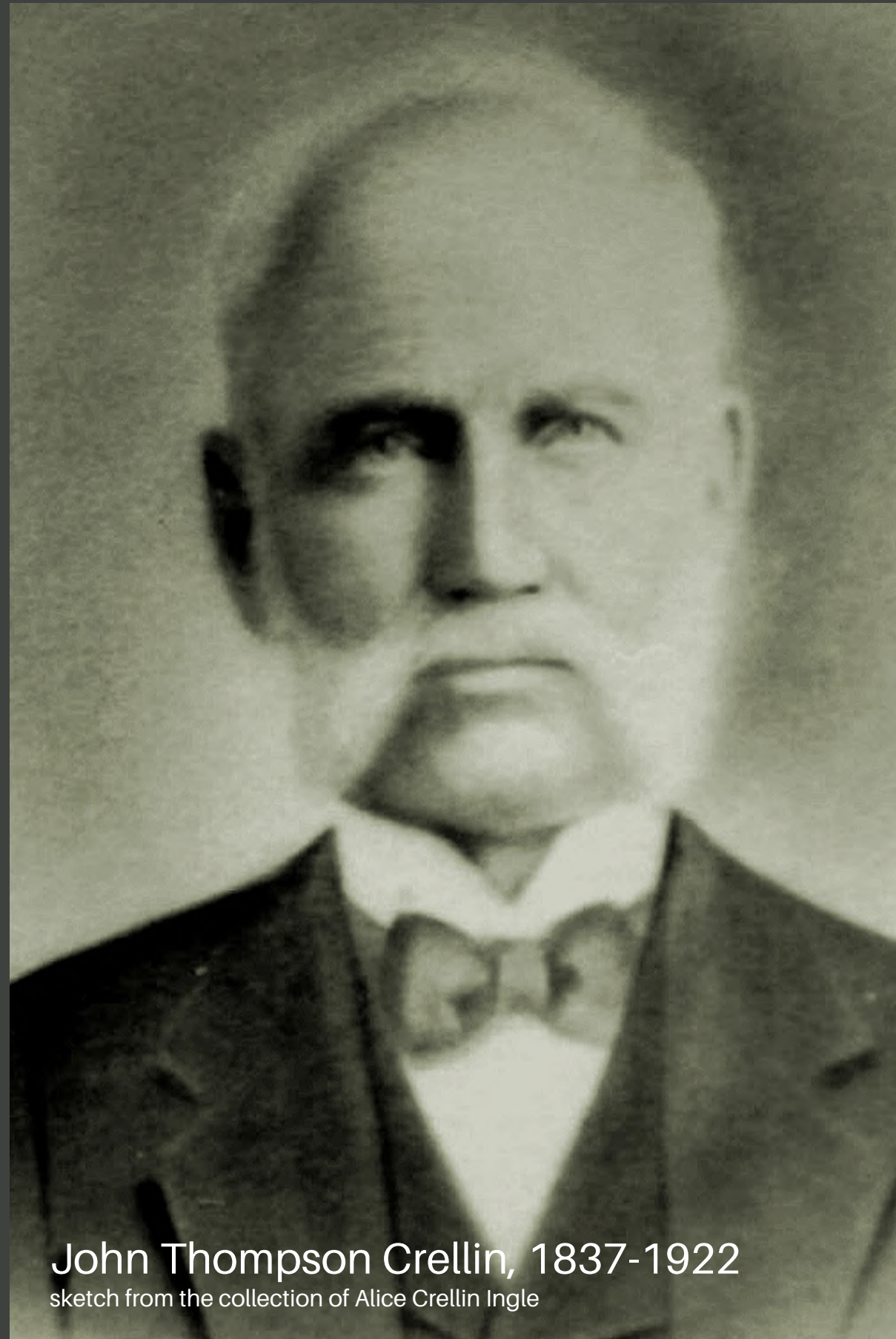
Location:
Lot 19 West, Concession
11, East Nissouri
Architectural style:
Ontario Farmhouse
Gothic Revival
Notable features:
Aberdeen Bond snecked
masonry, elaborate barge
boards & trim
Construction date: late
1870s
Original owner:
John Thompson Crellin,
1837-1922
Stone Mason:
John Thompson Crellin,
1837-1922

196150 19th Line, Zorra



West elevation
1974 photograph from the cover of
The Gaiety of Gables by Anthony Adamson

196150 19th Line, Zorra



John Thompson Crellin, 1837-1922
sketch from the collection of Alice Crellin Ingle

John Thompson Crellin, a master stone mason born in Ulverston, Cumbria, England, immigrated to Canada some time before 1870, when he married Elizabeth McComb. We can assume the McComb and Crellin families were acquainted in England and then J.T. after having arrived in Canada came to London Ontario where he no doubt visited Thomas McComb. As J.T. was a master Stone mason he may have been asked to build a stone house for the McCombs, which is still on this property in West Zorra. John Thompson Crellin and Elizabeth McComb were married on March 15, 1870. I believe they lived a short while either in a house on her Father's property or one near by. Here I believe at least their son, William was born. J.T. found a property 1 1/2 miles north of Kintore. It was a small property of only 8 acres. Here they moved to an old house north of the present house. I do not know if both Henry and Elizabeth were born in this house. The story goes that Margaret (my mother) was the first child born on April 19, 1877, in the new stone house. It may not have been entirely completed at this time. Here also John, Robert, Jane and Charles were born. John Thompson Crellin spent busy years throughout the countryside of East Nissouri and West Zorra, now called Zorra, building many stone houses. His own beautiful home was built with hand picked stones he had collected as he went through the countryside. J.T. did not spend all of his time building houses. Actually his main trade was building stone foundations for barns or houses. I understand J.T. was not a large man - but very quick. It is said that walking up from Kintore with his sons, as a young man, he would give them a head start. Then he would run and catch up to them, pass them and jump over the gate before the boys were home. He had a gang of men working with him. They would leave for work Monday morning and probably not return until Saturday. Returning home he would jump out and run for home as he came nearer. Of course, Uncle Will, the oldest son, started working with him as soon as he was big enough. This is where he learned his trade.

Branches by Audrey Furse Lindsay Griffin

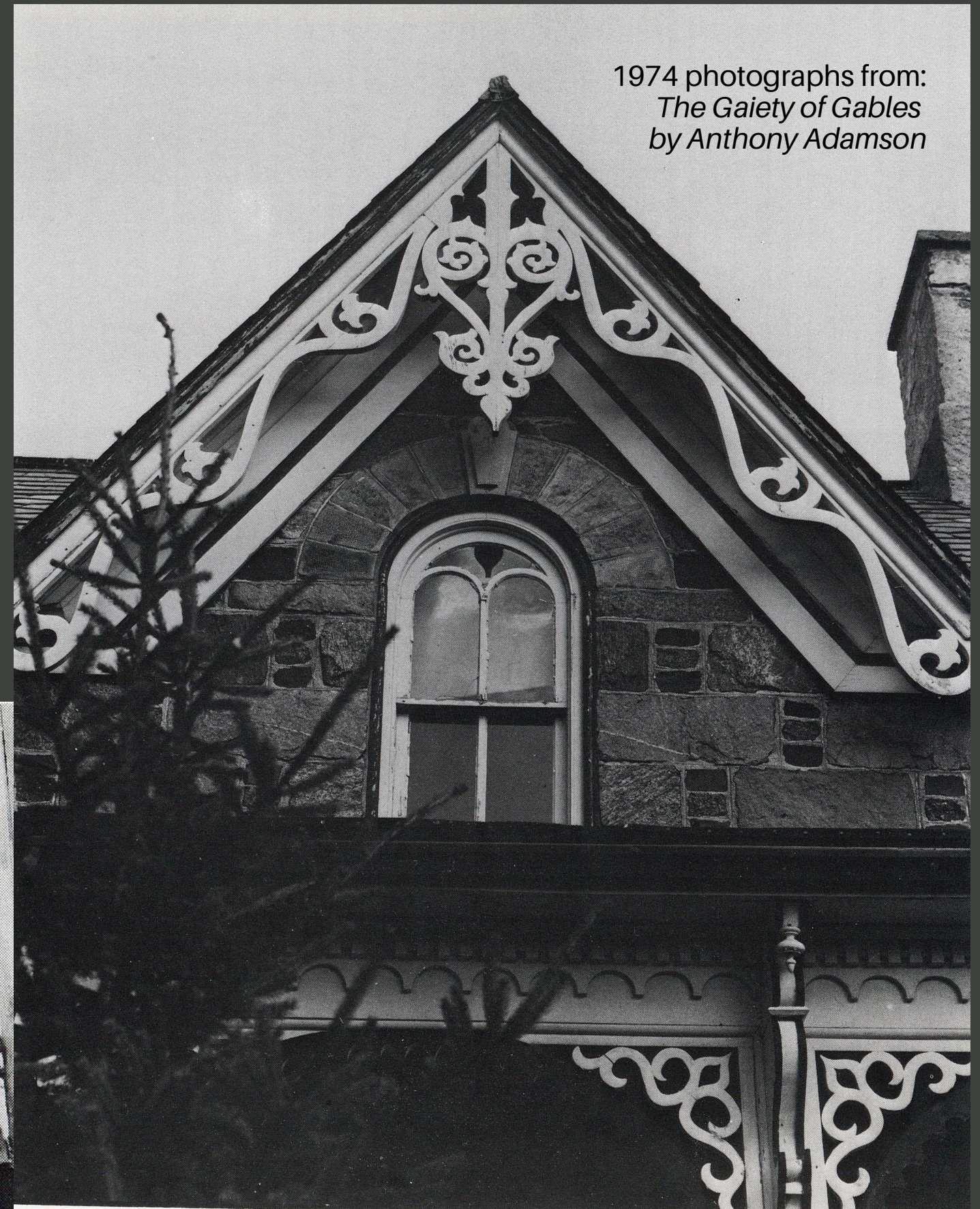
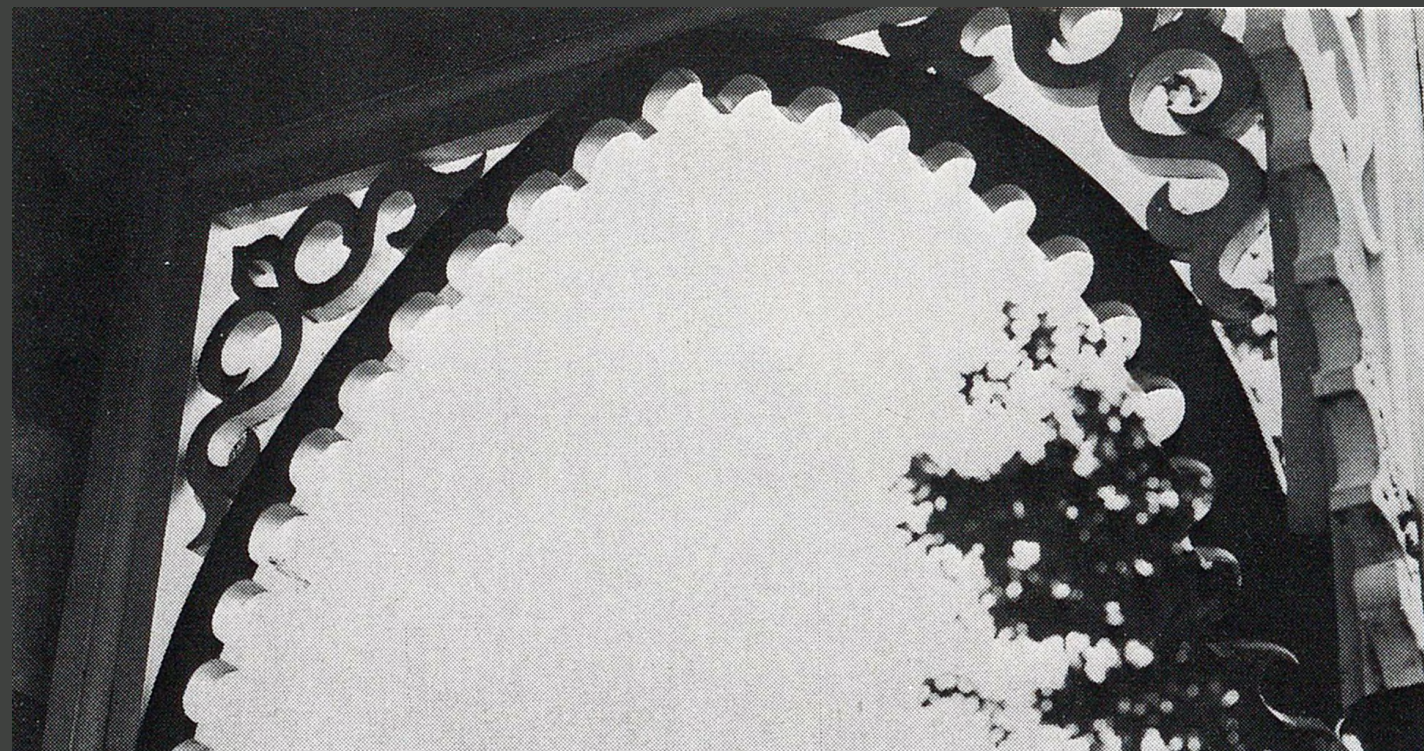
196150 19th Line, Zorra

Besides being a stone mason. J.T. was also a carpenter. He had in the shop, machines to turn out the posts for stair cases and railings. He had a jig saw which cut out the gingerbread work for the outside of the house. He also made fancy shutters. For his own home he made the fancy trimming for the inside of the arch of the Bay window in the living room. He also made the fancy molds for making the plaster cove ceiling and centre pieces. He made the wooden trim of all the rooms as well as the doors. The floor in the dining room was especially significant and beautiful as it was made with alternate wood, cherry and maple.

Branches by Audrey Furse Lindsay Griffin

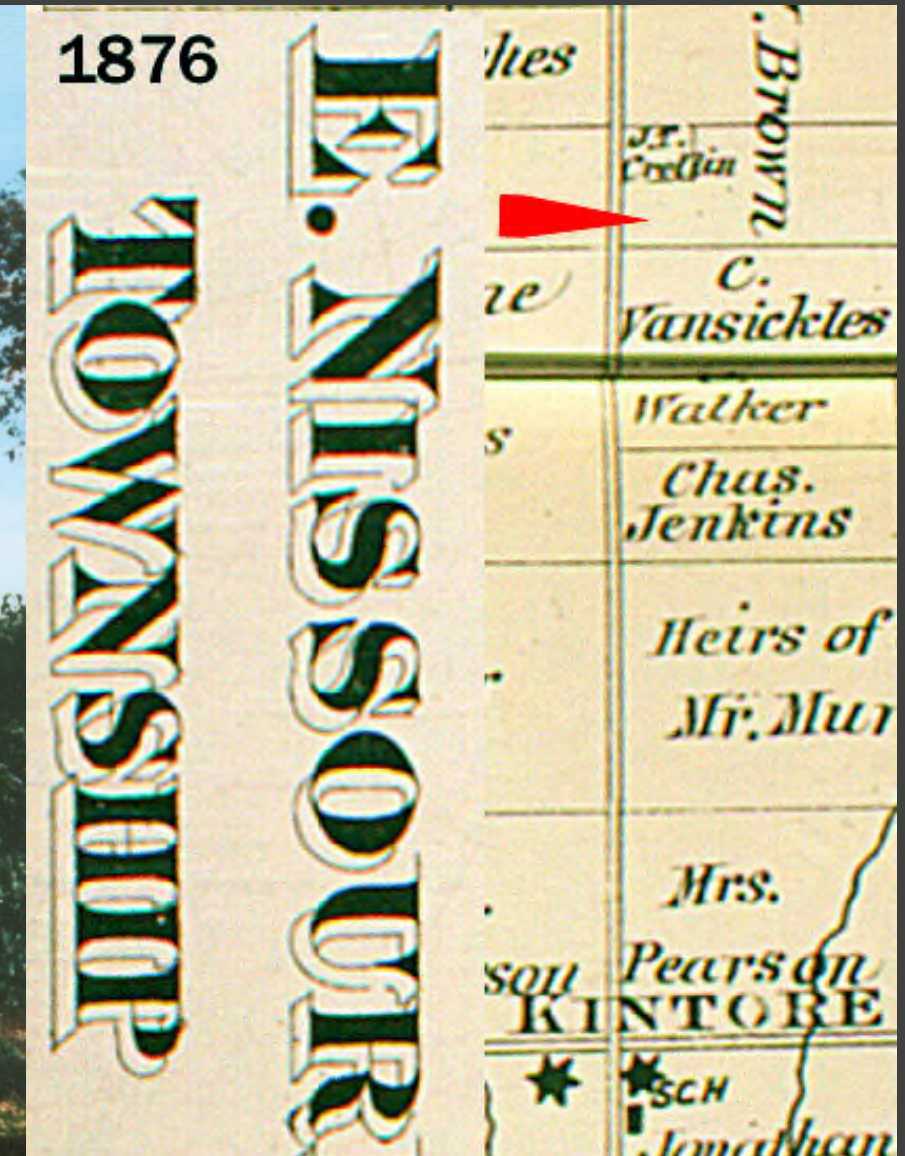
There seems to be nothing Crellin could not make and he made it all without electricity. He made furniture, games, and toys still valued by his descendants, including a built-in china cabinet in the dining room of his own house. In 1884 he joined the King Solomon Masonic Lodge in Thamesford and built a roll-top desk with a glass-fronted bookcase above, topped by a wide moulding featuring the Masonic symbol

*The Late Nineteenth-century Stone Farmhouses of John Thompson Crellin
Karen Elisabeth Armstrong*



1974 photographs from:
The Gaiety of Gables
by Anthony Adamson

196150 19th Line, Zorra



2004 west elevation, photograph by Doug A. Huntley,

Crellin had acquired Lot 19, Concession 11, by 1876 as indicated by the Oxford Historical Atlas. His Ontario Farmhouse Gothic Revival stone house was built around this time, in his distinctive Aberdeen Bond masonry style. Hand hewn granite blocks were carefully selected by colour, given a woven appearance. Corner blocks, heavy top window lintels & sills are quarried white limestone, which arrived by wagon from St. Marys. Limestone is relatively soft and can more readily be shaped into precise blocks that window encasements demand. An elegant bay window projects from the front facade, originally banded by a decorative patterned tin bell cast roof [see 1903 photograph], crowned by cast iron roof creating. Classic Gothic Revival arch-top tracery windows grace the upper storey. In high Gothic Revival fashion, the fancy barge boards once extended well above the gable rooflines. Elaborate decorative brick chimneys had failed by 1974, though the floral patterned slate roof was still in evidence at this time. Finely wrought shutters, built to fit & compliment the arched windows, as well as the intricately made upper porch railing, were also lost by 1974. [see 1903 & 1974 photographs].

196150 19th Line, Zorra



FIG. 16. CRELLIN'S ABERDEEN BOND STYLE MASONRY, WITH 3 SNECKS, MCCORQUODALE HOUSE, I 29TH LINE, NO. 6565, NEAR HARRINGTON, OXFORD COUNTY. | KAREN E. ARMSTRONG.



FIG. 17. CRELLIN'S ABERDEEN BOND STYLE MASONRY WITH 2 SNECKS, MCCOMB HOUSE, I 33RD LINE, NO. 6603, NEAR HARRINGTON, OXFORD COUNTY. | KAREN E. ARMSTRONG.

Working between 1870 and 1891, Crellin created twelve stone farmhouses & developed a unique, instantly recognizable colour pattern on his façades derived from multi-coloured fieldstones sourced from farmers' fields. Crellin brings to the building site not just competence, skill, and business acumen, but also a true aesthetic sensibility revealed through constructed polychrome. Aberdeen Bond was used by other stonemasons throughout Southern Ontario, but none of those buildings use a regularized colour pattern. It probably took Crellin and his crew of eight to thirteen men from early spring to late fall to complete the stonemasonry on a farmhouse. Crellin's main income came from building stone barn and house foundations along with stone walls surrounding properties and stone entrance pillars. During the last half of the nineteenth century, the culture of ornament and the desire for sophisticated, distinctive patterning in construction was such that if farmers only had a barn or house foundation built by Crellin, some paid extra to have the Aberdeen Bond style on the side of their buildings that faced the road. Farmers thus signalled to passers-by that they were aware of the latest trends in stone masonry and they could afford the best.

196150 19th Line, Zorra

DEATH OF JOHN T. CRELLIN.

One of the oldest residents of the township of East Nissouri, William Crellin of the tenth concession, died Monday. Mr. Crellin was born 87 years ago in Lancashire, England, where he learned his trade as a stone mason. At the age of 30 he came to Canada and settled in East Nissouri, where he followed this work.

For the last few years he has been confined to the house until death came Monday afternoon.

He is survived by four sons and three daughters, Charles and Bessie at home Mrs. George Furse of East Nissouri, William and Robert of Ingersoll, John and Jean of Wellwyn, Alta.

Woodstock Sentinel Review,
12 January 1922

John Thompson Crellin & Elizabeth McComb Crellin rest in the Kintore Methodist Cemetery



John Thompson Crellin &
Elizabeth McComb Crellin circa 1890



John Thompson Crellin, circa 1915

196312 19th Line, Zorra



Location: Lot 22 West,
Concession 11,
East Nissouri
Architectural style: Ontario
Farmhouse Cottage/Gothic
Revival
Notable features:
Suicide door
Construction date:
after 1861
Original owner: Hugh
McKay, 1815-1884
Stone Mason: unknown
Demolished: 1997

1994 west elevation, photograph by Doug A. Huntley,

196312 19th Line, Zorra

The suicide door seems to be a characteristic peculiar to Upper Canada architecture. There are a few possible explanations for its existence. Perhaps it was implemented for the easy movement of heavy furniture in and out, and up and downstairs. Such doors were common in industrial use at the time. Or it may have been a matter of taste - the additional door balanced the facade of the house and maintained perfect symmetry. Or it might have been installed in anticipation of a front porch or addition at a point in the future or time and weather combined to contribute to the demise of the original wooden porch which was never replaced.

*The Stone Houses of Old Townsend
by Carole Barber (1985)*

Oxford County land registry records indicate that Hugh McKay (1815-1884) acquired the 100 acre farm in November of 1847. The 1861 Census states that the McKay family was living in a log house.

The stone house was likely built in the 1860s by McKay or a stone mason he hired. Even stone blocks were created, with no discernably large corner blocks. Lintels are shaped stones laid vertically; window sills may have been wooden slabs. The original roof was likely covered in wood shake shingles. It is difficult to determine if the original roofline was once a simple low gable. It appears as though the roof was raised - with the Gothic Revival gable peak added at a later date. It may have added more room to the upstairs, as the McKay family had 6 children. The house once had a front porch, to which the upper door provided access to a balcony area.

196422 19th Line, Zorra



Location: Lot 23 West,
Concession 11,
East Nissouri
Architectural style:
Ontario Farmhouse
Georgian Italinete
Notable features: Two
storey bay window
Construction date:
1885
Original owner:
Hezekiah Towle, 1834-
1903
Stone Mason: John
Thompson Crellin,
1837-1922

2022 west elevation

196422 19th Line, Zorra



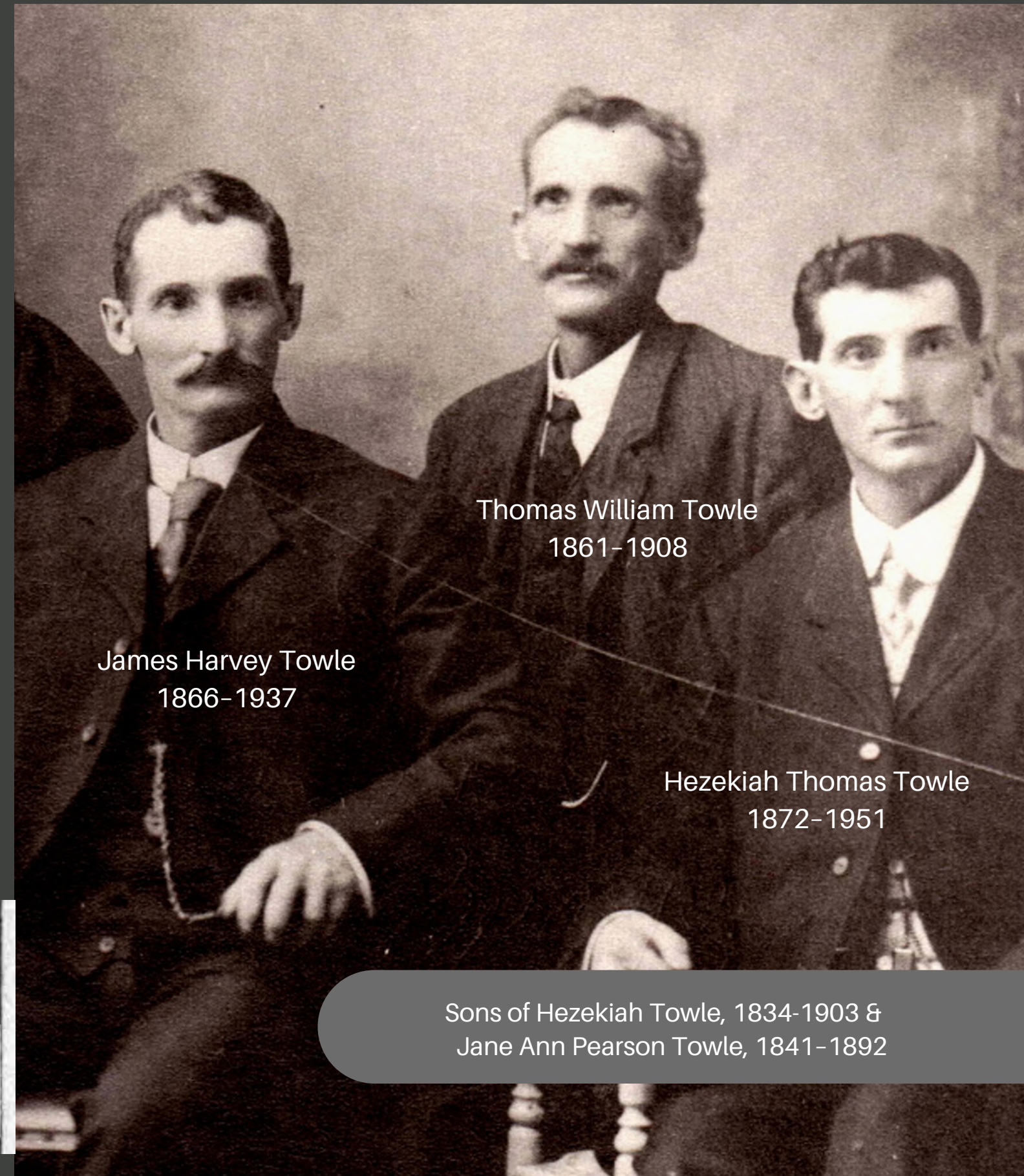
2009 west elevation photograph by Doug A. Huntley

196422 19th Line, Zorra

The farm at Lot 23, Ooncession 11 was acquired by Hezekiah Towle (1834-1903) in 1852. Hezekiah was a young man of 23 years of age who began clearing the land with an axe in 1857. Three years later in 1859, he married Jane Ann Pearson (1841-1892). The couple moved into a log house he'd constructed. The log house was south of the present lane. Grape hyacinths still grow today around the spot where the house stood. Hezekiah was a short, blocky man who was very hard working and quick tempered. Four sons were born to Hezekiah and Jane Ann: Thomas William, John Henry, James Harvey, and Hezekiah Thomas. In 1876, Hezekiah purchased an additional 25 acres of bush which backed his farm, giving him 91 2/3 acres. James Harvey was the son who remained at home to help his father Hezekiah run the farm. In 1885, when Harvey was 19 years of age, a large stone house fashioned after the English style was built on the farm.

James Harvey Towle, a son of Hezekiah, married Jennet Holden in 1893. To them was born a family of five sons and four daughters. The two youngest sons, George Sidney and James Everett remained at home with their father to carry on the farm work. Upon the death of Harvey Towle in 1937, the home farm was bequeathed to Everett Towle.

*East Nissouri Township:
People, Perversance, Progress, 2012*



Thomas William Towle
1861-1908

James Harvey Towle
1866-1937

Hezekiah Thomas Towle
1872-1951



Sons of Hezekiah Towle, 1834-1903 &
Jane Ann Pearson Towle, 1841-1892

196422 19th Line, Zorra



2022 south & west elevation

2009 north & west elevation photograph by Doug A. Huntley

The stone mason doing the work was John Thompson Crellin of Kintore. Ninety loads of stone went into the building of this structure, most of them off their own farm with the rose coloured stones coming from a nearby farm). The corner stones and window sills were quarried stone from St Marys. The brick came from a brickyard in Evelyn. A belfry was built on the back portion of the house that held a bell sent from England which is still in place ready to be rung. The bell was rung to call the men from the fields for meals. It is said even the horses would answer the ringing of the bell. This beautiful stone house consisted of the main part - full two stories with a slate roof cottage style and the lower part at the rear containing the farm kitchen, pantry, stairs to the basement, and a washroom.

196422 19th Line, Zorra

2022 east elevation



Each of the four façades of most of the Crellin-built farmhouses uses different masonry patterning, indicating a clear hierarchy based on prominence and visibility. A secondary façade is made up of even courses of masonry beginning at each quoin with stacks of two snecks in random colours rather than three. In all these cases, this secondary façade faces a driveway. The wall of the house opposite the driveway side is made up of courses of squared blocks of fieldstone of similar size with no snecks, while the back wall of the kitchen wing is random rubble stones, brought to courses.

*The Late Nineteenth-century Stone
Farmhouses of John Thompson Crellin
Karen Elisabeth Armstrong*

196422 19th Line, Zorra

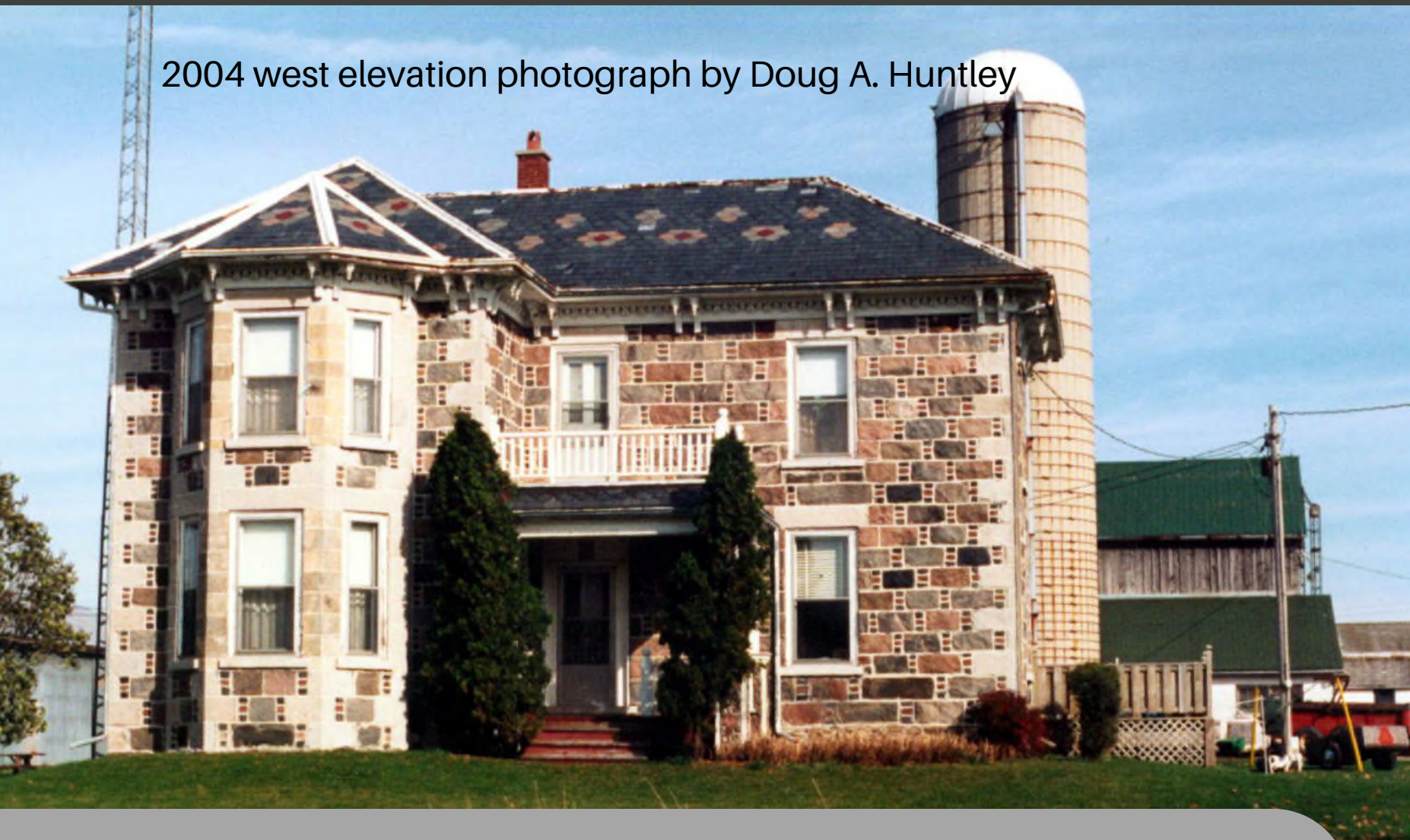


This beautiful stone house consisted of the main part - full two stories with a slate roof cottage style and the lower part at the rear containing the farm kitchen, pantry, stairs to the basement, and a washroom. The main part of the house contained a large dining room, central hall, a beautiful staircase to upstairs, parlour, and bedroom with a clothes closet. Upstairs there were four bedrooms and a large central hall with a door opening to the balcony over the verandah across the west side of the main house. The dining room had wain scoring 36 inches high with panels of bird's eye maple trimmed with black ash. In the centre of the ceiling was a molding of a basket with various fruits from which a hanging lamp was hung from the centre. The main post in the staircase to the upstairs was oak, handrail & spindles were cherry. The parlour had a beautiful bay window with a molded arch. It also had a centre ceiling molding more elaborate and decorative than the dining room.

*East Nissouri Township:
People, Perseverance, Progress, 2012*

196422 19th Line, Zorra

2004 west elevation photograph by Doug A. Huntley



MEDINA.
April 13.—A week ago to-day Mr. John Towle was laid away in Kintore cemetery after one week's illness. Much sympathy is extended to the sorrowing friends.
On Friday morning last his brother Mr. Hezekiah Towle passed away after one week's illness. His remains were interred at the English burying ground, Lakeside. Three sons are left to mourn his loss. His wife died eleven years ago. Sympathy is felt for the mourning ones. Mr. William Towle, their brother, has been very sick also, but is reported a little better. His two sons, Dr. Towle and Albert, are at his bedside.

Ingersoll Chronicle, 16 April 1903

Unique to Ontario is a design for a two story square residence with projecting eaves and ornate cornice brackets promoted by *The Canada Farmer journal* in 1865. This residence provided a classical alternative to the Ontario Gothic Revival Cottage. Italianate residences often have a frontispiece, large sash windows, quoins, and ornate detailing on the windows and roof brackets. Crellin adopted some Italianate features into the Towle house, including paired corbels supporting the roof, as well as deep eaves and large bay windows.

Jane Ann Pearson Towle passed away in 1892, having lived only a few years in her new home, of which she was so proud.

Hezekiah Towle died in 1903. Upon his father's death, son James Harvey inherited the family farm.

*East Nissouri Township:
People, Perseverance, Progress, 2012*