

Lot 14 (House and 2 acres) has been sold to Donald Shearer, a mechanic working in Borden's, Tillsonburg.

G. Paul Stewart has replaced the dairy barns on Lots 10 and 11 with a modern implement barn, and corn storage barns. (1964-5)



Paul Stewart's House

Former home of Mildred Travis

THE LESLIE- LEO PRESSEY FARM

Lots 3 and 4, Concession 7, Bayham were obtained from the Crown in October 1839, by a Joseph Moore. In March, 1852, there was a lawsuit and John Mills became owner. May of 1852 saw John King taking over.

In December, 1854, Israel Sutton got 53 acres and the west 25 acres went back to Joseph Moore. This land being in the Gore and really misshaped because of gulleys was a controversy to its owners.

By 1860, Aaron Springer, who owned the land to the west (some 150 acres with lots of gulleys) owned parts of it. By 1868, the land had gone back to John King from lack of payments. He sold 44 acres of lots 3 & 4 to I. H. Wills. Mr. Wills died and the holders of the property were: William H. Wills
John H. Wills
Mary & W. Nesbitt

At that time the property consisted of 66½ acres of lot 3 & 4, south of what is now No. 3 Highway.

In 1893 the Wills brothers sold out to Nesbitt for \$3,000. Mrs. Mary Nesbitt was a Wills girl and her daughter, born in 1894, still lives at R. R. 1, Aylmer. Mrs. Elgin Laidlaw was born in this house. Before the present house there used to be a log cabin two hundred feet back of it on a sandy knoll. Mr. Frank Veitch, a man well known to this district, was born in that log cabin in 1862. Fire took the cabin and all that remains to prove it was there are a few pieces of pottery, and many coins, if you are lucky enough to find them. Several have been found, even some large pennies as old as 1794. In 1903 William Nesbitt sold to Phineas Pressey for \$5,250.

In June, 1943, Leslie and Mabel Pressey bought the farm from the estate of Mrs. Julia (Phineas) Pressey for \$3,600. In March, 1961, Leslie and Mabel Pressey and Leo and Mary Pressey became joint owners.

During the 1940's it was a real task to sod over the natural blow sand surroundings. Mabel Pressey used to clean out her woodshed in the spring and cover first one part of the lawn and then the next. This was the only way the sand could be held down and the grass allowed to grow.

Water was abundant from natural springs behind the house and even though water is scarce in many places now, with modern conveniences in use, the twelve-foot dug well still supplies a large family. An additional dug shallow spring-fed well behind a drive barn supplies fifteen milking cows and some fifteen young cattle.



Leslie - Leo Pressey home on No. 3 Highway May, 1972



Leslie & Mabel Pressey - 1921



Julie & Phineas Pressey
1924



Leo & Mary Pressey
August 1, 1971, 25th wedding anniversary



Leslie & Mabel Pressey
48th wedding anniversary June 1969

THE MERVEL HOLBROOK FARM



Merv. Holbrook's farm. Former John Holtby farm.

Mrs. Holbrook's great grandfather Firby owned what are now the Beemer farms. Her great grandfather and his brothers owned land and saw mills all the way from Corinth to Aylmer. There was a saying in those days that a person could walk from Corinth to Aylmer and never step off Firby property.

Mrs. Holbrook's grandfather, Thomas Weston Firby owned the DeKraker and Tait farms as well as Lot 5, Concession 8 of Bayham, now owned by Mr. & Mrs. Mervel Holbrook. Later his son Robert Firby took over the DeKraker farm and built the house and barn. His daughter, Daisy Lee, took over the Tait farm and built the house and barn.

The first home of Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Weston Firby was a log house near the 8th Concession Road. Later they built the house in which Mr. & Mrs. Holbrook live now. Their daughter and son-in-law Mr. & Mrs. John Holtby, bought the farm from Thomas W. Firby's estate about 1932. They built additions to the house.

Mrs. Holbrook is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. John Holtby. She and her husband took over the farm after her father's death in 1962.

THE COOK FAMILY FARM

1818-1972

The Cook family farm which is presently owned by Robert Veitch who is a great-grandson of the original settler, Robert Cook, was first taken up in 1818, and is located on Lot eleven, Concession nine of Bayham Township.

Robert Cook, son of Haggie Cook who was a United Empire Loyalist from New Jersey, who had settled in Lundy's Lane, Niagara Falls, walked up from Niagara Falls in two days in 1818.

He settled on the present farm and a land grant of two hundred acres was given to him from the crown in 1819. The deed was registered in 1833 in the township of Bayham, County of Middlesex, District of London. The ruler at that time was William the Fourth. The original Crown Deed and also the Hand written marriage certificate (1822) of Robert Cook and Maria Dewey are in the possession of the present owners younger daughter Mrs. Robert (Isobel) Soper of Straffordville.

Robert Cook willed the property to his daughter Edna Ann Cook, who in turn deeded it to her neice Edna, a daughter of her brother Alonzo Cook, whom she had raised from infancy. Young Edna married Allan Oscar Veitch. The property was entailed property and passed to her three children, Jack Veitch, Mrs. Ray (Frances) Lemon and Robert Veitch. At the time of Edna's death, her son Robert Veitch and his wife Carrie Howey purchased the farm in 1943.

One of the terms of the original grant was that a dwelling be erected within three years by the grantee or his heirs. The first dwelling, built by Robert Cook, was a humble log cabin built in the early 1820's, followed in 1839 by a sun-dried brick house which was later encased in protective siding, cut from logs from the farm, and is still lived in by Robert Veitch.

A telephone was installed by the Bayham & Malahide Telephone Co. in 1909, followed by electricity in 1930.

A dairy barn 36' x 60' was built by Mr. Scriber for Robert Cook and dairy farming was carried on. A second house was built behind the main house where the sharegrower lived. There were numerous sharegrowers including Will Beattie who worked on the farm raising sheep for sixteen years. The wool was sheared and taken to Vienna by horse and democrat to be corded.

From 1915-1931, till the present owner took over, Len Travis was the sharegrower. Dairy cattle were kept and also corn, wheat and oats grown.

On the northern part of the farm was a large maple bush where maple syrup and sugar were made. Oscar Veitch had the distinction of winning first prize for his maple syrup at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1903. The sugar shanty which stood for many years was burned by careless transients during the depression.

The farm was divided in the 1800's by the Forge Road, which was later to become #3 Highway.

Robert Cook was very fond of trees and loved to plant them. Traces of a nursery he started can still be seen on the farm. The walnut trees west of the house derived from a walnut he carried in his pocket when he walked up from the Falls in 1818.



The Robert Veitch house in 1972

In 1958 the farm was equipped for growing flue-cured tobacco, with a greenhouse and five kilns being built. In 1964 a house was built for the owners son Allan Veitch, who grows the tobacco crop.



Allan Veitch's house and the tobacco kilns
1972

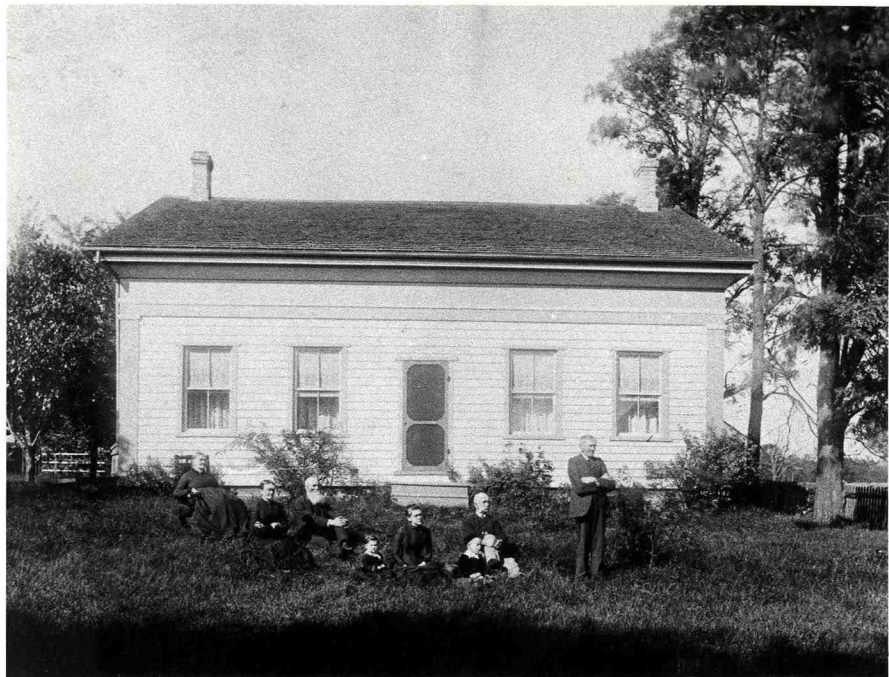
Robert Veitch's elder daughter Helen, married George Backus, the great-grandson of Butler Backus, another pioneer of the ninth concession of Bayham. George and Helen Backus also still farm their family farm.

These are the highlights of 154 years history of one farm. It would be interesting to know if the fifth, sixth and seventh generations and so on, continue to carry on the tradition of farming on the same family farm.



Robert Veitch house - about 1892

C. Depiel, E.A. Cook (died 1902), Haggai Cook, Frances Veitch, E.J. Veitch (1943 at 81 yrs.) J.C. Veitch (5 yrs.), Harvey Cook, A. L. Cook (died 1902)



Robert Veitch house - about 1892

C. Depiel, E.A. Cook (died 1902), Haggai Cook,
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CHARLES PHILLIPS FARM

This farm consisting of 292 acres in Concession 10 was taken from the Crown in 1834 and was taken over by Jacob Acre. In 1864 it was purchased by Casper Best also in 1864 one acre was given for a Cemetery which has been always known as the Best Cemetery. In 1870 rights were given for the railway to be put through the farm. In 1901 it was purchased by Edward Best and then later by Henry Best who owned it for several years. In 1919 the barn north of the tracks was burned but another one erected. After the death of Henry Best it was sold to James Rickwood in 1920 and then to James Slater in 1924. During his ownership the barn south of the track was burned. In 1930 the farm was taken over by Gordon Nelson and later in 1935 it was purchased by Harry Coomber and in 1944 he was joined by his son Howard Coomber. Harry Coomber moved then to the village of Corinth. In 1943 a house from the property of James Precoor was moved onto the farm for a hired man's house. Tobacco was the main crop grown at this time.

In 1961 the farm was sold to Mr. & Mrs. Charles Phillips but is occupied at the present time by their son and family Mr. & Mrs. Ron Phillips. The main crops grown at the present time are tobacco and corn. The original house still stands on the farm and is occupied by Mr. & Mrs. Phillips.

