



DONNELLY HOUSE



CHAS WALSH  
STRAFFORDVILLE



WILLIAM JOHNSON HOUSE



VIOLA + LYLE WALSH



LEN + TORY  
NORA JOHNSON ARBY

T H E   L E E   G A R N H A M   H O M E



The Lee Garnham home is on Lot 137 North Talbot Road in Houghton Township in Norfolk County. This house was built in the orchard on the dairy farm, a century farm that has belonged to our Garnham family for over a hundred years. The old Garnham farm house was a white pine cottage, a few rods east of the new house. This new brick home was finished and we moved into it in June, 1945.

The chestnut woodwork and the oak floors were cut and made into planks and left in the barn for many years before the house was built.

We were fortunate in having a mason, Walter McDowell, who was an artist and made a beautiful fire place and brick work.

Our carpenter was another artist, Mr. Walter Stansell, and his son Bud.



In Bayham Township, on Lot 136 North Talbot Road, on the S. W. quarter of the 200 acre lot, there was at one time, old timers tell us, a halfway house, situated along the North side of the Talbot Road on the corner of the Talbot and the Townline between Houghton and Bayham townships. My husband, Lee Garnham, in the 1930s bought the N.E. quarter of this lot 136 to get more acreage for growing tobacco. On searching the title of this lot in St. Thomas, we found there records back to 1819. The list of owners are 1819, Michael Page, 1843 Amos Smith, 1843 David Birdsall, 1843 Hon. George E. Goodhue, 1853 George McLean, 1863 Daniel Swayze, 1864 Henry Stratton.

We know the history of the farms, since 1864. Mr. Henry Stratton divided the 200 acre lot between his sons, George and Thomas. George, in the 1920s sold his land to the Silverthorns. The farm is now owned and operated by Mr. Emery Silverthorn.

When I told Mrs. Emery Silverthorn recently that the house, where she now lives, stands on the same spot that once had an old hotel, she was surprised as she had never heard this. But I feel sure that her Uncle Arthur Silverthorn, who owned the farm before and tore down the old halfway house to make room for a more modern house which he had moved to the site, must have known about this. Someone told me that Arthur destroyed and buried many old gin bottles. The present owners have noticed many horse shoes in odd corners, perhaps relics of the old barn where travellers rested their horses overnight in the early days.

Old timers recall that they have heard that around 1834 and later the mail man rode a horse from St. Thomas to Simcoe carrying the mail in leather pouches. There were few post offices at first between these two places. The mounted mail man followed an old Indian Trail through the dense forest. This trail was later used by Col. Talbot in surveying out the Talbot Road.

In an old book, which I have, written and published in 1851 by W. H. Smith for the people of Canada entitled "Canada, West, Past, Present and Future", he tells us that Bayham was first settled about 1813.

Croft Garnham tells us that his great-great grandfather operated this hotel known as the halfway house in 1839. His name was Lewis Winans and his son, Mahlon Lewis Winans, drew the mail by horse back from St. Thomas to Simcoe. He always stopped for the night on this trip to rest his horse. This barn was built close beside the road to accomodate the horses of travellers stopping at the hotel for the night.

Roy Lambert, whose ancestors, the Moyers and Honsburgers, settled in this vicinity in the early 1800s, tells us that they always spoke of the dense forest between Simcoe and St. Thomas as the 50 Mile Woods. Some settlers from the Niagara District who came up to Bayham in early times never did make the journey through this forest back to their old home again, during their life time. Too far for them to venture even for a visit.

I remember when I first saw this old hotel in 1913, when I came to Guysboro to teach school, it looked much like this snapshot of it. Mr. George Stratton lived there then and one of his three grandchildren who lived with him came to our school. These children told me there were nine bedrooms on the second floor. Two of these rooms had the windows boarded up and were not used. Local residents whispered that murders had been committed in these rooms and that was why they had been boarded up. I do not know that it was ever really proven that a murder was ever committed in the building.

Many of the travellers who stopped to eat and rest at this halfway house were planning to buy land to settle on. If so, they would carry money in gold coins likely in an iron kettle or leather bag. For safety at night this would be buried in a marked spot and left there for the night while the owner slept. Then at daylight it would be dug up and the traveller would continue on his way. We are told that often men were murdered and their gold stolen in these back woods hotels. So it may or may not be true that this took place at this hotel.

The old hotel barn was on cedar posts on a side hill right on the road side, so a team could drive right in off the road or trail. The lower part below the hill was used for manure storage. Now the barn on this farm has been moved back a distance from the road.

The saddle bag preacher, who used to visit Guysboro before a church was built here in 1864 may have stopped at this hotel for the night. We are told that Wesleyan

Methodist Missionary preachers used to visit our community and hold services in homes and later in school houses before a church was built in 1864.

This paper was read to the Bayham Historical Society in October 1974 by ETTA GARNHAM.

T H E   S T O N E   H O U S E   L O G



*The Stone House*

The Stone House was built on Lot No.2 and part of Lot 125 1 R., Reg. Plan 205, in the village of Straffordville, Township of Bayham, Ontario. The plan of this house was drawn by Wallace Cole of Michigan U.S.A. The basement was dug and finished by William Boyd and sons and daughter in 1933 in the afternoon of the eclipse of the sun. The frame work on the house was put up by Mr. Stewart Moore and sons of New England. The stone work on the house was done by Mr. Wesley Allen of Tillsonburg. He also put up the chimney and it was changed by Harley Esseltine and Mr. Arthur Ribble.

In 1935 Mr. Walter McDowell of Eden did the verandas and posts and pointed up all the house. THIS is the fancy bead like work around each stone, trimming - all the walls, cement floors and veranda and house all four sides. Mr. Walter Stansell put in the windows, floors down stairs 7/8 inch maple and up stairs 7/8 inch birch and finished them. He hung all doors and put on the trim through out the house and his son, Lloyd Stansell helped finish the trimming. Carrol Bros., Tillsonburg, did all the plumbing. Jack Howard did all the wiring - 60 openings for \$60.00. The well was put in the basement by Mr. Weaver of Tillsonburg, and Mr. Arthur Adams of Courtland planed and made the trim from Chestnut and Walnut cut from the old farm.

Mr. Clyde Soper made the windows and front and back doors. The house was finished and ready to live in, in October of 1935. Moved and stayed the first night of Oct. 31, 1935. On Halloween night, that night, there was an earth quake and it wakened everyone in the house. Although new the house made many sounds.

Most of the stones in the house came from the old farm of Charles Garnham. The rest of the stones came from William Rayson's farm. Some came from the Robert Garnham farm.

## THE STONE HOUSE LOG

All farms were about two miles east of Straffordville on Talbot road. The Garnham farm was on the right hand side and the Rayson's farm was on the left hand side. Charles and Hettie Garnham and their son, Croft and his wife, Pearl, and their daughter, Audrey, came to live in the new house. The first Beauty Parlor in Straffordville was started in this house and was opened in March 25, 1936, and closed after 1966 when Mrs. Croft Garnham retired from beauty parlor work. On April 26, 1966, when the daughter's husband was killed in Halifax, Nova Scotia, he was brought to Straffordville and buried in the family plot. (Mr. Sidney Reginald Seymour) When school closed, the daughter, Mrs. Sidney Seymour, (Audrey) and family returned to live with her mother and father until 1971. She taught school at Port Burwell, Ontario. Then she moved to St. Thomas where she bought a house.

The children's names are Marilyn, James, Gail and Croft Seymour. While here Marilyn trained in Woodstock as a R.N. and went to Ottawa to do nursing. Gail and Marilyn attended Alma College two years. Gail received her B.A. in 1976 and B. of Ed. in 1977 and will teach this year. James is still attending college in Toronto after attending Oakville Boy's College 5 years, and Waterloo 2 years and will be returning in the fall to Toronto. Croft attended Boy's School for 2 years at Selkirk, Manitoba. Then Croft attended Arthur Voden school in St. Thomas and 1 year at Fanshawe College and will return to school in the fall of 1977. Mrs. Audry Seymour is teaching at the Scott Street school in St. Thomas, special Ed. class, 1977-78.

Charles R. Garnham and Hettie A. Garnham celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary on April 9, 1948 at the Stone house. Pearl and Croft Garnham celebrated their 50th anniversary in 1972 in the same home and will celebrate their 55th anniversary on Nov. 29, 1977.

Previous owners of this lot were Joab Leach who sold to Lucinda Allison, on Dec. 8, 1876. On Sept. 14, 1891, it was sold by Charles A. Price to William Lipsit. On Nov. 4, 1892, it was sold by William Lipsit to Olevia J. Travis, who sold it to Hester Ann Garnham. Hester Ann Travis sold it to her son Croft Garnham on April 13, 1948.