

ROBERT BOBIER

John Kenneth Galbraith (this is where he grew up): This Farm and House is located on Concession 6 Lot 20 North - 1/2.

Crown to Canada Company on February 19 1838, 200 acres.

DEED March 8th 1855 Canada Company to Dugold Graham 100 acres North - 1/2.

DEED June 22nd 1864 Dugold Graham to John Galbraith 100 acres North - 1/2. June 26th 1932. Oil and gas lease. William Anchibold Galbraith.

GRANT October 30th 1973 Spence Norman Bobier and wife to Robert Henry Bobier - Robert owns it today (1994).
House built in 1864.



photo taken 1993.

"Backus House"

1850 - 1993

FOUNDING FAMILIES

In 1809 three families arrived from Pennsylvania and took up land in the Talbot Settlement. John and Frances Pearce received lot 10 con. 10, Mrs. Mary Storey and son Walter lot 11 con. 10 and Leslie Patterson and his wife Lydia Backus lot 12 con. 10. The following year Stephen Backus arrived and received lot 13 con. 10. Frances Pearce and Mary Storey were sisters of Leslie Patterson. Lydia (Backus) Patterson was a sister of Stephen Backus and Mary Storey's daughter Anne married Stephen. Thus we know that these four families were all related. In 1838 Mary Storey gave the property to her grandson Andrew Backus.

BACKUS HOUSE

This house of Georgian design was built in 1850 and was the first brick dwelling in Dunwich Township. It required 72,000 bricks which were made and burned on the farm. The home is constructed of virgin oak and black ash beams and joists. Three original fireplaces were hand worked with panelling and mantles of black walnut. The living room was finished completely with black walnut trim and doors. Floors are 1 1/2" black ash and Georgian pine tongue and grooved by hand. The family enjoyed their first meal in the house on the 13th of June 1851. Andrew Backus and his wife Mary Jane Hamilton raised a family of six sons and six daughters in this home.

THE LAST RESIDENTS

Mr. and Mrs. Morley Page were both descendants of pioneer families and had a keen appreciation of the history of this farm and of the Talbot Settlement. Mr. Page's ancestors also purchased land in the Settlement from Col. Talbot. Many Dunwich residents fondly recall the house and gardens lovingly cared for by the Page family. In 1965 the Pages' sold the property to the Ontario Government who still own it.

Some information kindly provided by Wallacetown and Tyrconnell Women's Institutes.

House
Taken
1993





MEMORIES — William and Iris Page relive old times at the Backus/Page house over the weekend. Ms Page said she'll always remember how cold it was in winter with just a wood

stove in the house. "You sure learned how to get dressed in a hurry in the morning," she said.

— (Staff)

There's no place like home, but it was never like this

Emotional open house for Page children

By **JAMES BARRY**
Staff Reporter

Sorrow, anger and finally hope. William and Iris Page experienced the emotional gamut while visiting their childhood home.

The siblings were back to the Backus/Page house for an open house Sunday organized by the West Elgin Genealogical and Historical Society. It was hoped when people saw the sorry state of disrepair the house has fallen into it would spark some action.

"I can't say I enjoyed going inside," said an obviously disheartened Mr. Page, "it's an awful wreck." In its day the house was described as an excellent example of Georgian architecture complete with extensive manicured grounds, attracting site seers from all over.

"I'm very disappointed," he said. "Dad sold it to the government because it was going to be maintained. That hasn't happened and I can't believe the state it's in. I'm not happy at all."

The house was built in 1850 by Andrew Backus and was the first brick home in Dunwich Township. It is constructed of 72,000 bricks, all made on the farm, as well as from locally grown oak, black ash and walnut.

"We're quite interested in preserving the house and are hoping it will become a museum," said

Alice Paterson, president of the society. If that doesn't happen, she said members hope the house will be sold to private interests with the provision it be restored to its former glory.

She adds it's the least the government could do after letting the house go. She blames the Ministry of Natural Resources for not taking care of the house and renting it to "not so good tenants." The house was sold to the MNR in 1965 and there were plans to turn it into a museum and the property into a trailer park. Those plans have been scrapped.

APPRECIATION

"I appreciate what the historical society is doing," said Mr. Page. "It's nice to see some people, especially young people, have an interest in Canadian heritage, even if the government doesn't. If people don't understand that (their heritage), they don't know where they came from."

"It was really hard," said Ms Page when she saw the house for the first time since her parents sold it. "It really rocked me on my toes. The government really dragged their heels. They started out with a beautiful property and let it go." She said she hopes something happens with the house soon before it's too late. "To let it sit any longer is criminal."

Ms Page said in a perfect world

it would be nice if the house could be turned into a museum. But in the real world she said she doesn't expect the government has the money or the interest to do it. She said the next best option would be to sell the house to someone with the provision it be restored to its original state. She said when setting the price the government should let it go cheaply because of the amount of work it's going to take to restore the house.

"We had a lot of laughs and lot of cries in this place," lamented Ms Page. As she walked through the house and grounds over the weekend she recalled many a family Christmas, lots of snow and tobogganing down the hill across the road, watching the weather roll in off the lake from the upstairs windows and just sitting on the front lawn after a hard day's work on the farm and listening to the peace and quiet.

"It was a real home," said Ms Page as she looked back at her childhood, "everyone pitched in and no one sat down until they were finished." She said it was a good thing her mother and father weren't there to see the condition of the house or "there'd be hell to pay. They really lived and enjoyed this house."

"Now that I've been here for a few hours," said Ms Page with a far away look in her eyes, "I'm starting to see it in my mind . . . the way it used to be."

BACKUS HOUSE 1850 to 1994

This farm and house is located on the 10th Concession Lot 11 of Dunwich Township. This land was given to Colonel Thomas Talbot on May 21st 1807 by the Crown.'

Deed: 6th November 1813 Colonel Talbot to Mary Storey.

Deed: 27th November 1835 Mary Storey (widow) gave it to her grandson Andrew Backus.

Grant of the 11th September 1925 - Andrew Backus to Jonas Page, 100 acres.

Grant 16th November 1925 Jonas Page to William Morley Page.

Given the house by William Morley Page and wife on June 22nd 1965 to Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Ontario as represented by the Minister of Public for Ontario.

HOUSE: Built by Andrew Backus. in 1850.

June 194.

Tyrconnell Heritage Centre

Thomas Talbot was born in Castle of Malahide, County of Dublin, Ireland in the year 1771. As a young military officer, he had visited Upper Canada in the company of Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe. He made the decision to settle along the shore of Lake Erie and returned in 1803. Originally he received a grant of 5000 acres and established himself at Port Talbot with a house, a grist mill, and a saw mill.

The business end of the Talbot Regime was Port Talbot where the "Baron" reigned, but the real heart of the settlement was St. Peter's Anglican Church and the hamlet of Port Tyrconnell. Here four families arrived in 1809-10 from Pennsylvania.

These four families were John and Frances (Fanny Patterson Pearce); Mary (nee Patterson and widow of Andrew) Storey; Leslie and Lydia (Backus) Patterson; and Stephen and Anne (Storey) Backus. As Talbot proteges, they were allowed to expand their holdings on easy terms. In return, they built large houses, barns, and St. Peter's besides luring other farmers and merchants to Tyrconnell port and mills.

In contrast to the crofters and cotters from the Argyll highlands, literally hoe-farmers and shepherds, the Pearce-Patterson Family farmed Yankee style. Oxen followed by horses supplied the power; scrub cattle were replaced by milking Shorthorns for butter, cheese, and beef; sheep provided lamb's wool, sheepskins, and lanolin. The swine furnished pork, ham, bacon, and lard. For fowl, hens and eggs, turkeys, geese and ducks were kept. Crops included marsh hay, (later clover and timothy), besides oats, barley, and corn for grains. Also they raised winter and spring wheat plus dried peas for flour and for cash money. Money was scarce, but little was needed. The garden and orchard provided summer and winter fruits and vegetables. An ample wood lot, besides being environmentally friendly, furnished firewood, lumber and maple products. A small field of flax plus the wool supplied the clothing material. Flowers were grown extensively for house, church, weddings and funerals.

The Pearce, Patterson, and Stephen Backus families soon discarded their primitive log houses for modern frame and brick houses. Andrew Backus inherited the Storey holdings and in 1850 constructed the lovely brick home on the Dunwich Lake Road. This was home to his wife, Mary Jane (Hamilton), and a dozen children, six boys and six girls.

The house of Georgian design was the first brick dwelling in Dunwich Township. It required 72,000 bricks which were made and fired on the farm. The home was constructed of virgin oak and black ash beams and joists. Three original fireplaces were hand-worked, with panelling and mantels of black walnut. The living room was finished completely with black walnut trim and doors. Floors were built with one and one-half inch black ash

and Georgian pine, tongue and grooved by hand. The family enjoyed their first meal in the house on the 13th of June 1851.

Morley and Grace (Hoskin) Page, the last residents of the home, were both descendants of pioneer families and had a keen appreciation of this farm and of the Talbot Settlement. Mr. Page's ancestors also obtained land in the Settlement through Col. Talbot. Many Dunwich residents fondly recall the house and gardens lovingly cared for by Morley and Grace. The Ministry of Natural Resources is the present owner, having acquired the property from the Pages in 1965.