

JAMES HARRISON.

This house is located on the 8th Concession Lot 11 sel  $\frac{1}{4}$  -- nwy  $\frac{1}{2}$  .

Crown-- JULY 25th 1821. To Hon Thomas Talbot.

DEED -- 1823<sup>th</sup> NOV 6th --- Hon Thomas Talbot to Charles Buredick.

DEED --- JUNE 24th 1824--- Charles Buredick to John Leslie Pearce.

Stewart and his sisters (Eve and Frances ) lived together all were single.

WILL -- Stewart Leslie Pearce -- Decd. 1969 His will to The Bible Sosicty.

Then to James Russell Harrison who owns this land and house. 1996.



HOUSE BUILT. Back of house built in 1830.  
Right side of house built in 1880--85.  
Front part left side of house 1978.





# Hidden heritage

1996

A funny thing happened to me on the way to my second job ... or is it my third one?

I'm starting to lose count.

Anyway, I've had the privilege to clean the oldest home in the area. Which I might add must also be one of the largest, since I got lost in there for so long my children sent out an APB.

I'm talking about the historic home now owned by Alistair and Audrey Littlejohn.

If you travel west along Lake Road past Fingal, you will encounter many historic homes. One of which is this former home of Col. Leslie Patterson.

Built in the early 1820s, this white clapboard home boasts 14 large rooms and still remains with the same charm and elegance it had back then.

Patterson left Ireland in 1807 in search of a new home. After settling in Erie, Pa., with his family, they soon became dissatisfied and came to Canada. Finding the Toronto area too swampy and having heard of the Talbot lands, they eventually settled in Tyrconnell.

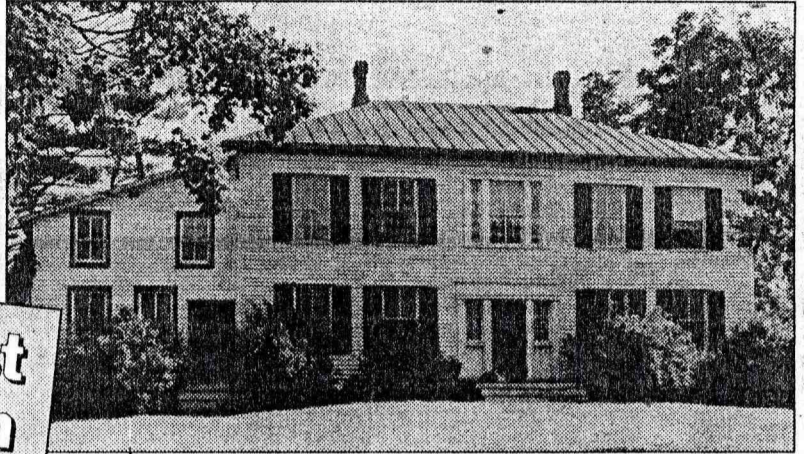
Patterson, who was Col. Thomas Talbot's right-hand man, opened his home to be the Anglican meeting place until 1928 when St. Peter's

Church was built.

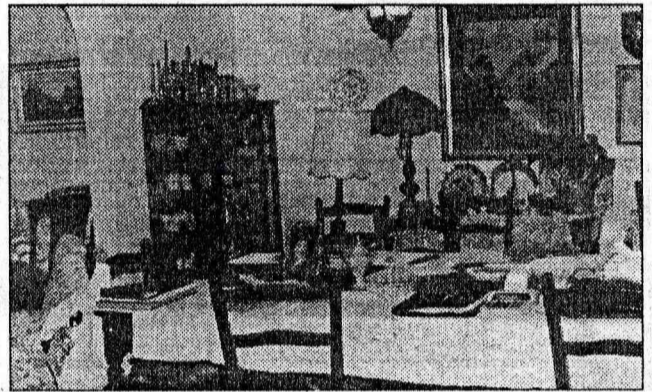
This home also became Tyrconnell's first post office from 1837-1852.

During the Rebellion of 1837, volunteers from the Talbot settlement were sent to Amherstburg with Patterson on the evening of the Battle of Pelee Island. These men consisting of 70 soldiers and 18 teamsters asked permission to stay in the spa-

**West Elgin**



**THE PATTERSON HOME**



cious house. They were granted lodging on that cold January evening.

The Pattersons remained in the home until 1914, at which time D. M. Littlejohn purchased it. Mr. Littlejohn died in the house and the current owner, his son Alistair, was born in the same room which is referred to as the 'Hatched and Dispatched' room, since most of the Littlejohn clan were born and died in the room.

Alistair married Audrey and they have 11 children.

This home boasts beautiful antique furniture, from the 1800s, natural woodwork and two staircases that would give Jane Fonda a

good workout. The five bedrooms are spacious with plenty of room to sleep a ball team which was needed considering they had 11 children. The grounds are just as breathtaking. The house is surrounded by trees, flowers and a picturesque view of Lake Erie.

This is truly one of west Elgin's hidden treasures.

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# Heritage group examines diary

BY JANE HUGHES

Merinda Pearce kept a diary.

In it, she recorded her thoughts, daily events and current affairs of the late 1800s.

Through accounts of mundane chores, amusing incidents and sometimes tragic events, she opens a window on to a way of life now long gone, although the message is clear that while methods may change, people do not.

On April 11, at the inaugural meeting of the new heritage group for St. Thomas and region, Kelly Gerbino gave an interesting account of the early portion of this diary.

Merinda, sometimes spelled Marinda, was married to Thomas Pearce, a descendant of noted Tyrconnell pioneer John Pearce and related to the donor of the John E. Pearce Park land. She was also the niece of Thomas Williams of St. Thomas.

Merinda and Thomas had four children: Alice (Willson), Anna (Orchard), Samuel and William. There was also an extra boy, Cecil Leroy Sloan, a twin born June 17, 1895. Merinda took little Cecil into her home when Mrs. Sloan needed help feeding the babies and, despite the fact an entry mentions Mrs. Sloan asking for her baby back, nothing more is said about this in the diary and Cecil remains with Thomas and Merinda as part of their family. He is still with them when Merinda ends her diary in the 1900s.

The diary tells the entire story of building a new house, from the moment the old house was moved, May 16, 1892, and the ground staked out to begin digging a cellar, to their first night in their new home, Jan. 4, 1893.

This house, with its innovative tile system in the basement for drainage and its then-rare indoor plumbing, is the same building that Merinda's son, Samuel M. Pearce half-gave, half-sold for the Pearce-Williams (United Church) Christian Centre south of Iona.

By any standards, it was a big house which must have

been convenient because Merinda seemed to think nothing of putting up large numbers of guests, either expected or unexpected.

From her accounts in the first three years only of the diary, the Pearce farm sounds quite profitable. They had pigs, sheep, chickens, turkeys, cows and steers as well as crops including "922 bushels of wheat, 304 of peas and 815 of oats all off of 64 acres of ground."

They had wool from the sheep, honey, from hives, that was "clear, thick and lovely and lots of it. We have more than we deserve." as well as maple sugar and syrup.

Mrs. Gerbino also talked about the sugar bush, when whole families would gather to chew "wax", the taffy-like candy produced when boiled-down syrup is drizzled into snow; dentistry practices at the time when "vitalized air" was used to relieve the pain of extractions and of some common (and startling) medical theories of the era.

May 12/96



1. John S. Pearce House  
Drive By Only



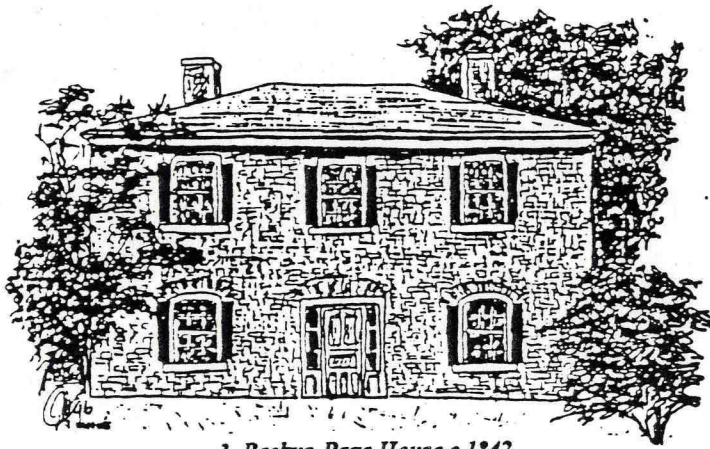
5. Col. Leslie Patterson House c 1836  
Drive By Only



2. Mary Storey Property



6. Stephen Backus House c 1856

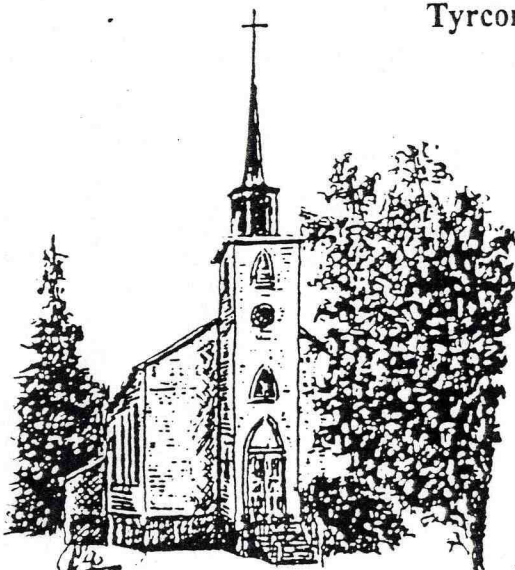


3. Backus-Page House c 1842

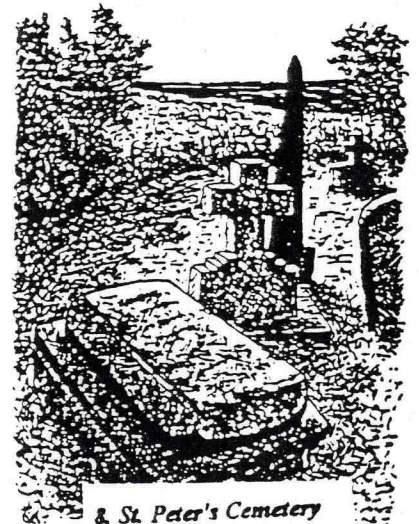
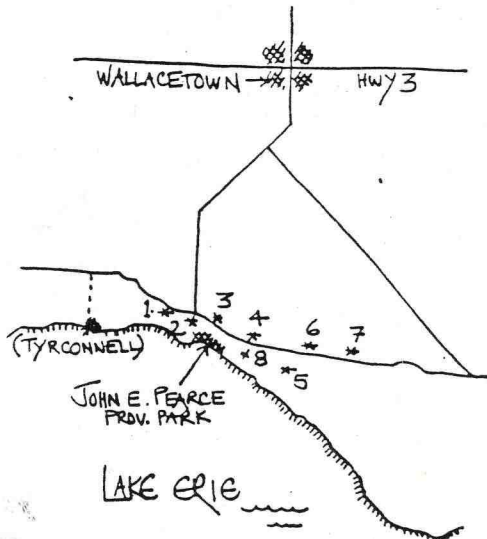


7. Meredith Conn House c 1839

### Tyrconnell Heritage Society



4. St. Peter's Anglican Church c 1827



8. St. Peter's Cemetery  
Colonel Talbot's Tomb