

**TALBOT'S CASTLE**—Colonel Thomas Talbot's old home at Port Talbot is in a picturesque setting atop the cliff fronting on Lake Erie. Interest in the 144-year-old estate has been revived by the movement to purchase the estate as a historical site and the efforts to get the Ontario Government interested in its purchase. Of the original estate of many thousands of acres only 650 acres remain.



**THE PORT TALBOT BEACH**—Seven thousand feet long it skirts the cliff in front of the "estate" and to the east of the Port Talbot fishery, shown in the picture.



**TALKED THROUGH A WINDOW**—It is said that when Colonel Talbot talked with his tenants and settlers of the early days he did so through a small opening in a window. In the picture C. A. (Cap) Pfeffer, of Detroit, present owner of the estate, demonstrates.

**PRICES EIGHTY YEARS AGO**

Mr. Levi Young, of Port Bruce, who has been writing some interesting articles on the early history of that place and which are being published by the Aylmer Express, quotes a few prices being charged in those early days in the article appearing on March 16th. These prices prevailed in 1853, 80 years ago, and are quite interesting to compare with those of to-day:

- Lumber, common, \$6 per M.
- Lumber, clear, \$16 per M.
- Wheat, \$1.22 per bushel.
- Rye, \$1.00 per bus.
- Oats, 37½c per bus.
- Pork, \$6 per cwt.
- Whiskey, 37½c a gallon.
- Eggs, 10 cents a dozen.
- Sugar, 12c a lb.
- Butter, 15c per lb.
- Cut nails, 75c a lb.
- Labor, 75c per day.
- Board of laborens, \$1.50 per week.

Renew your subscription.



# ELGIN *Life*

## McGugan Hotel now 143 years old

### OUR HERITAGE

This weekly column's purpose is to reveal the local area's heritage. Elgin County is immersed in great wonders that are frequently taken as commonplace. Visitors meanwhile marvel for hours at these sites. We urge everyone to take a moment to view our heritage wonders and acknowledge what splendor we regularly overlook.

All articles are provided by local historical and architectural conservation groups.

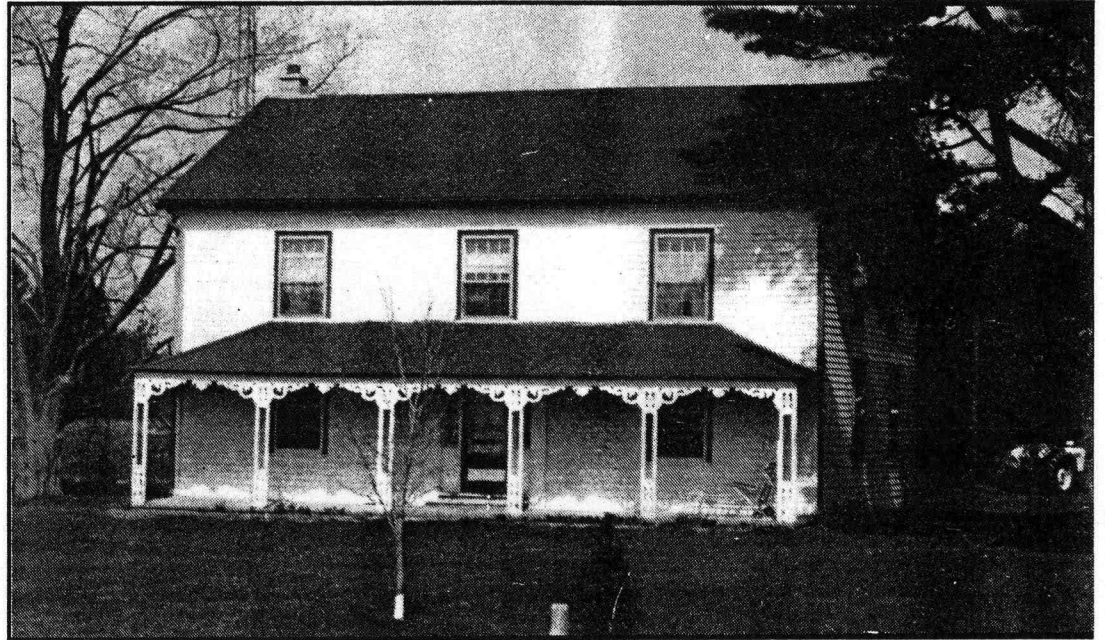
This well-maintained old colonial home — originally built as a hotel — is located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Talbot and Coyne's Roads in Dunwich Township, in what was at one time the hamlet of Coyne's Corners.

The Crown deed to this property, the southeast quarter of Lot 6, Concession 7, was issued in 1821 to Thomas Talbot

On Dec. 4, 1824, it passed to Daniel McGugan from Tayvallich, Argyleshire, Scotland. He is believed to have settled here in 1820 and by 1824 had sufficient land cleared and a house built to receive his deed. Starting with 50 acres he added to his holdings through the years, eventually owning 300 acres.

Coyne's Corners was an important intersection on the road to the port at Tyrconnell, three miles to the south, the main shipping point for all farm produce in the middle of the last century. Because of the traffic to the port, Henry Coyne built a large hotel in 1845 on the southeast corner. Donald G. Gunn built one on his father's farm, the second place to the west on the south side.

In 1852, John McGugan, a son of Daniel, decided to take the plunge and bought the southeast 50 acres of Lot 7 from his father for £400. All



(photo contributed)

**STILL WELL-MAINTAINED...** After 175 years, this farm is still in the McGugan family and the old hotel, now 143 years old, is still well-maintained and close to original, both inside and out.

went well at first, it was not uncommon to see 60 teams of oxen and horses at one hotel, engaged in drawing their wheat to market from as far as north of Glencoe, crossing the Thames on large rafts.

During these years the militia met on McGugan's farm each year for their yearly muster. It is remembered that the Aldborough volunteers congregated at the McGugan hotel and the Dunwich men at Coyne's, as they had to be kept separate when they started to relax.

In 1854, the Great Western Railroad opened for business, passing through Glencoe on its way to London. Just as the opening of Highway 401 in a later time ruined businesses on the older routes, so was John McGugan's hotel business affected.

With his large mortgage and his business cut back, he had no choice but to turn the property over to his father Daniel. For a few years the ho-

tel was run by someone on a rental or share basis, but it was not good enough financially.

Daniel McGugan did not want the building to be unused so he had it moved across the Coyne Road and back from Talbot Road to be used as the farm home on Lot 6.

Daniel McGugan died a few years later and in his will probated in February 1858, he left his son John \$2 and stipulated that if he became destitute the other members were to give him a home and look after him out of their inheritance.

The solid old home is of timber frame construction, covered with lap siding. It is a full two stories high, 28' x 38', with a large kitchen and pantry wing in the middle of the rear of the house. When one entered the front door the bar room was the first door on the left.

It was a large bright room with an open fireplace in one

corner. The floorboards show where the bar was located from the wear of heavy boots and the moisture that accumulated. There was also a large dining room and parlor as well as two small bedrooms downstairs. There were more bedrooms upstairs and a large dormitory type of room where several could sleep.

A lot of whitewood (tulip) was used in the construction, for siding, lining and even flooring everywhere, but not the bar room which is floored in oak.

The saw marks on the lumber show that it was cut with a straight saw, not a circular saw, and is believed to have been sawed at a water driven mill. With the exception of the bar room the house was heated with wood stoves.

After 175 years, this farm is still in the McGugan family and the old hotel, now 143 years old is still well-maintained and close to original inside and out.



She probably lived with her husband Alex Clarke in a house behind the hotel. This house (part of it at least) is the home of the present owners.

About 1870 the hotel was moved to what is now Mrs. Stewart McEugan's property & became a private home.

1906 Edward Clarke (Sarah & Alex's son) inherited the property.

1954 John M. Longhurst purchased property

1954 Wm. A. McLandress & his wife Joan became tenants.

1964. William A. and Joan H. McLandress purchased the property.

### Briefly previous owners

1821. Crown land Col. Thos. Pallot

1824 Donald McEugan

1852 John McEugan (son of Donald)

1852-58 Donald McEugan (father of John)

1858 Sarah (nee McEugan) Clarke (daughter of Donald McEugan)

1906 Edward Clarke (son of Sarah)

1954 John M. Longhurst

1964 William & Joan McLandress