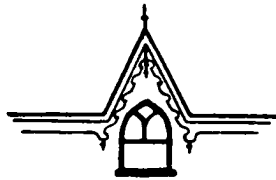


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# DUNDAS STREET Waterdown

1793-1993

Sylvia A. Wray  
Maurice H. Green



The Waterdown-East Flamborough  
Heritage Society

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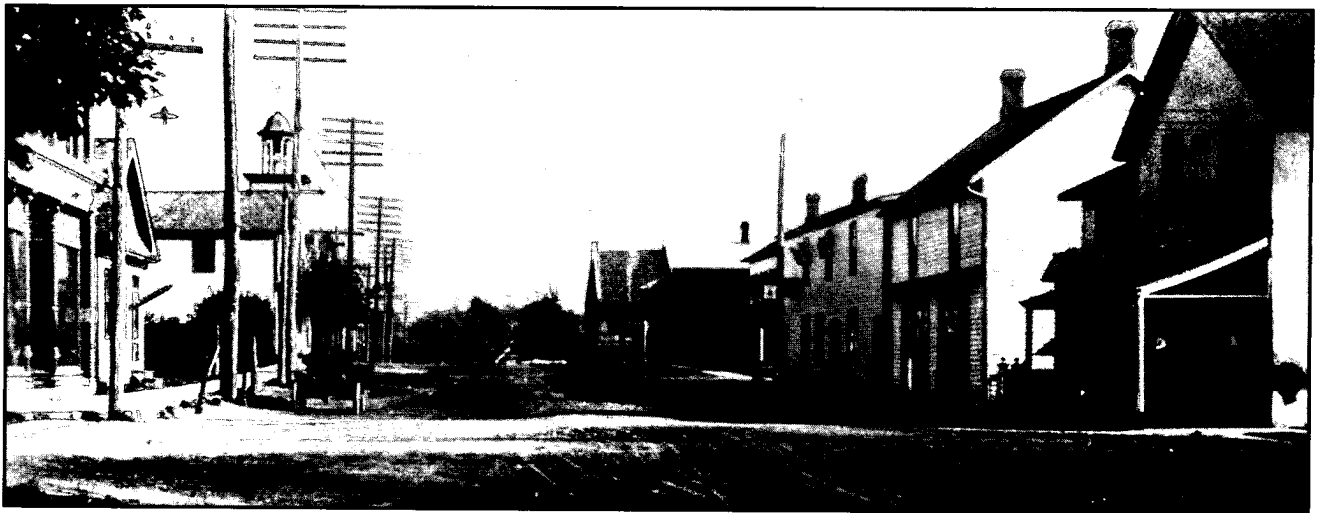
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## Dundas Street



*During the Summer months of 1992 and 1993, with the reconstruction of Highway #5 or Dundas Street, the core of the Village of Waterdown was a permanent scene of potholes, construction equipment and very unhappy motorists. Few people who travelled along this much-used road were aware that this is almost certainly the oldest highway in the Province of Ontario. In 1993, this historic routeway celebrated the Bicentennial of its opening.*

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*Dedicated to the memory of  
Mrs. Eilene Barbara Kennedy,  
one of the founding members of  
The Waterdown-East Flamborough  
Heritage Society who worked  
tirelessly to preserve the  
Heritage of the Village of Waterdown.*

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## Foreword

In 1993, The Waterdown-East Flamborough Heritage Society proudly celebrated its 20th Anniversary as a community organization in the Town of Flamborough. Founded to ensure that the local history of the two original communities would not be lost with their elimination through the move to Regional Government on January 1, 1974, the Society has grown from a group of dedicated local citizens who met to form the organization, to one that now receives support from members across Canada and the U.S.A.

The Society's Anniversary coincided with two other events, the provincial celebrations of the 200th Anniversary of the opening of the first section of Dundas Street in October 1793, and the completion of the reconstruction and upgrading of Highway #5 (Dundas Street) through the Village of Waterdown. To commemorate all three occasions, the idea of an exhibition of past and present photographs depicting Dundas Street, Waterdown was proposed.

Mrs. Marike Scholtens, Mr. Maurice Green and Mr. Robert Wray, three Society Directors accepted the responsibility for the planning of an exhibition to be entitled, "Present Images of Dundas Street Past 1793-1993". Streetscapes, buildings and businesses along Dundas Street were photographed throughout the Spring and Summer of 1993 by Mr. Maurice Green.

Two local high school students were hired to assist with all the preliminary work necessary to mount the Exhibition. Tim Wray, attending Guido de Bres High School, Hamilton was given the responsibility of locating historical photographs of buildings, businesses and events along the road. Lori Dodman, a graduate of Waterdown District High School was hired to research the history behind the chosen photographs. Many long time residents of the village spent an afternoon

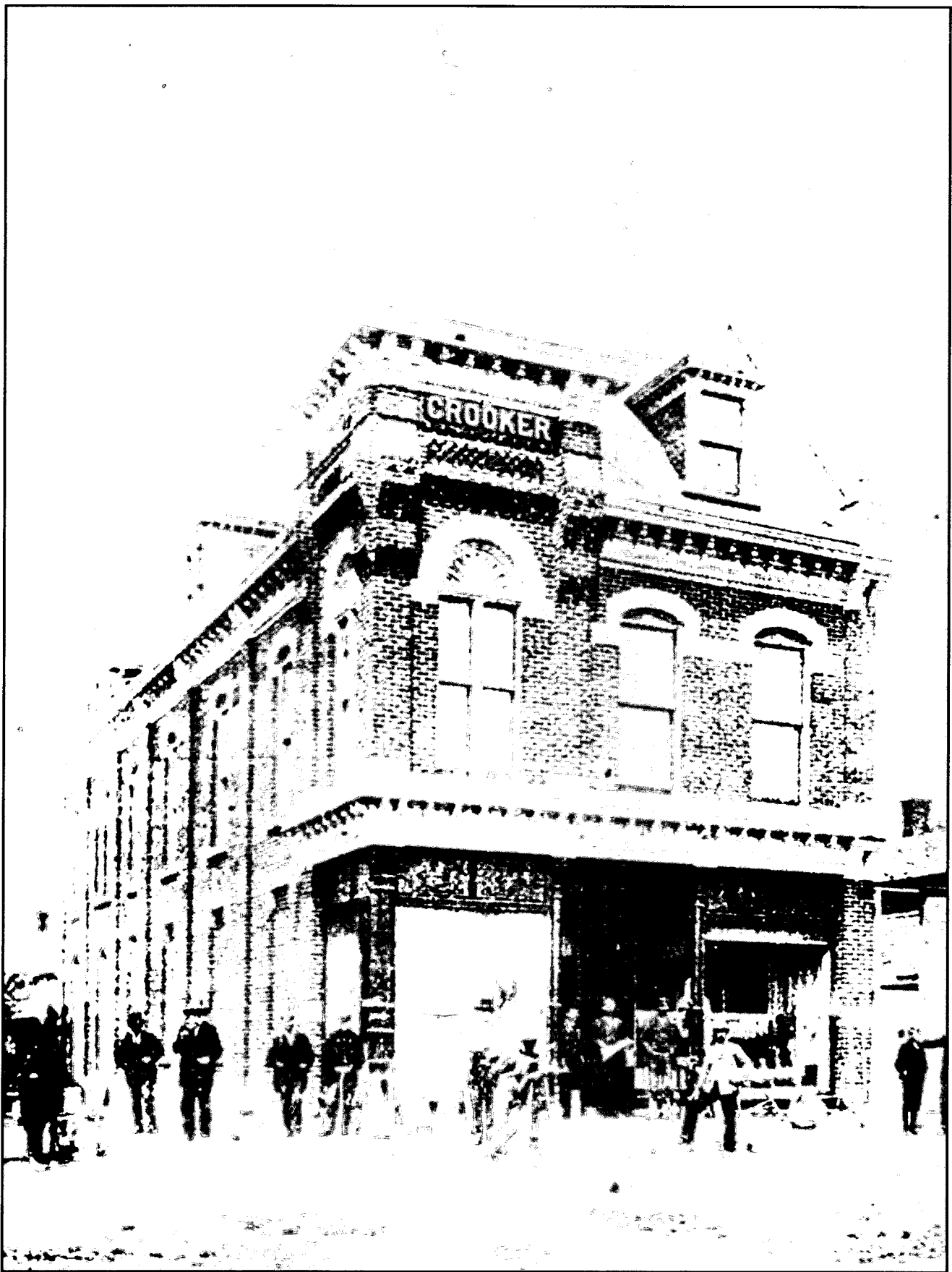
reminiscing about this section of Dundas Street, and Society members and friends loaned additional photographs that were copied for the exhibition.

At the end of the Summer, the photographs and text were compiled by Mr. Green and the Society's Archivist, Sylvia Wray, and arranged into a set of forty plates for a display that would allow visitors to take a stroll along historic Dundas Street. To enhance the exhibition, local artist, Mrs. Patricia Green designed a map identifying the various buildings and sites that were on display.

On Thursday, October 29, 1993, Mr. Peter Vance, the Society's first President officially opened the three day Exhibition at Grace Anglican Church Parish Hall on Mill Street North. To the delight of the Society's Board of Directors, the Exhibition was an overwhelming success, with many people returning for a second visit. The Guest Book recorded visitors from throughout the Hamilton-Burlington and Golden Horseshoe area reflecting the interest of people in such a unique project. As a result of the numerous comments about the value of such an exhibition to the community's history, the Society decided that the photographs should become a permanent record of the history of Dundas Street, Waterdown.

Retaining the same format of historical photographs matched with present day ones and accompanied by a brief text, Mr. Green and Mrs. Wray undertook the task of transforming the exhibition plates into a book during the summer of 1994.

With the completion of this project, it is the Society's hope that this record of Waterdown's main thoroughfare, Dundas Street, will be enjoyed by young and old, resident and visitor, and that the stories long associated with it will never be forgotten.



*Crooker's store, c.1895*

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## Dundas Street

**Y**ork: October 1793: "Captain Smith is returned from cutting the road named Dundas. It is opened for 20 miles. They met with quantities of wild grapes, and put some of the juice in barrels to make vinegar, and Captain Smith told me it turned out very tolerable wine".

In those few lines from her highly informative and often witty diary, Mrs. John Graves Simcoe, wife of Upper Canada's first Lieutenant Governor, records the beginnings of this famous old Ontario road.

Although John Graves Simcoe is credited with the original idea of constructing this early highway, the first proposal actually came from his father. Prior to his appointment by the British government, Simcoe had served in the American Revolutionary War, and while there, his father had collected old French maps. Among those which he obtained, one showed a fur trading route from the vicinity of present day Dundas to the upper waters of the Thames River.

On his arrival in Upper Canada in 1792, Simcoe's primary task was to initiate and supervise settlement. He was also given the responsibility of formulating plans to deal with the overwhelming fear of invasion from the recently liberated American colonies. His father presented him with the suggestion that a waterway dug along the fur trader's route would provide an inland passage, well back from the border and relatively safe from a surprise attack.

After studying the suggestion, and with the expectation of imminent border attacks, John Graves Simcoe and a military party travelled through the western part of the province, from Niagara to the border at Windsor during the winter of 1793. Guided by Indians, and following their trails by foot and sleigh where possible, Simcoe came to the conclusion that a road would be superior, since it would be multi-purpose, serving as a military link between Lakes Ontario, Erie, St. Clair and Huron, and as a spur to settlement. Simcoe

also reasoned that the American control of shipping on the Great Lakes was certain for several years, and therefore an inland route was the only way to ensure the safe movement of troops and supplies.

The decision to relocate the capital of the province from Newark, to a site on the Thames River, where London stands today, initiated the start of the highway. Simcoe believed that this new inland capital was a safer location and could be linked to Lake Ontario by the highway he planned, the road running from the Thames to Burlington Bay. From here there would be a link with the network of trails going eastwards to York and onto Kingston, and with a north-south route joining York with Lake Simcoe.

With his surveyor, Augustus Jones, and accompanied by a guide, Jean Baptiste Rousseau, Lt. Governor John Graves Simcoe selected the exact spot where the work would begin. They entered Burlington Bay from the lake, and proceeded through the marsh at the eastern end, choosing a site that was a known Indian landing place. Jones began his survey immediately, using a line marked at an angle of 70 degrees west that ran from Coote's Paradise to the upper forks of the Thames River, a distance of eighty miles.

Work on this first or western section of the route that today is often referred to as "The Governor's Road", went as far as the Mohawk Village on the Grand River where Joseph Brant was chief. The actual road cutting under the direction of a Captain Smith, and a company of men of the Queen's Rangers was completed in less than a month. But opening a road in 1793 involved nothing more than clearing a corridor through the bush, leaving the bigger stumps to rot and often going around very large groups of trees.

York: September 23, 1793: "Captain Smith has gone to open a road to be called Dundas Street, from the head of the Lake to River La Tranche. He has 100 men with him ... I hear that they kill

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rattlesnakes everyday, yet not a man has been bitten ... . Captain Smith sent two of the snakes in a barrel that I might see them; they were dark and ugly and make a whizzing sound in shaking their rattles when I touched them with a stick”.

The second section of the highway begun in the spring of 1794 went as far as the site of the planned new capital, London. However the departure of Lt. Governor Simcoe from Canada before the road had actually reached the site, and his decision to designate York (Toronto) the official capital, caused work to almost cease completely. Within months, this primitive single-lane pathway began to grow over again and revert to forest, only Simcoe’s foresight saved the road from oblivion.

Immediately work on the trail from Dundas had begun, Governor Simcoe authorized that grants of land along its route be made to the military personnel who had opened it. Although many of these grants were not taken up as farms, enough traffic was generated to make it worthwhile for the new owners to accept the responsibility of keeping their portion of the road open. Acceptance of such a land grant required that the pioneer keep his frontage clear. For the new settler, the road was his lifeline of transport, and to Governor Simcoe, it ensured the viability of his road. Even though it remained as little more than a primitive path with mud holes that, as one early humorist wrote, “stretched from one spot to the next”, it ensured that the settlement of Upper Canada would come.

Stretching from Burlington Bay to York, the second and eastward section of the highway that bore the name Dundas Highway after Henry Dundas, who was Home Secretary and responsible for Colonial Affairs, was not begun until a decade later.

Since water transportation along the north shore of Lake Ontario was good, there was not the urgency to build the eastern section of the road that Simcoe considered to be so important. In 1805, the great block of land that lay beyond the eastern boundary of East Flamborough Township was finally purchased from the Mississauga

Indians. This tract or hunting ground was the entire area between Burlington Bay and the Humber River. Simcoe honoured the Mississauga’s land rights, and although settlers had to cross the Indian’s territory more and more frequently as the old capital of Newark was transferred to York, the Lt. Governor refused to force the Mississaugas to give up their land. Finally in 1806 an agreement was reached and the government took possession of the land, the Indians gradually dispersing to the Grand River and Montreal area.

In the same year, Nelson Township was opened to settlers. Onto the newly surveyed land, families with names such as Bastedo, Hopkins, Markle, Calvert, Zimmerman, Bennett, Rose, King and Chisholm soon settled. Several of these people were already on the land or had requested the location prior to the official opening. With the arrival of the settlers, the opening of a road to the east and the capital of York began.

The road was surveyed and constructed several miles back from the lakeshore to avoid the difficulty of bridging the wide mouths of the many creeks and streams that crossed the area, and for greater safety in transporting troops and supplies in time of war. Much of the construction work on this eastern section of Dundas Street was under the direction of an American road builder called Asa Danforth at a cost of \$90 a mile.

Since this construction work involved nothing more than clearing a corridor through the bush, leaving the bigger stumps to rot and little else, the complaint by Danforth later that he lost money on the contract seems difficult to believe!

After serving several generations of settlers, and changing from a footpath to a single-lane track that could accommodate wagons and carts to the present day thoroughfare through Etobicoke and Mississauga, this highway has been the scene of tremendous change during its two hundred years. Hundreds of stories and incidents are associated with it, but so many of them are now forgotten by the passage of time.



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The historic village of Waterdown, that Dundas Street passes through on its way westwards towards London, is full of such stories and incidents. Built upon land that was originally granted to Lt. Alexander McDonnell in 1796, the area remained undeveloped until 1805 when the second phase of the Dundas Street construction commenced.

Alexander Brown, an agent of the North West Company, purchased property from McDonnell in 1805, and within a year built a sawmill at the falls on Grindstone Creek. The enterprises of Brown, and later Ebenezer Griffin during the 1820s and 1830s accounted for substantial industrial growth in the creek valley.

The first Common School was built in 1826 on the south-west corner of Flamboro and Dundas Street. Mill Street South and Franklin Street were the only north-south roads opened to the south of Dundas Street by the 1830s, providing access to milling sites just above the Great Falls and along the Grindstone Creek. On the east bank of the Grindstone, only Board Street ran north off Dundas along the river bank, and Spring Street ran south.

In 1831 Ebenezer Griffin prepared a village plan for Waterdown, and during the next decade sold a number of village lots, primarily west of Mill Street along Dundas Street. With his brother and business partner, Absalom, he continued to add to

his industrial holdings with the construction of another sawmill and a carding mill. Soon other pioneer settlers were attracted to the potential power of the Grindstone and purchased lots, several of them with water privileges. Names such as Hawke, Graham, and Cummins accelerated the industrial development of the creek. This area, later to become known as Smokey Hollow was fuelled by dams and raceways, and was the site of saw, grist and flour mills, a woollen mill, brass foundry, tanneries, rake, snath, cradle and basket factories.

By the date of the first Village Assessment in 1841, the village population totalled 165 people, many of them engaged in milling and the commercial establishments that had begun to develop along the narrow Dundas Highway which was the only access to the interior of the area and the principal east-west route between Toronto and Dundas.

In 1878, Waterdown was incorporated as a village. The last years of the nineteenth century were ones of general population decline. A series of fires, floods and dwindling water power in the Grindstone Creek heralded the end of Waterdown's milling industries. Early in the twentieth century, several major fires destroyed many of the older commercial structures along Dundas Street, dramatically changing the face of the Village of Waterdown.



*Looking east towards the village core and Vinegar Hill, c.1900.*

# Vinegar Hill Section

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## Vinegar Hill

The eastern entrance to Waterdown descends gently through tree-lined Vinegar Hill, the oldest section of this historic village.

The name appears to have been in use from earliest times, and may have been given because of the many market gardens with apple orchards that lined the hill. Much of this apple crop was required for the production of cider which was made from late summer onwards using the windfalls and bruised fruit. With no modern refrigeration available for the storage of the cider, it had a very short life before fermentation began to change the cider to vinegar. By the early Fall, the smell of fermenting apples was almost certainly noticeable to residents and visitors as they entered the village, and may explain the origin of the name.

Settlement along Dundas Street had begun by the time Ebenezer Culver Griffin prepared a village plan for Waterdown in 1831. By 1841 there were approximately 48 households listed on the Assessment Rolls for Waterdown. Most of these houses were located on the east bank of the Grindstone Creek in the Vinegar Hill area and consisted of one storey log or frame cottages facing onto Dundas Street.

Between 1831 and 1850 a small burying ground for the village was opened on Vinegar Hill. Through donations of land from George Bush to the Reverend David Culp and Trustees of the Waterdown Chapel of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and Absalom Griffin to the Trustees of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the Union Cemetery was established. Within the grounds of this peaceful cemetery, dozens of stones to pioneer settlers with names such as Baker, Griffin, Smoke, Culp and Brown are to be found recording the hardships of the early years.



*Looking down Vinegar Hill 1907*



*Vinegar Hill from First Street*



*1993*

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## Kirby House

Originally part of a two hundred acre Crown Grant to Ebenezer Culver Griffin in 1837, this house on the north side of Vinegar Hill is one of the oldest in the village. Between 1839 and 1855, ownership of the property is unclear. This is probably the time period during which the rear section, which is the oldest part of the house was constructed. Land Registry documents and entries on the Assessment Rolls suggest William Lang or George Bush as the first owners. George Will and his wife Hannah, a member of the Horning family were owners from 1855 to 1863.

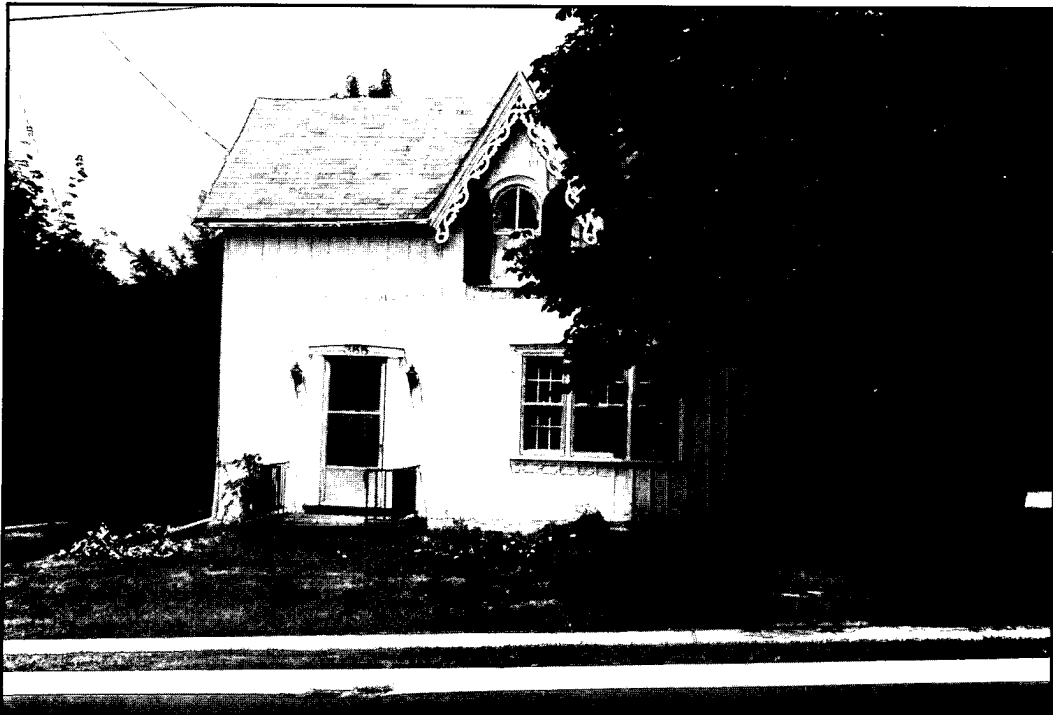
The rear section of the dwelling built of coarse or rubble stone dates from the 1839-1855 period, while the front one-and-a-half storey board and batten section dates from a later period, c.1860-1870. One of the most interesting features of the house, clearly visible from Dundas Street is the wooden verandah with ornate brackets on the pillars of the board and batten section.

Like many houses on this side of Vinegar Hill, the rear property was used for Market Gardening during the



*Kirby House, 357 Dundas Street, Summer 1977*

first half of this century. There were large greenhouses in the backyard of this house until the late 1960s – possibly remnants from the time when James H. Balfour, a Waterdown Market Gardener, owned the property.



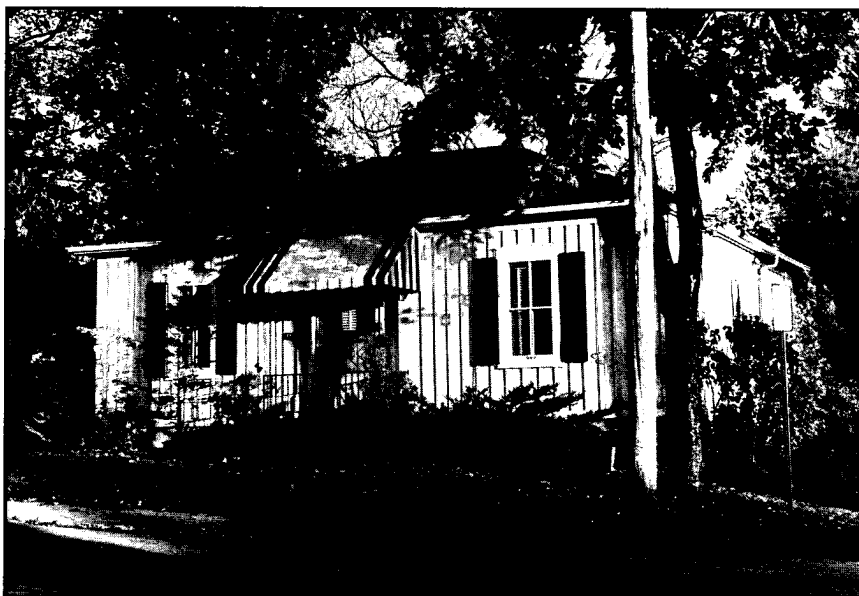
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## Raycroft Cottage

This charming single storey cottage on Vinegar Hill dates from the 1860-1870 period, and is one of several similar cottages to be found in the village. Built close to the street, its simple design is in sharp contrast to the larger and more ornate houses to the west. Constructed of clapboard, overlaid with white board and batten, and with a low hip roof, the dwelling sits on a stone foundation with 18 inch thick walls.

Several well known Waterdown names appear in the Registry Book as owners of the property; Featherston (1880-1920), Vance (1930s), Shutt (1940s) and Hamilton (1950s).

Reverend George Richardson, a Methodist minister serving Waterdown and the surrounding area is among the earliest documented owners of the house. Reputedly, Mrs. Richardson's sister lived with them during the time they were stationed in Waterdown and the two ladies were renowned as avid horse racing fans.



*The Raycroft Cottage, 348 Dundas Street, Summer 1979*



1993

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## Pillé House

In 1977, Mr. "Mickey" Rocket, a longtime village resident recalled that this home was originally a one storey log cottage. Unfortunately the building has been altered several times, even the rubble lower storey and board and batten upper level have been covered since the William Reid photograph recorded its appearance c.1910.

The house was formerly entered from Dundas Street but, possibly to ease traffic flow along Vinegar Hill, it is now accessed off William Street.



*The Pillé House, 343 Dundas Street, c.1910*



1993

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## Eager House

One of the fine Victorian residences in the village, this house was built for the Eager family c.1875, and remained in their ownership for three generations virtually unaltered.

The patriarch of the family, Benjamin Eager, emigrated from Ireland in 1837, settling in Lowville with his son Joseph, a merchant. Joseph, with his family, came to Waterdown and was the builder of this house. In 1873 with his two sons James and Joseph Jr., he purchased Griffin's General Store at the southeast corner of Mill and Dundas Street. They continued to operate it until 1924 with a variety of merchandise which included groceries, dry goods, boots, shoes, hardware and wallpaper.

The house is constructed of cut stone with a rough cast and lime cement facing that was added around the turn of the century. Over the years, the facing has been painted a variety of colours. The most noticeable features of the



*Eager House, 340 Dundas Street, Summer 1977*

house are the unusual portico with intricate woodwork of a sun motif flanked by fans, and the beautifully carved bargeboard of the gables.



1993



## Board Street and the Dundas Street Bridge

Located at the foot of Vinegar Hill, Board Street descended steeply to the Grindstone Creek, the Vance House, and by travelling along the banks of the creek, to Will Reid's barn.

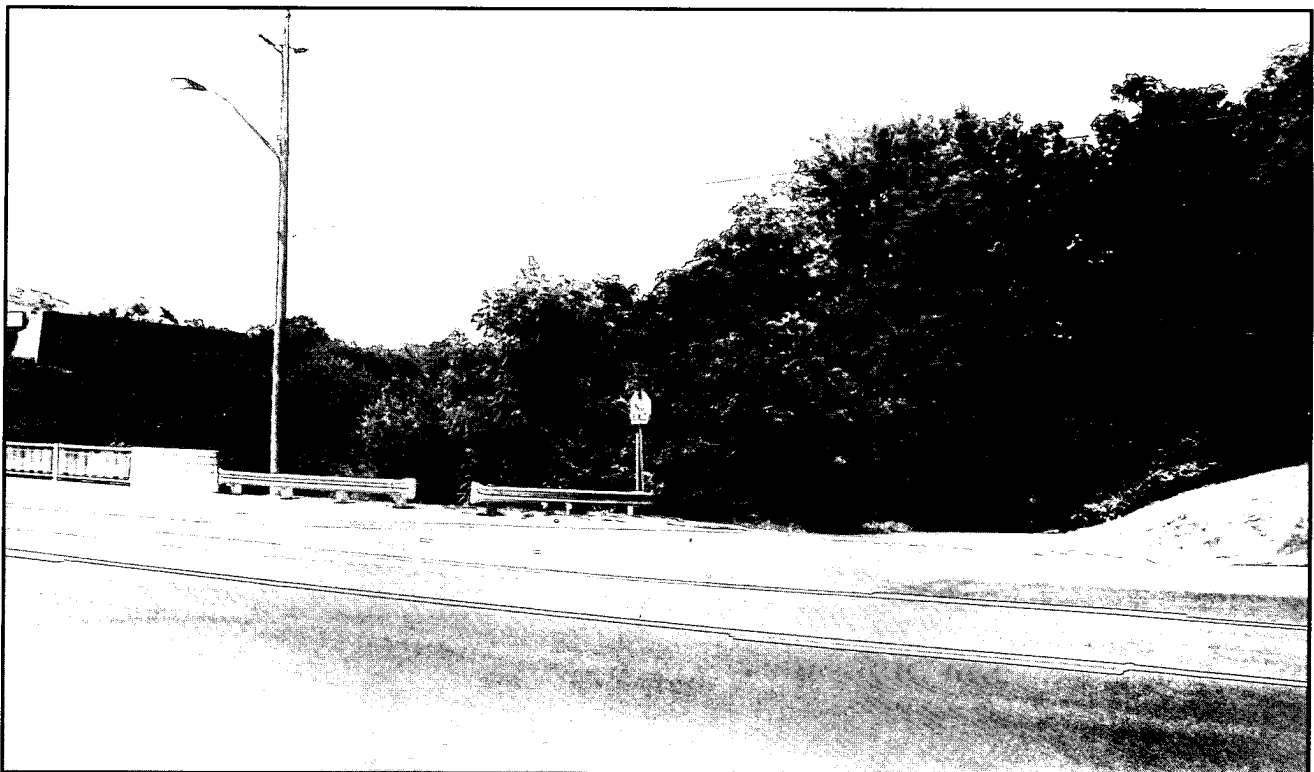
This area, between Reid's Dam just upstream, and the bridge was the site of several small mills between 1835 and 1911, although today no evidence remains. A turning mill that belonged to the Reid family was virtually destroyed by the demands of the railway as it moved into the Grindstone Creek valley, and it ended its life as a large barn. Fondly remembered as a favourite playground for the children of the Vinegar Hill area, the old wooden mill-turned-barn housed a wonderful collection of fancy pigeons, the property of Will Reid, the renowned Waterdown photographer of the early twentieth century who captured so much of the village's history with his camera.

Before the railway came to Waterdown, the Reid and Slater Mills had faced each other across the



*View across the valley. The Waterdown Evaporator and Jam Factory, and Slater's Saw Mill line the edge of the creek c.1900.*

Grindstone Creek. It appears from reminiscences of some villagers that the two owners were not always on good terms. It is recalled that Henry Slater often shouted across the creek at John Reid, Will's father: "My mill will be turning out lumber when yours is housing pigeons!"



1993

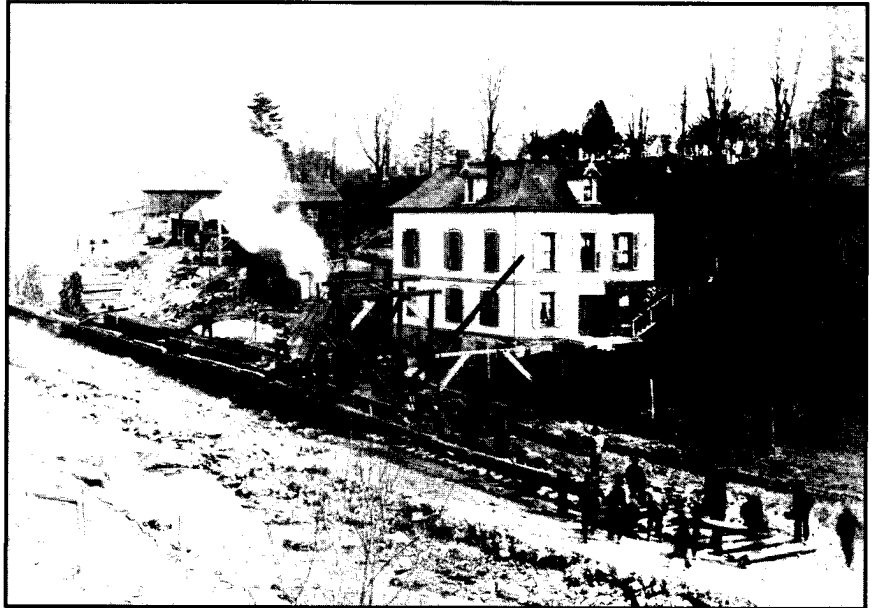
## The Waterdown South Railway Station

The coming of the railway to the village of Waterdown resulted in the relocation of the Grindstone Creek to the west side of the valley. Much of the project was done with hand labour throughout the summer and winter of 1910 and 1911. The physical changes complete, the tracks were laid on oak ties and first class gravel which was quarried in the C.P.R.'s own pit in Waterdown. The actual line from Hamilton to Guelph Junction, a stretch of 19 miles took two years to complete at a cost of a million dollars. The construction workers lived in tents which were located in Smokey Hollow, and the surveyor and engineer boarded at the old Post Office on Main Street South.

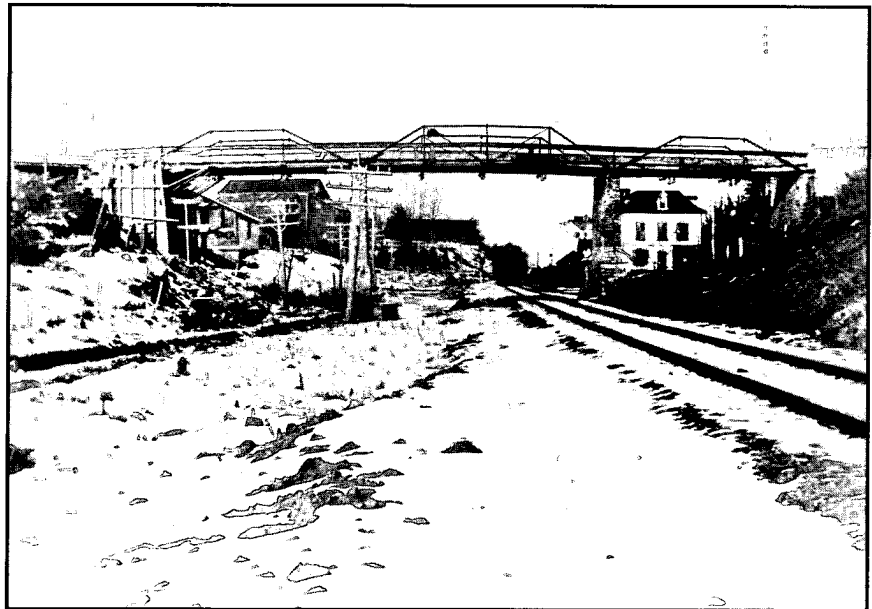
Prior to the official opening of the C.P.R. Guelph Junction line on July 1, 1912, John and Ada Vance's large two storey house was converted to become the village railway station. The building also served as the Station Master's home and operated until 1962 when the station closed and the last Station Master, George McKay left.

During the early years of the railway, the station, known officially as the South Waterdown Station was a hive of activity. Students from as far away as Campbellville took the train daily to Waterdown High School. The local farmers used the line to take their produce to the Hamilton Market every morning, and freight for the village and surrounding area was delivered for pick-up.

Gradually as more and more people began to purchase cars, the passenger service was no longer needed, and in 1950, the C.P.R. discontinued the service, and since then, the line has only been used for freight.



*Railway construction in front of the Vance House c.1911*



*The Dundas Street Bridge and Waterdown South Station, formerly the Vance House c.1912*



1993



1993

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## Dundas Street Bridge

With the arrival of the railway in 1911 the Dundas Street Bridge extending over Grindstone Creek was raised by Fred Carson & Sons. Since that first major structural change to the bridge, several more have been required as heavier demands have been placed upon it.

During 1965-1966, while the Gaffney Construction Company was working on the Bridge, they used the upstairs rooms of the old Waterdown South Railway Station as a storage shed, and the downstairs as an office for their staff. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company arranged with Gaffney to dismantle the station once they had finished their work. When the time came, Gaffney decided that the easiest way to get rid of the old building would be to burn it.

Waterdown Reeve, Orly Gunby and Fire Commissioner, Ted Appleby refused to give permission on the grounds that the village had a By-Law which prohibited the setting of fires in June, July and August – but on the night of June 23, 1966, vandals did the job for them!

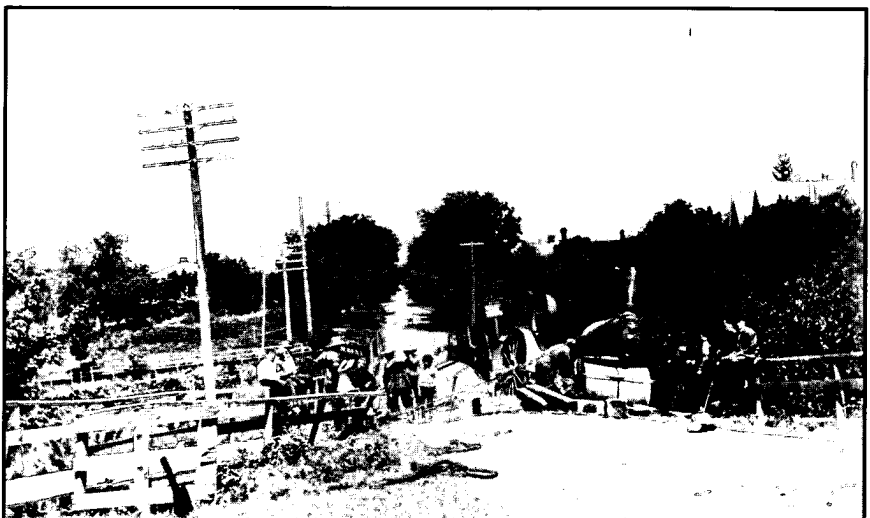
Over 250 people stood on the new Dundas Street Bridge and watched the station go up in flames. This closed the history on the Waterdown South Railway Station, and was the last major fire along Dundas Street.



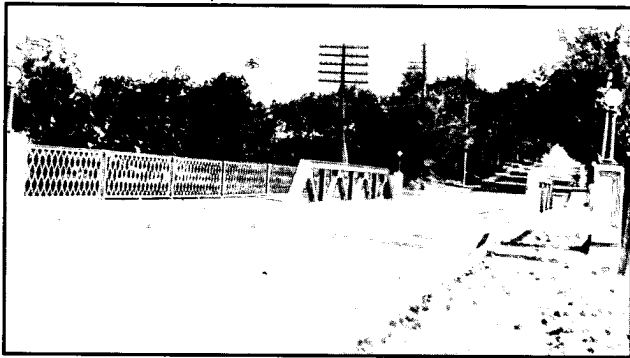
*Dundas Street Bridge c.1905*



*Dundas Street Bridge and Eager's House c.1906*



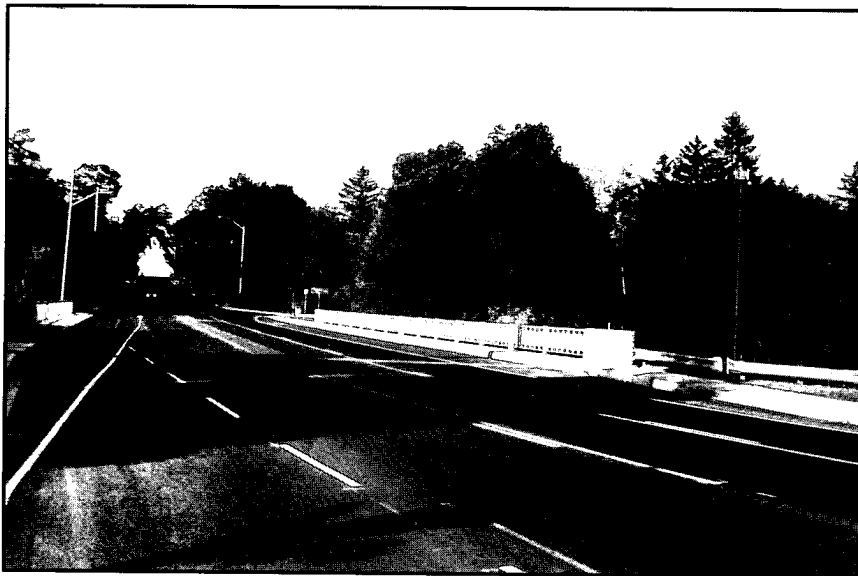
*Road work on Dundas Street Bridge c.1922-1925*



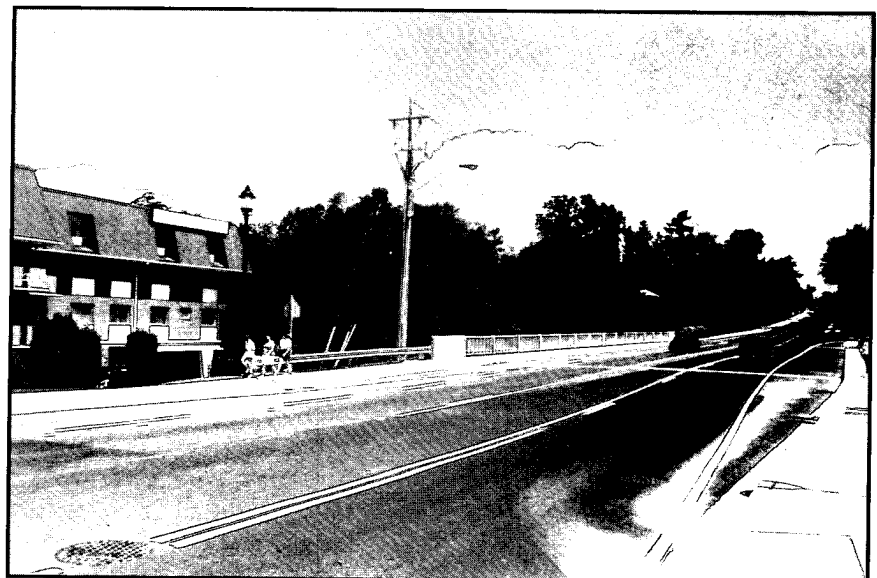
*Looking east up tree-lined Vinegar Hill to the eastern entrance of Waterdown at First Street c.1930.*



*Road work on Dundas Street Bridge by Gaffney Construction Company, c.1965.*



1993



1993

## The Mitchell-Peer House



*Peter and Sara E. Mitchell outside their house c.1913. Peter Mitchell owned a painting and decorating business in the village.*



*The Board and Batten Mitchell House. The property, enclosed by a decorative fence, originally extended westwards towards the north-east corner block of Mill and Dundas Street.*



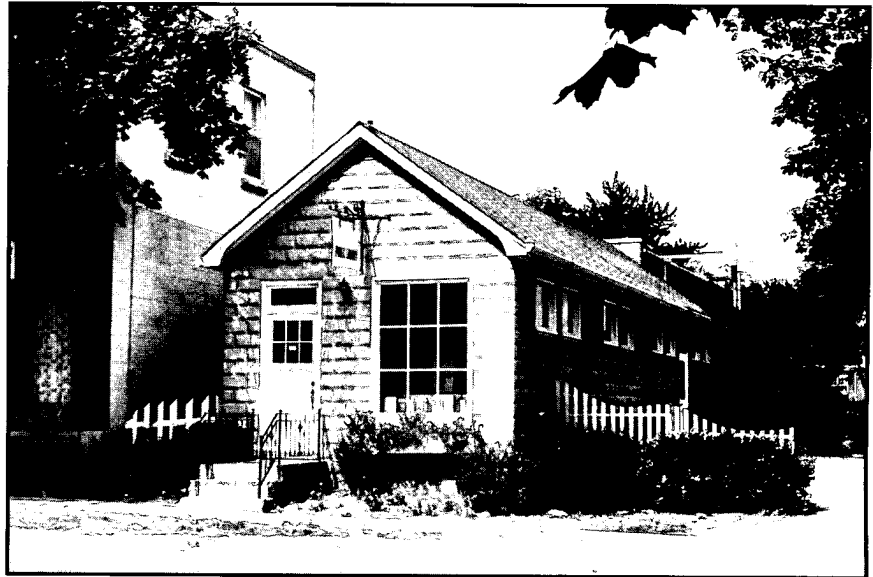
*The Peer House c.1982. Mr. Fred Peer sold hunting licences for the area. The house was burnt to the ground rather mysteriously in the 1980's. Later, Mr. Ralph Naccarato redeveloped the area with a small collection of specialty shops.*



## Raphael's Cottage

Nestled between the north-east corner block of Mill and Dundas Streets and the Peer House, a small one storey frame building housed a variety of village businesses. During the 1940's, Mr. Elmer King and his son-in-law, Ted Sherwin, operated King's Butcher Shop from the building. In the 1950's the name changed to Sherwin's Grocery and Meat Store, and in 1957, the Waterdown Library moved into the premises from the Memorial Hall. The Library remained until 1970 when it moved again to the Haynes Building on Mill Street South.

Mr. Ralph Naccarato, the last owner had a paint and wallpaper business in the rear section, and his wife operated a lady's dress shop at the front. During the 1980's, Mr. Naccarato demolished the building, and on purchasing the neighbouring Peer property and house, replaced them with a two storey commercial/residential block containing a group of specialty shops.



*Raphael's Cottage, Dundas Street c.1980*



1993

## The Eager-Weeks Block to Dundas Street Bridge

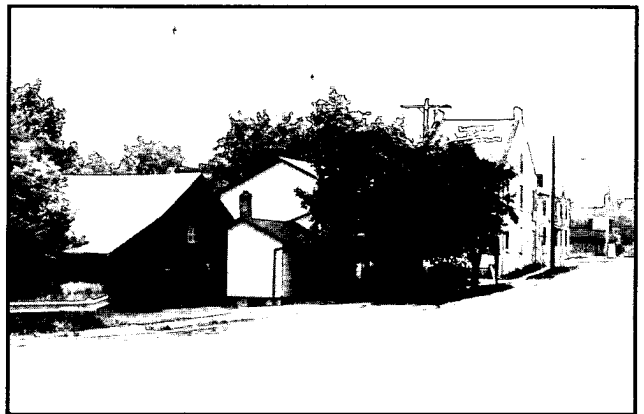
Between the rear section of the Eager-Weeks Block and the Dundas Street Bridge, a small group of buildings owned by the Eager family existed until c.1980. Now almost forgotten, they were a part of Dundas Street's ever changing streetscape that has disappeared with the increasing demands for parking and commercial development.



*Double House, Summer 1977. Covered with modern siding, the house was last rented to the Lewis and Downs families before demolition c.1982.*



*Double House c.1905. Board and Batten construction with decorative fence similar to the Mitchell House across the road.*



*Looking west to Mill Street intersection from Dundas Street Bridge c.1978. Small cottage and large garage where Eager's cars were stored.*





# Commercial Section

## The Eager-Weeks Block

*South-East Corner of Mill and Dundas Streets*

The magnificent stone building on the south-east corner of Mill and Dundas Streets is instantly recognizable to thousands of people in Flamborough and the surrounding area as once being the home of Weeks of Waterdown.

The corner building actually consists of four separate sections, although in all probability the entire block was developed at the same time c.1824-1830. Fires, structural changes and additions over the years have wrought great changes and allowed each individual section to have its own architectural style. A prime location at the crossroads of trade and travel in the village has ensured stable ownership, as the building has changed hands infrequently during the past 170 years.

The oldest, and probably the only original section is the impressive corner one with its steep side gable roof atop a parapet wall, constructed of rubble stone, parged and striped to resemble dressed stone. Local tradition suggests that this building was constructed soon after Ebenezer Culver Griffin's purchase in 1821, possibly as early as 1824, and that the family operated a General Store in the building until it was sold to the Eager family in 1873. In fact, E.C. Griffin sold the property to Daniel

Cummins in 1839, and like his brief ownership of the neighbouring American Hotel, was probably relinquished because of his involvement with the rapidly developing milling industry in the Grindstone Valley.

The second section was erected c.1850 after the original frame building burned and was rebuilt several times. The third section was once the site of a detached barn that was used for the delivery horses until the 1940s. Demolished for the Weeks family c.1948, the building was replaced almost immediately due to the demands for an expansion of their hardware department within the General Store.

The final or fourth portion of the block was acquired by William Featherston in 1890 who operated a bakery on the premises. The previous owner of this section, James Rodgers, also a baker, suffered a disastrous fire in 1883 that not only destroyed much of his bakery but also threatened the rest of the Eager Block. In the early 1900s, the rear apartment was added to the building by the Featherstons. Many older residents of the village recall the south wall of the apartment collapsing when the horse barn in the third section was being removed, thus exposing to view the inside of the



*Eager's General Store c.1904*

Featherston's home. The Weeks family promptly purchased this final section of the building thus returning the whole block to one ownership.

From the 1840s, this corner of Waterdown was a popular stopping place for farmers from as far as Guelph who would drive their wagons down to Brown's Wharf (Aldershot) with their grain and produce, and after selling it, return home through the village. For some it was an annual trip during which they would purchase their supplies for the year, for others, they would spend the night in one of Waterdown's seven hotels, including one that was reputedly located above the store.

In 1873 the store was bought by the Eager Brothers who moved their business to Waterdown from their previous general store in Nelson Township. Both James Edward and his brother Joseph shared the responsibility for operating the Eager Brother's General Store for over 40 years. Although in competition with the general stores on Main Street operated by F.W. Crooker and O.B. Griffin, Eager's reputation for its warmth and hospitality and the wonderful variety of merchandise made it very popular.

George Weeks purchased the Eager Store in December 1924, and so began the long tradition associated with "Weeks of Waterdown", that saw it grow from a small general store to a unique hardware establishment that was based upon good service and personal attention.

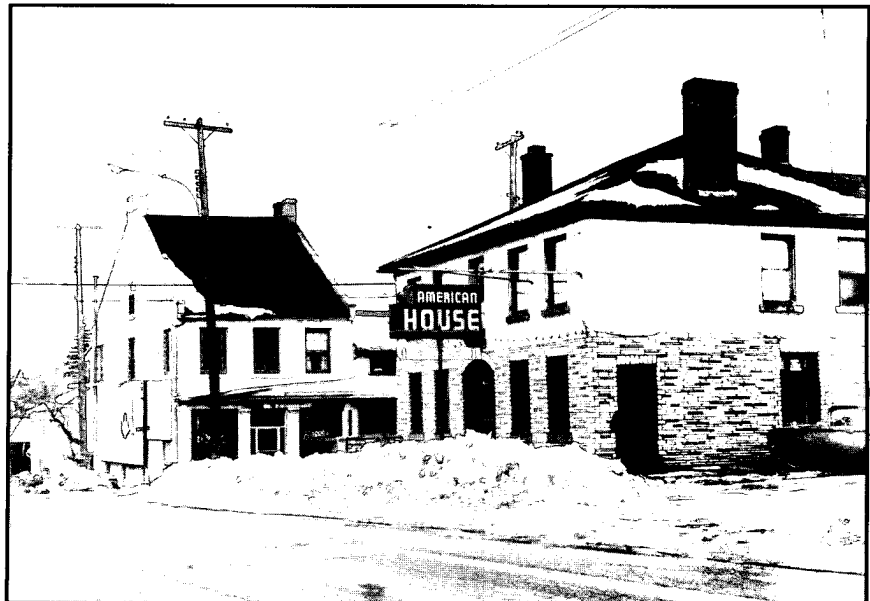
When the family arrived to take up residence, the hitching posts for horses and front verandah were still in place. However, one night after returning to the store from the Township Hall where he had gone to deliver coffee, Ernie Weeks, George's son, heard a loud crash at the front of the store. Looking through the window he noticed the northern section of the verandah roof had caved in from heavy snow sliding off the roof above. Afraid that someone might have been passing when it collapsed, Ernie and others spent an

anxious time shovelling the snow off the sidewalk before finding that no one had been trapped.

Besides the usual store merchandise, "Weeks" was once a cheese factory. George Weeks discovered that the temperature in the stone basement of the corner block was fairly constant and remained at the correct level to age cheese. When ready for sale, a length of piano wire



*Jessop Pharmacy in Weeks Building, August 1963.*

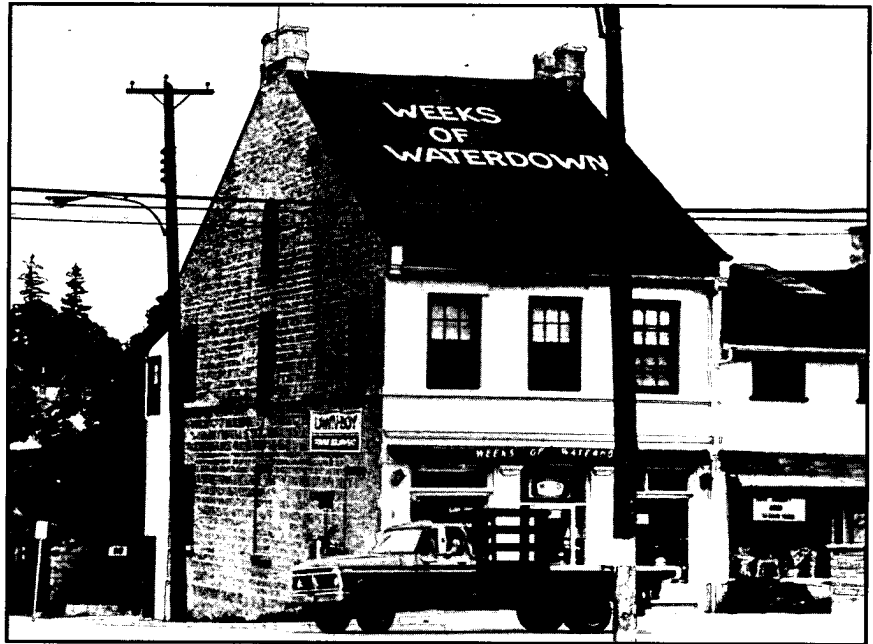


*American House and Weeks of Waterdown, c.1967.*

## The Eager-Weeks Block

was drawn through the 80 pound slabs to cut the cheese into saleable pieces. These were then waxed to preserve their freshness and high quality. Described as "good old cheese", its reputation brought customers from far and wide to Waterdown.

After George Weeks died, Ernie operated the store, slowly allowing the business to progress from a general store to a hardware store that gained an area-wide reputation for the stock that it carried and thus coining the phrase: "You'll be sure to find it at Weeks of Waterdown."



*Weeks of Waterdown 1980.*



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## North American Hotel / American Hotel / American House

As soon as the first road was cut through Upper Canada's wilderness, hotels, taverns and inns appeared like magic along the way, and the innkeeper, that "Jack-of-all-Trades" in the pioneer community, opened his establishment for business.

With the opening of the Governor's Road through the little settlement of Waterdown, entrepreneur Ebenezer C. Griffin saw great potential in the area with the proximity of waterpower on the Grindstone Creek and the location of this road. The south-west corner, the present day site of the American Hotel, was part of the first piece of property that he purchased from Crown Patentee, Alexander Brown in 1821. Construction probably took place almost immediately, as both his General Store on the opposite corner and the Hotel are believed to have been in operation by 1824-1830.

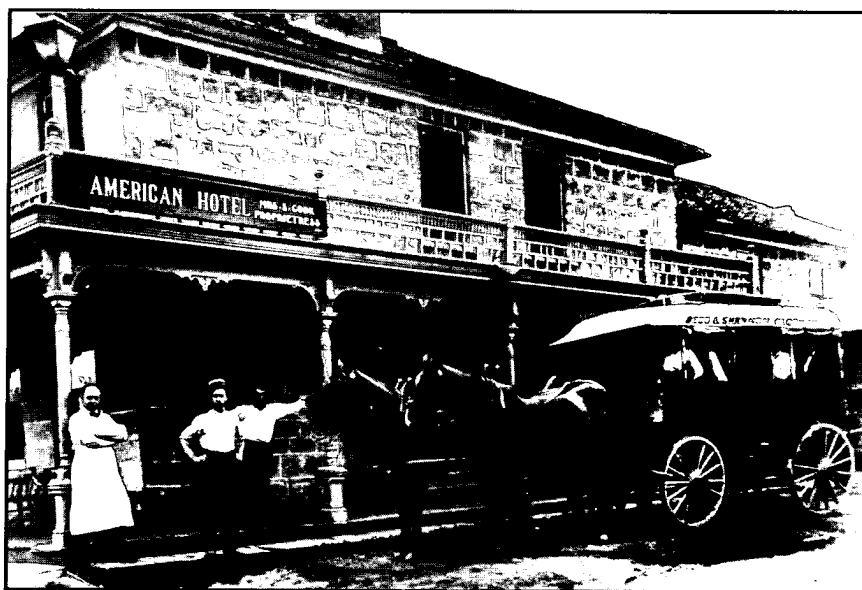
By 1829, Plumer Burley of Ancaster had begun a stage-coach line between Ancaster and York that left Ancaster at 4 am each Monday, Wednesday and Friday, arriving at York an exhausting eleven hours later. In 1833 William Weller's Stage Line was carrying passengers westwards from York. So within a decade of the hotel opening, there was a steady passenger trade in place.

Possibly because of his involvement in the Temperance Movement, or the developing milling industry that he was promoting, Griffin only owned the hotel for a short period, the property being sold to Alexander Markle, an Innkeeper in 1832.

Throughout its long history, the hotel has been known by a variety of names, including, North American Hotel and American House. It has also been owned and operated by many different innkeepers. In Smith's 1846 Gazetteer, the Village of Waterdown is recorded as possessing two hotels, one of which was almost certainly the American Hotel, with Mr. Samuel Anderson as proprietor. Possibly because of its prestigious location, this building has remained a permanent



*Stage Coach, front steps of North American Hotel c.1900-1905.*



*Travelling salesman's wagon and American Hotel Staff on west side of building c.1905.*

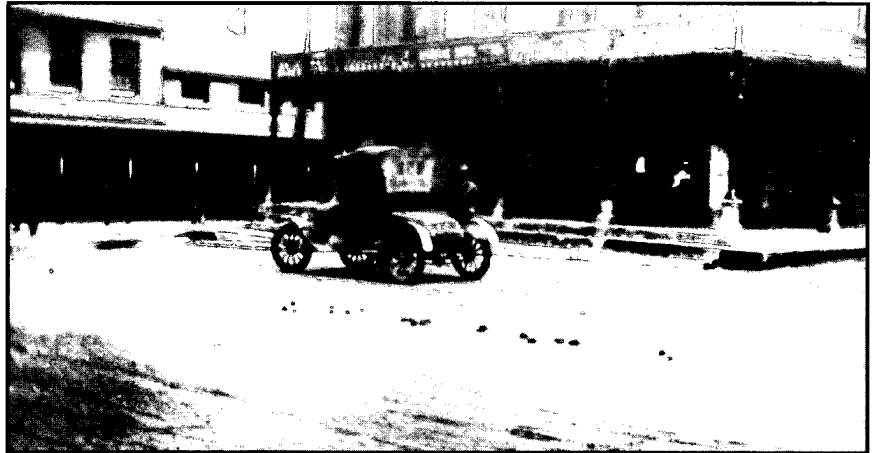
hostelry, serving the travellers on both the east-west and north-south routes through the area – and thus making it one of the oldest hotels in Ontario.

Among the known owners and innkeepers were Samuel Anderson (1837-1869), John and Thomas Stuart (1875) who had come to Canada from Scotland in 1871, Michael Doyle (1880s), James H. Cooper (1884-1885) and Samuel Cook (1885-1904). For a brief period following Mr. Cook's death, the hotel was owned by Richard Morley, but in 1911, his widow, Mary Cook returned to

operate it until 1926. During prohibition the hotel was closed, reopening in 1933 with proprietors William Condon and F. Stanley.

Many grand social events have been held in the building over the years. At one time, an archway in the Mill Street wall was the entrance to a passageway through which carriages could drive. This allowed the ladies to alight inside the hotel – a great convenience, especially if they were dressed for an evening in the upstairs ballroom. The archway was later closed in to make an apartment, but for many years after, the outline was still visible through the paintwork.

Before the turn of the century, the hotel was the site of a winter banquet hosted by Agricultural Implements Agent John Prudham for his customers. This renowned social occasion alternated annually between the American and Kirk Hotels and followed the arrival of the farm machinery at the Waterdown Grand Trunk Railway Station, and a spectacular procession up the Waterdown Road.



*Early car passing the American Hotel c.1910.*

During the last thirty years, the interior of the hotel has been drastically altered, both to modernize and serve the demands of the public. In 1966 the wall between the segregated male and female front rooms was eliminated, and during the 1980s, the original wooden floors, tin ceiling in this front section, and the last old-time stand-up bar in Ontario were removed. But despite these changes, the American Hotel continues to be one of the landmarks in the commercial life of the village.



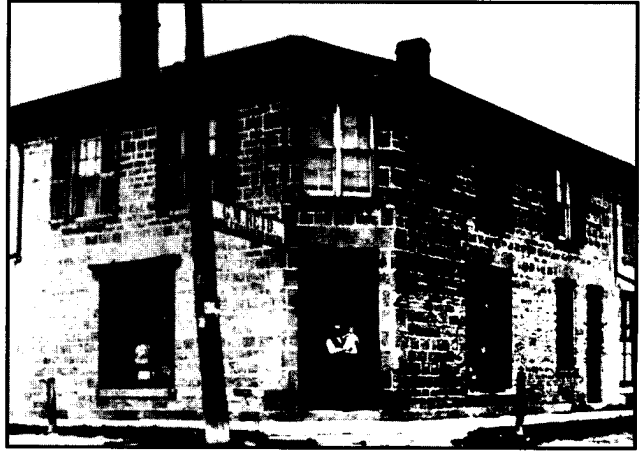
## Mill and Dundas Street Intersection

Unlike Main and Dundas, the Mill and Dundas Street intersection has not experienced great change. The building on the north-west corner, popularly known as the J.T. Stock Building, dates from the 1850s and has housed many businesses during its history.

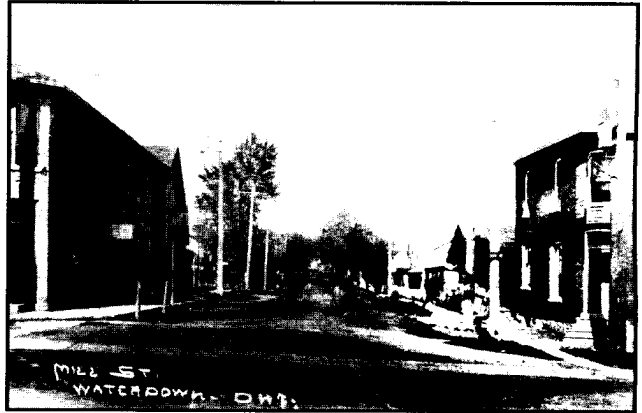
The Waterdown Mechanic's Institute met in the upstairs section of the building from the time of construction, and had their Library there. Although the Institute grew in its early years, membership declined as education became available, and the last meeting was held on May 9, 1884.

The first telephone line in Waterdown was installed in John Stock's store in May 1882, and for the next twenty-three years, this was the only telephone in the village. In 1900 George Reid rented the store for his harness repair business. He worked during the night instead of the day – possibly because farmers would bring in broken equipment after a day's work and require it to be fixed by the next day.

The Trader's Bank occupied the downstairs part of the building from 1909, and in 1911, installed a vault on the premises, subject to the condition that it "was to be removed if and when they vacated". The Royal Bank bought the whole building in 1921, and remained at this location until the new bank was built at Dundas and Main in 1963.



*G.M. Reid Harness Shop, J.T. Stock Building north-west corner Mill and Dundas Street c.1900.*



*Looking northwards, Dundas and Mill Street intersection c.1914.*



# Dundas Street

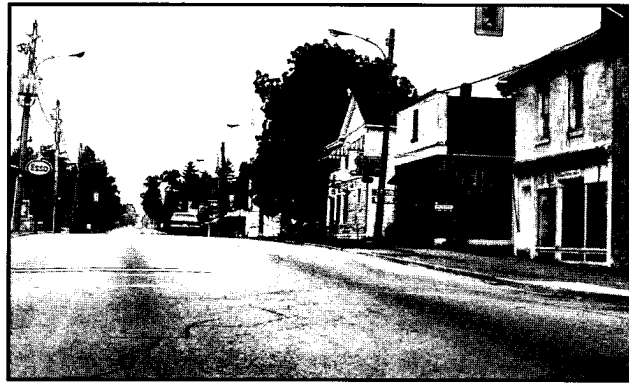
*Looking west from the Mill Street North Intersection*



*North side showing Metzger's Barber Shop, J. Buchan's Bakery and the Bell House and Tower c.1901-1905.*



*North side showing Royal Bank of Canada on the north-west corner of Mill and Dundas Streets c.1918.*



*North side showing The Hub Antiques Shop which replaced Huxley Brothers Groceries and Butcher Shop c.1982.*



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## Huxley Brothers' Shop, Dundas Street

The western section of the J.T. Stock Building has housed commercial businesses for over one hundred and twenty years, probably due to the building's prime location at such a well-travelled Waterdown intersection. Constructed of stucco over squared rubble, the L-shaped Huxley building was designed to house a private residence upstairs and a business at street level – typical of merchant store designs in the 1850s.

In 1941, the Huxley brothers, Dan and Tom, followed T.E. Carey Groceries and Meats into the building. Between 1941 and 1980, the brothers developed a reputation of kindness towards those who were facing difficulties. They delivered produce to customers who were sick, allowed those who were experiencing financial difficulties to pay later, and alerted relatives when regular customers did not come into the shop.



*Daniel and Tom Huxley outside their Grocery and Butcher Shop, c.1980.*



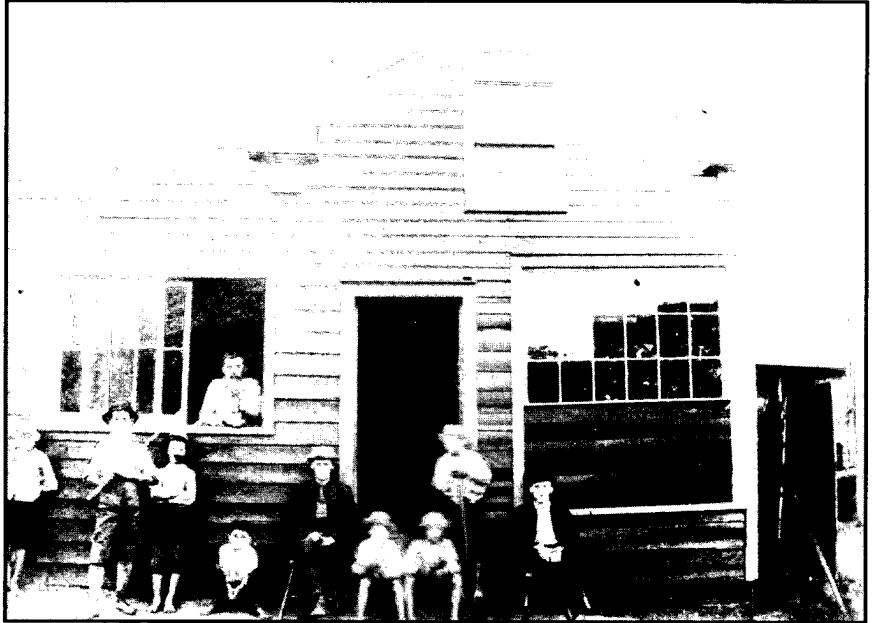
*Mr. Daniel Huxley inside the Huxley Store.*



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## Main to Mill Street

Next to the J.T. Stock Block on the north side of Dundas Street, Philip Metzger's Barber shop also housed the Waterdown Library c.1900-1905. Peter Perry, the High School Principal acted as librarian and set up a reading room in the front of the building where a little wood stove was installed for the winter months.



*Metzger's Barber Shop, Dundas Street c.1895. Philip Metzger stands in the window of his shop with a group of Waterdown boys identified from left to right as Charles Burns, Ed Cahill, Art Featherston, Walker McGregor, Herbert Green, Fred Smith, Ormand Smith, John Colyer and John Doyle.*



1993

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## The Antiques Plus Shop, Dundas Street

**D**ramatically changed from the date of photographs taken between 1890-1914, the building has housed numerous Waterdown businesses during the past hundred and thirty years.

High in the gable of Edward's Bakery that existed at the turn of the century, the name of the Boadicea Hotel can be seen beneath the layers of fading paint. This dates the building's existence from c.1865-1867. Alexander Somerville writing in the Daily Spectator on September 16, 1867 following a visit, described Waterdown as "lay winking in the noontide sun, one of its sleepy taverns bearing the ancient British name of Boadicea".

Although numerous renovations have occurred throughout the years, the original fieldstone used during the construction can be seen at the rear, and the large baker's ovens used in the early 1900s remain in the back section of the building.



*Meat Market in the corner section, ownership unknown c.1890.*



*Edward's Bakery c.1900-1901.*



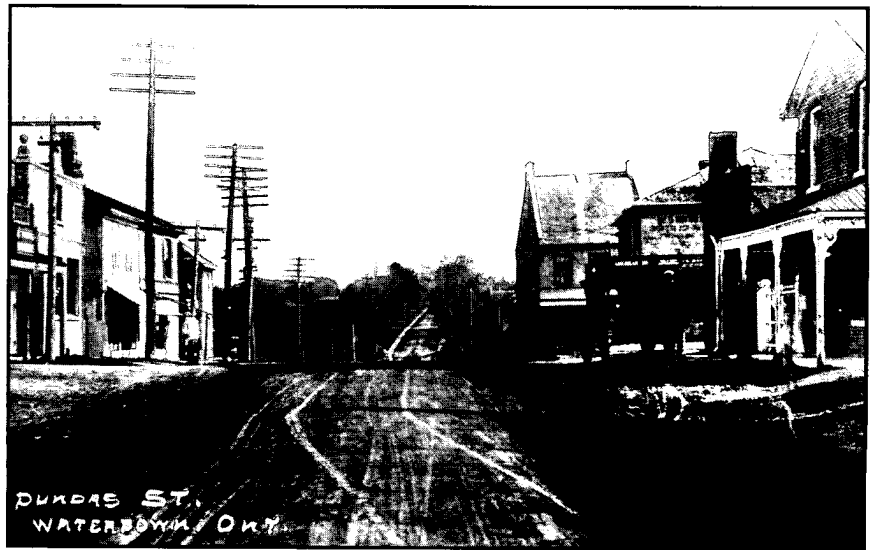
*Buchan's Bakery c.1901-1914.*



## Dundas Street

*Looking East towards Vinegar Hill*

During the early years of the twentieth century, Dundas Street was still a dirt road, but well groomed to accommodate both wagons and automobiles. Sidewalks were made of wooden boards, and several businesses had covered walkways to afford customers protection from the elements. The road was paved in the 1920s, when further work was done on the Dundas Street Bridge and concrete sidewalks were installed in the commercial section of the village.



*Looking east c.1905.*



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## The Bell House and Tower Section, Dundas Street

During the early years of this century, a group of frame buildings that included The Bell House and Tower, together with several other businesses were to be found in the central section of the north side. All were removed to allow for the construction of the present day Memorial Hall, erected to honour the veterans of World War I.

The Bell House and Tower were erected in 1874. The first village election in 1878 and the first Council meeting are recorded as being held in this building. The Third Divisional Court for the County of Wentworth and the Village Lock-up were housed in the building as was the Fire Department's sole hand pumper.

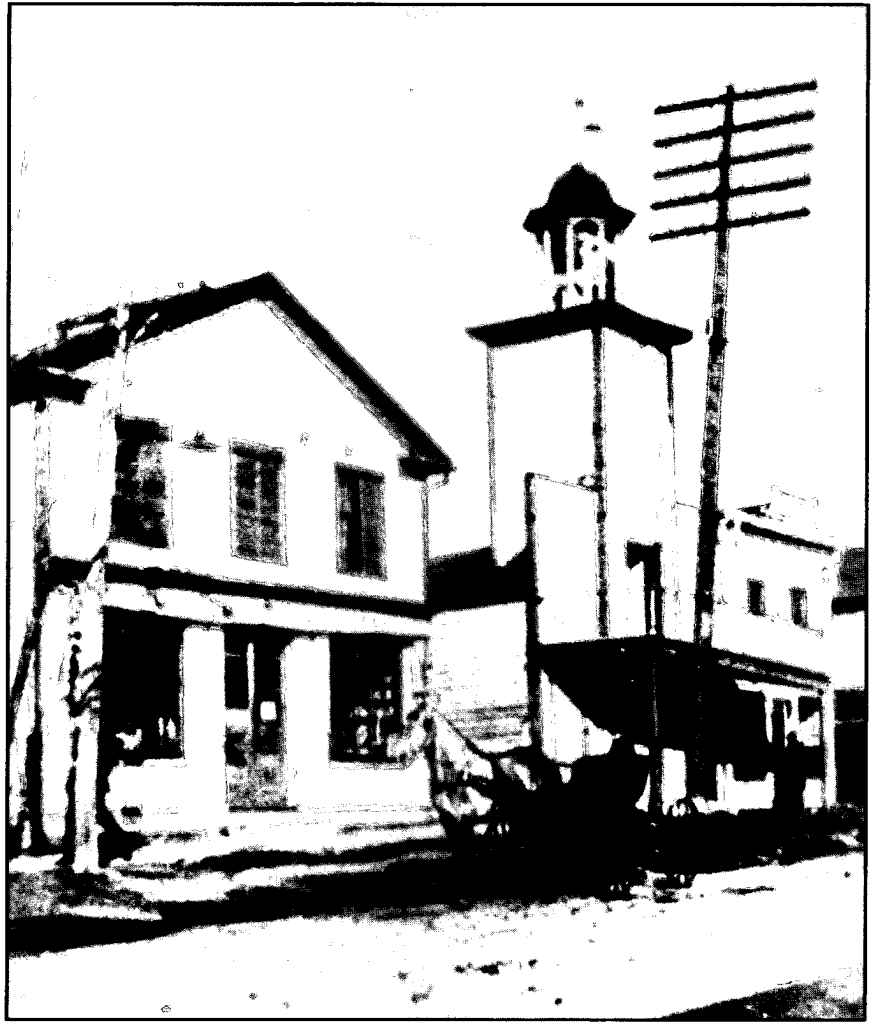
Capping the tall wooden tower was the village bell, tolled at the start and finish of each work day, as well as to alert residents of community emergencies. After the building was demolished, the bell, so much a part of village life, was retained and eventually mounted at the front of the Memorial Hall.

In 1920, the Waterdown Women's Institute purchased the site, and with various church groups, undertook the raising of funds to build a community hall.

Construction began in the Spring of 1922, and miraculously the partly-built structure was not damaged by the Great Waterdown Fire of that year. Some of the workers actually saw the fire that started in the Barrel Factory on Franklin Street jump to the Roller Rink, raised the alarm and then rushed to see what they could pull from the building.

The construction was completed in the late Fall, and the Waterdown Review proudly described the hall as "an example of what a small community can achieve when united in a common goal".

The building was officially opened on January 24, 1923, although it had been dedicated the previous Sunday afternoon when a large number of people gathered for the special service and unveiling of a tablet to honour the soldiers who had enlisted from the village and given their lives in the Great War of 1914-1918.



*View of Cummins' Drug Store and the Bell House and Tower c.1910.*



*Lower section of the Bell House and Tower with office of the Waterdown Review c.1918.*



## “Chestnut Grove”, Dundas Street

On November 2, 1987, the Town of Flamborough passed By-Law #87-150-H that designated this building and grounds at 315 Dundas Street as a property of architectural and historical interest under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. Known as ‘Chestnut Grove’, the building houses a number of community organizations serving the Town of Flamborough and is open to the general public.

Built in 1880 by prosperous local lumber merchant, Charles Sealey, first Reeve of Waterdown, the house was built around an earlier one. The addition was constructed to face Dundas Street, while the earlier house had faced Main Street. Great care was taken by Mr. Sealey’s builder to match the brick work and window openings of the original house, so that today only an expert can detect the evidence of an earlier building.

Today the building is entered through a handsome oak door with etched and frosted glass. Many fine interior features remain, including a wide Victorian staircase, with a decorative carved newel post, decorative plaster ceilings and a magnificent marble fireplace with metal screen. One special feature of the house is the small second-storey porch above the front door. A round-headed door from the second floor hallway leads onto the ornately decorated porch, allowing a fine view over the village of Waterdown.

Charles Sealey gave the name “Chestnut Grove” to his property, possibly from the large number of Horse Chestnut trees that were growing on the land behind his house. Even today odd remnants of these trees can be seen in the neighbourhood. Miraculously this house suffered no damage from the fires that devastated the commercial establishments just to the west of it between 1906 and 1922.



*Charles Sealey's House c.1880.*



1993



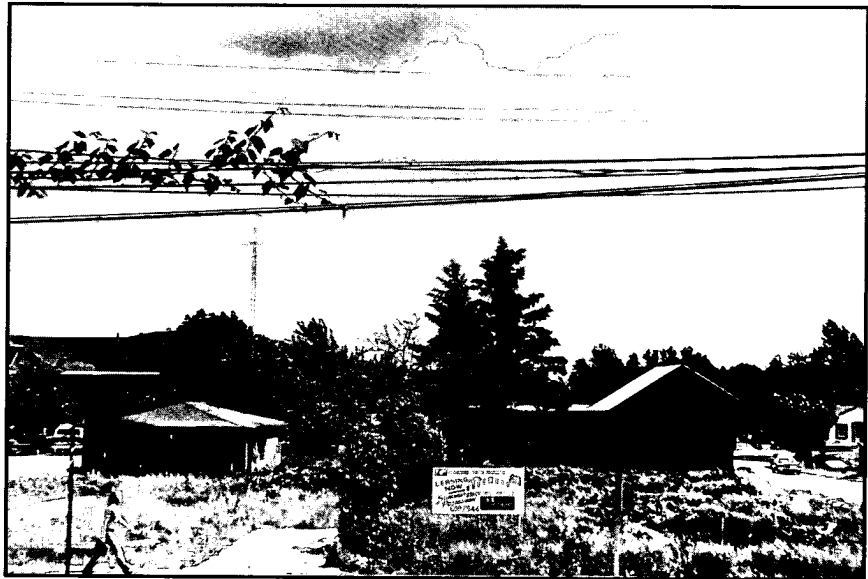
## Vacant Property after Demolition of the George Potts House

*South-East Corner of Franklin Street*

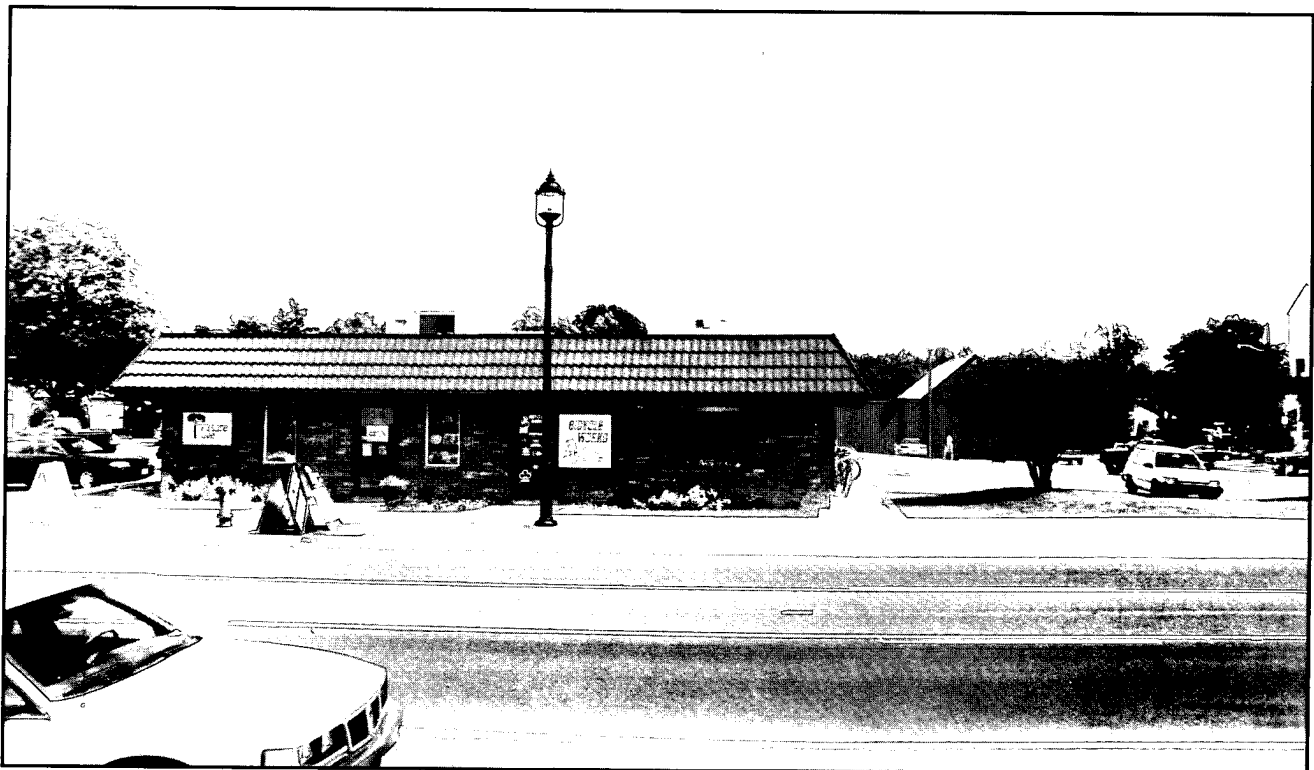
The commercial section on Franklin Street was demolished and replaced by the present day Harper Building between 1977 and 1980. To many village residents, the loss of the George Potts house marked the end of a chapter in Waterdown's history.

In 1913 George Potts moved his blacksmith business from Clappison's Corners to the corner of Franklin and Dundas Streets. For over 50 years he provided his blacksmithing skills, shoeing horses, sharpening saws, repairing farm machinery and iron-work. Life was not all work for Mr. Potts, as during his lifetime he made over 100 violins, and on many summer evenings, he could be seen sitting by the pump beside his house amusing himself and others while playing on one of his instruments.

Following his death on March 9, 1967, his funeral was reported throughout Canada, partly because he was one of the last blacksmiths in Ontario and partly because his cortege was accompanied by a mounted escort of over 20 of his customers, a fitting tribute to a fine craftsman.



*Vacant lot, Summer 1978.*



## East of Franklin Street

Many businesses have operated along this south side of the street. Among those remembered are: Ellis Gordon's Tailor Shop, Willis Fuels, Mid-Town Laundry, a Real Estate Office and a Restaurant.



*Waterdown Cubs march past the George Potts House in the Annual Victoria Day Parade, 1956.*



*Looking east from Franklin Street c.1965.*



*The George Potts House and Blacksmith Shop.*



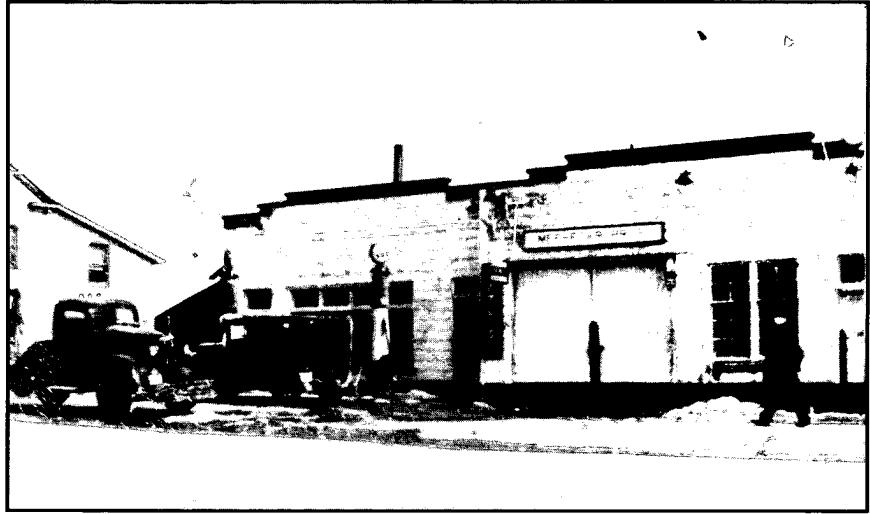
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## Messecar Bros. Garage, Dundas Street

In June 1938, Emery Messecar and his brother Howard purchased the L. & H. Garage that was located on the west corner of Franklin and Dundas Street from Harry Lillycrop and Bob Harvey. Advertising their business as "Another Progressive Waterdown Firm", the garage operated on this site for almost twenty years.

Although Howard Messecar returned to his work as an Accountant in 1940, the garage remained as Messecar Brothers for many years, as another brother who had been working in the gold mines at Schumacher retired and acted as night watchman for the business.

Until late in 1946 the garage remained open 24 hours a day and was reputedly the only garage on Highway #5 with a towing truck between St. George and Islington. Between 1938 and 1946, the garage would tow a car from the Waterdown area to Toronto for \$5.00, even at night. During the 1950s Messecar's provided full service to the rapidly developing motor trade, a line of pumps, the service of licensed mechanics that included Doug Lillycrop,



*Messecar Bros. Garage, Dundas Street c.1938.*

Chester Lillycrop, Emil Baus and "Mickey" Shelton, a towing service and membership in the O.M.L. and O.A.A.

On April 1, 1955, the garage moved to a new building further west on Dundas Street and continued under the Messecar name until Emery Messecar's death in 1969.



## North-West, Main to Mill Street

The commercial section between the north-east corner and Chestnut Grove has been destroyed three times this century by the devastating fires of 1906, 1915, and 1922. Rebuilt following each fire, the block has been home to a wide variety of retail businesses. Some, such as Dales's, Alton's and Langford's have returned following the fires, but others are only fleetingly remembered – just names in the village business listings.

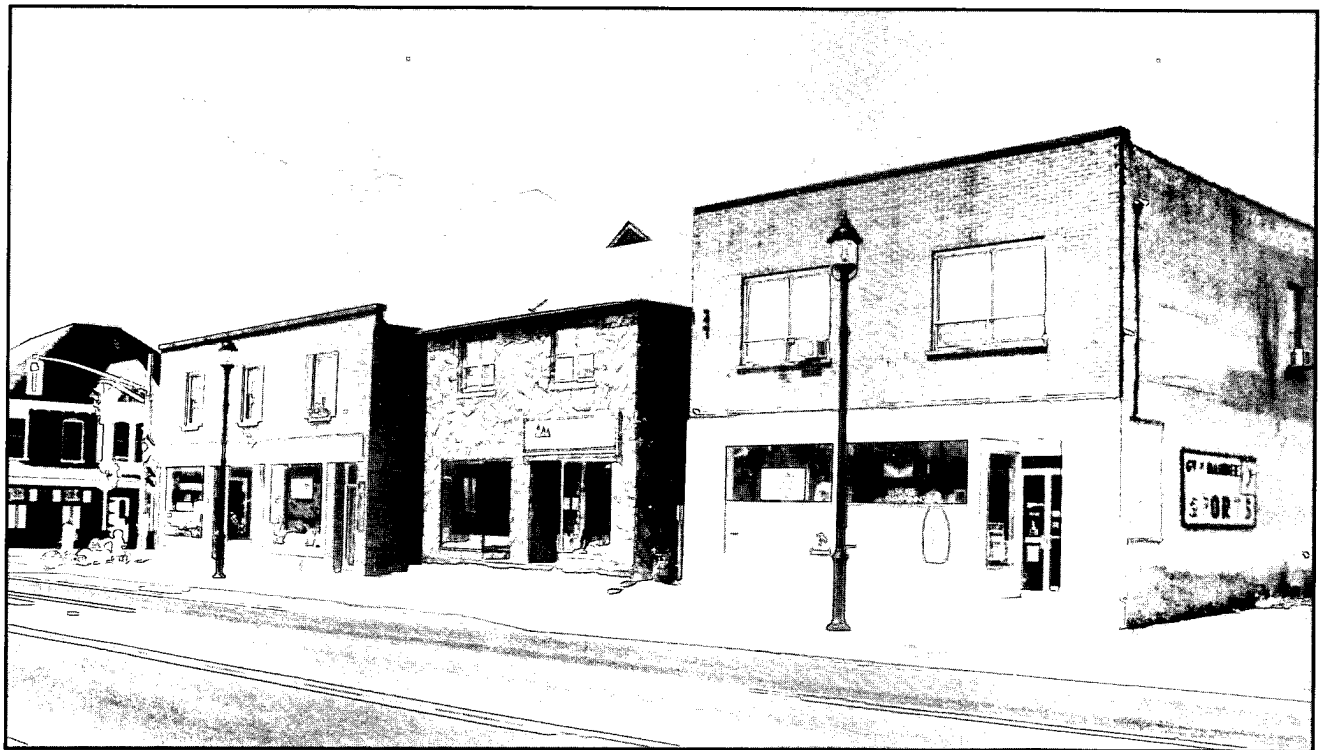
Stories from the 1922 Fire abound, but those concerning the occupants of this block are especially touching since their misfortunes occurred solely from the inadequacies of the village fire department.

The Bell Telephone in Alf Dale's Store was operated by the Burns sisters. They remained at the switchboard for much of the afternoon while the fire raged around the building. Finally Miss Hazel Burns, the chief operator, fearing the building would catch fire at any moment, sent her younger sister out, but heroically remained at her post until Hamilton linemen arrived to remove the switchboard as the building began to smoulder. Shortly after the ladies left, the office was completely gutted.



*The Embassy Restaurant – Country Cupboard Block 309-313 Dundas Street c.1980.*

Mr. Alf Dale, owner of the store was advised soon after the blaze began to remove his brand new car from the front of Springer's Garage. Busy fighting the fire at the Roller Rink, he said that he did not think the fire would reach the garage since the village fire brigade was on the scene. Before he realized it, the fire spread across to Main Street South where his automobile was parked and it was destroyed.



## Village Fires

The first major fire of the twentieth century is poorly documented. Occurring in 1906, it broke out just east of the Main Street North intersection, destroying several businesses, but not the magnificent Crooker Building on the corner.

Less than a decade later on May 25, 1915, the Crooker Building was destroyed by another major fire. Reported in the Hamilton Herald, the fire which broke out early in the morning, levelled the corner block. Owned by Mr. Frederick Wesley Crooker, it was described by the newspaper as "the finest mercantile building in the village". Included in the building were the General Store operated by Postmaster, Mr. W. Walley, and on the second floor, a large hall and public library.

So fierce were the flames, that the adjoining buildings were threatened. Neighbouring Alton's Barber Shop and Pool Room suffered damage when one of the walls collapsed. No one was injured, but several village fire fighters suffered cuts and bruises from the falling debris.

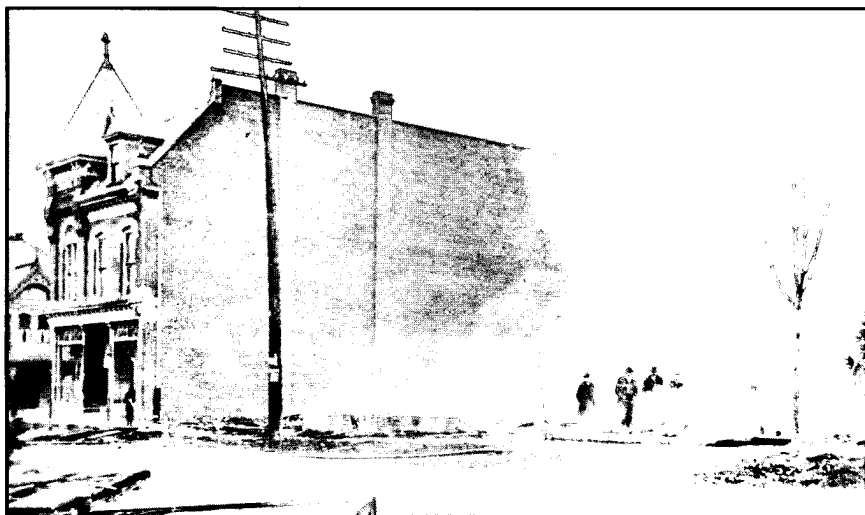
The volunteer village fire brigade although quickly on the scene were unable to cope with the blaze. The Hamilton Fire Department was called to assist, but arrived too late and only managed to prevent the fire from spreading. Ironically, activities in the village on Victoria Day had been to raise funds for the village library.

Three years later on September 30, 1918, villagers awakened to another Dundas Street fire. The rear section of W. Cummins' Drugstore, the site of the blaze was destroyed, but many residents who rushed to assist, succeeded in the removal of the druggist's stock.

The village fire brigade managed to bring the fire under control, but the Waterdown Review still commented upon the disaster in the next edition of the paper stating, "this fire clearly demonstrates the fact that Waterdown is still in need of additional fire fighting apparatus, such as ladders, pike poles etc. ... Let us hope that the days of the frame fire trap are numbered, and

that our Council will pass a By-Law which will prevent the building of this style of structure, which have caused our citizens a great deal of uneasiness in the past."

Just after 1pm on May 23, 1922, the last of the major fires to destroy sections of Dundas Street broke out. Eleven businesses, the Roller Rink and three private houses were destroyed by a fire that engulfed the south side of the street between Franklin and Main Street. When it was finally extinguished by the Hamilton Fire



*The 1906 fire on Dundas Street destroyed a tailor shop and barber shop. Crooker's General Store was untouched.*



*Fire damage on Dundas Street looking west, May 25, 1915.*

## Village Fires

Department, the damage was estimated at between \$60,000 and \$80,000.

The fire, which at its height threatened to destroy the entire village core, began in the David Davies Cooperage and Heading Mill where a spark from the engine room ignited a pile of sawdust in the rear section. None of the employees saw the flames which, fanned by wind, quickly jumped to the rear of the Roller Rink. James Hayes, employed in the construction of the new Memorial Hall across the road, saw the flames leaping up the rear of the rink and immediately raced to the village bell to ring the alarm.

Within a few minutes, the volunteer fire brigade headed by George Cott arrived on the scene, equipped with only hand chemical engines to fight the flames which had completely enveloped the rear of the Roller Rink. They succeeded in removing the piano from the front section but little else. As other volunteers arrived, they removed stock from the nearby stores – Carroll's, Sterling Meat Company and Alton's Hardware. Among the volunteers was Mr. Bachelor, who ran from his store without even removing the cash from the till – his receipts went up in smoke, along with his drugstore and stock.

It soon became very apparent that the fire was almost completely out of hand as it quickly spread from store to store. Charles Burns, local agent for the Bell Telephone company requested his switchboard operator to contact the Hamilton Fire Department for help in the hope of saving the residential section of the village. The operator was told that such a request must be made by the Reeve of Waterdown to the Mayor of Hamilton! Fortunately, another resident contacted Mr. J.F. Vance, the County Treasurer who had an office in the Old Courthouse and he gave the necessary guarantee to the Fire



*Fire damage on Dundas Street looking north-east to Chestnut Grove, May 25, 1915.*



*Fire damage along the north side of Dundas Street following the Great Fire, May 23, 1922.*

Chief who promptly dispatched an engine and group of fire fighters.

The costly switchboard was removed from the telephone office in an effort to save it, but this severed all phone communication with the outside. When the Hamilton Fire engine arrived in the village, and Deputy Chief Robert Aitchison surveyed the scene, he quickly realized that there was no adequate supply of water to fight the fire. The dam on a small stream on Dr. McGregor's property was broken, and then blocked in the rear of the Kirk Hotel where the fire engine was parked. This immediately provided an adequate supply of water and with a slight change in wind direction, the fire was brought under control and extinguished by the early evening.

Most of the buildings destroyed were of frame material, and these, with the oil and other inflammable materials in the garages, hardware and auto accessory businesses, made the blaze unusually hot and the smoke very dense. At one time the flames, shooting skywards, caused sparks to land on several residences to the north and west, including the home of Dr. McGregor. The Kirk



*View from the roof of the Kirk Hotel, May 24, 1922.*

Hotel roof caught fire several times, but the strong stream of water from the Hamilton engine prevented serious damage.

At the end of the day, much of the village core was damaged beyond repair, and the face of Waterdown changed forever.



## Dundas Street

*Looking West from the Main Street Intersection*

Between 1875 and 1889, the Crooker corner block was operated by William Oscar Sealey, the son of Waterdown's first Reeve, Charles Sealey. W.O. Sealey who operated a banking business on the premises and lived above the store was involved in one of the most exciting incidents to ever occur in the Village.

During the early hours of April 14, 1887, the building was broken into by burglars searching for the location of the downstairs bank safe. They drilled two holes near the handle of the safe, inserted powder, and ignited a fuse. The enormous explosion blew open the safe, shattered windows and awakened the Sealeys who were in bed overhead. Mr. Sealey seized his revolver and blasted away from the head of the stairway hoping to scare away the intruders. The burglars returned the fire and four bullets pierced the bedroom floor. Several more volleys of gunfire occurred before W.O. Sealey attempted to open a side window, and call for help. Gunfire from the street struck the sash, but missed Mr. Sealey. Realizing that the disturbance



*View looking west c.1910.*

would soon bring attention, the burglars began to beat a retreat, two running northwards, and two to the south across the Dundas Street intersection. The two who ran north carried the drawers from the safe, full of valuable papers, eventually throwing them down under the Dundas Street bridge where they were found later that morning.



1993



# The North-East Corner of Dundas and Main Street Intersection

*Looking East Towards Vinegar Hill*

The north-east corner of Main and Dundas Street has been "home" to many long-time family businesses that have been an important part of village history.

The Crooker family appear to have operated commercial establishments in Waterdown from an early date. In 1853 Francis Crooker appears on a list of trades and businesses in the village as a grocer and baker. In the listing for 1857-58, his name appears as "dealer in dry goods, hardware and groceries." It is not known if this corner was the location of the store, but Crookers appear continuously in the Directory Listings of the village from this date onwards as merchants, general store owners and druggists.

Frederick William Crooker built the very fine brick building that bore the Crooker name and graced this corner from the turn of the century. The building survived the 1906 village fire, but was badly damaged during the second in 1915.

The corner was rebuilt by Mr. Crooker, and for a short period he continued in business, serving as Postmaster until 1927. However, his interest moved onto local politics and he served as Reeve of Waterdown from 1924 until his death in 1927.

The Dale family became owners of the corner block after the 1915 fire, living in the house behind the store. They too operated a business, selling groceries and meats, and providing a delivery service throughout the village. Rebuilding the store after the Great Fire of 1922, they only stayed for another year before selling the corner building to W.E. "Wilf" Langford.

Mr. Langford had come to Waterdown after graduating from the Ontario College of Pharmacy in 1921 and set up his own business in one half of the Alton Grocery Store. After this building was destroyed in 1922, he moved two doors down the street into the rebuilt Dale's store.

Langford's Pharmacy continued at this location for 64 years, and like the Weeks building at Mill and Dundas, could be called one of the village landmarks. Remembered for its virtually unchanged store front, soda fountain and friendly staff, the drug store closed its doors on May 31, 1988 and moved into the new Waterdown Plaza.



*F.W. Crooker's General Store north-east corner c.1911*

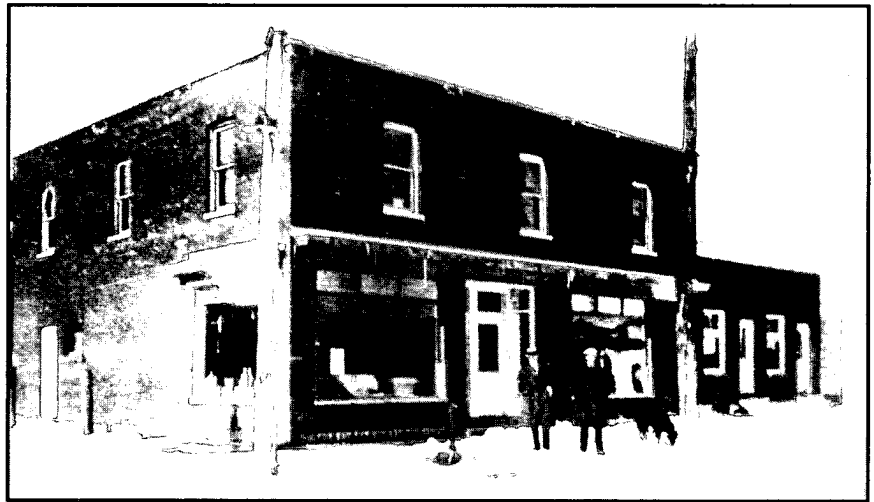


*Alf Dale's General Store north-east corner c.1918-1920*



*Hazel and Myrtle Dale outside their father's General Store 1921.*

The North-East Corner of Dundas and Main Street Intersection



*Alf Dale's General Store north-east corner c.1923*

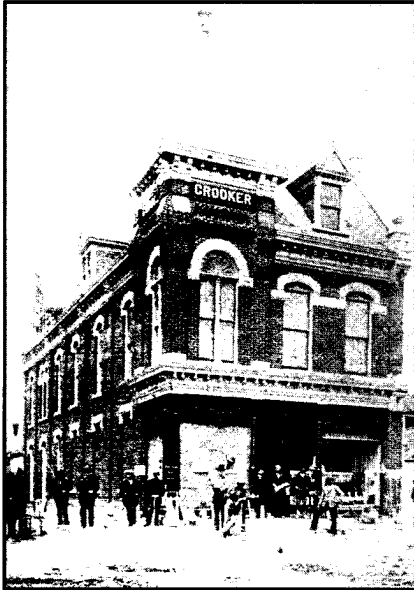


*Wilfred Langford's Drug Store c.1932*



# Dundas and Main Street Intersection

*Looking Northwards*



*Crooker General Store c.1895*



*Kirk Hotel and Crooker's General Store c.1900*

*John Prudham's Delivery Service outside the Kirk Hotel c.1906. Horse drawn sleighs and wagons await the arrival of mail and parcels at Mr. Crooker's General Store opposite.*



## South-East Corner of Dundas and Main Street

The majority of the buildings along this south side of Dundas Street, which were largely constructed of wood, remained virtually unchanged until the Great Fire of 1922. The south-east corner has been the site of commercial establishments throughout the history of the village. Orley B. Griffin's General Store was one of the few village businesses to retain a covered walkway into the twentieth century. However, the 1922 fire destroyed both Mr. Griffin's General Store and residence – this corner suffering complete devastation.

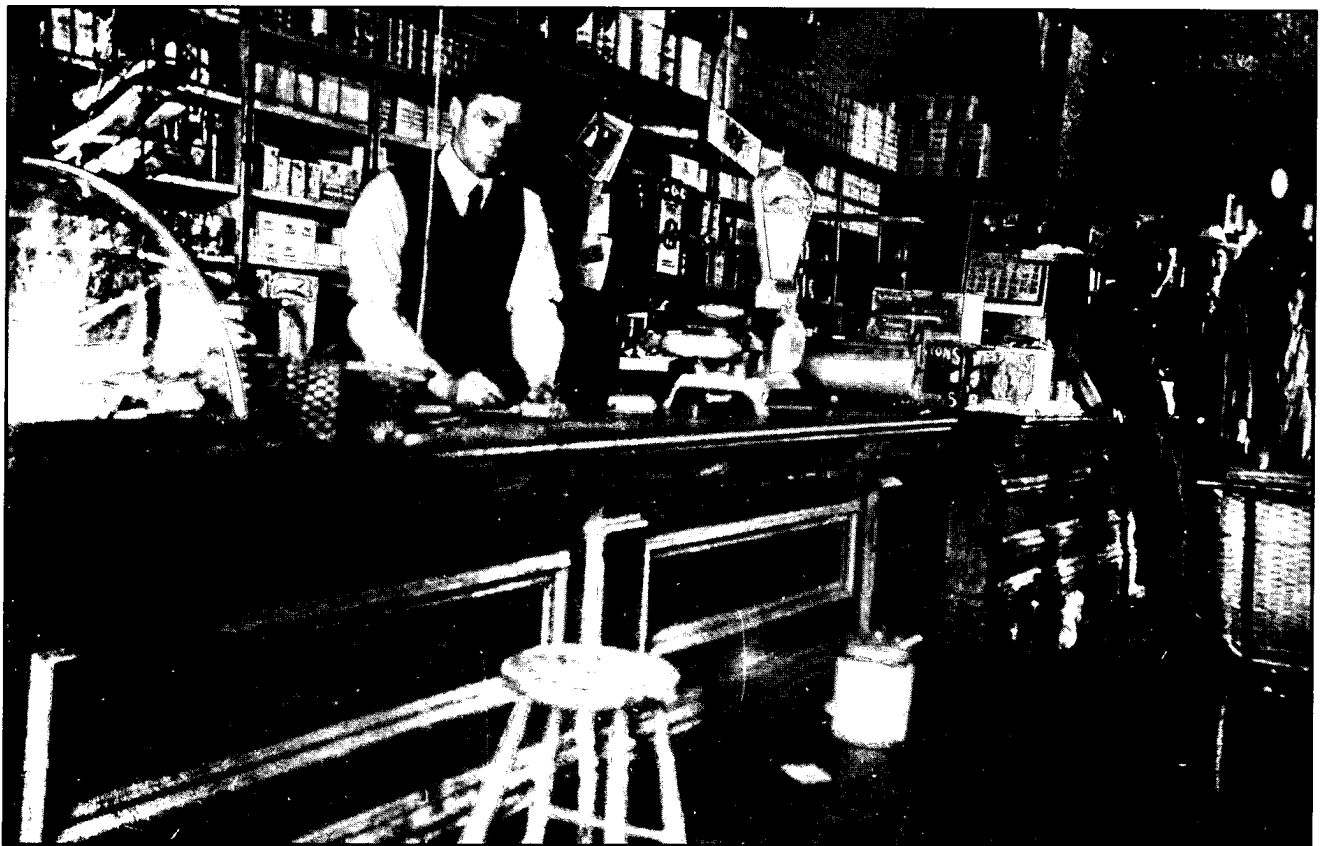
In January 1930, Harry Lillycrop and Bob Harvey opened a garage business on Dundas Street known as the L. & H. Garage. Originally located in George Potts' Blacksmith shop on the east side of Franklin Street for a year, while Mr. Potts contemplated retirement in his northern cottage, the two mechanics moved into Alton's Garage on the corner of Franklin and Dundas Street, when he decided



*Looking east from the Dundas and Main Street intersection c.1905.*

to “unretire”. During its years of operation, the L. & H. Garage complex included a set of pumps, towing and repair service and an independent diner.

*Interior of Orley B. Griffin's General Store c.1921.*





*L. & H. Garage, owned by Harry Lillycrop and Bob Harvey, south-west corner of Dundas Street and Franklin Street c.1933.*



## North-West Corner of Main and Dundas Street

Hotels have been an important part of Waterdown's history from its earliest days. As the village prospered, the number of hotels dramatically increased, and as it declined, so did the hotels.

The Kirk Hotel situated on the north-west corner of Dundas Street and Main Street North is the village's second prominent hotel. It has been a popular "watering hole" for locals since the last decade of the nineteenth century. Unlike the American Hotel, it has undergone very little change since its early days, and still retains many of its original exterior features, a reflection of stable family ownership that operated the establishment for almost a century.

The property was originally granted to Alexander McDonnell, and then passed through the ownership of Alexander Brown and E.C. Griffin. In 1862, this north-west corner was purchased by Thomas English, a prominent local inhabitant, a carriage manufacturer and donor of the property on which the original St. Thomas Roman Catholic Church was built. This corner was the location

of his carriage works, but in 1868, the property was sold to William Heisse. In the same year, Heisse was recorded as a Hotel Keeper, although no name for the establishment was given until 1875, when he was listed as the Proprietor of the Right House Hotel.

In 1888 Patrick Kirk purchased the property, and it remained in his family's possession until 1966, passing through three generations of the Kirk family. Soon after the family assumed ownership, they converted the frame hotel to a brick building. Patrick Kirk added a kitchen and pantry at the rear and four rooms to the front of the building. This enlargement of the original hotel building being necessary to serve the increasing village traffic, as the Kirk was a stop on three different stage coach routes that passed through Waterdown.

At this time, the hotel grounds extended to just beyond the present village Post Office, but the wooden stables and large barn that fronted onto Main Street and appear on several turn of the century postcards have been demolished. Many village residents still recall the



*The Kirk Hotel c.1920.*



1993

open area north of the hotel, with trees, a small rustic bridge and stream that until the 1950s, ran south from the McGregor estate on Main Street and meandered across the Kirk property before disappearing under the hotel building. Water from this stream was reputedly used to help douse the Great Fire of 1922. Sadly the stream has been led into a drain and the trees removed to make way for the present parking lot.

When Patrick Kirk died in 1897, his son John Henry Kirk and his wife Annie Isabella Organ took over the operation of the hotel. During these early years, the hotel was one of the sites of John Prudham's annual winter banquets – this was the time when whisky cost 3 cents a glass, and to reserve a hotel room cost \$1.50 a day.

After the Great Fire of 1922, the Bell Telephone centre was installed in the hotel, and remained there until 1931. John Henry Kirk died in 1944, and for three years his son John Leo Kirk operated the hotel, before his ill health forced his sister Mary to take on the responsibilities. She continued the family ownership until 1966 when it was sold out of the Kirk family. In 1990 the Morgunov family of Toronto took possession and undertook the task of a major facelift to a building that has been an important village landmark throughout its existence.

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## Dundas Street

*Looking East Towards the Village Core*

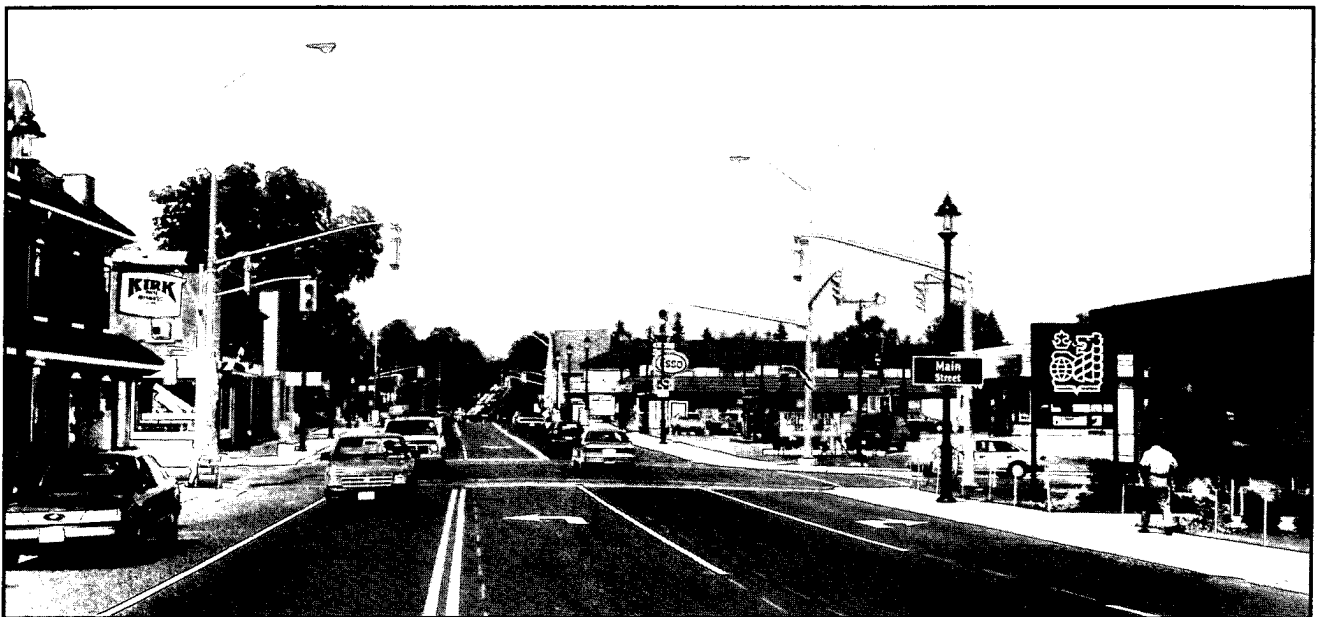
The large two storey stone house that stood on the south-west corner of Main and Dundas Streets was demolished in 1962 prior to the erection of the Royal Bank building in the following year. Village residents recall several notable families occupying the house, including the Spences, Carsons, Johnsons, and Attridges.



*Looking east from Flamboro Street c.1909.*



*Looking east from the Royal Bank, Main and Dundas Street, Spring 1967.*



1993



# Residential Section

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## Dundas Street

*Looking East from Flamboro Street*

Sidewalks were still made from boards during the first decade of the twentieth century. Slightly contoured to allow for drainage, the road was dusty in the summer, and bumpy and full of pot holes as the frost came out each spring. Maintenance with horse teams operated by Jack Buchanan, Davy Davies, and the Slaters continued all summer. Using wagon boxes filled with stones that were dumped onto the highway, and then crushed by steam rollers, it was backbreaking labour. During very dry periods, the road surface was oiled, or dampened down to improve visibility.

Gas lighting was in place at the turn of the century with standards located at the Mill and Main Street intersections. Electricity came to Waterdown when Sir Adam Beck addressed a mass meeting in the Roller Rink, and officially turned on the hydro September 1911.



*View of Dundas Street looking eastwards from Flamboro Street c.1909. Mr. Crooker's General Store on the north-east corner of Dundas and Main Street, Cummins' Drug Store and the Bell House-Tower.*



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## The Crooker House, 299 Dundas Street

**B**uilt in 1884 for successful Waterdown merchant and druggist William H. Crooker, descendent of an early Flamborough family, this large Victorian mansion is surrounded by attractive grounds. Ownership of the property passed to W.H. Crooker's son at the turn of the century. Frederick W. Crooker also assumed operation of his father's general store at the corner of Main and Dundas Street until it was destroyed by fire in 1915. He served as Waterdown's Postmaster 1906-1927 and as Reeve of the village from 1924 until his death in 1927. He was a popular, hard working politician, and through his efforts, the waterworks system in Waterdown was installed by Fred Carson & Sons.

During the 1940's and 1950's the house was the residence and office of Dr. Reginald Perkins from Hamilton. Lovingly restored to its Victorian splendour by the present owner, the house is now a commercial establishment known as "The Parlour".



*Side view of the Crooker House c.1920.*



*Crooker House from Dundas Street c. 1977.*



*1993*

## Hamilton to Main Street

This small one-and-a-half storey house in the residential section of Dundas Street appears to have been painted white for much of its life. Constructed of stone blocks over which stucco and paint have been applied, its style is that of a typical Ontario house of the 1860-1875 period with upper windows in the gable ends and a central gable above the front entrance.

From time to time commercial businesses have been located in the lower section of the building, with the upper floor serving as a residence. Village residents recall a seamstress and two elderly bachelor brothers living in the house in the late 1930s.



*The White House, 297 Dundas Street c.1977.*



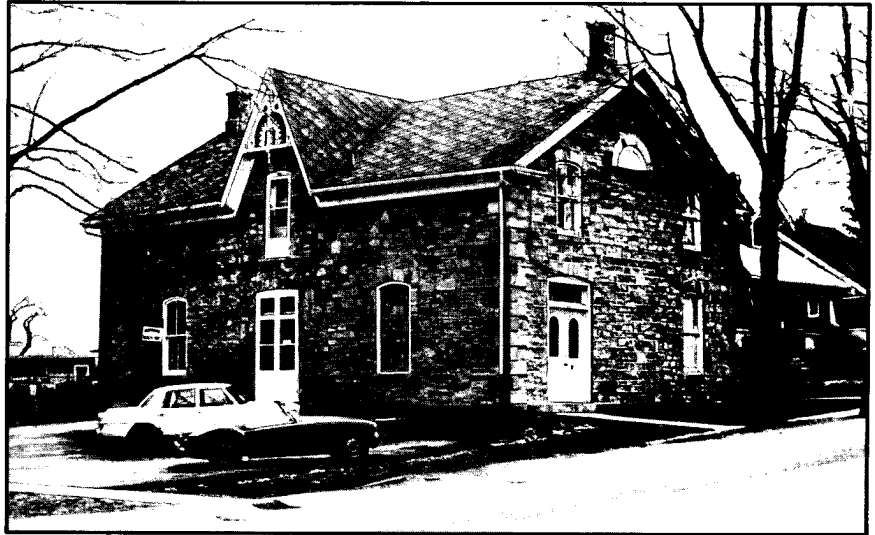
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## Methodist New Connexion Church – Maycock House

In 1859, one-fifth of an acre of land on the corner of Dundas and Flamboro Street was bought from Russell Smith and James K. Griffin by the Trustees of the Canadian Wesleyan Methodist New Connexion congregation “for the purpose of building a village church.”

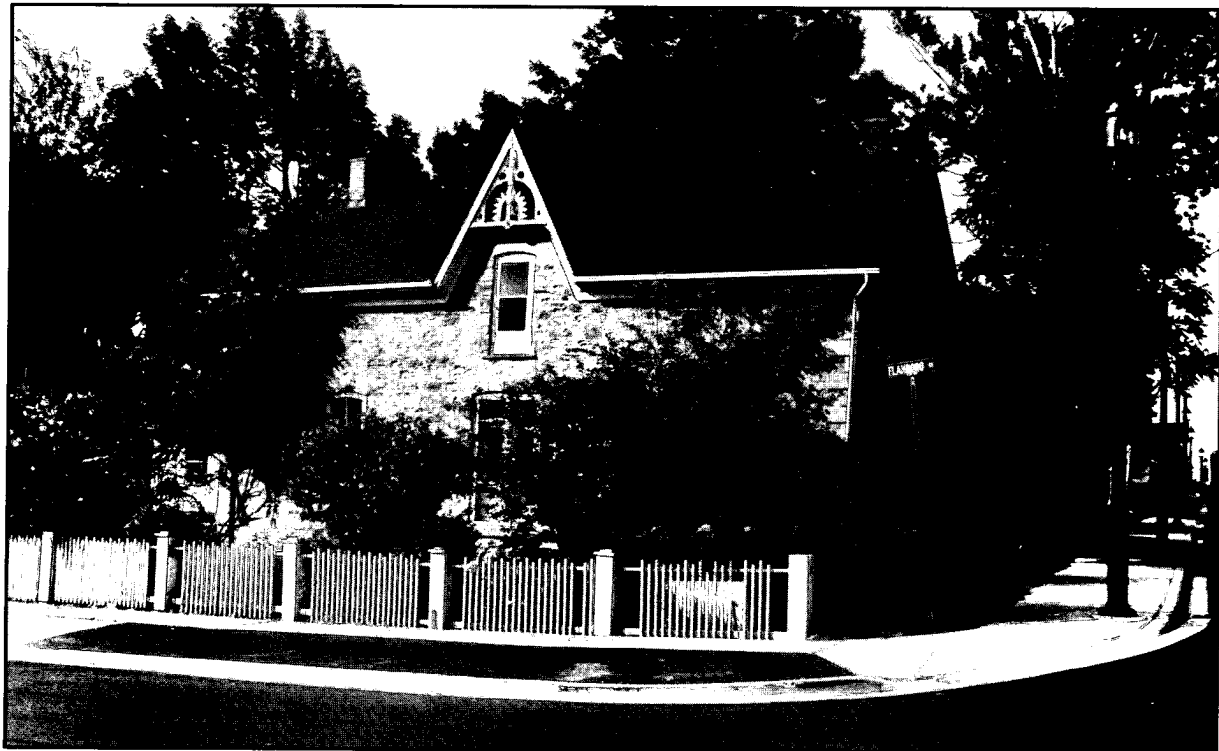
A modest stone church was built on the site and opened within a year, but its time as a place of worship was very brief, as fifteen years later, the two local Methodist churches united – the congregation from this church moving to worship on Mill Street North. No longer required for regular Sunday services, the building became the Sunday School for the two churches between 1874 and 1882.

Mrs. Deborah Jarvis, sister of Waterdown Reeve, Charles Sealey purchased the building in 1882, and was responsible for its conversion to a private residence. No photographs from the era when it was a church have ever been found, so the original appearance is not known. Some changes can be detected when the exterior is examined, these include the position of the front door, bricked windows and the addition of a second storey.



298 Dundas Street c.1967.

The house was converted to apartments during the 1960s, and the Wentworth County Health unit opened offices there and paved over the side yard for parking. In 1969 Professor Paul Maycock undertook restoration of the building and property, including the installation of the white picket fence, and small garden filled with many fine examples of unusual Canadian perennials.



1993

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## Hamilton to Main Street

An ornate and unusual two storey Victorian house marks the end of the residential section on the north side of Dundas Street. This building is one of a diminishing number of private residences along the street, as many of the larger ones have become commercial establishments in the last two decades.

The house has been the home of two well-known Waterdown residents. During the first half of the century it was owned by Richard "Dick" Smith who served as Reeve of Waterdown for two terms, 1920-1924 and 1932-1943. During his first term of office, the terrible fire of 1922 that destroyed much of the village core occurred. While praising the members of the Hamilton Fire Department who "by their indefatigable efforts saved the village core from further destruction," he vowed to ensure that an adequate water supply and fire fighting equipment be put in place. Neither proposal was enacted during his first term, but his suggestion that only fire-proof buildings be erected in the centre of the village was successful.



*The Smith - Carson House, 289 Dundas Street c.1977.*

During the 1950s, the property was purchased by Cecil Carson, a son and member of the famous Waterdown company, Fred Carson & Sons, responsible for many major construction and highway projects in the province, including the village waterworks and the paving of the Mount Hope airstrip.



1993

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## “Maple Lawn”, 292 Dundas Street

Located in the centre of the residential section of Dundas Street, “Maple Lawn” is a large attractive two storey house that dates from the late 1880-1890 period, reputedly designed by Mr. Souter, a local architect. Constructed of red stretcher bond brick, it has been painted white at some point during its history. Several fine features, including a wide front verandah, decorative bargeboard and round-headed windows on the second floor, high in each of the gables that face Dundas Street make this dwelling one of the finest in the area.

At the rear is a large brick carriage house and loft, and reputedly there is a spring well on the east side of the property. Mr. George Allison, who described himself as a “gentlemen” on the 1898 Waterdown Voter’s List was probably the builder of this Victorian mansion. He was a local magistrate and an avid collector of Indian relics, many from the Lake Medad area were eventually donated as a collection to the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

Mr. Harold Greene, the first publisher of the Waterdown Review lived in the house for a brief period, and it is believed that a few of the early papers were produced in the carriage house. During the Depression years the house was converted to a Tourist Home and several out-of-town school teachers boarded there while employed at the High School.



*Maple Lawn, Summer 1977.*



*Maple Lawn, Summer 1980.*

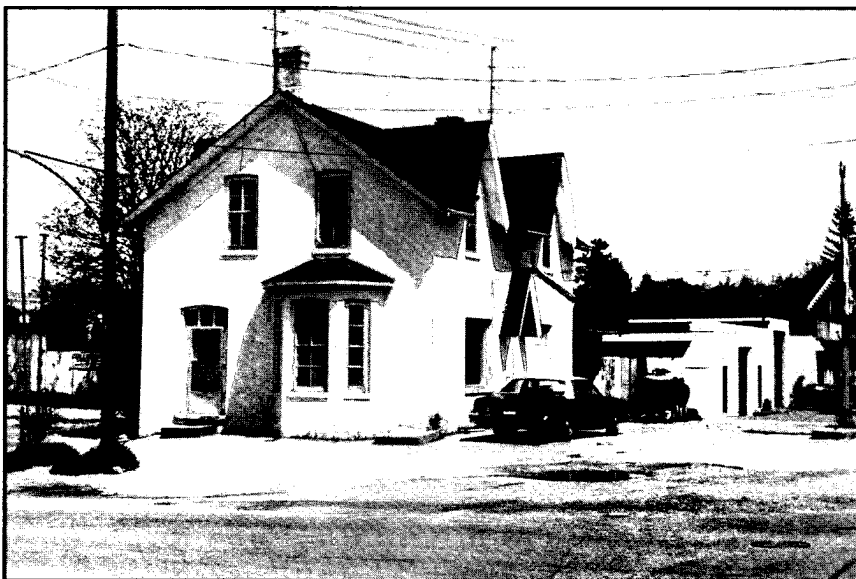


*1993*

## North-East Corner of Dundas and Hamilton Street

The commercial block occupying the north-east corner of Hamilton and Dundas Street included this white stucco house until the 1980s. A variety of businesses have operated from this building alone. During the 1930s and 1940s, a restaurant and garage owned by the Brown family, was a favourite "haunt" for Senior Waterdown High School students.

Before the house was demolished to make way for a proposed Car Wash, it served as the headquarters of Mrs. Betty Ward's campaign for Mayor of Flamborough in the November 1978 Municipal Election.



*Mrs. Betty Ward's Campaign Headquarters, north-east corner of Dundas and Hamilton Street, c.1978.*





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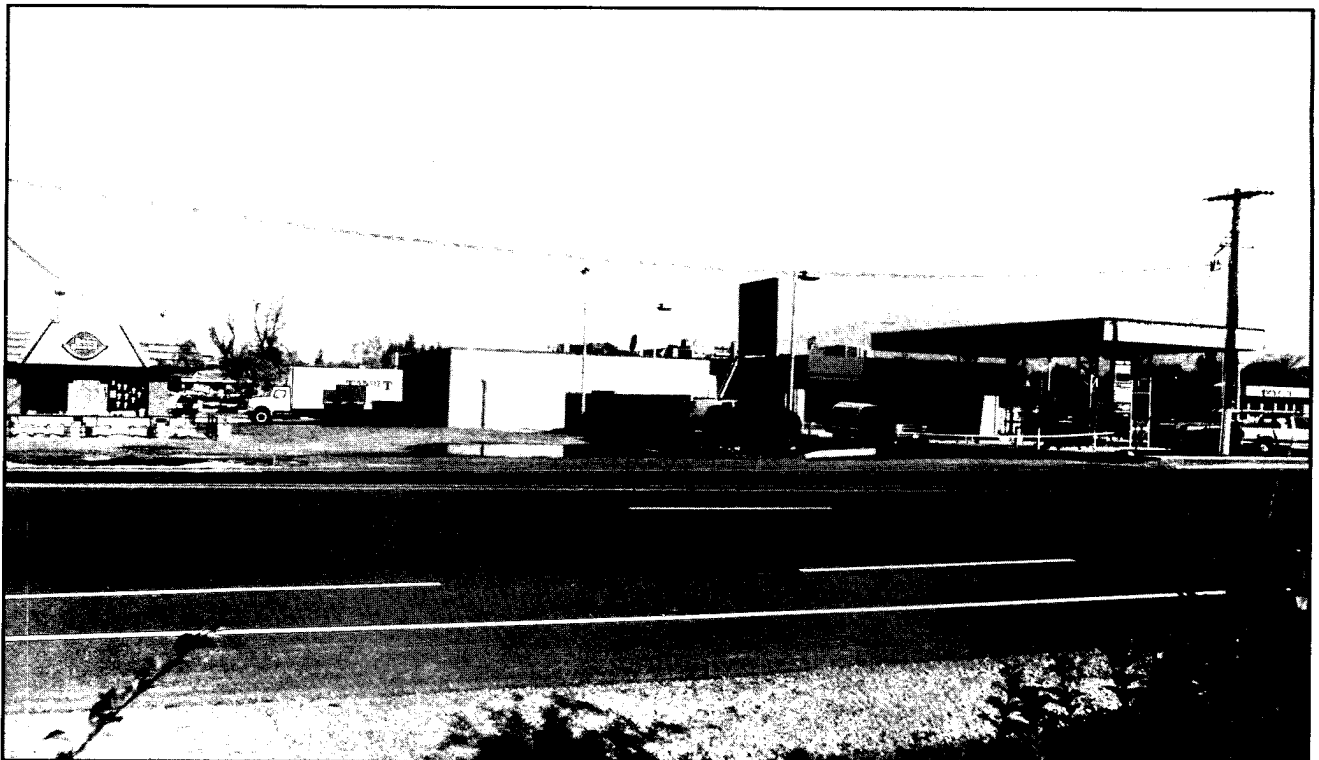
## North-West Corner of Dundas and Hamilton Street

**H**amilton Street marks the western entrance to the Village of Waterdown. The Metcalfe farm bordering on Hamilton and Dundas Streets was a Market Gardening operation that also included small fruits such as black currants. Commercial strip development in the 1950s heralded the end of farming.

In 1953, a Sunoco Service Station opened, operated by Jack Hodgins, with "Bob" Williamson and Bill Hunter providing repairs to cars and trucks. The property behind gradually reverted to low growing bush until 1987 when the Rosart Brothers began the development of the Waterdown Plaza, which by 1993 included such businesses as I.G.A., Langford's I.D.A., Chapters, and the Toronto Dominion Bank.



*Ruby Featherston, Ruth Bell, and Bernice Lemon, Metcalfe Farm, Hamilton Street, 1938.*



1993

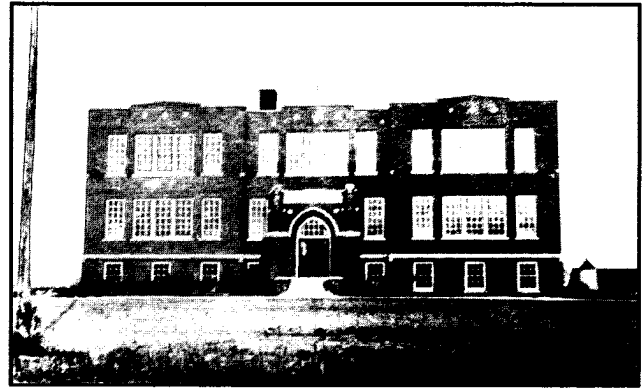
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## The Waterdown High School, Dundas Street

In January 1928, students from the upper floor of Mary Hopkins School on Mill Street North in Waterdown walked over to the new high school that had been constructed on the south-west corner of Hamilton and Dundas Street, at the western entrance to the village. The largest gathering in the history of Waterdown, nearly 800 people, assembled on February 27, 1928 to watch the opening ceremonies. Built of red brick, in the Art-Deco style, at a cost of \$60,000, with an additional \$10,000 for the grounds and equipment, the new school was surrounded by controversy during the early months. The East Flamborough Township Council felt strongly that since the township had contributed 60% of the cost, the words, "East Flamborough" should be part of the school's name.

However, at the official opening by Dr. F.W. Merchant, Provincial Director of Education, the name, Waterdown High School, that dated from the school's beginnings in 1853, was given. Later in the same year, the School Board relented, and the name was changed to include the words East Flamborough. The name eventually became Waterdown District High School. Consisting of eight classrooms, a Gymnasium and Assembly Hall for the 250 pupils, it was described as a "progressive enterprise". While the original building had been designed to serve the needs of the community, the growth of Waterdown and changes in education during the 1950s necessitated expansion with the construction of additions to the main building in 1954, 1956 and 1967-68.

When the first request for expansion, "more classrooms for the teaching of practical subjects" was made to town council in 1952 by Principal F.W. Walden, supported by Deputy William Tyrell, the claim "our



*Waterdown & East Flamborough High School c.1928.*



*Waterdown District High School c.1956-1958.*

young people must be sent into life equipped to the best of their ability and we must raise our sights above cost and think of what is going to be best for future generations" was made. A claim that was made again almost four decades later and resulted in a new Waterdown District High School being built on Parkside Drive in 1992.





*Looking at the intersection of Main and Dundas Street, c.1905-1910.*

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