

Expect Town Landmark to disappear
for Industry

Burlington - Time and vandals- are slowly destroying one of Burlington's oldest houses.

The once proud home on the South Service Road, east of the Appleby Line, now stands deserted, it's windows broken and boarded, with cracked plaster littering the floors, sagging stairs and shattered partitions.

Little remains to suggest it was originally the home of staunch United Empire Loyalists, who helped establish three United Churches in Burlington. Said to be a good example of U.E.L. architecture, the rear of the house was probably built in 1824 by Isaac Van Norman. Later, it is believed, the two-storey front section was added, a reversal of the usual practice of adding smaller wings to the main structure.

Other buildings on the 100 acre property include a large barn built around 1900, three smaller buildings and the stone base of a silo. In addition there is a wooden structure attached to the house. The larger part, is salt box shape, and may have been used earlier for carriages.

Hidden from the road by a screen of trees, the house has almost been forgotten, but, recently,

Mrs. Eric Gudgeon, of Lowville, great-great granddaughter of Mr. Van Norman, discovered the building after reading letters written by the first occupants.

From These, she has been able to fill in some of the details about the former owners.

Born in New York State in 1784, Isaac Van Norman settled here in 1807, receiving a Crown grant of 200 acres in 1810. He received another 200 acres in 1840 when the Family Compact broke up.

When he married Catherine Cummings is not known, but one of the earliest gravestones in a nearby cemetery is that of Eliza Van Norman, Isaac's first daughter, who died in 1811. The cemetery was on the original property.

Most of his children were educated at Upper Canada Academy, later Victory College - at Cobourg, at which Egerton Ryerson was first president. The Rev. Dr. Ryerson, famous preacher and educationalist, is considered to have been the founder of Ontario's Public Education System.

One daughter, Jan Van Norman, was the first woman in Upper Canada to take the course leading to a bachelor of arts degree; but education for women was considered unnecessary and she was never allowed to receive the degree formally.