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### THE HISTORY OF OUR HOUSE

- Diane Hieatt

2850 FRONT RD-

As far as we can trace, the house was in existence in 1820. There is an Island tale about the Caugheys' house - then being built for the Prestons, in 1822, with the neighbours (the owners of our house) coming to the bonfires that were burned each evening to extract the lime from the limestone for the mortar for the walls.

The flavour of our home is French, and may well have been built by a French-Canadian. When Canada was settled by the Empire Loyalists at the end of the American Revolution in 1792, there was a shortage of skilled stonemasons, and French-Canadian stonemasons were in demand. There was also a Mr. Dennee who settled on the Island, and may have been involved in the construction. Who knows? However, the stuccoed portion of our home is actually constructed of limestone "pancakes" piled up from a wide foundation, and covered with stucco. And the asymmetry, with two windows to one side and one window on the other side of the central door, is more typical of French-Canadian homes in Quebec in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

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The interior of the house, however, has an English flavour to it, with an elegant parlour with a most elegant fireplace-mantel in the Adam style. The windows are pure Regency - large and allowing sunlight to stream in. Twelve-over-twelves is the official name for the style of window, and some of the original panes are still present, distorting the scenery viewed through them.

Whoever was responsible for the house liked good design, and this is evident in the mouldings and trim and panelled doors in the parlour. The other rooms in the house are much simpler and less ornate. When we gutted the upstairs portion to the stone walls a few years ago, we found wallpaper glued to plaster parged onto the stone walls at the eastern end of the house.

Originally there was a veranda on the riverside of the house, facing northwest, and this must have been a fine place to sit on a summer's evening before the mosquitoes became too fierce. It overlooked the road which ran between the house and the water. However the veranda has long since gone, and we hope to replace it one day, but not the road, which was moved to the south side of the house after 1838. This change in the road site affected the house greatly - somebody decided to swing the stairs around to face the back-now-front door, and so now we enter the house directly into the kitchen or into the office space that was once two small bedrooms.

Hugh and Mary Patterson, both from Ireland were registered as owners in 1837. There is a tale about the house being attacked by "pirates" who had been involved with the 1838 rebellion in Upper Canada. Old Mrs. Patterson was concerned that the robbers would open a chest belonging to three brothers, which contained their savings to send for their parents still in Ireland. It seems, with great presence of mind, she cried out "Ah, sure and yez wouldn't take a poor body's died clothes" and so they left the chest alone.

Hugh and Mary's daughter Sarah had married a Captain Thomas Polley, and she and Thomas and their children moved into a frame cottage they built between 1851-1861, on the land between our home and the Welbanks' home, which now stands on the site of the farm's former barn. (One of Sarah's descendants is a well-known Canadian actress and film-maker!) The cottage no longer exists, and has become the site of a large garden on our land, by the water.

James and Margaret Patterson built the brick house portion of our home, we think, in the 1870s. The house was more "English", square and symmetrical. The McMullens became owners around the time of World War I. Vaughan McMullen, who was born in our house, reminisced with us about growing up with his family in the stone house, and

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his grandparents living in the brick house. He said that every evening Mrs. McMullen would open the door and call for one of the grandchildren to come through to the brick house for supper at the table with the starched tablecloth and napkins. He remembered, too, the bathtub (now filled with impatiens, near the road),

being used by his uncle with the children peeking through knotholes while he bathed in the outhouse that has long since gone.

We are still tracking down stories about the home and would welcome any stories you have to add.

{NOTE: Mrs. Hieatt provided us with a printout of a photo of the house, however, the photo did not scan well, and we were unable to use it. We are wondering, though, if anyone has an original photos of this house that we could feature in a future issue.}