

# Stone barns give look of permanence to farms of northern Nassagaweya

Stone houses, especially those made by Scottish masons or their descendants, are very much in demand by connoisseurs of Canadiana. Their solid design employing hand cut stone embellishes this district, especially in Guelph, Galt and Fergus.

Not so well known, perhaps but just as sturdy and time tested, are the stone barns which were built in that more leisurely era when rugged looks were prized. They often complement the stone house and give the farm a look of permanence which even the best kept wooden structure cannot duplicate.

The northern part of Nassagaweya township has several of the stone structures around the Guelph Line and 30 Sideroad. The rock-strewn fields in Nassagaweya and the rock underneath were ideally suited for stone structures and the pioneers realized it. Most of them are still in daily use.

This week The Free Press took a look at four of these stone barns and talked to owners who endeavor to keep them in good shape. All were built before the turn of the century and some are well over a century old.

Owners take a special pride in the buildings, which are unique not only from the standpoint of the building materials, but also because of the link they forge with the early pioneers of the district.

## Lasby barn

Joshua Norrish, who wrote the first history of Nassagaweya, built the barn on the farm of Wallace Lasby in 1881. It's on 30 Sideroad. The stone house on the same property dates back to 1872.

Gateposts, consisting of solid pieces of stone, stand on each side of the entrance to the farm lane. The posts are anchored extending four and a half feet below the ground.

The farm has been in the family for 68 years.

Jimmy Marks, a stonemason of some repute, constructed the barn on the farm of Robert Croft on the Guelph Line, just east of Eden Mills. Mr. Croft estimates it was built over 100 years ago.

The farm has been in the family, since Mr. Croft's father bought it in the spring of 1806.

A 20 foot tall silo adjoining the barn extends 15 feet underground.

## Archway hand cut

Stones for the archway over the door to the barn are all hand cut, and Mr. Croft says the building is in sound shape and has never had any repair work done on it.

Stonework on the barn on property of L. Hall Smith, on 30 Sideroad, near the Fifth Line of Nassagaweya is now painted white and the huge doors are attractively done in red.

Although Mr. Smith and his family have lived there only seven years, he estimates the barn was built about 1860.

## Application approved

Last week the Committee of Adjustment approved the application of Gordon Cunningham to seek a conveyance to validate his sale of land for a planned new apartment on Ransom St.

The land had not been under subdivision control by the town of Acton so, following new legislation passed in June, it automatically fell under provincial jurisdiction which put all land in Ontario under subdivision control.

Subsequently the sale couldn't be registered, so the hearing by the committee of Adjustment was required.

## ESQUEISING COUNCIL BRIEFS

At their regular meeting Monday night, Esqueising Council:

—Authorized clerk-treasurer Delmar French to investigate and bring recommendations before council with regard to a bookkeeping machine for the township.

—Approved a petition received from the ratepayers of Esqueising, regarding street lights in the village of Ballinacree.

Delving further into the history of the barn, Mr. Smith learned stones were lodged into place by the use of a device called an "A" frame. Beams inside the barn are all hand-hewn.

## Hewn beams

Hand-hewn beams are also a feature of the barn on the property of V. J. Willms on the Fourth Line of Nassagaweya, just above 30 Sideroad.

The barn was built in 1859 by the Easton family, who received the land from the Crown.

The farm has had only four owners since, including former Nassagaweya councillor Ross Gordon. Mr. Gordon used the barn as an implement shed and to store hay.

The Gordons lived on the farm from 1918 until 1968. The Willms family have lived there, since 1968.

All four barns are easily seen from the road. They enhance the area and draw stares from passers-by unaccustomed to barns made of stone.



A SILO 20 feet high, which extends 15 feet below the ground as well, is attached to the stone barn on the farm of Robert Croft on the Guelph Line. The

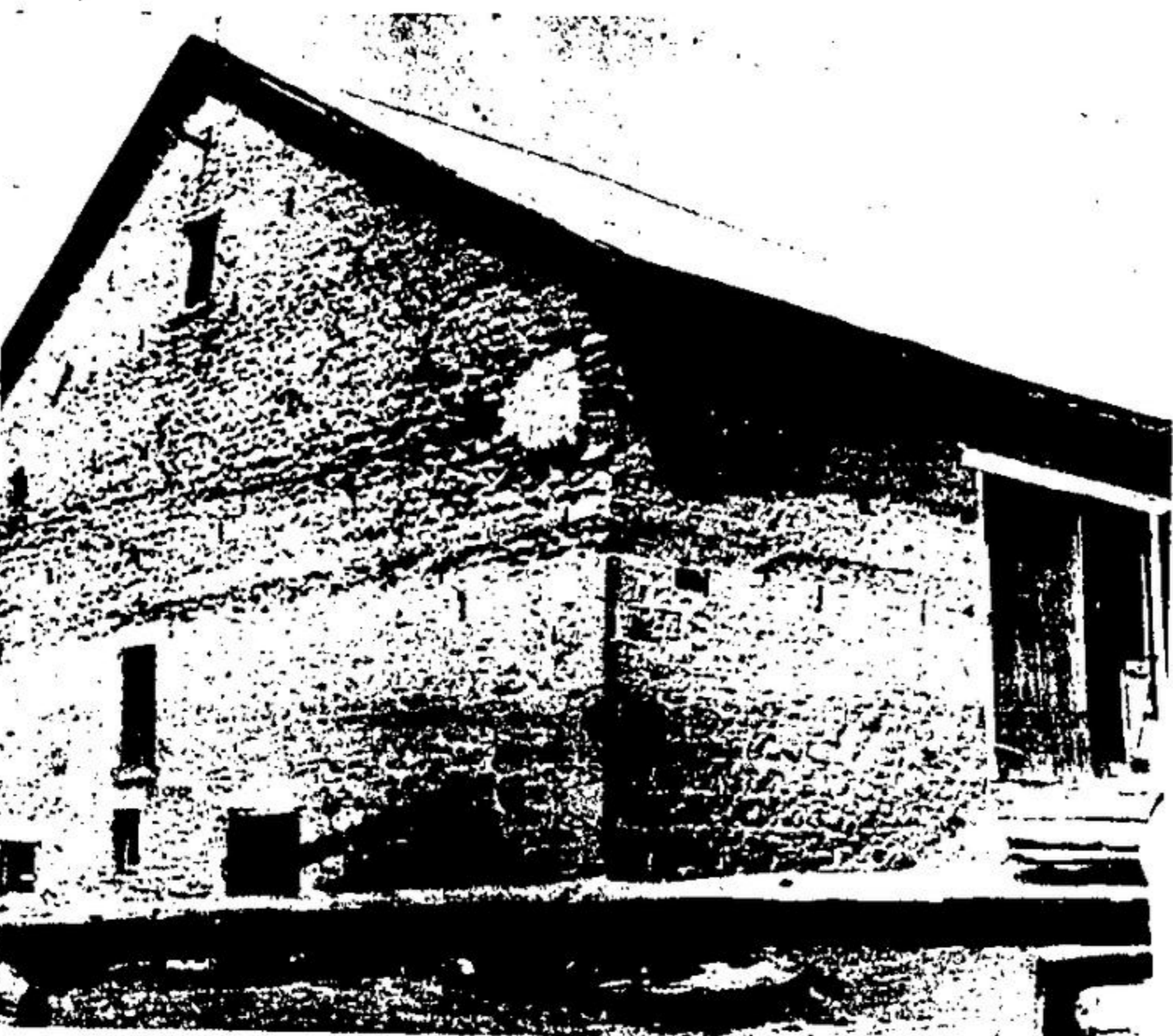
barn was built by stonemason Jimmy Marks over 100 years ago.—(Staff Photo)



A GREAT DEAL of effort and know how went into the placing of hand-cut stones in buildings such as this garage, on the farm of Wallace Lasby. The stone

house, garage and barn on the property have been in the Lasby family for 68 years.—(Staff Photo)

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JOSHUA NORRISH, who wrote the history of Nassagaweya built the stone barn on the farm of Wallace Lasby on 30

Sideroad. The barn was built in 1881 and measures 54 feet by 72 feet.—(Staff Photo)



STONEMASON on this barn on the property of L. Hall Smith, 30 Sideroad, near the Fifth Line of Nassagaweya is painted white and the barn doors are

painted red. Mr. Smith estimates the barn was built about 1860.—(Staff Photo)

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