









South half, lot 32, on the west side of Pinnacle Street, and part of Hotel lot, south half of lot 32. Plan 296

Historical Background

Until nearly the end of the 19th Century, Victoria Avenue was known as Hotel Street. John Everitt had built a frame "hotel" on the trail along the east bank of the river, in 1809, with an adjacent frame and log house and frame barn. When the survey was made for the town plot in 1816 by surveyor Samuel Wilmot, it was found that the proper line for Hotel Street would run through the middle of the hotel building. Accordingly, perhaps because of the size and need for the building, or Everitt's influence, the street was moved south for the one block between Front and Pinnacle Streets, thus running south of the building. Lot 32 was then on the north side of Hotel Street. (see 1816 map)

In 1817, Everitt received the Crown Patent for the south half of lot 32, one acre "and so much of Hotel Street as lies between Front and Pinnacle". This southern strip where the street should have run is subsequently always referred to in the abstracts as the "Hotel lot".

In 1821 and again in 1828, he raised a mortgage on the property, 100 pounds each time. The second mortgage includes the phrase "the said parcel or tract of land and all and singular other the premises", which may only refer to his 1809 buildings or simply be a legal form. In 1829, his lands were seized by the sheriff in payment of a debt owed since 1808. At a public auction, the Hotel Street property was sold to John Turnbull, his son-in-law, and Daniel Everitt, Kingston Township, no doubt a relative. They paid 230 pounds for it, the parcel the same as described in the Crown Patent, adding, "together with all houses, outhouses and other buildings thereon erected". Whether this included the stone house at 20 Victoria Avenue is not known. In 1832 John Turnbull and Daniel Everitt sold a 66 foot deep strip along Hotel Street, from Front Street to Pinnacle Street, to Lewis Daly, for 125 pounds. The same day, they sold the north 66 feet between Front and Pinnacle Street to Oran Stone for 426 pounds. Why was the Hotel Street property so much less valuable?* Front Street was the main business street and perhaps contained a more significant building; perhaps, the stone house was not yet there.

* Note: Subsequent research revealed that Lewis Daly had also married a daughter of John Everitt Sr., thus he was a brother-in-law of John Turnbull

In 1835, the ^{Subject} property along Hotel passed from Daly to Oran Stone, a "shoemaker", for 200 pounds, beginning 116 feet east of Front Street, by 66 feet in depth, through to Pinnacle Street. The same year, Stone subdivided again and sold a lot to Pennel G. Seldon for 80 pounds. Seldon's lot commenced at a point 110 feet westerly from Pinnacle Street, thence north 126 feet, then west 60 feet, south 66 feet, east 16 feet, south 60 feet to Hotel Street, then, according to the deed, "54 feet east to the place of the beginning", a mistake in calculation as the Hotel Street frontage was actually 44 feet. (see map June 16, 1975) Seldon was residing on the premises in 1838, according to a mortgage instrument whereby he borrowed 146 pounds from Samuel Stocking. It is probably in this period that the stone house was built (1835-1838)

Seldon paid 80 pounds for this property in 1835. In 1845, he sold it to Erastus Holden, prosperous agent for the Bank of Upper Canada, for 400 pounds. This great increase would seem to indicate building activity on the lot as well as the increased growth of business in the area.

Erastus Holden was a prominent citizen who owned other property in the area, including his house (containing as well the bank office) on the south side of Hotel Street. The 1845 map shows a tail at the rear of the stone house, but we have no way of knowing the construction or building material used.

The earliest available assessment roll, for 1853, lists Judge William Smart as tenant in Erastus Holden's dwelling on North Hotel. In 1854, Smart is replaced by Miss Charlotte Moore, teacher, who is listed until 1869. By 1860, the assessment roll numbers premises as well as persons, and Holden's North Hotel st. property is number 90 and 91. In number 90 (the tail?) is Thayer Fisher, cabinet maker, with Miss Moore in 91. In 1862, John Forin, Carpenter, and R. Roy, Town Clerk, are in 90 and Miss Moore in 91, the same in 1864. By 1869, the listing for all is number 90, with William Keith "druggist" also present with a clerk. The Hastings County Directory for 1869 lists Keith at "Apothecaries Hall" - no address.

In 1868, Erastus Holden entered into a right-of-way agreement with his neighbour to the west at number 89, Allan R. Dougall, barrister. The plan attached shows Holden's house as being 60' 5" from the facade to the rear wall, the same dimensions as it is today. It is probable than that the brick rear addition was built before 1868, possibly in 1860.

A harness maker shares ^{assessment} number 90 on the 1871 roll, and two clerks are with William Keith, who is now the householder in place of Miss Moore. In 1869, the carpenter shop is listed at 600 (dollars) assessed value, compared to 50 (pounds) in 1864. The druggist's premises in 1869 is valued at 800 (dollars). They are listed as tenants. Miss Moore, as householder, shows an assessed value of \$1,900, which must be the stone house.

In November 1874, Erastus Holden sold the property for \$1,500 to Dency Matilda Horne, wife of James Horne "gentleman". They immediately turned it over to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Jones, "for their life". Mrs. Jones is Lucretia Jones.

Three maps published in the 1870's reveal the next sequence. The 1874 "Birds' Eye" map pictures a two storey building next east to Holden's with a space between. The 1877 Evans and Bolger map confirms this, with buildings numbered in sequence, showing the Horne-Jones building as 34, a small building at the rear of 35, and Gilbert Bogart's building number 36. But the Goad Insurance map of 1878-1883 shows Bogart's building has gone and a new brick building, nearly as deep as the stone house, built against the east wall of the stone house.

The Registry Office records a mortgage in 1878 obtained by Mr. and Mrs. Horne and Lucretia Jones, for \$800, discharged in 1882. The Hastings County Directory for 1879-1880 lists: "Horne, Mrs. M., Milliner, 22 North Hotel". The Goad map indicates that the new brick addition on the east side is number 22. ~~Hotel St.~~

The property changed hands in 1882 when it was bought for \$2,000 by Hannah Melissa Vermilyea, wife of Solomon Vermilyea. The numbering on the assessment rolls has changed again by 1884, the next available year. Vermilyea is listed as number 48, assessed value \$2,600. In 1885, the next two lots east, number 49 and 50, are vacant, owned by E. Filliter (from the estate of Erastus Holden) as Holden's son-in-law. Vermilyea is listed as a merchant. The 1884-85 Kimball City Directory shows him as a "corset mfg. h. 20 Hotel St.". The 1889 Directory lists Hannah Vermilyea, "corset factory, N. Hotel".

Hannah Vermilyea sold the property December 1889, to Isaac Fraser Asselstine for \$1,800. The assessment rolls of 1892 and 1894 show Asselstine had a Piano and Organ showroom in the building, also, his household and a boarder, James F. Dolan, M.D. The assessed value of business and household is \$2,600 although Asselstine paid \$1,800 for it. Fraser Asselstine left the property to his wife, Emily, (Probate of will, October 28, 1905). She lived in the house for many more years with various tenants and boarders, and her son Burton "traveller" is listed there in the 1934 City Directory. The Directory last shows that E. Asselstine, widow, is at 20 Victoria Avenue in 1944. Until 1951, the listing is for "B. Asselstine" and usually one tenant, then in 1953, it is Mrs. Lena Asselstine, widow of Burton, who carries on the family name associated with this building for so many years, until the last Directory listing for her in 1972. In 1974, the Asselstine estate sold the building to Michael and Susan Tom. In 1978, R. Brennan opened his antiques and collectibles business "Memory Lane" in the stone house, which operated for a few years until 1981. Renovations for the present restaurant began in 1984.

Sources Consulted:Maps

- 1818 Samuel Wilmot, Surveyor - Town Plot, Mouth of the River Moira
1845 Haslett's Map - Belleville
1874 Bird's Eye Map - Belleville
1877 Evan's and Bolger - Belleville
1878 - 1883 Chas. E. Goad Insurance Map of Belleville
1888 - 1900 Goad Insurance Map, Belleville
1904 - 1908 Goad Insurance Map, Belleville
1915 - 1925 Goad Insurance Map, Belleville

Plans From Registry Office

- 1868 G27 Quit claim - Erastus Holden to allow R. Dougall right-of-way
1974 209428 Deed - Asselstine to Tom - attached plan, June 16, 1975