

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Thompson house which was built in 1859 and is situated on Water Street, on Lot #4* to the west of Gordon's house, was the home of Alfred Andrew Thompson who in his 68th year became Penetanguishene's first mayor, and was one of her wealthiest merchants. A.A. Thompson was born in 1813 in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the second son of Colonel William Thompson who fought at the battle of Queenston Heights. Colonel William Thompson was a United Empire Loyalist who was born in New Brunswick and who died at the age of 75 in 1860 leaving behind 9 children, three girls and six boys. Of the 6 boys, William A. was the eldest Alfred Andrew was the second and Henry H. the fifth.

Alfred Andrew came to Penetanguishene in 1830 at the age of 17 where he lived until he died in 1885 at the age of 72. In 1857 he married Sara-Anne the daughter of David Burke, Quartermaster Sargeant. Sara-Anne gave him 3 sons, William M., merchant and proprietor of the Greenblock, Alfred B. Barrister Lawyer who was elected MPP in 1894 and Charles was an insurance agent. A.A. had 2 daughters, Mrs. (Dr.) P.H. Spohn and Mrs. Frances Fahey of Kitchener.

Alfred Andrew worked in a lumber yard on Fox Street, ^{and later} /clerked in the Andrew Mitchell Store when it occupied the corner of Water Street and Owen St., then Queen' St. (opposite McGibbon's Mill). It carried on a general mercantile business and in addition did 12,000 to 20,000 dollars worth of fur trade annually, attracting buyers from Montreal, London, New York and Berlin.

Alfred Andrew built his own store, the Greenblock, and bought out Mitchell. Later, he secured the contract for building the Lines Road from the garrison to the center of town.

A. A. Thompson

Architectural Description

Symmetry in building construction is a feature which gives a feeling of an orderly pattern or structured existence. This design represents security and establishment to an uncertain world.

The Georgian Style expressed by the Thompson Home - 1859¹ - on lot number 4, south Water Street is very symmetrical.

A stone wall, extending along the front border of the property, opens in the centre to allow the visitor to walk up the concrete steps to the front lawn. From there a sidewalk allows the visitor to travel across the lawn to the staircase of the classically styled verandah.

This verandah - added within the past supported by square columns. The cornice decorated. *Refer to Picture D-168*

The main door is centered on the first floor. The single, 4 panel door, is encompassed by a multi-pane transom and 3/4 length side lights. The main door structural opening is defined by two wood pilasters, which may provide support to the verandah above.

Two structural openings flank the main door on the first floor. The opening on the left is a second door which replaced a set of french doors. This alteration was made within the past 25 years.

ever, the Thompson house does not have this false design feature. Both chimneys are operational.

One fireplace on the interior does however present a unique design feature. It has a depth of only 4 inches. We can only speculate that this fireplace was used as a surround for a wood stove².

The interior of the building has many original details. Original doors and decorative brick work can be found throughout the house. The original staircase, balusters and rail provide the access to the second floor.

The A. A. Thompson house of Penetanguishene is a classic example of the Georgian Style of the mid-nineteenth century.

1. information from present owner, Mrs. N. Thompson
2. wood stoves were very popular during this period