

3 Maria Street

Historical Background

The historical background of the Ontario Gothic house at 3 Maria Street is very humble. Its history does not present itself as a large prominent home of one of the first Mayors of the town of Penetanguishene or a home of a large businessman of the town. However, it does present a view of the calibre of home that was built and maintained by an essential person in the advancement of the town.

By 1878 this home was built on lots 1, 2 and 3 of west Maria Street where it still stands. Fredrick W. Jeffery was freeholder of this land which was listed at a value of \$600.00 in the assessment rolls. Mr. Jeffery, second son of Edward Jeffery who sat on the board to elect the first council of the united townships of Tiny and Tay, was a bookkeeper in the town of Penetanguishene¹. He later became a well-known hardware merchant of Midland. He also served the municipal government of Midland as mayor, councilor and police majestrate.²

The ownership and title of this property changed hands in 1884. Preston and Elizabeth Lambert purchased the property and building. They were the resident druggists of Penetanguishene.

Many years past and after two exchanges of the property Mr. George H. Wright and Mr. C. E. Wright became freeholders and took over ownership. The property had gradually climbed from its original valve of \$600.00 to its value of \$1400.00 in 1905.

By 1910, George H. took over the ownership on his own and the valve had risen to \$1600.00. George H. was a merchant of the town of Penetanguishene and also held the position of mayor in 1900.³

In the 1915 assessment rolls, we find a separate value for both property and building. Each were assessed at \$1000.00. George rented the building to a Mr. Hindley Ambrose who was a jeweller in the town.

George was again on town council in 1919.

In 1920, George's widow, Mrs. Jane Wright, and C. Edward Wright - clerk - were freeholders of the property.

The 1935 assessment roll presents an entry which is puzzling. Fifteen years after the change of ownership, George H. Wright is again mentioned. However, beside his name is the word "estate". Also, G. C. Wright and A. N. Wright are now mentioned as freeholders of the property until 1945 when James Martin - watchman - was listed as tenant to Peter Desroches and Robert Desroche, freeholders. Robert Desroche was a painter and Peter worked for the railroad.

Something interesting happened in 1935. In the assessment rolls we find that the property and building value dropped.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Land Value</u>	<u>Building Value</u>
1930	\$1000.00	\$2000.00
1935	\$ 800.00	\$1400.00
1939	\$ 800.00	\$1400.00
1945	\$ 500.00	\$1400.00
1950	\$ 700.00	\$1400.00

This may have happened because of the war and depression years.

1. bookkeeper - found in 1882 assessment roll. Edward Jeffery - The First 100 Years, Tiny and Tay Townships. Page 5
2. The First 100 Years, Tiny and Tay Townships. Page 6.
3. Mayor list, Municipal Office. George H. Wright held office as mayor for only one year.

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Architectural Description

Gothic Revival buildings, in the period of 1850 to 1870 were customarily distinguished by finely scaled gingerbread trim, pointed - arch openings and sharply pitched gables. These structures were very decorative. The reason for the decline of this style after this period is a change of taste. Assymetry was lost to symmetry.

The building at 3 Maria Street, which is enhanced by its highly sloped landscape, is of a similar Gothic style as the Gothic Revival buildings of the 1850 to 1870 period.

A cross plan is formed by the plan of this two storey structure. This presents an illusion to the unsuspecting viewer for it may appear as an "L" shaped building or a squared building with a frontal wing. I will now refer to each projecting end of the building as a wing-east wing, west wing, north wing and south wing.

The roof is of a criss-cross high gable construction. The east, west and north (front) gable trim is very decorative. It extends down the gable end from the peak to the eaves and enhances the clapboard exterior wall sheathing which encloses all exterior facades. Finials also adorn the peaks of the gable end.

End boards close the corners of the clapboard sheathing.

Two projecting bays adorn the north facade (front) and the east facade. These extend up both the first and

second storeys. The windows of the bays are double hung and have a plain wood lugsill, side surround and head surround. All window structural openings are glazed similarly.

On the east and west facades, of the north wing, gable dormers provide some light to the second storey rooms. The fascia of the dormers with the same gingerbread trim as the gable ends of the gable roof. are also decorated with finials on the peaks.

The single chimney stack, made of brick is centered on the criss-cross gable roof.

Added on to the west facade of the north wing is a small closed porch which now serves as a secondary entrance to the house.

NOTE

Unique wall and roof relationship which should be photographed and noted in the architectural description. Exterior wall faces on the gable ends extend higher than roof line.

Note

Our basic historical study of 3 Maria Street has been limited to assessment roll research and bits received from family names of people owning the property. Also original land title may prove a theory that Mrs. Jeffery owned the property and sold it to her son, Fredrick. The Jeffery's did own most of the south eastern sub-division area as we now know it. Further study may be profitable.