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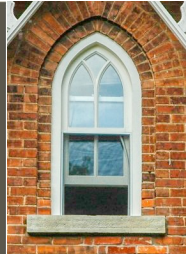
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Orangeville Preserves



Looking back >>>

Who was John Green?

This house at 11 First Street was built in 1867 by John Green, a prominent businessman. This area of First Street became known as Green's Hill because of the prominence of the Green family. John Green had originally moved to Orangeville to manage the Chisholm store and he later became a successful businessman and local politician.

Green was a prominent member of the Primitive Methodist Church and instrumental in the 1867 construction of their church at the corner of Zina and First Streets. Subsequently, Mr. Green served on the Town Council; was the president of the newly organized YMCA in 1876; and was appointed a Justice of the Peace for Orangeville in 1881 for the newly formed Dufferin County.

11 First Street remained in the family for many years and by 1900 was occupied by John Green's daughter, Mary Alice, and her husband, J.D. McMillan.



Regency Architecture

Local versions of the Regency style are echoes of Britain's colonial past.

A walk through the older areas of Orangeville will reveal, sprinkled amongst the larger homes, modest single storey cottages built in a local interpretation of the Regency style.

The term "Regency" is used to describe the architecture of early 19th century Britain, when George IV was Prince Regent. It emerged in the early 1800s and spread throughout the British empire: later versions were built into the 1870s in Canada. Typical of Ontario, Orangeville's residential architecture in the Regency style are one storey cottages with low-pitched hip roofs and symmetrical facades. Exterior finishes were stucco and brick.

The John Green cottage at 11 First Street is Orangeville's finest example of a Regency cottage. More usual for Orangeville are the smaller cottages like those at 16 Church Street and 18 Little York Street. The John Green cottage is a one storey, stucco-clad building with a symmetrical five bay facade, a low hipped roof with two offset brick double stack chimneys. The term "five bay facade" refers to the central door (one bay) flanked by two large windows per side (four more bays). Like many Regency cottages throughout the Province, it has a high degree of ornamentation: plain soffits, with a decorative dentil frieze under the eaves, triple sets of brackets under the eaves, and decorative mouldings around the windows. The main entranceway features a shaped pediment topping Neoclassical side pilasters; the door is flanked by sidelights with a large transom window above it.

The John Green cottage was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act in 1999 as an important heritage resource for its architecture and its associations with John Green.

< *11 First Street, John Green's Regency Cottage*

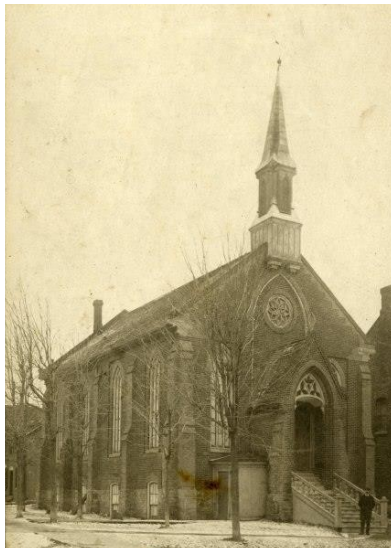
Before Settlement > Trees, trees, trees!

Before settlement began in this area trees were everywhere! Historically it is estimated that more than 80% of Ontario was forested. In the southern parts, the species found were mainly maple, beech, elm, and oak.. In wetter areas spruce, tamarack and cedar dominated while drier, sandy areas of the Oak Ridges Moraine supported large stands of white pine.

For new settlers, the old growth forest was both a challenge and a business opportunity; land was laboriously cleared for farming, the wood burned for fuel or to make potash and lye, or sawn to be sold as lumber. Thus, the trees provided necessary materials and income for pioneering families. In the decades following settlement in the 1830s, deforestation for agriculture and urbanization throughout the watershed of Orangeville's Mill Creek led to lower water levels, but also increased flooding during rain events. The landscape was radically changed.



The Clarke farm on Purple Hill (Buena Vista Drive area), 1900
Museum of Dufferin: P-2513



Primitive Methodist Church building, 1898
Museum of Dufferin: P-2518A

Primitive Methodist Church

In 1867 the Primitive Methodists built a new brick church at the corner of Zina and First Streets on a building lot donated by John Green. They worshipped here until 1886 when they united with the Wesleyan Methodists who already had a church building on First Avenue. The building was then sold to the Baptist congregation.

Despite the modern additions, the original church is largely intact. It is a simple Gothic structure of a style commonly used for 19th century places of worship. Buff brick buttresses separate the segmented lancet windows and a rose medallion. The original east entrance has been replaced with a large inset window featuring Gothic tracery. The spire was removed many years ago.

Resources

Caring for historic masonry

Historic brickwork needs special care to ensure that it lasts another hundred years. And it can! If your building has cracks, failing mortar or staining, a little knowledge can lead to a good outcome when planning and implementing such repairs. The red clay bricks produced locally through the 1800s have a hard outer surface but are softer on the inside. Aggressive cleaning can damage the hard outer surface exposing the softer inside leading to a condition called spalling where the surface wears away and becomes concave. Sandblasting, high pressure washing and other harsh cleaning treatments should be avoided.

When replacing damaged bricks or re-pointing, the relative softness of the historic bricks needs to be accounted for. Modern mortars based on Portland cement are harder than the old bricks making the bricks themselves the weakest part of the system. This can actually cause the bricks to crack with weather changes. Hydrated lime mortar made from lime, sand and water is the ideal mortar for old bricks. It is a soft mortar whose breathability actually draws moisture coming from the interior and exterior out of the bricks allowing it to evaporate thus reducing the likelihood of water damage to the brick.

Check out the following resources for more information on the care of your old brick house.

https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/user_assets/documents/TCS-001-Repointing-historic-masonry-structures-ENG.pdf

https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2009/cnrc-nrc/NR25-2-67E.pdf

<https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/exploring-the-region/resources/Documents/PracticalGuideMasonry-access.pdf>

Heritage Orangeville is here to help. Contact us >>>

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