

Stratford Notes

1832 - The first hotel was built and christened the Shakespeare Inn. Little Thames was renamed Stratford and the Little Thames River became the Avon River. Population: 39

1854 - Stratford became a village and the Perth County seat after a courthouse on William Street and a jail on Elizabeth Street were erected. Population: 900

1856 - The Grand Trunk and the Buffalo-Lake Huron railways arrived. Regular GTR service from Toronto began in October.

1858 - A market building / Town Hall was completed. On January 1, 1859 Stratford officially became a town. Thirty-nine years later the building was destroyed by fire.

1871 - The GTR locomotive repair shops were relocated to Stratford. In 1889 the shops were enlarged.

1885 - Stratford was officially recognized as a city. The present jail and courthouse were built. Population: 9000

1886 - George McLagan returned to Stratford and became a leader in the furniture business. He was the first to build in what is known as the factory district.

1900 - The first council meeting in the new City Hall was held on January 3, 1900.

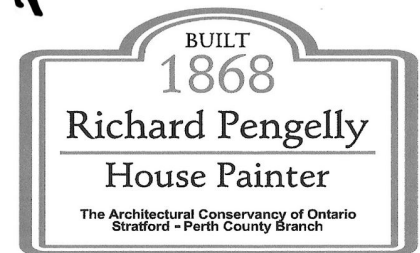
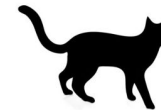
1913 - The CPR lost its final battle for land to build railway tracks along the river.

1952 - The concept of a Shakespearean theatre was conceived by Tom Patterson and supported by the city council and citizens alike. In 1953 the first play was presented in a tent where the Festival Theatre stands today.

2009 - The University of Waterloo officially launched the Stratford campus focusing on digital media.

Historical Walk

Cobourg Street Stroll



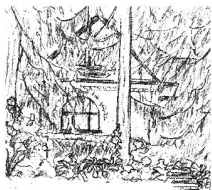
*The Stratford-Perth County Branch ACO
self-guided walk along one of Stratford's
original residential streets*

from

Waterloo Street to Parkview Drive.



"Branch website creation is supported by a grant from the Orr Family Fund held in trust by the Stratford Perth Community Foundation"



81 Cobourg Street

Built 1857
George Larkworthy Esq.
Merchant-Butcher
First Town Constable

George Larkworthy, his wife, Orange Ingersoll White, and their family emigrated from England in 1849. In 1854, Stratford officially became the Perth County seat. As well as being a butcher, George was the first town constable with an annual salary of 80 pounds. In 1856, the foundation was laid and in 1857 a ginger brick, one storey home was completed. Forty-two years later George's grandson enlarged the house and changed the brick.

Architecturally Speaking

"Walking east on Cobourg Street, you will see by the dates on the plaque properties the growth of the community from the last half of the nineteenth century through the early decades of the twentieth century."

The majority of the houses can be classified as Edwardian classics ~ brick, mostly two storey and unembellished. The houses built in the 1800's display varying Victorian styles and decorative details."



161 Cobourg Street

Built 1906
Frank Gifford
Furniture Manufacturer

Frank Gifford was born in Stratford in 1879. As a young man he played on several championship lacrosse and hockey teams. Frank went to work for the McLagan Furniture Company where he learned the trade of furniture finishing. 1906 was a memorable year: Frank married Mary Maud Black, his daughter was born and they moved into the new house at 161 Cobourg. In 1913, Frank joined his friend and neighbour, Charles Farquharson to form Farquharson-Gifford Furniture.



17 Nile Street

Built 1911
Charles McDonald
Typesetter
Stratford Herald

Charles McDonald was born in 1865 and grew up on Cobourg Street. His father and mother had emigrated from Scotland and England respectively and married in Canada. Newspapers were flourishing in the 1880's when Charles worked as a typesetter for the Stratford Herald. Production was labour intensive as typesetters picked the type or letters from cases and laid out the stories by hand. In 1889 he married Mary Cook who lived a few doors down the street.



154 Cobourg Street

Built 1917
Margaret Morgan
Daughter of
S. R. Hesson, MP/Mayor

Margaret Hesson was born in Stratford in 1867. She was the daughter of S. R. Hesson. He was the Mayor of Stratford in 1875 and from 1878-1891 the Member of Parliament for Perth North. He was also a merchant with a store on market square. In 1903, Margaret married Greville Morgan. He operated the Princess Theatre on Ontario Street and owned an art and handicraft store near the theatre. In 1911, Margaret's father gave her this property where she had a new house built.



167 Cobourg Street

Built 1876
Thomas Tobin
Bailliff

Thomas Tobin and his wife Bridget emigrated from Ireland in 1850. By way of New York and Toronto they reached Stratford in 1856. Thomas became the Bailliff for the District Court which was not a far stretch from his days as a constable in Ireland. The couple would eventually have five children. In 1873, Thomas Tobin purchased the property from the Canada Land Company and in 1876 built the Gothic Revival house. They lived in the house until Bridget's death in 1900.



141 Cobourg Street

Built 1868
Richard Pengelly
House Painter

Richard Pengelly was born in Kingston in 1842. At 19, he was living in Stratford and employed as a house painter. Two years later he married Sarah Ann Saunders. They would become the parents of five children. In 1867 he bought a parcel of land along Cobourg Street. The first house he built was 141 Cobourg which was originally clapboard while today it has a pebble dash exterior. He served as a volunteer fireman for 28 years and eventually rose to the position of chief.



155 Cobourg Street

Built 1905
Charles Farquharson
Furniture Manufacturer

Born in Stratford in 1877, Charles Farquharson became a leading figure in lacrosse and hockey first as a player and later a manager. He began his career as a bookkeeper with one of the leading furniture companies, Porteus-McLagan, and eventually became secretary-treasurer. In 1913, he joined Frank Gifford to form the Farquharson-Gifford Furniture Company on Douro Street. He married Edith May Barton the year before he built the house. The couple had two children.



187 Cobourg Street

Built 1905
Louis Soehner
Trimmer
McLagan Furniture Co

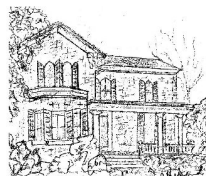
Louis Soehner was born in Floradale, Woolwich Township. He was the fifth child in a family of seven. By the 1890s, Louis was working in a saw mill there. He married Maggie Gilliland in 1895. Their son Howard was born in 1898. About 1900, Louis and his family moved to Stratford where he went to work as a trimmer for the McLagan Furniture Company. In 1905, they moved into their large Edwardian home. Here their second son, Walden, was born.



191 Cobourg Street

Built 1905
Alexander Vivian
Cabinetmaker

Alexander Ritson Vivian was born in Stratford in 1857. At the age of thirteen Alexander opened a second hand furniture shop. At fifteen, Alexander worked as a printer at the Herald newspaper. However, from the mid 1870's Alexander was variously described as a furniture finisher and cabinet finisher in the records for the period. He married Helen Todd on January 21, 1876. By 1905 when he and his family moved into the newly built 191 Cobourg, Alexander was a cabinetmaker.



310 Ontario Street

Built 1881
George Riddell
Locomotive Engineer

At twenty-one, George Riddell was an engineer for the Grand Trunk Railway in Toronto. After moving to Stratford, George met and married Georgina Cawston. Their first child, Eva Emeline, was born in 1877. In 1881, George built the beautiful Italianate home for his growing family and Georgina gave birth to the couple's son, Walter Alexander, who would later become Canada's representative to the League of Nations, the forerunner of the United Nations.



105 Front Street

Built 1907
J.F. (Bob) Pearen
Barber

Jonathan Fletcher Pearen was born in November 1873 in Chinguacousy Township. When serving as an apprentice barber a French instructor who could not manage the name Fletcher dubbed him "Bob". He was to be known as "Bob" for the rest of his life. He married Henrietta Welsh in 1900 and in 1901 they arrived in Stratford where Bob bought a barber shop. Bob and Henrietta moved to the new house at 105 Front Street in 1907. Here they raised their two children.

Historical Plaque Program

The Historical Plaque Program was launched in 2012 by The Stratford-Perth County Branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario.

The objective of the program is to celebrate the first occupants of Stratford's and Perth County's built heritage. It recognizes that it was ordinary citizens who created our communities as we know them today.

As you walk along the street, you will see the houses that became homes to a wide variety of people. A house painter, a tailor, the local bailiff, a teacher, a farmer, a butcher, men who worked in the furniture business and those that started the companies - these were the heads of the families who lived in the community.

The houses reflect the period from 1857 to 1930. Front Street was the town limit when the first houses were built. The plaques give a flavour of life on the street as well as the dates of the architecture. While only the buildings remain with this program the traces of the first residents linger.



The Stratford-Perth County Branch ACO
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For more information about ACO, our programs and membership visit our website:

www.stratford-perthcountybranchaco.ca

email: ACOSTratfordPerth@arconserv.ca



225 Cobourg Street

Built 1876
Douglass McTavish
Teacher

Douglass McTavish graduated from Toronto Normal School at seventeen and began his career as a teacher in North Easthope in the school from which he had first graduated. He married Annie McGregor in 1867. They would eventually become parents of seven children. In 1874, Douglass McTavish bought a half acre lot, part of McCulloch's original survey. By 1876, their house, built in the Gothic Revival style, was completed.



229 Cobourg Street

Built 1906
Fred Sylvester
Tinsmith

Frederick John Sylvester was born in 1866 in England. In 1869 his family left England and by 1881 they had settled in Stratford. Fred became a tinsmith by trade and received the contract for tin work at the new armoury on Waterloo St. In 1898 he opened a store at 113 Ontario St. He remained at the same location for the next fifty-one years where, in addition to tinsmithing, he also provided a variety of services including plumbing, piping, and steam heating.



243 Cobourg Street

Built 1916
John Schiefle
Traveller

John Schiefle was born in 1871 in Waterloo County. John married Christina Sippel in Alliston, Ontario where their daughter was born in 1899. Shortly afterwards the family moved to Detroit where John was employed as a carpenter. In 1904, when their son was born, John was a 'drummer', or travelling salesman. They returned to Ontario and John and Christina moved into their newly built house in 1916. Until 1922 John's occupation was listed in the Stratford directories as 'traveller' or 'agent'.



289 Cobourg Street

Built 1907
George S. Pequegnat
Jeweller

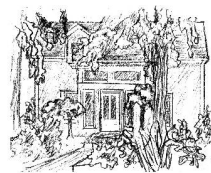
George Stanley Pequegnat was born in the village of Tavistock in 1882. He came from a long line of clock and watchmakers. By 1889 his father James had moved the family to Stratford to establish his own jewellery store. Here, George learned the business. In 1904 George married Jean Isabelle Watson. They had one daughter. In 1907 the family moved into their new house. About 1910 he joined Seifert and Sons jewellers in Quebec City and later the prestigious Henry Birks & Sons.



297 Cobourg Street

Built 1906
David Blane
Farmer

In 1859 David Blane junior was born into a family of seven children on a farm near Tavistock. David bought his own farm in South Easthope near Harmony and, in 1893, he married Margaret Blain. David continued farming for another thirteen years. In 1906 David and his family, which by then consisted of one boy and four girls, moved into the house at 297 Cobourg Street. The family moved to Russell, Manitoba to farm and are recorded there in the 1911 census.

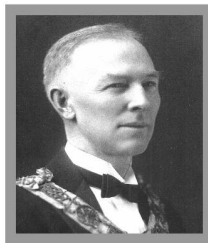


304 Cobourg Street

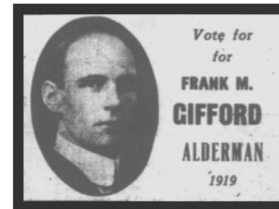
Built 1938
Norman Kenneth Fiebig
Fuel Merchant
Alderman

Norman Kenneth (Ken) Fiebig was born in Stratford in 1912. He was the son of Norman Robert Feibig and Lillie May Walker of Haldimand County. Ken and his sister were raised at 239 Water Street. He joined his father in the family business, N.R. Fiebig & Son Fuel Merchants. When he married Dorothy Pratt in 1938 they moved into the newly built house at 304 Cobourg Street where they raised their family. Ken later served as city alderman in 1955. Dorothy Fiebig was an avid gardener and her gardens were the envy of the neighbourhood.

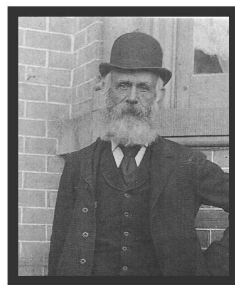
Some Early Residents



Charles Farquharson
155 Cobourg Street



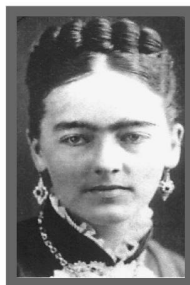
Frank Gifford
161 Cobourg Street



Thomas Tobin
167 Cobourg Street



Alexander Vivian
191 Cobourg Street



Georgina Riddell
310 Ontario Street



Douglass McTavish
225 Cobourg Street

*Historical photographs courtesy of
Stratford-Perth County Archives*



323 Cobourg Street

Built 1918
Richard Deem
Tailor

Richard Charles Deem was born about 1857 in Somerset, England. In 1877 Richard married Annie Elizabeth Bagg. Richard later apprenticed as a tailor. They moved to the Channel Islands and then in 1884 to Canada and settled in Seaforth. They had four more children while living there. In 1905 the family moved to Stratford where Richard established a tailor shop at 21 Downie Street. In 1918 they purchased the house and were the first occupants. Richard and Annie lived in the house for the rest of their days.



76 Parkview Drive

Built 1930
Rev. DeWitt Cosens
Parkview Manse

Parkview United Church was officially established on July 7, 1925. In 1929 the congregation approved plans for construction of the manse which was completed in 1930. Reverend Charles Wesley DeWitt Cosens was the first minister to occupy the manse. He was born on December 14, 1893 in the hamlet of Walton, Huron County. He married Lillian Brown of Cornwall. They had four children and lived in the manse until 1933.



57 Parkview Drive

Built 1914
Walter Eldridge
Woodworker
MacDonald Thresher Co.

Walter Eldridge was born in 1880 in Lincolnshire, England. The family emigrated to Canada and settled near Wiarton. In 1902 Walter married Tryphoena Alberta Bovair. In 1903 their son was born and a year later a daughter. At this time Walter was working as a sailor on The Great Lakes. In 1915 Walter and his family moved to Stratford and into the new house on Parkview Drive. Walter was a woodworker for MacDonald Thresher Co. They were well known manufacturers of threshing machines for steam or horse power.