

Old Appleton Post Office & General Store,
473 River Road, Appleton, Ontario
(West Half Lot 3, Concession 10, Township of Ramsay, County of Lanark)
February 2020
By Sarah More for the Municipality of Mississippi Mill's Heritage Committee

Present Owner: Unknown

Present Use: Private Home

Statement of Significance:

This two-and-a-half-storey brick building is one of the oldest commercial buildings in Appleton. It is one of the few remaining examples of commercial brick architecture in the town. The building has been used until recently as a retail establishment since the mid-1850s. It was established in conjunction with the development of the Post Office by Albert Teskey, a long-time Justice of the Peace and sometime Reeve of Ramsay Township. It has served the town of Appleton throughout its' growth and has, therefore, been involved significantly in the daily life of the town.

Part 1: Historical Information

A Physical History

1. Original and Subsequent Owners:

An 1829 Crown Patent, for all 200 acres, was granted to the Canada Company. In 1842, they sold the same to James Wilson for \$550.00. 14 February 1851, James Wilson sold 65 acres of the West half of lot 3 to William Wilson for \$1.00. Four months later, William & Flora Wilson sold to Albert Teskey for \$64.00. 26 Jan 1883, Teskey sold to Duncan Miller for \$95.00. It has been owned by various owners since that time.

2. Date of Erection:

By the mid-1850s.(2)

3.Architect: Unknown

4. Alterations and Additions:

Sometime between the late 1940s and 2014, the second-storey balcony was removed with its' supporting columns.

5. Historical Events and Persons connected with the Structure:

"By the mid 1850s the village [of Appleton] contained...Albert Teskey's general store and post office."(2) Teskey was one of the first trustees of the Appleton Methodist Church.(3) "Albert Teskey...who lived to 1887, also engaged in lumbering and became reeve of Ramsay township."(4) "He was a justice of the peace for about 30 years."(5)

"In *A History of the Appleton School, S.S. No. 11 Ramsay*, Laura O'Brien Russell remembers that when John A. McGregor operated the store (1899-1931) he sold: yard goods (cloth), bananas, lanterns, harness parts, wash tubs, copper boilers, smoked hams, round of cheese sold in chunks, candies, bull's eyes, licorice pipes, sour balls & suckers."(6)

"My husband's grandfather, John Anthony McGregor (married to Margaret Christine Newman), owned and operated the general store in Appleton from 1899-1931. He also ran the Post Office from 1913-

1931. He lost everything except his house during the depression because he gave too much credit. He said he couldn't see people go hungry.”(7)

“A few years ago he [David McNeely] returned to Appleton and in partnership with Mr. Robert Baird conducted a general store until his death” [on March 1, 1937.](8)

[29 October 1949] “FINE GENERAL STORE”

“35. In village of Appleton. No opposition. Large brick building on the banks of the Mississippi River. Consisting of all fixtures and equipment. Imperial gas tanks. Scales. Meat slicer. Also post office. Refrigerator counter. Upstairs apartment. Large living room. Dining room. Kitchen. 3 bedrooms. A real buy for \$10,000. Stock at invoice.”(7)

[10 September 1979] “Dream Goes On The Block: Auction marks end of store”

“The 1916 brass cash register went for \$575, the old wood stove for \$400 and the heavy wooden showcase for \$150. With them went 24-year-old Jill Teschke's dream of operating a thriving, fully-restored, old-fashioned general store. By the end of the day Saturday, everything from groceries off the shelves to the antique scale proclaiming “Honest Weight” went on the block in an auction at Appleton General Store... Tescke moved to the Appleton area from Ottawa about five years ago and restored a house in the village of about 200. She sold the house and decided to take on the brick store with stained glass over the entrance that once sold everything from clothing to farm machinery. But a lack of business combined with a burdensome workload led to the project's demise. County horseshoe-throwing teams competed boisterously across the street from the auction as the 200 bidders slowly claimed the contents of the store, previously operated for 30 years by W.A. “Sliver” Gambell and his wife Millie... ‘It's a... shame to see the store close,’ said Appleton resident Stewart Neil. Neil's father-in-law John McGregor operated the store during its heyday I the 1920s but was forced to close when the depression hit.”(9)

Owners of general stores in Appleton:(6)

Albert Teskey (1857-c.1883)
Arthur (1860-1883)
Thomas C. Arthur (1883-1892)
Wesley West (1892-1899)
John A. McGregor (1899-1931)
David McNeely(1931-1937)
Robert M. Baird (1931-1939)
William Russell Lyons (1939-c.1949)
W.A. Gambell (c.1950-c.1960)
Kathleen Neil (1961-1970?)

Postmasters in Appleton:(6)

Albert Teskey (1857-1883)
Thomas C. Arthur (1883-1888)
John M. Munro (1888-1889)
William Garvin (1889-1912)
Mrs. Susan Garvin (1912-1913)
John A. McGregor (1913-1931)
David McNeely (1931-1937)
Robert M. Baird (1937-1939)
William Russell Lyons (1939-1946)

Mrs. Jessie J. Lyons (1946-1949)
Mrs. Mildred Gambell (1950-1953)
Mrs. Violet Gladish (1954-1955)
Mrs. Slades Dowdall (1955)
Mrs. Mildred Gambell (1955-1960)
Mrs. Kathleen Neil (1961-1970)

Part II: Architectural Information:

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character:

This is a commercial example of a pre-Confederation building. The building is done in the so-called “Almonte” style, its light grey brick quoins contrasting with the darker red brick of the walls.

2. Condition: Poor

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall Dimensions:

The building is two-and-a-half storeys.

2. Foundation:

The foundation is of stone.

3. Wall Construction, Finish and Colour:

The walls are made of dark red brick finished with lighter grey brick corners (quoins).

4. Porches:

There was a porch located on the second story at the front in the late 1940s.

5. Chimney & Roof:

There is one chimney of concrete blocks, located at the south side of the structure.

The pitched roof is made of dark grey shingles.

6. Openings

There are several openings on the River Road side. Windows and doors proportionally large glass area here draw the spectator in at visually and also physically; there is a base stone wall along the river. The shaping of display windows enhance direct movement into the shop.

A) Doors and doorways: There is a first-storey double door entrance facing the River Road. It is of plain wood with panel windows and is probably of modern origin. There is a second-storey door facing the road and probably used to access the former balcony. It contains a 4-pane rectangular window topped by an additional 2-pane rounded windows. There is also a side door facing the fence and parking area.

B) Windows:

The windows in the second-storey front section are rectangular, 6-pane, double hung, with brick voussars.

The four windows in the rear section are rectangular, 2-pane (with the exception of one 4-pane), double hung, with brick voussars.

The four windows on the side facing the bridge are mixed pane.

The remaining side contains two windows on the second-storey which are rectangular, double hung, with brick voussars.

C. Site:

A) General Setting and Orientation:

The building is situated at the corner of River Road and Wilson Street, facing north.

B) Outbuildings: possible Summer kitchen attached to the wall facing the bridge.

Sources of Information:

1. Lanark County Land Records Office, Almonte, Ontario

2. *A Pioneer History of the County of Lanark*, Jean S. McGill, T.H Best Printing Company Limited, Toronto, Ontario, c1968, Page 91.

“John Teskey, Sr., with his wife and eight children, had come from Rathkeale in Limerick to take up land on lot 7 of the 11th concession of Ramsay, his land adjoining that of his son, John Jr.; and his son Robert located on lot 8... By the mid 1850s the village contained Joseph Teskey's grist mill, Robert Teskey's saw mill and Albert Teskey's general store and post office.”

<https://www.google.ca/search?tbm=bks&hl=en&q=albert+teskey%27s> (1979 edition)

3. *The wind bloweth where it listeth: a history of Almonte*, Winston Archibald MacIntosh, Almonte United Church (Almonte, Ont.), c1989, Page 218

“The Methodists, led by the Teskey family, were the first to build a church in Appleton, but its year of construction is open to ... The first trustees were: Robert Teskey, Esquire, Village of Appleton; Albert Teskey, Esquire, Village of Appleton...”

<https://www.google.ca/search?tbm=bks&hl=en&q=albert+teskey%27s>

4. *Lanark Legacy: Nineteenth Century Glimpses of an Ontario County*, Howard Morton Brown, GeneralStore PublishingHouse, c2007, Page 128.

“Albert Teskey, a younger brother who lived to 1887, also engaged in lumbering and became reeve of Ramsay township.”

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=BNQNJ2x8ouUC&pg=PA128&dq=appleton+ontario+general+store&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi0j9vA5cfnAhXsQ98KHV2dBOUQ6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q=appleton%20ontario%20general%20store&f=false>

5. Death of Mr. Albert Teskey.

Friday, April 4, 1887, *The Almonte Gazette*, Almonte, Ontario, page 1

<https://mvtm.ca/gazette2017/display-pdf?ref=1887-04-08-01>

6. *The Mills of Appleton: The Legacy*, North Lanark Regional Museum, Almonte, Ontario, #50

http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/histoires_de_chez_nous-community_stories/pm_v2.php?id=story_line&lg=English&fl=0&ex=00000835&sl=9368&pos=1&pf=1

7. Obituary of David McNeely.

March 3, 1937, *The Ottawa Citizen*, Ottawa, Ontario, Page 7

8. The Appleton General Store and Polly Parrot

Posted on October 22, 2015 by lindaseccaspina

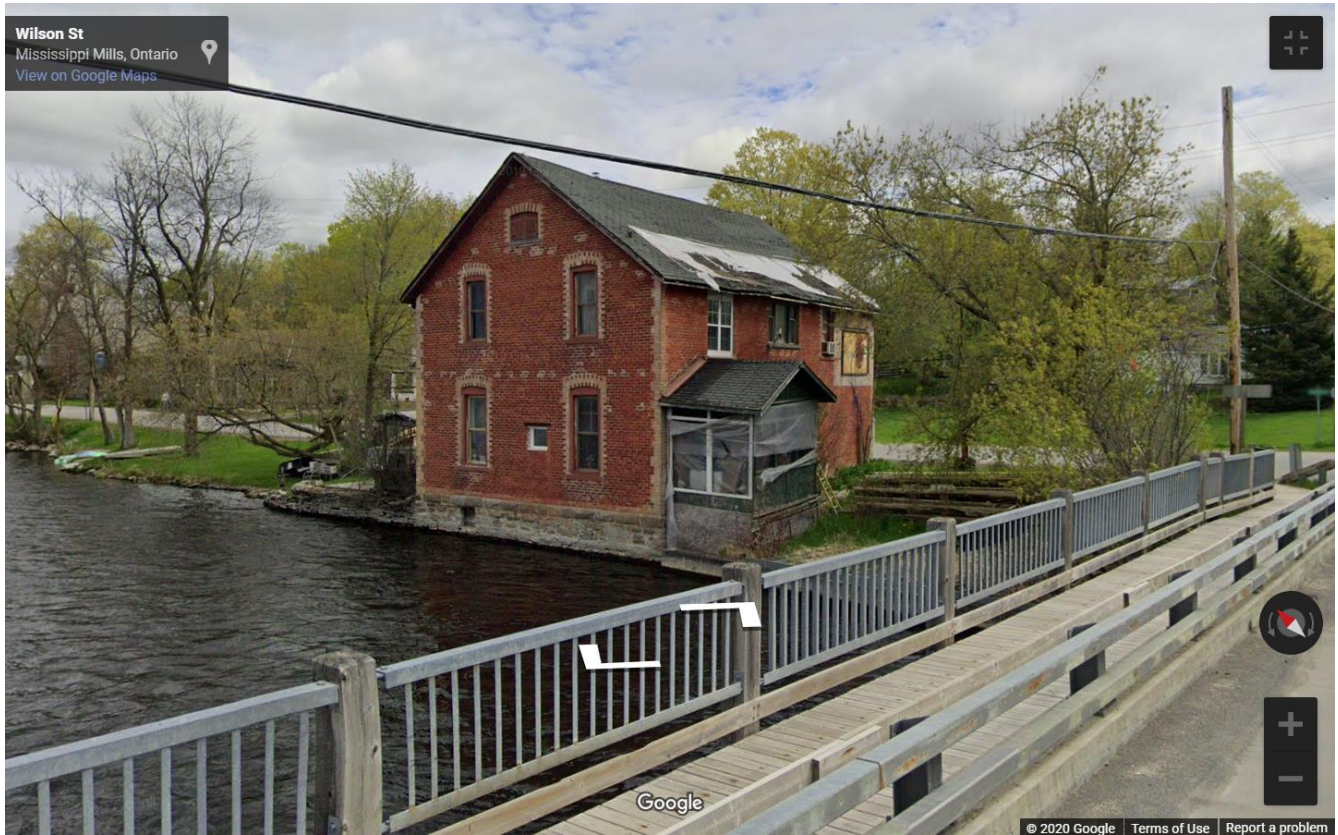
Photo clipped from *The Ottawa Journal*, 29 Oct 1949, Sat, Page 35

<https://lindaseccaspina.wordpress.com/2015/10/22/the-appleton-general-store-and-polly-parrott/>

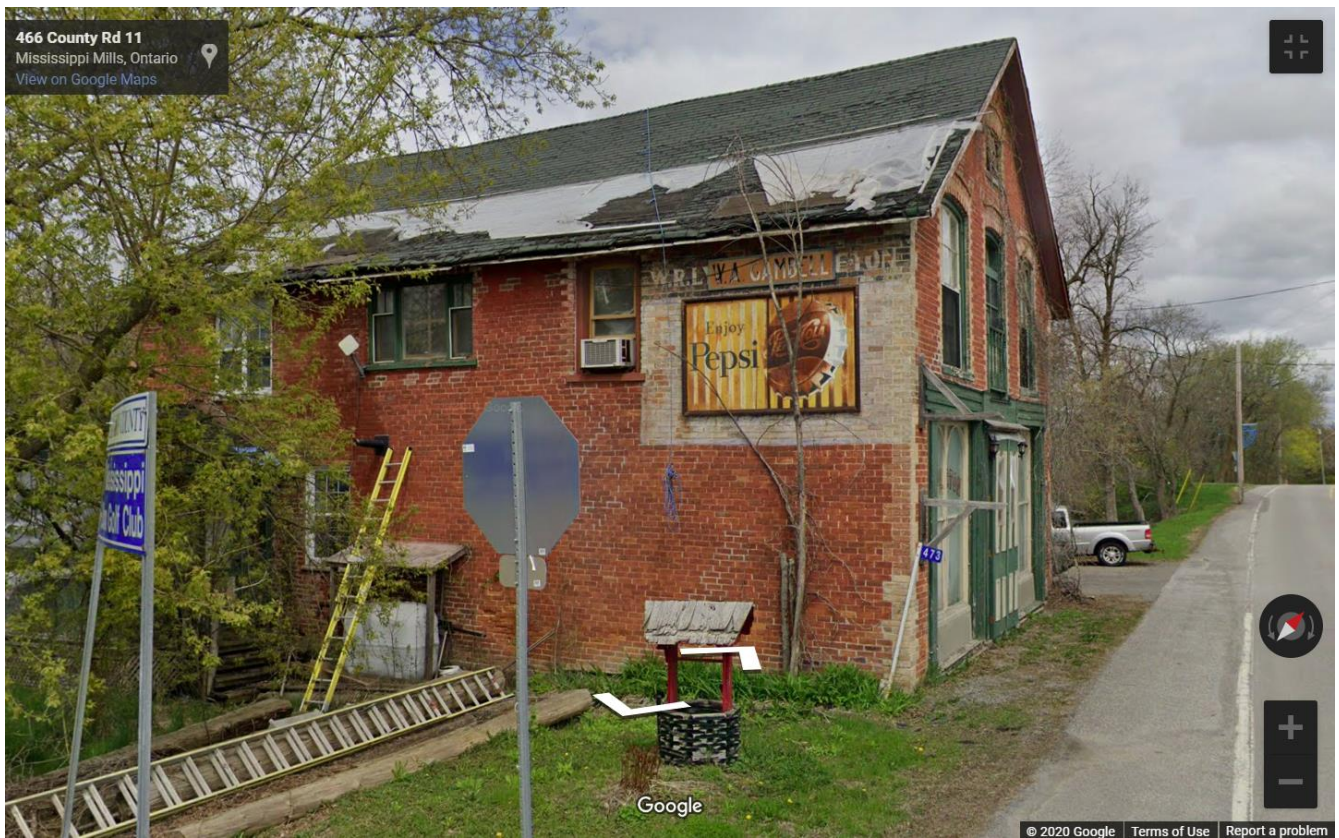
9.Dream Goes On The Block: Auction marks end of store.

Monday, 10 September 1979, The Ottawa Citizen, Ottawa, Ontario, Page 2.

Images



<https://goo.gl/maps/fHbR7Wbdrn7SKbkSA>



<https://goo.gl/maps/uJfUERXPAhMMnauv8>



<https://goo.gl/maps/VKEDYzKX9CdC2mTC9>



<https://goo.gl/maps/uiaCEmYVyw1cY8r96>



2014, Courtesy of

<https://lindaseccaspina.wordpress.com/2015/10/22/the-appleton-general-store-and-polly-parrott/>



Lyons General Store (1939-c1949) by Malak Karsh, courtesy of <https://lindaseccaspina.wordpress.com/2015/10/22/the-appleton-general-store-and-polly-parrott/>



Late 1940s, Courtesy of Trisha Stewart
http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/histoires_de_chez_nous-community_stories/pm_v2.php?id=record_detail&fl=0&lg=English&ex=00000835&rd=248191



John A. McGregor, courtesy of

<https://lindaseccaspina.wordpress.com/2015/10/22/the-appleton-general-store-and-polly-parrott/>