

The Robert Teskey House

Sarah More for the Municipality of Mississippi Mills' Heritage Committee

July 2024

Location: 104 Old Mill Lane, Appleton, Ontario
Concession 10, West Part, Lot 4, includes RP 26R-2678 Part 31, Ramsay Township(1,6)

Present Owner: Gary Lamers & Julie Odin(2)

Present Use: Country Inn(2)

Statement of Significance:

This Pre-Confederation, two-and-a-half storey, stone residence is intrinsically tied to the Teskey, Caldwell and Collie Families who also ran the Robert Teskey Mill in Appleton from 1863-1950. (3) Travelers have been welcomed and shown hospitality here, likely, from its earliest days.

Part 1: Historical Information

A Physical History

Original and Subsequent Owners:

A 'great Indian Camping ground' prior to the 19th century development(3), Appleton is located on the unceded territory of the Anishinabe, who have been caretakers of this land since time immemorial.

In 1835, John Teskey Sr. & sons: Joseph, Robert, and John Jr. received Crown patents in Appleton. Joseph received 100 acres in Concession 10, West Part, Lot 4.(4)

In 1849, Joseph & Margaret Teskey sold the (N?)W1/2 to Robert Teskey for \$200.(5)

In 1901, Thomas Boyd Caldwell purchased the property and Robert Teskey's mill.(5)

In 1937, William Collie III of Scotland did the same, eventually purchasing many of the Teskey properties. Four generations of Collies lived in the house until the 1980s.(3,10)

In 2012, Margaret Shanahan sold the property to the present Owners.(11)

Date of Erection:

Various dates have been projected ranging from c1840 (or possibly earlier)(12) to 1842(6), c1850 (7) or early 1850s(8). The later dates may stem from the property being sold to Robert Teskey in 1849.(5)

Architect:

Robert Teskey(9)

Alterations and Additions:

*Very small rooms suggesting a hotel or rooming house of sorts.
No real principal rooms on the main floor.(14)*

The Collies hired Expert Weavers to teach the Mill Workers how to weave. The Experts would temporarily stay in the small rooms until finding accommodations of their own.(11)

The summer kitchen looks to be original and is probably the original dwelling where staff eventually lived on the top floor. The dormers, as they appear now, are much larger than the original would have been.(13)

Several alterations were made during the Collies' residency:

Around the 1970s, the addition of dormers in the, then, nursery were added for the benefit of the Nanny and children.(11)

Edith Kathleen "Katie" Buse was the maternal Grandmother of Nancy Collie-O'Reilly. They lived on the same property but Katie lived in a small, renovated, former horse shed with a lovely view of the waterfalls. They shared a septic tank until the lot was severed.(11)

Margaret Shanahan had a new septic system installed in the front yard as part of her purchase c2008. It is now surrounded by flowers.(19)

The two-storey veranda was removed in the 1950s. The one-storey veranda was removed in the 1980s. (11)

This front porch has since been removed but the bolt holes are still visible in parts of the stone.(8)

Historical Events and Persons connected with the Structure:

Robert Teskey (1803-1892) helped found the Village of Appleton (formerly Teskeyville).(10)

In 1823, His parents, John & Ann (Vale) Teskey Sr., and their children emigrated from Rathkeale, County Limerick, Ireland with other Government-sponsored Peter Robinson Settlers.(15)

In 1835, John Teskey Sr., & sons Joseph, Robert, and John Jr. received Crown patents in Appleton, Ramsay Township, Ontario.(4)

Robert Teskey was a Magistrate for over forty years.(16)

Previously, The Teskeys were German Palatines who came to Ireland in 1709.(15)

On 11 Sep 2013, Laureen (Teskey) Harper, wife of then Prime Minister Stephen Harper, toured the area with a group of Irish Palatine descendants sponsored by the Irish Palatine Special Interest Group of the Ontario Genealogical Society (<https://ip-sig.ogs.on.ca/activities/tours/2013-ip-tour/>). (15)

During the Collies' residency, members of the band, Fleetwood Mac, visited as family friends.(11)

As Mill Owners, The Teskeys, Caldwells, and Collies provided employment to a good portion of the Appleton population.

Mrs. Eleanor Wright, a life-long resident of Appleton, babysat for the Collies as a young woman. An Appleton Park, at the end of Duke Street, was named in her honour.(20)

Part II: Architectural Information:

General Statement

1840s Georgian-style(10)

or

Built about 1850 for Robert Teskey, this two-and-a-half storey stone house of rather plain style

has three windows on the second storey facade. It originally had an upper and lower veranda wrapping around the front. Built into a hillside, the bedroom windows at the rear are level with the back lawn.(7)

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall Dimensions:

Unknown

2. Foundations:

Stone

3. Wall Construction, Finish and Colour:

Locally quarried, squared limestone(17)

4. Structural System and Framing:

Stone

5. Porches:

Originally, an upper and lower veranda wrapped around the front facade

6. Chimney:

Two chimneys on the Main House

Two chimneys on the Summer House

7. Openings:

The c1875 main entrance with glass panels above has been replaced

There are three windows on the second storey facade

There are two windows on either side of the main entrance

Two dormer windows were added to the then nursery in the 1960s

Below them is a double-hung window and a bay window on the right-hand side

The three-car garage doors used to be rounded archways

8. Roof:

Asphalt shingles(18)

C. Site

General Setting and Orientation:

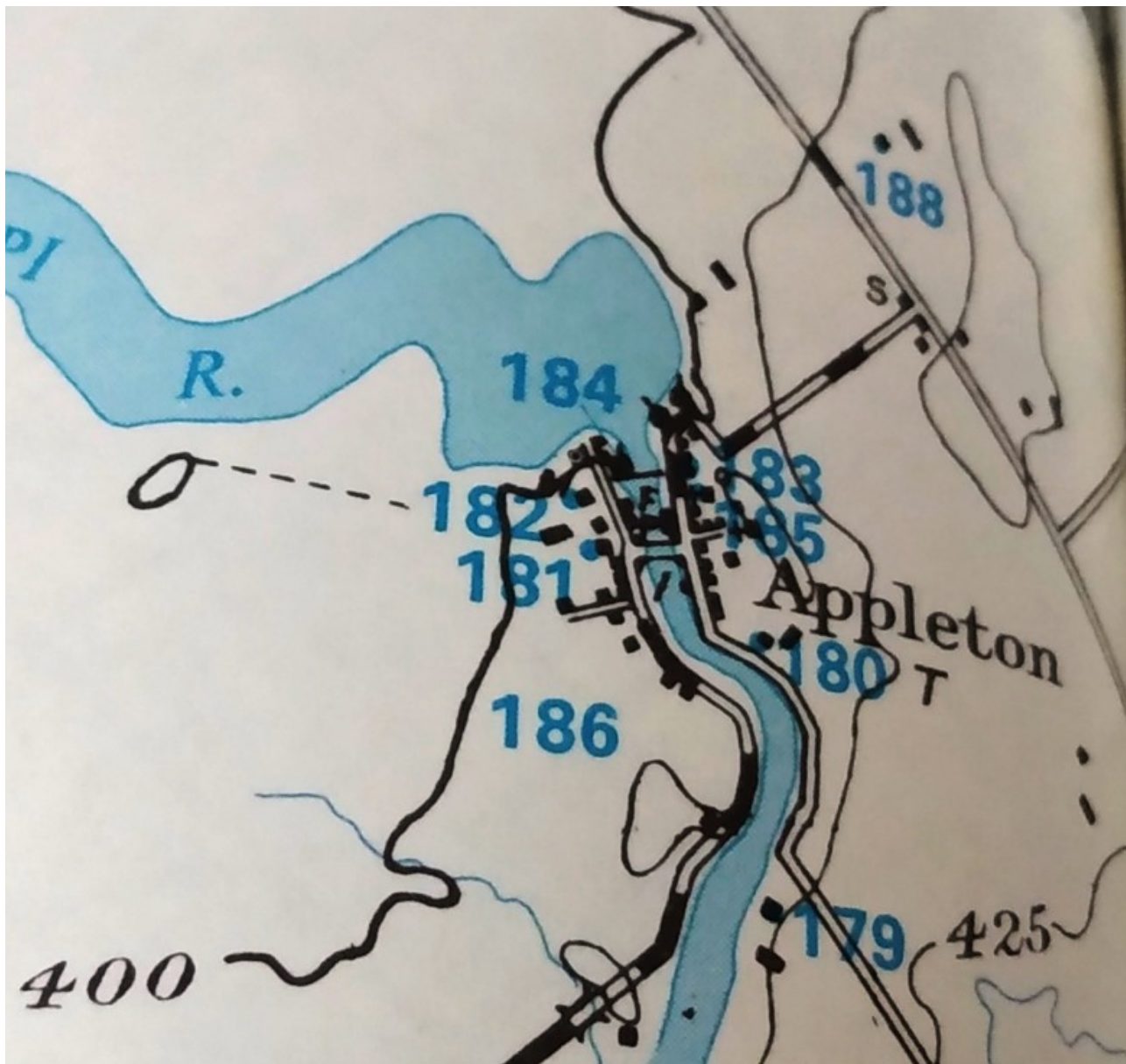
This lovely home is built in the side of a hill.

It is enhanced by a swimming pool and deck in the backyard.

A septic tank was buried in the front yard and covered with flowers.

There are several mature trees in front overlooking the Mississippi River.

The landscaping is beautifully cared for and enhanced by several hanging baskets.



Robert Teskey House (182).

The Ottawa Country: A historical guide to the National Capital Region, Courtney C.J. Bond, The Queen's Printer, Ottawa, c1968, opposite page 81, enlarged.



c1875, Appleton. Jane & Robert Teskey (in top hat) are seated near the front door.
Courtesy of Ken McDonald of Teskey.org (2024).



c1950s, Appleton: Nancy Collie stands opposite the “Big House” displaying a 2-storey veranda.

Courtesy of Nancy Collie-O’Reilly, Justin and Jasmine Brown (2024).



Late 1970s, Appleton. The “Big House” displaying a one-storey veranda.
Courtesy of Nancy Collie-O’Reilly, Justin and Jasmine Brown (2024).



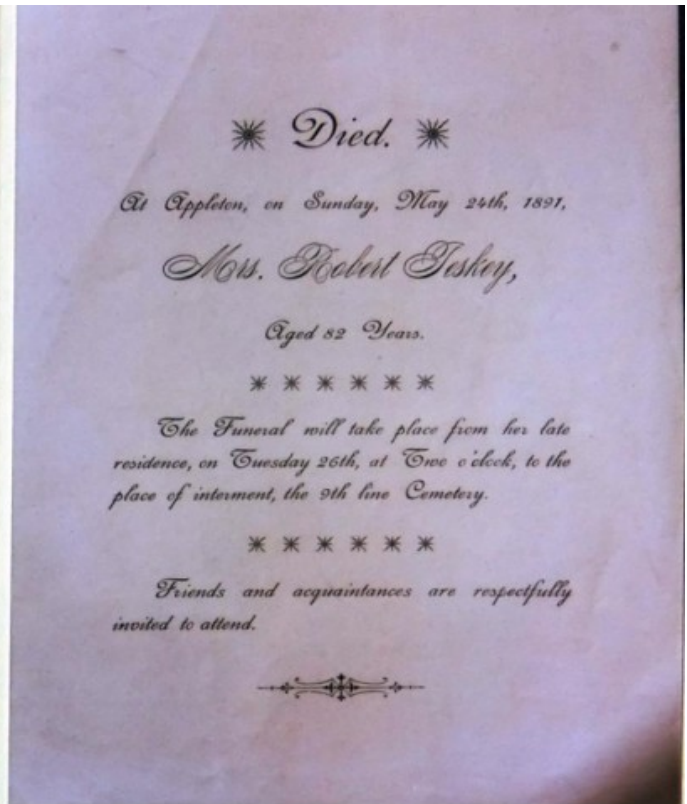
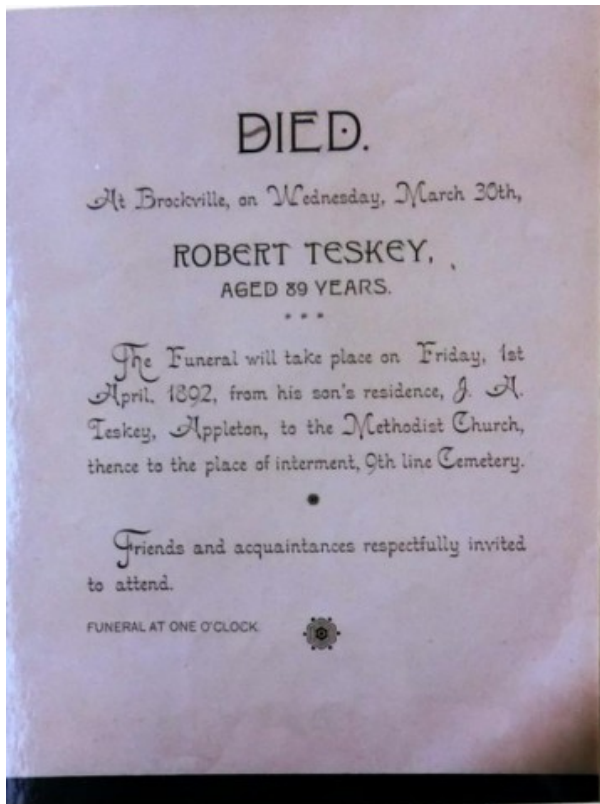
1987/8, Appleton. Courtesy of Carolyn Heald (2024)



1987/8, Robert Teskey Mill Ruins, Appleton. Courtesy of Carolyn Heald (2024).



1987/8 Wesleyan Methodist Cemetery, Mississippi Mills. Courtesy of Carolyn Heald (2024). Robert Teskey's coffin plate is above Carrie Teskey's gravestone.



Robert & Jane Teskey funeral cards. Courtesy of Ken McDonald of Teskey.org (2024).



1998, Appleton. Courtesy of Ken McDonald of Teskey.org (2024)



JUST LISTED 104 OLD MILL LANE, APPLETON \$499,900
Own a piece of history. Large 6 bdrm waterfront stone home situated in the village of Appleton, just outside of Almonte. It has been renovated but retains the charm of the 1840's. Great for Bed & Breakfast. MLS#613985.

September 17, 2005, *The Ottawa Citizen* (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada), Page 88, Newspapers.com



16 June 2012, photo by Pat McGrath of *The Ottawa Citizen*. Courtesy of Newspapers.com

November 8, 2014, The Ottawa Citizen (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada), Page 64.
Courtesy Newspapers.com



MILL OWNER'S MANOR

There's a lot of history in this 1840s, Georgian-style stone home. It was built by mill owner Robert Teskey, one of the founding brothers of Appleton, eventually became a bed and breakfast, and has most recently been a private home in which the servants' quarters have been transformed into a separate two-bedroom residence. The rambling home features two kitchens, two master bedrooms, river views and four fireplaces.



29 June 2015, courtesy of Linda Seccaspina

<https://lindaseccaspina.wordpress.com/2015/06/29/the-apple-does-not-fall-far-from-the-tree-virtual-tour-of-a-teskeys-home/>



August 2019, Appleton: courtesy of Google Maps (above & below)



25 Jun 2024



25 Jun 2024



25 Jun 2024



25 Jun 2024



Sources

1. 24 Jun 2024, email from

Melanie Knight, Mississippi Mills Director of Development Services & Engineering

2. Mississippi Mills Committee-of-Adjustment-Agenda-April-17-2019.

<https://www.mississippimills.ca/en/municipal-hall/resources/Documents/Agenda-and-minutes-archive/Committees/Property-Standards-and-Committee-of-Adjustment-Advisory-Committee/Committee-of-Adjustment-Agenda-April-17-2019.pdf>

3. *Stage 1 and 2 Archaeological Assessment Appleton Development Property Hamlet of Appleton Part of Lot 4, Concession 10 Geographic Township of Ramsay Town of Mississippi Mills Lanark County, Ontario Original Report*, by Michael Berry, PhD for the Town of Mississippi Mills, 24 October 2014, pages 3-4, 6. https://www.mississippimills.ca/en/build-and-invest/resources/Documents/Z-15-22--2014_Stage-1-AND-2-Archeological-Study-Appleton-Development-Property.pdf

4. Community Memories: The Mills of Appleton

Early Mills: Robert and Joseph Teskey

Courtesy of the North Lanark Regional Museum, Almonte, Ontario & CHIN 2024

[https://www.communitystories.ca/v1/pm_v2.php?](https://www.communitystories.ca/v1/pm_v2.php?id=story_line&lg=English&fl=0&ex=00000835&sl=9362&pos=1&pf=1#2)

[id=story_line&lg=English&fl=0&ex=00000835&sl=9362&pos=1&pf=1#2](https://www.communitystories.ca/v1/pm_v2.php?id=story_line&lg=English&fl=0&ex=00000835&sl=9362&pos=1&pf=1#2)

5. Teskey Land Petitions of Upper Canada, 1763-1865

https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/land/land-petitions-upper-canada-1763-1865/Pages/List.aspx?Surname=tesk*&

and

ARCHIVED - Microform Digitization

<https://lac-bac.gc.ca/microform-digitization/006003-119.02-e.php?>

[PHPSESSID=m9nbb3kl3tkgt1sgn9lhjdsv33&sqn=1257&q2=29&q3=2600&tt=1284](https://lac-bac.gc.ca/microform-digitization/006003-119.02-e.php?PHPSESSID=m9nbb3kl3tkgt1sgn9lhjdsv33&sqn=1257&q2=29&q3=2600&tt=1284)

6. [Abstract index books, ca. 1820-1959](#), Ramsay Township (v. B), page 71

[Lanark County \(Ontario\). Registrar of Deeds \(North\)](#)

<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C3H6-5STT-P?cat=483979>

And

[Land records of Lanark County, 1825-1921](#)

Ramsay Township 1827-1847 (v. A) 1847-1856

Memorial #148, Folio 221

<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSTY-ZSTH-T?i=319&cat=463102>

7. 2012 real estate listing & <https://www.theoldmillmanor.com/history>, courtesy of Gary Lamers

And

Christmas in Carleton Place House Tour 2019

Posted on [October 27, 2019](#) by [lindaseccaspina](#)

<https://lindaseccaspina.wordpress.com/2019/10/27/christmas-in-carleton-place-house-tour-2019/>

8. Robert Teskey House (182).

This two-and-a-half storey stone house of rather plain style has three windows on the second storey facade. It was built about 1850 for Robert Teskey and had originally an upper and lower verandah running across its front. This house was built into a hillside, so that the bedroom windows at the rear are level with the back lawn. Houses like this are to be found in the village of Lanark; the Simon Hill house near Aylmer is similar. The Ottawa Country: A historical guide to the National Capital Region, Courtney C.J. Bond, The Queen's Printer, Ottawa, c1968, page 117.

9. Walking Tour of Appleton, undated

Turning onto Old Mill Lane (#104) the majestic Robert Teskey house stands out. This large stone home was built in the early 1850s. The house is a two and a half storey stone home built into the side of a natural slope. This massive home once housed the Teskey family on the first two levels and their servants in the third level. The home originally had an upper and lower veranda running across its front. This front porch has since been removed but the bolt holes are still visible in parts of the stone.

<https://www.mississippimills.ca/en/explore-and-play/resources/Documents/Walking-Tour-of-Appleton.pdf>

10. Mill Owner's Manor, Nov. 8, 2014, *The Ottawa Citizen*, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, page 64.
Courtesy of Newspapers.com

And

The Apple Does Not Fall far from the Tree

Posted on June 29, 2015 by [lindaseccaspina](#)

<https://lindaseccaspina.wordpress.com/2015/06/29/the-apple-does-not-fall-far-from-the-tree-virtual-tour-of-a-teskeys-home/>

11. 10 July 2024, phone call with Justin Brown

12. 26 Jun 2024, email by Gary Lamers

13. 4 Jul 2024, email by
Janet Carlisle MA, Antiques and Fine Arts Appraisals & Heritage Committee Member

14. 5 Jul 2024, email by Janet Carlisle

15. July 2024 emails by:
Carolyn Heald, Irish Palatine Special Interest Group of the Ontario Genealogical Society
Tom Upshaw & Ken McDonald, both of Teskey.org

16. *Early Stories of Hamlets in Township of Ramsay*,
By Howard Morton Brown, Carleton Place Canadian, 29 June, 1961
<https://carletonplacelocalhistory.wordpress.com/2009/10/>

17. TRAVEL: Mills, 21 Sep 1985, *The Ottawa Citizen*, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, page 114.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/464399267/>

18. 1 Jul 2024, email by Gary Lamers

19. 14 Jul 2024, email by Gary Lamers

20. 26 Jul 2024, phone call with Eleanor Wright