



Raymond Stone surveys his recent purchase – circa 1947. This photo shows the complete house prior to the back section being removed.

DOORS OPEN AMHERSTBURG

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THOMAS OUELLETTE HOUSE

**671 Front Road North
Amherstburg, Ontario**

**September 25, 2004
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**



Doors Open Ontario is a community-based celebration that builds pride in Ontario's heritage for residents and visitors alike. The Ontario Heritage Foundation works with community partners throughout the province to produce this innovative program.

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THOMAS OUELLETTE HOUSE

Currently owned by David & Deanna McDowall

This fine Second Empire-style house was built for Thomas Ouellette from plans furnished by the owner. Built on an original parcel of land totaling 12 acres, the site was comprised of several buildings including the main home, a carriage house, a large barn and a boat and bathing house on the river.

Heritage Significance

The house is one of the better examples of the Second Empire residential style in Ontario, with a hint of Italianate motifs. The home has existed for over 120 years, but has had only a handful of owners in that time. It was described at one time as “Two miles east of Amherstburg on the banks of the Detroit River, there is situated the finest country home in the province of Ontario. It is a massive structure, built in the most modern style, and has every convenience that one finds in palatial residences of the city.” – Detroit News, circa 1892.

History of the Home

Originally named ‘Island View’, the house was built for Thomas Ouellette, a successful operator of a very large lumber mill in McGregor, Ontario and occupied offices in the Home Bank Building in Detroit, Michigan. Married twice with nine children, five surviving him, Mr. Ouellette died in 1913. A short time after, his second wife, Harriette Ralph returned to her family home in upstate New York and left Island View empty for a number of years.

Prior to Raymond & Francis Stone purchasing the home in 1947, the building was used as a seed farm residence and a boarding house. Mr. & Mrs. Stone raised five children in the home and for economic reasons removed a large rear section of the house in the early 60’s. This section was in a poor state compared to the main portion of the home. Mrs. Stone was active in the Amherstburg community as a volunteer until her passing in 1998. Mr. Stone maintained the house until 2000, wherein it was purchased by the David & Deanna McDowall.

The McDowalls purchased the main house in addition to the only remaining out-building, a carriage house on an adjoining, yet severed property. They are in the process of restoring the home to its original grandeur, including a new slate roof, extensive plaster repairs along with some modern, yet hidden, amenities.

Architectural Highlights

Designed and built for Thomas Ouellette, a local lumber baron, this 5,000 sq. ft. wood elevator style home rests on a two foot thick stone foundation and is clad in detailed wood siding giving the home the impression of a stone block exterior. All interior and exterior walls are comprised of stacked 2x6 and 2x4 rough milled lumber and are finished with original plaster walls. Each room features a different cornice molding and ceiling medallion accent. Other highlights include:

- Combination Oak, mahogany and maple doors and trim
- Massive 9 ½ foot pocket doors between the front room and parlor
- A large central two level hallway extends the depth of the house and is offset by a 19 step staircase joining the main and upper floors
- Main ceiling height is over 11 feet and the second floor is just over 10 feet.
- Near floor to ceiling 94-inch windows are abundant throughout
- Originally outfitted with gas light, the home has been converted to electric lighting with reproduction fixtures in keeping with the era

