

APPENDIX 'D': Research Reports

RESEARCH REPORT



Peter Milne Jr. House
East Half Lot 26, Concession 7
5970 Elgin Mills Road East, Milnesville
c.1870

Heritage Section
City of Markham Planning & Urban Design
2024

History

The Peter Milne Jr. House is located on a portion of the eastern half of Markham Township Lot 26, Concession 6, in the historic rural community of Milnesville.

The community of Milnesville, south of Dickson Hill, began to take shape in the 1830s with the establishment of a general store at the northwest corner of the Eighth Concession (known today as Highway 48) and Elgin Mills Road East. The Markham and Elgin Mills Plank Road connected the community to Yonge Street by the 1850s. In time, two blacksmith shops were established near the crossroads along with two sawmills, a brickworks, a pottery, and the Wideman Mennonite Church. A post office was established in the general store in 1852. Milnesville was a diffuse community rather than a hamlet. Most of the land in the vicinity was agricultural, with many farms owned by Pennsylvania German Mennonite families.

Martin Holder received the Crown patent for the entire 200 acres of Markham Township Lot 26, Concession 7 in 1801. In 1804, Holder sold to Martin Hoover, a member of Markham's

Pennsylvania German Mennonite community. In 1821, Martin Hoover sold a five-acre parcel at the southeast corner of Lot 26, Concession 7 to Abraham Holdeman, and it was upon this property that a store was established in the 1830s. John Harrington (or Herrington) was the storekeeper and his presence on Lot 26, Concession 7 was noted in Walton's 1837 directory of Markham Township. John Harrington's portrait appears on page 277 of *Markham 1793-1900*. According to the 1851 census, John Herrington was born in Ireland, therefore he does not seem to be related to the well-known Harrington family of American origin who are best known in Markham's history for their association with the Planing Mill at Unionville.

In 1837, Peter Milne Jr. (1803-1878), a son of Alexander Milne (1777-1877), purchased the five acres of Lot 26, Concession 7 containing the store. The Milne family were originally from Forfarshire, Scotland. Several brothers emigrated to the United States during the late 1700s-early 1800s where they became successful in business and industry. Peter Milne Sr. and his brother Alexander came to Markham Township in the 1820s and purchased a sawmill and gristmill built by Nicholas Miller on the eastern part of Lot 9, Concession 7 (Reesorville, later known as Markham Village). Alexander Milne operated the mills and his brother Peter Milne Sr. ran a store. In time, Alexander Milne moved to York Township to establish Milneford Mills on the Don River (today the location of Edwards Gardens). Alexander Milne was first married to Jane Gibson (1773-1835). His second wife was Ann Kirk.

Peter Milne Jr. was the first postmaster of Milnesville, giving his family name to the local post office. He served in this capacity from 1852 to 1862-63. In late 1837, Peter Milne Jr. acquired the rest of the western half of Lot 26, Concession 7 to add to the five acres purchased earlier in that same year. In 1845, he received the Crown patent for the eastern half of Lot 25, Concession 7 where he had lived in the 1840s to the early 1850s.. A sawmill was located on Little Rouge Creek in the early 1850s. The mill pond is shown on the McPhillips map of Markham Township, 1853-54.

In addition to his properties in Milnesville, Peter Milne Jr. owned considerable acreage within the eastern parts of Lots 1, 2 and 3 in the Eighth Concession (south of Sparta, later known as Box Grove). He owned another sawmill on the Rouge River, south of Sparta. Earlier in his career, he worked as a bookkeeper at his uncle Peter Milne Sr.'s mills near Markham Village.

Peter Milne Jr. was a noted Reformer. Following the Upper Canadian Rebellion of 1837, he was arrested for his role in the uprising (which he denied) and held at Fort Henry. At the time he was living on Lot 1, Concession 8, south of Sparta. (His wife, Hannah (McKay) Milne (1812-1902), is said to have ridden on horseback to Kingston carrying her young child to petition for the release of her husband. He was later pardoned. The Markham Museum has a collection of letters written by Peter Milne Jr. to his wife, and to his brother William, while he was incarcerated in Kingston in 1838. A photographic portrait of Peter Milne Jr. is found on page 191 in *Markham 1793-1900*. Further stories about Peter Milne Jr.'s life that shed some light on his personality are found in a history of Milnesville in *Pioneer Hamlets of York*.

According to the 1851 census, Peter Milne Jr. and Hannah Milne had six children at that time: Elizabeth, age 20; Ellen (or Helen) age 18; Jane Ann, age 17; Hannah, age 15; Peter, age 13; and William, age 8. While Peter Milne Jr. and his family were living on Lot 25, Concession 7 at the time of the 1851 census, the store on Lot 26, Concession 7 was rented to John Herrington. He lived in a one-storey frame house with his wife Sarah (Hastings) Herrington and their ten children between the ages of 1 and 19. Also on the property was Peter Kribs, a toll-keeper for the tollgate on the eastern end of the Markham and Elgin Mills Plank Road. He lived in a one-storey frame dwelling.

By the time of the 1861 census, Peter Milne Jr. and Hannah Milne were living in a two-storey frame house on Lot 26, Concession 7 with two of their children, Hannah and William. Also in the household were labourers and a servant. The property on Lot 25, Concession 7 was rented to tenants. In 1871, Peter Milne Jr. was an owner-farmer on Lot 26, Concession 7, while Joseph Truman was a tenant farmer in a separate household. Joseph Truman's wife was Helen (Naylor) Truman.

Perhaps the farmhouse at 5970 Elgin Mills Road East was constructed by Peter Milne Jr. for his retirement, leaving his earlier frame dwelling for the use of the tenant farmer. A dwelling is shown in the approximate location of the existing house at 5970 Elgin Mills Road East on the map of Markham Township in the *Historical Atlas of the County of York, Ontario, 1878*. The MPAC date of construction is 1880, however, since Peter Milne Jr. died in 1878, it seems unlikely that his heirs would undertake the construction of a new dwelling on the property at that time. His widow, Hannah Milne, moved in with her daughter Helen (Milne) Freeman on Lot 1, Concession 9, south of Box Grove.

Peter Milne Jr. willed both of his Milnesville properties to his daughter, Elizabeth Wilcox (Milne) Gibson (1830-1918), sometimes known as "Eliza," who was married to William Milne Gibson. William Gibson was a son of David Gibson and Eliza (Milne) Gibson of York Township. Eliza (Milne) Gibson was Peter Milne Jr.'s sister. David Gibson, a Scottish-born land surveyor, lived in Willowdale. He was a member of the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada in 1834 and 1836 and a leading Reformer who was a significant figure in the 1837 Upper Canadian Rebellion of 1837. His second residence, replacing a dwelling burned by government troops during the Rebellion, is now the Gibson House Museum at 5172 Yonge Street, Toronto. His son, William M. Gibson, became a mill owner in Windham Township, North Norfolk County, by the 1870s. After her husband's death, Elizabeth W. Gibson moved to St. David's Ward, Toronto, where she was living by the time of the 1891 census. The house she lived in still stands at 48 Rose Avenue in the Cabbagetown neighbourhood.

Elizabeth W. Gibson was a non-resident owner that rented her Milnesville properties to tenants. According to census records, Nelson Herrington was a tenant farmer on Lot 26, Concession 7 in 1881 along with his wife Susannah (Byer) Herrington and their children. The 1892 Directory placed farmer Donald Douglas and farm labourer Enos B. Hoover on Lot 26, Concession 7, as the tenants of Eliza Gibson of Toronto. According to the 1891 census, Donald Douglas, a Scottish immigrant, lived with his family in a two-storey frame dwelling containing

five rooms. Enos Hoover lived with his wife Delilah and their infant son in a two-storey brick dwelling containing six rooms (the existing house at 5970 Elgin Mills Road East). At the time of the 1921 census, Joseph G. Kirk, a farmer, was the tenant on the property, living in a six-room brick dwelling with his wife Minnie and their five children between the ages of 9 and 22. There is a Kirk family connection to Alexander Milne, suggesting that Joseph Kirk may have been a relative of Eliza W. Gibson. In addition to the Milnesville properties, Elizabeth W. Gibson owned considerable land south of Box Grove that was previously owned by her father.

In 1937, the administrators of Elizabeth W. Gibson's estate sold the property to Ella L. Bell and Elizabeth E. Bell. In 1961, Ella and Elizabeth Bell transferred the property to Donald and Gwen Boyington. The brick dwelling may have been stucco-clad at around this time. The Boyingtons transferred a 10.29-acre parcel containing the residence to Harvey James Brown in 1970, and the larger acreage to the Runnymede Development Corporation Limited in that same year. In 1987, Harvey J. Brown sold to Kirk and Donna Globocki. The current owner is the Chung and Jao Development Corporation.

Architecture

The Peter Milne Jr. House is a one-and-a-half storey stucco-clad brick dwelling with an L-shaped plan. If the foundation material is fieldstone, portions appear to have been parged. The front or eastern section of the building is rectangular in shape and once fronted onto Highway 48. Its central front door has been closed in and the alteration has been concealed by the application of stucco to the wall. The rear wing of the building is offset to the north, creating a south facing ell. A single-storey modern-era addition is located on the south side, leaving about half of the rear wing's ground floor exposed and all of the second floor exposed. The addition has a flat roof masked by a modern interpretation of a mansard roof.

The nature of the brick masonry beneath the stucco is unknown since no archival photographs of this property have been located. Given the c.1870 date of construction, this house may have had dichromatic brickwork in a combination of red and buff coloured brick, which was fashionable in this region from the 1850s to the 1880s. The updating of old brick houses with stucco was popular in the 1950s with several similar examples known in Markham.

The medium-pitched cross-gable roof has projecting, open eaves. There is a steep centre gable on the east wall. No historic chimneys remain. A heavy masonry chimney is located on the south gable end, offset to the left. This chimney is a twentieth century addition.

The house originally had a three-bay facade with the principal entrance centred on the ground floor between two windows. As noted earlier, the door has been covered over and the building is now entered from the south side. The window openings are flat-headed and rectangular with projecting lugsills. They contain single-hung windows with two-over-two panes. The window in the centre gable follows this design, as do most of the window openings on the other sides of the building.

The south gable end wall at the second storey has one window to the right of the exterior chimney. The western portion of the ground floor, not covered by the modern addition, contains a single-leaf door and a single window. It is not known if the portions of the ground floor wall concealed by the addition retain elements of their original openings. These may have been covered over or enlarged to provide a connection to the addition.

The north side of the house has not been altered. There is one window centred on the wall on the ground floor level on the north gable end, and one window at the second storey level offset to the right. There is one window on the ground floor level on the north side of the rear wing.

The rear, or west gable end, has a single square window centred on the wall at ground floor level. It has one-over-one panes and is either an enlargement of an old window opening or a later addition. There are two historic windows on the second-floor level.

Architecturally, the Peter Milne Jr. House is an altered, restrained representative example of a rural dwelling in the Ontario Classic style, as defined by Marion MacRea and Anthony Adamson in *The Ancestral Roof – Domestic Architecture of Upper Canada* (1963):

“The little vernacular house, still stubbornly Georgian in form and wearing its little gable with brave gaiety, became the abiding image of the province. It was to be the Ontario Classic style.”

The Ontario Classic is a house form that was popular from the 1860s to the 1890s with many examples constructed on farms and in villages throughout Markham Township. The design was promoted in architectural pattern books and a design for “a cheap country dwelling house” of this type appeared in an edition of the journal, *The Canada Farmer*, in 1865. These vernacular dwellings were often decorated with features associated with the picturesque Gothic Revival style, but in the case of the Peter Milne Jr. House, this is limited to its steep centre gable. In the absence of an archival photograph that shows the building prior to its stucco cladding in the 1950s, it is not possible to say if any other decorative features were ever found on this building.

The essential form of the Ontario Classic was symmetrical with a centrally-placed front door flanked by windows, a hold-over from the long-standing, conservative formality of the Georgian architectural tradition, and a steep centre gable above the entrance. The Peter Milne Jr. House is now missing its front door, but the space where it once existed remains evident. A one-and-a-half storey height and an L-shaped or T-shaped plan were typical of this house form with the rear portion usually functioning as a kitchen wing. Here, the rear wing is one-and-a-half storeys rather than the more common single-storey kitchen wing.

The single-storey addition on the south side of the building is out of character with the original structure but it appears to be a reversible change that, if removed, could restore the Peter Milne Jr. House to its original c.1870 form.

Context

The Peter Milne Jr. House is one of a number of nineteenth and early twentieth century farmhouses in the vicinity of the historic rural community of Milnesville that make legible the agricultural history of the area. There are no historic accessory buildings remaining. The property is in a rural setting. The property is historically linked to the Milne House at 10666 Highway 48, on the east half of Markham Township Lot 25, Concession 7.

Sources

Abstract Index of Deeds for Lots 25 and 26, Concession 7, Markham Township.

Canada Census: 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911 and 1921.

Directories of Markham Township: Brown (1846-47), Rowsell (1850-51), Mitchell (1866), Nason (1871), 1892 Directory, and 1918 Directory.

Markham Township Assessment Rolls, East Half, 1891 and 1901.

Maps of Markham Township: McPhillips (1853-54), Tremaine (1860), and Historical Atlas of the County of York, Ontario (1878).

Milne Family Genealogy File, Markham Museum.

Genealogical Research on Elizabeth W. Gibson by Fred Robbins, Stouffville Historian.

Property File for 5970 Elgin Mills Road East, Heritage Section, City of Markham Planning & Urban Design.

Champion, Isabel (ed.). *Markham 1793-1900*. Markham: Markham Historical Society, Second Edition, Revised, 1989. Pages 75-76, 190-192, 277, and 339.

Watson, Trevor. "Milnesville." *Pioneer Hamlets of York*. Kitchener: Pennsylvania German Folklore Society of Ontario, 1977. Page 145.

Compliance with Ontario Regulation 9/06, as amended – Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.

The Peter Milne Jr. House has design value and physical value as an altered, restrained representative example of a rural dwelling in the Ontario Classic style.

The property has historical or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.

The Peter Milne House Jr. has historical or associative value representing the theme of agriculture, economic development and government services in relation to the diverse activities that took place on this property in the nineteenth century, and for its association with Peter Milne Jr., a prominent early resident of the rural community of Milnesville who was a major landowner in Markham Township, as well as a store and sawmill owner, and the community's first post master from 1852 to 1863. Peter Milne Jr. is also noteworthy for his alleged association with the Upper Canadian Rebellion of 1837.

The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.

The Peter Milne Jr House has contextual value as the farmhouse that once served Peter Milne Jr. and later tenant farmers on the Milne farm (Lot 26, Concession 7), in the historic rural community of Milnesville. The dwelling has existed since c.1870, and is historically linked to the Milne House at 10666 Highway 48 on Lot 25, Concession 7.

RESEARCH REPORT



Hastings-Vague House **East Half Lot 31, Concession 6** **11534 McCowan Road** **c.1890**

Heritage Section
City of Markham Planning & Urban Design
2023

History

The Hastings-Vague House is located on a portion of the eastern half of Markham Township Lot 31, Concession 6, near the north-west corner of Nineteenth Avenue and McCowan Road.

John Harrison received the Crown patent for the entire 200 acres of Markham Township Lot 31, Concession 6, in 1805. In William Berczy's 1803 census of Markham settlers, the name Abraham Harris was noted in association with this lot, marked as "Absent." Did William Berczy write "Harris" instead of "Harrison" by mistake?

In 1811, Joseph Harrison sold the property to Jonas Byer, a member of Markham's Pennsylvania German community. Jonas Byer came to Markham Township from York County, Pennsylvania in 1810-1811. The family surname was also spelled "Boyer" or "Beyer" depending on the primary source consulted. This property was one of several purchased by Jonas Byer in 1811. His home farm was on the western half of Lot 22, Concession 8, an area that eventually became known as Milnesville.

In 1836, Jonas Byer sold the 200-acre lot to John Hoover, another Pennsylvania German. In Walton's 1837 Directory of Markham Township, John Hoover Jr. was noted as residing on this property. John Hoover died in 1845 and Lot 31, Concession 6 was willed in parts to his son-in-law Samuel Kendrick [married to Rosanna (Hoover) Kendrick] and to nieces and nephews. In the 1851 census, Christina Hoover, John Hoover Jr.'s widow, lived on the property in a two-storey frame house. The location of the Hoover house within the lot is not known.

The east quarter of Lot 31, Concession 6, comprising 50 acres, went through the hands of a series of owners between 1864 and 1872. The property appears to have been vacant or sometimes occupied by tenants during this time period.

In 1872, Thomas Hastings Jr. purchased the property. Thomas Hastings Jr. was the son of Irish immigrants Thomas Hasty and Sarah (Mitchell) Hasty who came to Upper Canada from Strabane, County Tyrone, Ireland in 1818. The family settled on Markham Township Lot 30, Concession 6, directly south of the subject property. Thomas Hasty Jr. was born in Markham, and later changed the spelling of his surname to "Hastings." Thomas Hastings Jr. married Matilda Jane Thompson in 1857.

In 1877, Thomas Hastings Jr. became the owner of the entire eastern half of Lot 31, Concession 6 through the purchase of the western 50 acres of the eastern half of the lot from John H. Raymer. Thomas Hastings Jr. did not reside on the property. His home was on the family homestead on the eastern half of Lot 30, Concession 6 (11482 McCowan Road). It appears that the existing frame dwelling at 11534 McCowan Road was built as a tenant farmer's residence. A dwelling is shown in this location on the map of Markham Township contained in the *Historical Atlas of York County, Ontario, 1878*.

At the time of the 1881 census, Thomas Hastings Jr. and his family continued to reside on the eastern half of Lot 30, Concession 6. His other property, on Lot 31, Concession 6, was occupied by tenant farmers in two separate households. Charles Richards and his wife Elizabeth, ages 67 and 57 respectively, were in one dwelling. Charles Richards was born in England and his wife was born in Ontario. Their son William Richards, a farm labourer, resided in another dwelling with his wife Mary and their six children between the ages of 13 and 1.

In 1890, the farm was willed to Martha Hastings, the unmarried daughter of Thomas and Matilda Hastings. At the time of the 1891 census, the property was tenanted by Robert Vague, his wife Euphemia, their son Henry, and Robert's parents Thomas and Jane. The family was of English origin. Their residence was described as a one-storey frame dwelling containing four rooms. The family continued to reside at the same location for many years as indicated by the 1901, 1911 and 1921 census returns. In the 1921 census, their dwelling was described as stucco containing six rooms. It appears that the older house on the property was increased in size and achieved its current form by that time. The MPAC date of construction is 1890, which fits with this scenario.

Martha Hastings seems to have married soon after being willed the property in 1890 and never resided there. Rather, she rented the property to long-term tenants for income. The Robert Vague family lived there for at least thirty years but apparently were never able to purchase their farm.

In two Markham Township directories, 1892 and 1918, the property is in the name of M. Francis. The name "M. Francis" is likely Martha Francy (presumably the former Martha Hastings).

In 1923, the property was sold by Martha M. Francy to Bartholemew Tennyson, who previously was a tenant farmer on the eastern half of Lot 12, Concession 2 (Leek Estate), north of the crossroads hamlet of Dollar. In 1941, Ruth N. Tennyson, the widow of Bartholemew Tennyson, transferred the property to her son Bruce M. Tennyson. He and his wife Ada were the owners until 1959 after which point the farm was split into several parcels that have passed through a series of other owners.

Architecture

The Hastings-Vague House is a one-and-a-half storey frame dwelling with a T-shaped plan. The foundation material is not known as it has been covered in vertical cladding. The siding is narrow horizontal aluminum vinyl that imitates clapboard. The main block of the house has a rectangular plan. There is a one-storey wing centered on the rear wall and two shed-roofed extensions on the north wall of that wing. On the south gable end of the main block is a gable-roofed enclosure that likely covers an external basement entrance.

The medium-pitched roof has projecting, open eaves. There is a steeply-pitched centre gable on the front which contains a tall, narrow, flat-arched window opening. There is no evidence of bargeboards having once decorated this gable. There are single-stack brick chimneys at each gable end. The northerly chimney is the older of the two.

The house has a three-bay facade with a centrally placed single-leaf door flanked by windows. The door is modern. The flat-headed window openings are tall and somewhat narrow in proportion, indicative of a late nineteenth century date of construction. The windows themselves are modern replacements with sliders in their lower section. They have plain, narrow trim and projecting lugsills. These front windows are typical of those on the other sides of the building.

Window placement on the gable end walls is regular, with two window openings on the ground floor and two on the second floor.

The gable-roofed, one-storey rear wing has the traditional form and placement of a kitchen wing. The shed-roofed additions on the north wall may have replaced a veranda in this location.

The Hastings-Vague House is a simple representative example of an Ontario Classic farmhouse. The Ontario Classic is a vernacular house form that was popular from the 1860s to the 1890s,

with many examples constructed on farms and in villages throughout Markham Township. With its one-and-a-half storey form, centre gable, symmetrical three-bay facade and T-shaped plan, the house at 11534 McCowan Road is typical of this type and is representative of farmhouses constructed in this area in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This example does not have the full-width front veranda and gable ornamentation seen on some other Markham examples. Its proximity to the current extent of the roadway may have resulted in the removal of a front veranda at some point in the past. The outline of a former veranda may exist on the original siding that may underlie the present cladding.

Context

The Hastings-Vague House is located in a rural setting to the east of the historic hamlet of Almira. This is one of a number of farm properties containing nineteenth century residences in the north-central part of Markham. A brick bungalow is located on the same property, to the north-west of the heritage house. The Hastings-Vague House is historically linked to the Thomas and Sarah Hasty House at 11482 McCowan Road.

Sources

Deed abstracts for Lots 30 and 31, Concession 6, Markham Township.

Canada Census: 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911 and 1921.

Directories of Markham Township: Walton (1837), Brown (1846-47), Rowsell (1850-51), Mitchell (1866), Nason (1871), 1892 Directory and 1918 Directory.

Maps of Markham Township: McPhillips (1853-54), Tremaine (1860), Historical Atlas of the County of York, Ontario (1878) and 1919 map.

Property Files for 11534 McCowan Road and 4822 Nineteenth Avenue, Heritage Section, City of Markham Planning & Urban Design.

Research Report, 4822 Nineteenth Avenue by D. Billich, 1995.

Hoover Family File, Heritage Section, City of Markham Planning & Urban Design.

Champion, Isabel (ed.). *Markham 1793-1900*. Markham: Markham Historical Society, Second Edition, Revised, 1989. Pages 43, 45-46.

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The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early examples of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.

The Hastings-Vague House has design value and physical value as a representative example of a tenant farmer's dwelling in the form of an Ontario Classic farmhouse.

The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.

The Hastings-Vague House has historical value and associative value as it makes legible Markham's mature agricultural landscape in the late nineteenth century where well-

established farmers purchased additional land for investment purposes and income, and provided modest housing for use of tenant farmers.

The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.

The Hastings-Vague House has contextual value for being physically, functionally, visually and historically linked to its site where it has stood since c. 1890, and for being historically linked to the Thomas and Sarah Hasty House at 11482 McCowan Road.

RESEARCH REPORT



Byer-Shank House **East Half Lot 22, Concession 8** **& Southwest Quarter Lot 23, Concession 8** **10235 Highway 48, Milnesville** **c.1829**

Heritage Section
City of Markham Planning & Urban Design, 2024

History

The Byer-Shank House is located on portions of the eastern halves of Markham Township Lots 22 and 23, Concession 8, in the historic rural community of Milnesville, next to the western bank of Little Rouge Creek.

Early Property History

Joshua Miller Jr. received the Crown patent for the entire 200 acres of Markham Township Lot 22, Concession 8, in 1801. He was the son of Joshua Miller Sr., a United Empire Loyalist who came to Upper Canada from Fairfield, Connecticut in 1793. The family initially settled in Stamford, near Niagara Falls. Joshua Miller Jr. remained in the United States until 1798 when he joined the other members of the family in Stamford. He petitioned the colonial government for a land grant based on his status as a son of a Loyalist and in 1801 was awarded Lot 22, Concession 8 in Markham Township subject to completing the required settlement duties.

Joshua and Elizabeth Miller and their two young children were noted as residing on this property in William Berczy's 1803 census of Markham settlers.

Joshua Miller Jr. and Elizabeth (Darrer) Miller were married in 1798 and had nine children: Robert, Hanna, Anna, John, Phoebe, Jacob, Luton, Elisha, and Laura. Elizabeth Miller died in 1823. Joshua Miller's second wife was Rachael Shannon. They had three children: William, Sarah and Daniel.

The Miller family were strong supporters of the Baptist Church. The Ninth Line Baptist Church, relocated to the Markham Museum a number of years after it closed, was built on a parcel of the east half of Lot 21, Concession 8 purchased by Joshua Miller Jr. in 1823. An historic cemetery remains on the property. The Joshua Miller Jr. House, c.1825, formerly located at 10192 Ninth Line, was relocated to 10 Heritage Corners Lane, Markham Heritage Estates, in 2006. It is one of Markham's oldest remaining buildings.

This Miller family is one of three prominent Miller families in Markham. They are not inter-related.

Byer Family

In 1811, Joshua Miller Jr. sold the western 100 acres of Lot 22, Concession 8 to his brother John Miller, who owned the property briefly before selling to Jonas Byer in that same year. About one month after his purchase of the Miller property, Jonas Byer bought the western 100 acres of adjoining Lot 23, Concession 8 from Daniel Hoover, a member of Markham's Pennsylvania German community. The Little Rouge Creek meanders through both of these properties, making them valuable for a mill site.

Jonas Byer (1760-1849), his wife Elizabeth (Schwartz) Byer (?-1822), and their six children came to Markham Township in 1810-1811 and settled on the western half of Lot 22, Concession 8. They were from Mannheim Township, York County, Pennsylvania. There are several variations in the spelling of the family surname, include Beier, Beyer, Boyer, and Byer. Beier was the spelling used by Jonas Byer's ancestor Andreas Beier in the Rhine Palatinate.

The Byer family were members of the Tunker Church, an Anabaptist Christian sect related to the Mennonite faith (later known as the Brethren in Christ). The Tunkers (initially known as the River Brethren because they were organized near the portion of the Susquahanna River that flows through Pennsylvania) were an offshoot of a sect in Pennsylvania known as the Dunkards, so named due to their practice of full immersion adult baptism which was conducted outdoors in natural bodies of water. A group of Pennsylvania German families that settled in Markham and Vaughan Townships in the early nineteenth century were members of this church, some of whom included the Byer, Heise, Hoover, Doner, Steckley and Eyer families. Worship services were held in the homes of church members until 1877 when a brick meeting house was erected at Heise Hill in the same year. Special communion services called "love feasts" were regularly held on the Byer farm within their great barn. Benches used in the services were stored on the second storey veranda of the farmhouse.

In addition to his purchase of the western halves of Lots 22 and 23, Concession 8 in 1811, Jonas Byer also purchased all 200 acres of Lot 14, Concession 7. That property was sold to Peter Ramer in 1836 in an area north of Markham Village that became known as Mount Joy. Also in 1811, he bought Lot 31, Concession 6, a 200-acre property. In 1820, he purchased the western 100 acres of Lot 23, Concession 7. In all, by Jonas Byer was the owner of 700 acres by 1820, making him a significant early land owner within Markham Township.

A family cemetery was established in the northern portion of Lot 23, Concession 8. Jonas Byer's wife Elizabeth, who died in 1822, was interred within the cemetery which is located on the banks of the site of the former mill pond that served the Byer family sawmill on Lot 22, Concession 8. This sawmill and its associated mill pond were illustrated on Tremaine's map of Markham Township, 1860. It was in operation as early as 1817 based on a report by Captain James Fenwick. The sawmill supplied lumber for plank roads in Markham constructed during the mid-nineteenth century. It is not known how long the sawmill operated. One source says it closed in 1903 or 1904, but that seems late and needs to be verified. It was not shown on McPhillip's map of 1853-54 or the map in the Historical Atlas of the County of York, Ontario, 1878. In 1878, only the mill pond on Little Rouge Creek was illustrated.

The Byer Cemetery was formally deeded to the Deacons of the Tunker Church by John Byer in 1890, along with a right-of-way for access. Today, this cemetery is cared for by the Markham Cemetery Board. In 1993-1996, the historic cemetery was refurbished by the late Bruce Vander Bent, a dedicated member of the Heise Hill Brethren in Christ Church.

There is no information available about the Byer family's first dwelling, but according to local history, their second house (the subject property) was constructed in 1829 by Jonas and Elizabeth Byer's son David Byer Sr. This large frame house, two-and-a-half storeys in height with a two-tier veranda on its south-facing (principal elevation), is a unique example of its type in Markham. A similar farmhouse, built by David Eyer in 1828, still stands in the City of Richmond Hill on a property that was once part of Markham Township (West half of Lot 25, Concession 2, 1045 Elgin Mills Road East). Eyer was also part of Markham's Pennsylvania German Tunker community and the owner of a sawmill that supplied lumber for the Markham and Elgin Mills Plank Road, constructed in 1849-1850.

The Byer farmhouse is located a considerable distance from the road, close to the meandering route of Little Rouge Creek. A smaller frame house on the northern part of the Byer farm on Lot 23, Concession 8 was occupied by tenants. According to the 1851 census, this was the home of Peter Lehman, a farmer. By the time of the 1861 census, Thomas Pearse, an English-born shoemaker, lived there and continued to do so with his family at the time of the 1871 census. In 1881, it was the home of Albert Frownfelter, an American-born farmer who was married to Mary Byer. Mary Byer was the daughter of John Byer, a grandson of Jonas Byer. The house still stands, somewhat altered, at 10451 Highway 48.

Jonas and Elizabeth's children included Christina (1785-1861) who married John F. Hoover; Benjamin (1787-1852) who married Elizabeth Modrey; David (1791-1844) who married Anna Doner; Elizabeth (1795-1876) who married Peter Ramer; Susannah (1800-1833) who married Abraham Miller; and Samuel (1806-1878) whose wife was named Mary.

David and Anna Byer remained on the family homestead where they raised seven children: Jonas (1816-1897) who married Katherine Welsh; Susannah (1818-1883) who married Daniel Lehman; twins David (1820-1894) who married Esther Raymer (1823-1910) and John (1820-1892) who married Elizabeth Raymer then Margaret Cober; Elizabeth (1823-1903) who married Abraham Ramer; Christina (1828-1857) who married Daniel Strickler; and Anna (1830-1900) who married Lyman Conner.

The Byer homestead was sold by Jonas Byer to his son David Byer Sr. in 1836. David Byer Sr. died in 1844. The larger portion of the farm passed to his son David Byer Jr. who continued to farm the property in addition to operating the sawmill with his twin brother John Byer. John Byer inherited the northwest quarter of Lot 23, Concession 8, where the mill pond and the Byer Cemetery were located. He previously had moved across the Eighth Line to Lot 23, Concession 7, a property purchased by his grandfather in 1820 and sold to his father David Byer Sr. in 1831. A frame house was constructed on the property in 1836 (no longer standing; illustrated on page 40 of *Markham 1793-1900*). John Byer, in addition to being a farmer, served as minister at the Heise Hill Brethren in Christ Church from 1872 to 1892 and was a trustee of the Dickson Hill Public School.

The Byer family kept bee hives which are said to have been brought to Markham from Pennsylvania. The Byers had a long history of honey production that continued through several generations until 1991. The business, Byer Brothers Brookside Apiaries, was located at 10379 Highway 48 in a frame building constructed in 1920 that is still standing but not listed on the *Markham Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest*.

Byer Cancer Cure

David Byer Jr. is particularly remembered for developing Byer's Cancer Cure. In one historical account it is stated that the Byer Cancer Hospital was established on this property in 1890 and that it was operated by David Byer Jr.'s daughter Katherine Byer (1852-1906) and her assistant Annie Byer. David Byer Jr.'s son Daniel Byer (1858-1944) established the D. Byer & Co. Cancer Institute in 1895. Registration of Patent No. 50,198 for a Medicinal Compound in the form of a plaster was reported in the *Canada Patent Office Record*, Volume 23, October, 1895. This patent contains the ingredients of the plaster, one of which is a native plant known as bloodroot. At the time of the registration of the patent, Daniel Byer was a resident of the village of Stouffville, formerly of Sunnidale, Simcoe County. Part of the old family home at Milnesville was used to house those undergoing treatment. Department store owner Robert Simpson of Toronto was a noteworthy patient. It is said that the treatment for outward growths and tumors was based on Indigenous sources. According to folklorist Blodwen Davies in her book *A String of Amber*, wherein she wrote about Markham's Pennsylvania German culture, there was a well-established tradition of healers within that community. Josephus Reesor of Box Grove

was also known as a healer who based many of his treatments on Indigenous traditional medicine.

A copy of a promotional brochure issued by the D. Byer & Co. Cancer Institute dated at Markham, February 16, 1899, is preserved in the collection of the Markham Museum. In a section of the brochure titled "TO THE PUBLIC" Daniel Byer stated:

"It is now thirty-two years since the secret of this remedy was discovered by my father, the late David Byer, and during that time it has undergone continual improvement until to-day we claim to have a perfect cure for cancer."

The brochure goes on to describe how David Byer developed a compound to cure a cancerous growth on his foot and then provides further information on cancer and the patented treatment, as well as a number of testimonials as to the efficacy of the cure.

The Byer family faced some challenges from the medical community. Perhaps it was for this reason that Daniel Byer decided to leave this area and move to Manitoba after being unsuccessful in promoting the cure in the United States. In the 1901 census, he was listed as a farmer in Swan River along with his wife Frances "Fanny" (Cober) Byer and their children. He later returned to Ontario and lived in Bertie Township, Fort Erie where he served as a Deacon in the Bertie Brethren in Christ Church. He retired from farming in the mid-1930s.

David Byer Jr.'s cancer cure was also passed down to another daughter, Christina. Christina Byer (1850-1920) married Jonas Sauder (1852-1933) and moved to a large two-storey concrete block house known as "Ramark" at 300 Main Street North, Mount Joy, that had been built as a combined residence and tailor shop by Sylvester Anson Hoover in 1905. The cancer hospital, in its second location, was operated by Christina (Byer) Sauder and her husband beginning in 1911. A south-facing two-storey veranda was added to the former Hoover House for the use of the cancer hospital's patients. The cancer hospital operated for a short time after the death of Christina (Byer) Sauder in 1920 under the direction of her son, Peter Sauder, but closed in the early 1920s. Esther (Sauder) Allen, the married daughter of Jonas and Christina Sauder, was the last member of the family to administer the patented cancer treatment.

Shank Family

Mary Byer (1867-1949), David Jr. and Esther Byer's youngest daughter, inherited the farm after her father's death in 1894. She married William Shank (1863-1937), the son of Jacob Shank (1806-1897) of Pickering. The Shank family were Pennsylvania Germans. In *Markham 1793-1900* it says that Shank brothers, John, Michael, Henry and Jacob came to Markham Township as early as 1804.

According to the Shank family, Henry Shank (1780-?) moved with his parents to Rainham Township, Upper Canada, in 1800. This area is on the north shore of Lake Erie, west of the Niagara Region. Henry and his brother Michael came to Markham in 1804 and leased Clergy Reserve Lots 19 and 20, Concession 7 in 1805. The location was north of the area that later

became known as Mount Joy. Henry Shank married Catherine Van Hoben Wideman (1781-1809), daughter of Reverend Henry Wideman, the first Mennonite minister in Markham and one of the first in Upper Canada. Henry Shank moved from Markham to Pickering Township. He was living on Lot 30, Concession 3 at the time of Walton's Directory of 1837. This area became known as Cherrywood. Jacob Shank, the son of Henry and Catherine Shank, farmed Lots 23 and 24, Concession 3 in Pickering during the same period. He had moved to Pickering several years prior to his father.

Jacob Shank's first wife was Susannah Snyder who died in 1838. His second wife, with whom he had 14 children, was his cousin Barbara Shank, daughter of his uncle John.

William and Mary (Byer) Shank initially lived in Whitchurch Township after they were first married c.1886. By the time of the 1901 census, they had moved to Markham and had five children between the ages of 15 and 1. William Shank was a farmer. The widowed Esther Byer and her daughters Christina and Elizabeth lived in a separate household on the property. The D. Byer & Co. Cancer Institute appears to have operated in the same farmhouse where the Shank family lived. From the 1891 census, it is known that the large farmhouse contained 14 rooms. As noted earlier, the cancer institute had moved to Mount Joy in 1911. This coincides with the formal transfer of ownership of the Byer homestead from the executors of David Byer Jr. to William Shank.

At the time of the 1921 census, there were two Shank family households located on Lots 22 and 23, Concession 8: William and Mary Shank and four of their unmarried children lived in the farmhouse along with Mary's twin sister Elizabeth Byer while the second dwelling housed Jacob and Martha Shank. Jacob Shank was the married son of William and Mary Shank.

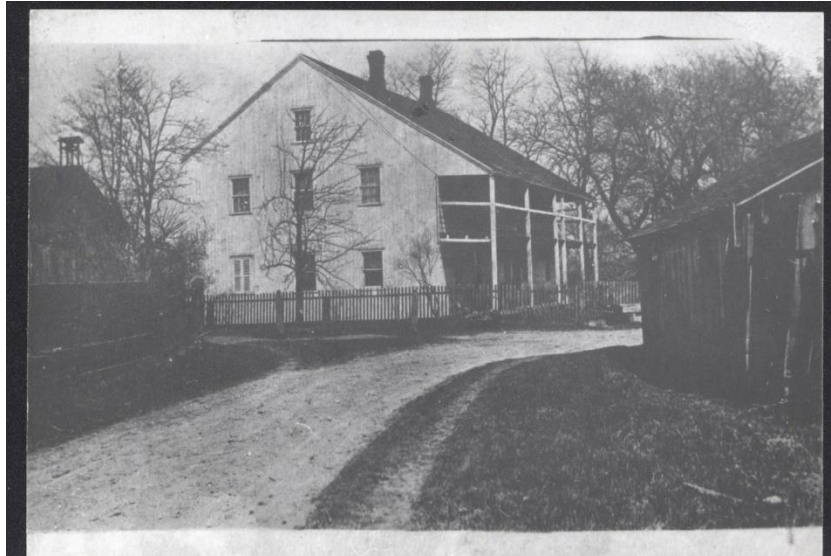
In *Markham 1793-1900*, it is noted that William and Mary Shank's sons Oliver Shank and Jacob Shank continued to reside on the farm in 1977. Oliver Shank (1904-1984) and Mary Margaret Shank (1916-2016) had four children: Willis, Helen, Ruth, and Neil. Willis Shank is the last of the family to reside on the farm. From many years he had a stall in Toronto's St. Lawrence Market.

The farm is no longer in the ownership of Byer descendants. In 2024, the property owner is 2722465 Ontario Limited.

Architecture

The Byer-Shank House is a two-and-a-half storey frame dwelling with a rectangular plan and a distinctive two-tiered veranda on the front wall, facing south. Its ground floor is placed close to grade and therefore the foundation material is not readily visible. Photographs taken in 2002 show the house with stone-patterned insul-brick siding, a material in use in Canada from the time of its invention in 1932 by Building Products Ltd. of Montreal up until the 1980s. The insul-brick was installed over narrow, vertical tongue and groove wood that is shown in an archival photograph in the collection of the Markham Museum, which appears on page 50 of *Markham Remembered*. The vertical siding, a type commonly used in Markham Township during the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, was an update to this early dwelling. The original siding

may have been clapboard on the gable ends, with roughcast stucco on the walls sheltered by the veranda, as seen on John Byer's home of 1836 (demolished), illustrated on page 40 of *Markham 1793-1900*. The use of stucco within open verandas appears to be a wall treatment favoured by Pennsylvania Germans for frame dwellings. Examples are known from the Niagara and Waterloo areas, both of which are centres of early Pennsylvania German settlement in Ontario.



Byer-Shank House, 1829, west and south sides showing 6/6 windows.
Markham Museum Collection M.1987.0.1514



John Byer House, 1836 (Demolished). Lot 23, Concession 7.
Markham Museum Collection M.1987.0.646

The medium-pitched gable roof has a minimal overhang, a characteristic of some early frame dwellings. The roof of the two-tier veranda is an extension of the south slope of the main roof. A similar veranda treatment can be seen on the Hoover House at the Markham Museum, which dates from 1825. The Hoover House shares many design characteristics with the Byer-Shank House, but in a smaller one-and-a-half storey form. The veranda of the Byer-Shank House has six plain, square posts, with two posts spaced to frame the principal entrance. A simple horizontal railing without pickets is seen on the upper veranda.

Roughly centred on the roof ridge is a single-stack, corbelled brick chimney. The archival photograph noted earlier shows that there was once a similar chimney at the east gable end. These chimneys, proportioned to serve wood stoves, were of a style later than the 1829 construction date of the house and likely replaced a heavier chimney, perhaps centred within the building, that would have served several fireplaces. Central chimney placement is a characteristic of early Pennsylvania German rural dwellings.

The house has an asymmetrical four-bay facade, another distinctive feature of Pennsylvania German vernacular architecture. By the mid-nineteenth century, Pennsylvania Germans mainly constructed Georgian farmhouses, imitating the design preference of their British-American and British neighbours. The principal entrance has a single-leaf door with shouldered sidelights (i.e. there is no panelled apron below the sidelights, rather there is an extension of the wall). There are two windows to the left of the door and one to the right. On the second floor, the arrangement of openings is also asymmetrical and not fully vertically aligned with the openings on the ground floor. A door opening onto the upper veranda is above the principal entrance. On the west gable end, there are three window openings on both the ground floor and second floor, and a single window centred on the gable wall to light the attic. The window openings are flat-headed, rectangular in shape, and small in proportion compared to the size of the dwelling. They once contained single-hung windows with six-over-six panes, but based on the most recent photographs, the windows are single sheets of glass, possibly casements, unless what is visible are storm windows. The trim is plain, in keeping with the overall restrained design of the building.

An interesting description of the Byer-Shank House was provided to Markham Heritage Section staff in 2002 by Bob Shank, a relative of the former owners:

“As I recall, there is supposed to be a date (1827?) carved into a beam over the front porch, and some of the original wooden benches that were used to seat the people for the Love Feasts that were held in the barn are still above the porch. That house is unique in that there were 19 rooms in it, and until they installed the bathroom there was absolutely no plaster anywhere in the house. It is entirely pine panelled from trees that were growing on the farm.”

Another description of the Byer-Shank House is found on page 160 of *A String of Amber* by folklorist Blodwen Davies (1973):

“When David was a small child, his father [David Byer Sr.] built a very big house for those days (1825) for it had three storeys. In it David lived all his seventy-two years and his great-great-grandchildren are growing up in it today. It is almost unchanged. The same handwrought hinges are across the front door, the same worn latch, the same built-in bench runs the whole length of the wide verandah above which is a second storey verandah on which the old benches used for the Dunker house meetings of the church are still stored.”

The Byer-Shank House is a rare and early example of a Pennsylvania German farmhouse of frame construction with a two-tier front veranda. It is the only one of its kind remaining in Markham and has had only minimal exterior alterations, likely due to the fact that the property remained in the ownership of the same family for over two centuries. Its restrained design reflects the simple domestic architecture that the Byer family would have been familiar with in Pennsylvania. It exhibits elements of the conservative Georgian architectural tradition but with the asymmetry indicative of a Germanic influence, notably on the dwelling’s facade. The two-tier veranda is a locally rare feature that gives this farmhouse an inn-like character.



View of the Byer-Shank Farmstead from Highway 48.

Context

The Byer-Shank House is one of a number of nineteenth and early twentieth century dwellings in the vicinity of the historic rural community of Milnesville that help make legible the agricultural history of the area. The house is part of a complete farmstead which includes a large gambrel-roofed barn and a cluster of outbuildings. The farmstead is located some distance from Highway 48 and is screened by mature trees. The property is composed of portions of the western halves of Markham Township Lots 22 and 23, Concession 8, with the

buildings more particularly located on Lot 22. The meandering Little Rouge Creek runs to the east of the buildings. This property is historically linked to another smaller Byer house at 10451 Highway 48 on the northern portion of Markham Township Lot 23, Concession 8. On the same property is the relocated Chancy Crosby House. The Crosby House, individually designated under By-law 94-98, was relocated in 1997 from the southern portion of Markham Village (Vinegar Hill) to remove it from the path of Highway 407. The Byer Cemetery is located near the Crosby House, on a separate parcel. The Byer-Shank House is also historically linked to the Jesse and Emma Byer House at 10388 Highway 48, and the former Byer Brothers Brookside Apiaries at 10379 Highway 48.

Sources

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Compliance with Ontario Regulation 9/06, as amended – Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.

The Byer-Shank House has design value and physical value as a rare and early example of a Pennsylvania German farmhouse of frame construction with a two-tier front veranda.

The property has historical value or associative value because it is associated with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.

The Byer-Shank House has historical value for its association with the Pennsylvania German Byer and Shank families, long-time owners. This property is the homestead of the family of Jonas Byer, a prominent early landowner, who came to Markham Township from York County, Pennsylvania in 1810-1811 with his wife Elizabeth (Schwartz) Byer and their six children.

Further, The Byer-Shank House has historical value and associative value representing the following themes in Markham's cultural history:

- **The cultural and religious mosaic theme of Pennsylvania German Tunkers being attracted to Markham in the early nineteenth century;**
- **The theme of industry, innovation and economic development for the property's association with the Byer sawmill, in operation as early as 1817;**
- **The theme of industry, innovation and economic development for the property's association with the Byer Cancer Cure and the Byer Cancer Hospital.**

The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.

The Byer-Shank House has contextual value for being physically, functionally, visually and historically linked to its site where it has stood since 1829, and for its connection to the Byer House and Byer Cemetery at 10451 Highway 48, the Jessie and Emma Byer House at 10388 Highway 48, and the former Byer Brothers Brookside Apiaries at 10379 Highway 48.