

"The site contains the Thomas G. Elgie House, a surviving late 19th century farmhouse that is listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties .

Located in Leaside, the property is the subject of a development application that proposes to subdivide the lot and retain the main section of the heritage building on one of the parcels

The Thomas G. Elgie House (c.1898) is valued as a rare surviving farmhouse and the oldest residential building in Leaside where in its original location it yields information about the development and evolution of the community to which it remains historically and visually linked."

My name is Kae Elgie. I live in Waterloo, Ontario where I am writing a history of the Elgie family farm, the farm I grew up on, in Chatham-Kent.

PIC

In the course of this research, I discovered that Thomas G. Elgie and I share common ancestors, William Elgie and Anna Adamson Elgie, who lived in Ingleby Arncliffe, North Yorkshire, England, from about 1845 to 1714.

[death notice]

William and Anna were Thomas G's great-great-great-great grandparents. William and Anna are my 7 times great grandparents. I can't say I am closely related to Thomas G. Elgie, but I am related.

My research is focused not so much on genealogy, but more on the 200 acre farm that I grew up on, the property transactions associated with it back to the first parchment deed from The Canada Company, as well as the pre-European contact people who lived on that land and left artifacts dating back 10,000 years.

I am very interested in pioneering practices, and the evolution of the housing built form.

In my case, there was a family belief that my grandparents' house was built by the founder of the hamlet I grew up in, Dawn Mills, spelled D-A-W-N, not to be confused with the model community developed along the Don River from 1952 and 1965.

I questioned this, and have carefully studied what rich, and not-so-rich people's houses looked like, back in the mid to late 1800s, to try to confirm or negate this family myth. [There is no documentary evidence on deeds or mortgages.] The founder of Dawn Mills, Captain William Taylor, was a very successful businessman who is described as having lived in a mansion by local historians.

My grandparents' house was quite modest. I am convinced we grew up on Captain Taylor's land, but not in Captain Taylor's house.

Looking at the photos, archival and current, in the background file for this item, it is clear to me that Thomas G. Elgie's home was that of a well-to-do person.

[pic of house]

The monument erected in his memory in the Mount Pleasant Cemetery further attests to this fact.

[pic of monument]

This history of The Elgie Family, written by Molly Anne MacDonald in 1991, makes it clear that Thomas was an enterprising man. He emigrated to Canada in 1841 and immediately became the proprietor of

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CITY OF TORONTO

the Bay Horse Inn. By 1850, he was well enough off to loan his brother a £300 mortgage. In 1883, he was both a farmer (per the assessment rolls) and a partner in an upholstery, cabinetmaking and furniture dealing business (per the Toronto City Directory). He was listed as a realtor in the 1886 City Directory.

Clearly, this was a successful businessman.

This is important to remember when considering exactly what needs to be designated as worthy of preservation. Despite the whittling away, over time, of what was once called the "Elgie Estate", the circular driveway and the way the house is set back from the street make it clear this was not the residence of a common farmer – as was my great-great grandfather's house. No, this house was built and situated in a way designed to show off Thomas G. Elgie's accomplishments and status.

Thus, it's not just the house which needs to be preserved, it's the whole setting which becomes, if you like, a cultural heritage landscape.

This landscape is worthy of preservation because it captures and reminds us of the entrepreneurial spirit so prevalent in the early days of York Township.

Hiving off, or moving the house, would cause this part of the story, this part of our heritage, to be lost.

Thank you, on behalf of Elgies everywhere.

Thomas G. Elgie 1816-1880

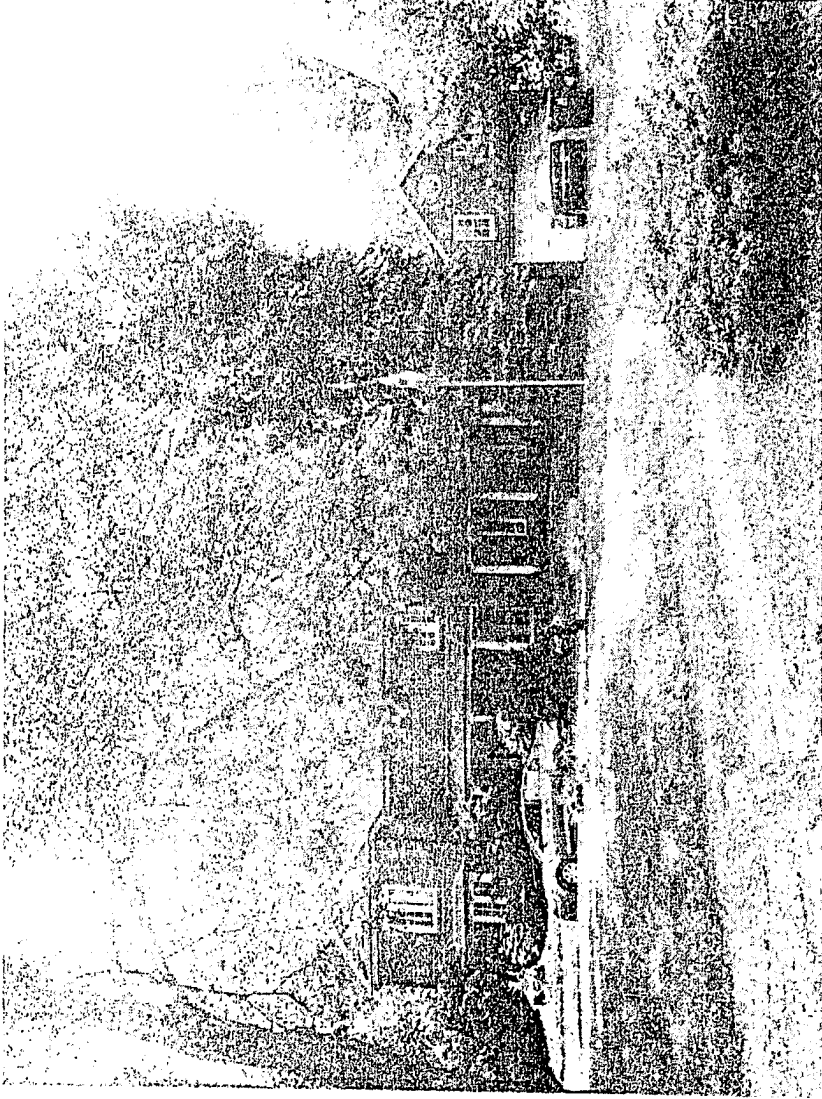


- Josiah Bruce Studio, 118 King St. W., Toronto
- c. 1875
- Notation on reverse
- “Elizabeth Beckwith married Thomas Elgie”

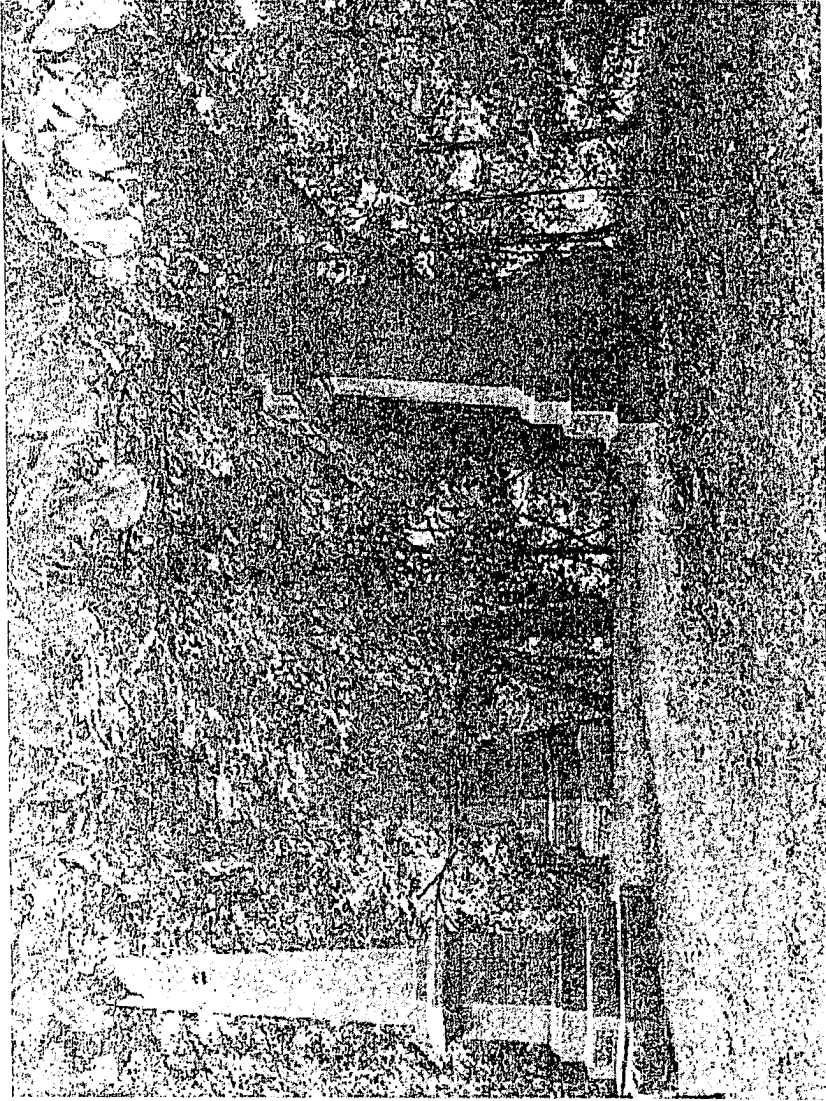
Thomas Elgie, d. 1880

DEATH OF MR. T. ELGIE.—A large number of our readers will regret to hear of the death of Mr. Thos. Elgie, of the Pines, Davisville, which took place on the evening of Sunday last. The sad event was not unexpected as Mr. Elgie had been confined to his bed for more than a month. He was an ardent sportsman and a most genial gentleman, and will be missed by a large circle of acquaintances.

- "Aft 4 July 1880"
- Clippings found in Elizabeth Adah Elgie's scrapbook
- Source: Craigmyle Gordons family tree
- <http://trees.ancestrylibrary.com/tree/25231468/person/1629001133/media?pgnum=1>



**Thomas G. Elgie house,
262 Bessborough Drive, June 2012.**



Thomas Elgie monument, Mount Pleasant Cemetery