

196 Niagara Street  
"Twin Gates - The Mateka House"

Prepared for City of Welland L.A.C.A.C. by Nora A. Reid, M.A.

## A. ARCHITECTURE

### 1. STYLE

This small one and one half story house of post and beam construction has both Italianate and Classic Revival features. Centred in the projecting frontispiece are two sets of Italianate style double front doors with glass upper panels, flanked by classical pilasters (Figures 2, 6-10). The panes of the inner doors have segmentally arched tops. This same type of arch is echoed in the window under the roof peak above. Double hung windows throughout the house have their original glass with new glazing bars. A wrap around veranda of Queen Anne inspiration (Figures 12-15, 17, 18, 20, 21) with classical posts and spindles and a small porch above the front door were likely built a few decades after the construction of the house.

### 2. CONSTRUCTION

Post and beam construction. House is supported on four large chestnut beams (Figures 61 and 62). Two large ceiling beams upstairs and down are joined with wooden pegs.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. AGE

Registry office records indicate that lot numbers forty and forty-one on the east side of Main Street (changed to Niagara Street in 1935) were created in 1853 when the original 80 acres of the Shotwell farm were subdivided for James Shotwell. On January 15th of that year, Lots 40 and 41 (1 rood, 8 perches) (this house sits on lot 40) were sold by Smith Shotwell to William Thomson for 25 pounds.<sup>2</sup> No definitive record exists as to whether William Thomson built a house on lot 40 before it passed from his hands in 1865 (see history below). However, Thomson owned a two-acre block consisting of lots 40, 41, 43 and 44 (Figure 32) and took two mortgages on this block of 1 and one in 1855 for \$600.<sup>00</sup>, and a second one in 1861 for \$760.<sup>00</sup>.<sup>3</sup> Given the relative prices for land alone and buildings at that time, the amounts of the mortgages would indicate that there was something built on at least one of those lots.

The sale to Ozial Rounds in 1865 provides few clues as it was a Sheriff's seizure for unpaid debt and all four lots went for \$8.<sup>00</sup>.<sup>4</sup> In 1869 Rounds mortgaged the same four lots for \$800.<sup>00</sup>, again indicating the presence of a built structure.<sup>5</sup> The earliest available assessment roll for 1872 indicates the block of land was worth \$1200.<sup>00</sup>. Abner Stringer owned the property from 1873 to 1888. During this time, most of the assessment roll values are given as a total for all four lots (i.e. for 1873 \$2000.<sup>00</sup>) but in 1877 it is divided:

Lots 40 and 41, \$2000.<sup>00</sup>,

Lots 43 and 44 \$100.<sup>00</sup> for a total of \$2200.<sup>00</sup>

From this we can infer that whatever had been built earlier was built on lots 40 and/or 41. The first year we have a definitive value for lot 40 is 1892 when that lot alone was sold for \$900.<sup>00</sup><sup>6</sup> indicating the presence of a structure. From this record it appears that the earlier assessments and mortgages referred to structures built on lot 40, the site of the present house, and lot 41.

The structure of the house also suggests an early date. The double leaved front door and segmented arches over some of the windows and the front door are of Italianate style, which lasted in Upper Canada between approximately 1850 and 1900. These features may be original to the house or a later embellishment added sometime before 1900. However, the house is of post and beam construction, being supported on four big chestnut beams in the basement, which usually indicates a construction date of, pre-1870's (when the lighter balloon framing began to be used). The presence of Classic Revival features around the front door, including the side pilasters and a row of small windows above the door, now lost (see ALTERATIONS below) also indicates an early date, as the Classic Revival style was popular from 1830, and went out of style about 1860. The presence of post and beam construction and Classic Revival details reinforce the estimate for date of construction as circa 1855, when Thomson took out the first mortgage. Other typical 1850's features are present including the enclosed central front vestibule (used to protect from the weather before porches became common), the centre hall plan and high interior basements with panelling beneath low windows (see ALTERATIONS).

#### 4. ARCHITECT

The name of the architect and builder is not known at this time. T. H. Lewis, Mayer of Welland between 1940 and 1945, did interior renovations and re-plastering in 1946 when the Hignell family owned the house. A Mr. Fox may have built the garage.<sup>7</sup>

## 5. DESIGN

The building is not outstanding or unique in design or craftsmanship.

## 6. INTERIOR

The interior of this house has been extensively remodelled several times during the course of its history. The only details, which appear to have survived without some alteration, are the staircase in the front hall, the panelling beneath the dining room windows (north-west room, first floor) and some of the trim & window surrounds upstairs. (See ALTERATIONS below).

## B. HISTORY

### 7. PERSON

The land was originally part of a 1796 Crown grant of 300 acres in Thorold Township from George III to Captain Thomas Welch,<sup>8</sup> whose name can be found on much of the original land registration for this area. A descendant of Welsh nobility whose family lived in Ireland for several centuries before settling in America during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Capt. Welch was a surveyor in Pennsylvania before serving with the British Army. He came to Upper Canada in 1793 and was employed to survey portions of Norfolk and Lincoln Counties (Welland County was then part of Lincoln).<sup>9</sup>

It became part of the Shotwell farm when William Shotwell bought Lot 247 and the south part of Lot 248 along the Welland River from Welch in 1803. The Shotwell family emigrated from Wales to America during the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. William and his wife Martha settled in this area when they purchased Lots 231 and 237 about 1800. Shotwell Street in Welland was named for descendant Smith Shotwell, who donated a section of the farm fronting the river for Welland's first sawmill, built by Messrs. E. Seeley and John Dunigan.<sup>10</sup>

Smith Shotwell sold lots 40 and 41, with a frontage of 2 chains (132 feet) on North Main Street (Niagara) to William Thomson, a resident of Merrittsville (as Welland was then known) in January of 1853 (see AGE above). The deed lists Thomson's occupation as miller. At that time, Welland had two grain or

grist mills, one built by Moses Cook about 1850 on the south bank of the Welland river, and one built by the above mentioned Messrs. Seely and Dunigan in 1847, on the north bank of the river at the corner of what is now Riverbank Road and Niagara Street (Fig. 1). A raceway was dug to provide waterpower to run the mill. This was reportedly the first flourmill in Welland. According to the History of Welland County, published in 1887, the Seely and Dunlop (sic) flouring mill was destroyed by fire in 1860, and in that location, by William Thompson (sic), a new mill was soon erected. It would seem reasonable to conclude that this was the same William Thomson, miller, who was living nearby on Main Street (later registry office documents also spell his name, with a “p” - see below).

Thomson had other milling enterprises elsewhere in the peninsula. W.A. Thompson, miller, is listed in Smith’s Canada, Past, Present and Future of 1851 in the Lincoln, Welland and Haldimand business directory as residing in the now defunct community of Waterloo, along with a David Thompson, mill owner, in the community of Indiana (also since disappeared). The Directory of the Province of Ontario for 1857 lists a William A. Thomson as owner of a gristmill in Fort Erie. The 1861 census for Welland indicates a William Thomson, miller, married, age 33, born Scotland, adherent of the Church of England with four children: Alfred, Lymon, Alexander, and Edwin, living on the west side. Thomson sold the mill, which was run by waterpower in 1874 to J.A. Everingham. It was later known as Phelps Brothers, then the Welland Flouring Mills.<sup>11</sup>

Thomson lost the property on Main Street in September of 1865. A Sheriff’s Deed allowed Sheriff Robert Hobson to seize the “...lands and premises...together with all houses, outhouses, and appurtenances thereto belonging...” on account of a debt of thirty seven pounds twelve shillings and six pence charged...by one James Chambers against the said William Thompson...” (note spelling of Thompson), and provided for the transfer of ownership to Ozial H. Rounds “...in consideration of the sum of eight dollars”.<sup>12</sup>

Mitchell’s Lincoln and Welland directory for 1865 lists Rounds as a machinist living on Elgin Street. Four years later he is listed as proprietor of a planing mill. O. H. Rounds was born in 1854 in New York State. Page’s Atlas of described him in 1876 as a “farmer and lumberman”.<sup>13</sup> Assessment rolls for 1872 locate his mill on a block of land bounded on the north by the mill race, on the east by the Board of Works Lands (canal), on the south by the river and on the west by (north) Main Street. This was the original Seely and Dunigan sawmill. The Tribune that year described him as a “lumber

merchant” and recorded that the school board paid Rounds the sum of \$18.18 for lumber.<sup>14</sup>

Rounds seems to have had quite a problem with thievery. In August of 1872, he charged Captain Burt Minor with stealing timber from the beach west of Port Colborne, but the captain was acquitted. The Tribune of 1877 contained an interesting exchange of letters regarding an employee of Rounds charged with stealing timber.

On April 20, a letter from Mr. Samuel Gilchriese:

“I secured Mr. O. H. Rounds’ ill will by a difficulty about a scow and by charging him with drawing a revolver upon me, before the Grand Jury”.

On May 4, a letter from Mr. Lamont, who says Gilchriese stole plank from him, and continues:

“Again, Gilchriese was running Mr. Rounds’ scow at the time, and he knew that Gilchriese did steal the plank and ordered him not to put it on board the scow, and in consequence of that order, Gilchriese fastened a rope to it and towed it after the scow.”<sup>15</sup>

Rounds was still operating a saw and planing mill on North Main in 1879, as “Round & Son” (O. H. and F.). However, by 1892 Frank Rounds is proprietor of the sawmill, and O. H. Rounds & Son had become a marble works. The marble works was still operating as O. H. Rounds and Son in 1898.<sup>16</sup>

Oziah H. Rounds was elected to Welland Village Council for 1871-1872. He had three sons. Frank apparently went into business with his father, Charles married Charity Silverthorn and his third son, Fred, was killed in an accident at age 30 in 1890.<sup>17</sup>

In February of 1873, Oziah Rounds and wife sold lot 40 (with the house on it) separately from the other lots to Abner Stringer. Stringer’s occupation is given on assessment rolls for that year simply as “gentleman” but he appears to have been a retired farmer who moved into town to live. Records of the first Crowland Township Council meeting of January 21, 1850 show that Abner Stringer was appointed a path master. Mitchell’s in 1865 lists Stringer as a farmer on lot 9, concession 6 Crowland, along with Alem and Benjamin Stringer (presumably his sons). Another son may have been A. O. Stringer

who resided in Fenwick during the decade 1872 to 1883 and was a partner in the firm there, Stringer and Brown.<sup>18</sup> Abner Stringer's wife died in Welland on November 20, 1886 at the age of 77 and Abner sold the house two years later to Mary A. Page. Abner himself died at age 82 in Toronto in January 1890.<sup>19</sup>

The Page family were United Empire Loyalists who settled early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the area of Quaker Road and First Avenue, which was known for 100 years as "Page Road". Jonathan Page was born in Massachusetts but the family was living in Ryegate, Vermont when Josiah, Alexander, William (born June 26, 1811) and their ten siblings were born. After the Revolutionary War, the family walked from Ryegate to Canada. Josiah Page served Thorold Township as Assessor for twelve years during a period between 1827 and 1852, was Clerk in 1837-1839 and Councillor in 1851.<sup>20</sup> William Page is listed in Lovell's 1857 directory of Ontario as keeper of a general store in Merrittsville (Welland). Mitchell's 1865 directory lists a William Page as a bookkeeper, living on Merritt Street. By 1869, however, the Province of Ontario Directory lists William Page's occupation as a nurseryman, as did assessment rolls during the 1870's.<sup>21</sup>

In fact there was more than one William Page. The Tribune of November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1878 reported that William Page Senior had died in Wellandport at age 67 but subsequent newspaper reports indicate that a William Page served on the Agricultural Society fair committee (1879) and was defeated in a law suit brought against the town for payment for supervising the tearing down of the old Chippawa River bridge.<sup>22</sup> In 1879 he was still on Merritt Street at the corner of Seely. He served as a Welland Village Councillor in 1877 and Town Councillor in 1878. This William Page, bookkeeper, nurseryman and councillor was likely the son of William Page Senior. A third William Page (presumably a grandson) had a few brushes with the law at age 14, reported in the Tribune in March and April of 1872.<sup>23</sup> The house at 196 Niagara Street was sold by Abner Stringer in March of 1888 to Mary A. Page, wife of William Page. However, it is unclear whether this was William Page Junior or the grandson, William Page, who would by that time been of age to be married and purchase a house.

The following advertisement appeared in the Tribune on April 25, 1890:

"One of the finest residences in Welland for sale on easy terms. Apply to Mrs. Wm. Page, North Main St., Welland".

Two years later, in May of 1892, Mary and William sold the house to Allen E. Taylor.<sup>24</sup> Allen E. Taylor and his brother John B. Taylor were born in Pelham township on the farm owned by their father, Elisha Taylor, and which their grandfather, John Taylor, a Quaker loyalist from Dutchess County, New York, purchased from the Crown in 1790.

Born October 7, 1849, John B. Taylor married Sarah Barker of Norwich Township in 1868 and farmed in Pelham, then Norwich Township. After his wife died, in 1881 and in partnership with his brother Allen E. (born March 29, 1863), he started a grocery business in Norwich in under the name of Taylor Brothers. In 1884 the brothers sold their business in Norwich and purchased the mercantile business of the late James bridges in Welland. A Welland Tribune advertisement of January 11, 1884 noted that Taylor Brothers (successors to James Bridges) were selling groceries, glass, farm produce, etc. at Bridge's old stand. In 1886 J. H. Crow became a partner, and the firm name was changed to Taylor & Crow.<sup>25</sup> In 1889 Taylor and Crow were advertising that they sold one of the latest products – cotton and rubber hose for lawn watering.<sup>26</sup>

About 1891 the business partnership between the brothers broke up. Allen E. remained a partner in Taylor and Crow with J. B. Crow. This store was located on the north side of West Main (next to the bridge) and began specializing in hardware. John B. opened J. B. Taylor & Co., grocers, across the street in what became known as the Taylor Block (35-41 West Main) and later as the Morwood Block (Figure 31).<sup>27</sup> The following description of the latter business appeared in 1902 in a souvenir booklet for the town of Welland:

#### J. B. Taylor & Co, Grocers

There is not an establishment in Welland that carries a finer stock of groceries, china and crockery ware than that of Messrs J. B. Taylor & Co. on West Main Street at the head of North Main Street. Nor is there a store where patrons obtain more for their money, quality and quantity considered, prompter service or more courteous treatment, than they do at J. B. Taylor & Co's. Mr. Taylor entered business many years since, primitively, but by strict integrity he has developed a trade requiring increased facilities. Eleven years ago he moved from across the street into his present quarters, a three-story brick building, the lower floor and basement of which is devoted to business purposes. The premises are up to date, and with the large plate glass fronts reflecting the character of the goods within, there

being practically two departments combined in one, makes it one of the most attractive establishments of its character in town, and even in the county. The two apartments afford a combined floor surface of 3,000 square feet. That to the right is devoted to the sale of choice family and staple groceries, including high grade teas and coffees, flour, spices, bottled and canned goods and relishes, both domestic and imported fruits, nuts, confectionary, tobacco and cigars. In addition thereto Mr. Taylor deals in fish and oysters, smoked meats, and country produce, the latter purchased direct from the neighbouring farmers; while his premises are equipped with a cold blast storage with a capacity for the care of two tons of butter and other products. Adjoining the grocery is a completely stocked crockery and glassware department, including the best of porcelain and earthenware, of the "Haviland" and other celebrated European makers, which Mr. Taylor imports direct, thereby saving middlemen's profits to his customers, these being singly and in sets which, with the glass and lamp ware goods, forms a very essential household department. Connected to the main building is a three-story warehouse, devoted to the storage of heavy groceries, woodenware and surplus stock. The establishment is a credit alike to the business element of the town, and its enterprising proprietor.<sup>28</sup>

Four years later The People's Press of August 7, 1906 also published a description of the store:

J. B. Taylor  
Groceries and China

There is not an establishment in Welland that surpasses this store for quality of goods and absolute satisfaction to customers. If a newcomer to Welland inquires which is the best place to trade, the chances are ten to one that he will be told J. B. Taylor's can't be beat. That is the unanimous opinion of all who have dealt with him. Mr. Taylor has been in business in Welland for many years, and has built up a reputation for quality and business integrity that is indeed an enviable one. Mr. Taylor's store is a model of neatness and order and he carries a large, strictly up to date stock of fine groceries, canned goods, delicacies, etc. Choice cooked and smoked meats are an especially popular line. Imported and domestic fruits and vegetables will always be found choice and fresh and in great variety at this store sooner than at any other. In fact, there is nothing that the most exacting trade demands that this store cannot supply.



The stock of china, crockery, glassware, etc., is also large and well assorted. Mr. Taylor imports largely in these lines, and the finest goods of the world's markets will always be found at the closest prices. Mr. Taylor enjoys one of the largest and highest class trades in the town of Welland.<sup>29</sup>

Allen Taylor dissolved his partnership with J. H. Crow in 1896. Allen Taylor was married in October 1885 to Eva Watts, daughter of John and Mary (Holmes) Watts, both born in England. They had two children, a boy born June 15, 1887 and a daughter born June 9, 1891. He was an officer of the Welland Fire Company and a member of the Masonic order and the Independent Order of Foresters. From 1891 to 1893 he served as a Welland town councillor, was deputy reeve in 1894 and reeve in 1895 and 1896.<sup>30</sup>

Ownership of the house at 196 North Main passed from Allen E. Taylor to his brother John B. Taylor about 1904.<sup>31</sup> John Bruce Taylor had married Rachel Bradsaw of Welland in 1887. John Taylor died about 1918 and his widow, Emma R. (Rachel?) continued to reside there until her death about 1936. In October of 1935 a city bylaw legally changed the name of North Main Street to Niagara Street.<sup>32</sup>

In June of 1937, the executor for the estate of John B. Taylor sold the house to Edna Frances Patricia Hignell, wife of Dr. Charles Roy Hignell (Figure 1). Charles R. Hignell was born in Guelph, Ontario where he received his early education. During the First World War, Hignell attended the University of Western Ontario where he graduated in medicine and surgery in 1924. He did post-graduate work in surgery at McGill University in Montreal and practiced in Grand Valley (near Orangeville) and Fort Erie before coming to Welland in 1935. Dr. Hignell's office was located on the south side of East Main near the bridge, upstairs at no. 9 above Brennan's Drug Store. He also served as jail physician, Michigan Central Railway doctor, Atlas Steels doctor and Department of Veterans Affairs doctor for the Welland district. He was a member of the Merritt Masonic Lodge, Holy Trinity Anglican Church and the Welland Lawn Bowling Club.

Dr. Hignell died suddenly in July of 1949. Following is part of the tribute paid to Dr. Hignell by Dr. D. C. MacNeill, president of the Welland County Medical Society, as reported in the Tribune of July 2<sup>nd</sup>:

Dr. Hignell was known, loved and respected by all the doctors of the district, first of all as a man of the highest character and integrity,

whose cheerful disposition and soundness of opinion was appreciated by all at all times.

He was respected as a man of the highest professional standards. His clinical judgment and his work as a physician and surgeon reflected his thorough training and a full clinical experience. His patients will surely miss his kindly, skilful attendance.

Mrs. Hignell, known as Pat (Figures 25 and 27), was originally from London, Ontario. She was a member of Joan of Arc chapter of the I.O.D.E. in Welland. The Hignells had two daughters, Lorna and Frances, who were raised in the house. Lorna married Bill Rawlins in May of 1949 (Figure 5) and moved to Port Colborne where she raised a family of three boys and worked for many years in the Gas Company office. Frances (Figures 4, 14, 27) continued to reside at 196 Niagara Street while teaching at Ross School. She received undergraduate and graduate degrees in Psychology from the University of Western Ontario in London and taught psychology for many years at London Teacher's College. In 1959 she married Ralph Devereux and moved to London. The Devereux's also have three children. Mrs. Patricia Hignell continued to reside at 196 Niagara until it was sold in 1977. She died in August of 1983.<sup>33</sup>

In April 1977, the house was purchased by Anthony "Tony" Mateka. Mr. Mateka was born, raised and educated in Welland. He worked in and managed a local hotel until 1955 when he took a job at Stelco Page Hersey Works in the inspection department where he eventually became lead inspector. With a background in writing work procedures, he transferred to Welland Tubes where he was made Inspection Foreman. A few years later he went into the Operation Department as a Finishing Foreman and later became a Shift General Foreman. When the new Stelform Mill was established, Tony was assigned to the team responsible for setting up and starting the operation of the mill. After training in Germany, Tony wrote the operation procedures and trained operators on the various machines in the Finishing Department where the large sized pipes were made until his retirement in 1989.<sup>34</sup>

### C. ENVIRONMENT

#### 10. CONTINUITY

The house is located in one of the oldest established residential areas of the city. However, this part of what used to be known as the North Ward along

Niagara Street, being a main traffic artery, is in transition. Some of the older homes have been demolished to make way for apartment construction. Niagara Street is an area of mixed character, with Victorian, Edwardian and newer construction. This 19<sup>th</sup> century house is therefore not out of keeping with the predominant character of the area.

## 12. LANDMARK

The house is a conspicuous and familiar structure in the context of the neighbourhood.

### E. INTEGRITY

#### 18. SITE

The house occupies its original site and has not been moved.

#### 19. ALTERATIONS

##### Exterior

At some point before its purchase by the Hignells, the original clapboard siding put on with square nails was covered with stucco, as can be seen in the earliest available photo of the house from 1938 (Figure 2). The front door (Figures 3 and 10) once had a four paned transom above which was likely covered up at the same time.<sup>35</sup> During the Hingells' tenure a barn that originally stood directly east of the house (Figures 12 and 26) was demolished. In 1946 the Hignell family had extensive renovations done. The east end of the kitchen wing, once a pantry and woodshed, was converted to a garage with storage above (Figure 13 at right, and Figures 9, 21, 22-24, 47-51) and pipes were installed under the driveway bringing heat from the chimney to melt ice and snow on the drive. Sometime before 1949, likely also in 1946, two short sections of railing extending from the porch columns of the front (west) entrance that terminated in short pillars similar to the one on the south side (Figure 15) were removed (compare Figures 4 and 5).<sup>36</sup>

After purchasing it in 1977, Mr. Mateka with the assistance of his son Jeffrey also embarked on extensive renovations. Most of the carpentry work was done by the Matekas themselves. The railing and short pillars of the west porch entrance were reproduced (Figure 10). Mr. Mateka stripped the paint off the front porch, levelled it in places using concrete and parged the stone foundation of both the porch and the house with plaster. New exterior shutters

were installed with hand made cast iron hardware. A French door of wood and glass panels located on the south side of the front vestibule (Figure 13) was removed and replaced with a solid wood door which does not provide access (Figure 11). A second french door on the main wall of the house under the porch on the south side (Figure 17) which had previously been a solid door (Figure 15) was again replaced with a solid door (Figure 21) with a new fireplace installed on the interior wall directly behind it. All the windows were removed and the original old wavy glass (Figures 13, 33) was cut to fit the new six over six-paned sashes. A door and two windows in the east wall of the house where it joins the kitchen wing under the back porch were removed and replaced with two new windows (compare Figures 27-29 with Figure 30). A door leading from the upstairs bath to the sun deck above the back porch was replaced with a window (Figures 28 and 30).<sup>37</sup>

### Interior (Figures 33-36)

The house has a centre hall plan and is basically an “L” shape. The main part of the house is a rectangle with a centrally located projecting frontispiece or vestibule at the front door leading to a centre hall. The centre hall, with stairs to the second story on its south wall, divides the main wing of the house symmetrically, with (originally) two rooms on either side of the hall. At the south east corner this main wing is joined by a kitchen wing or “tail”. This centre hall plan with kitchen tail was a common configuration in mid 19<sup>th</sup> century houses.

Before the 1946 renovations by the Hignells, the first floor of the house was laid out in the following fashion: the front door opened onto a shallow vestibule with another exterior door (french door) on its south side. To the left (north) side of the vestibule was a long closet with shelves at either end and directly east of this was a radiator (Figure 35). A wide square archway in the east wall of the vestibule led into the front hall proper with a slight rise in floor level between the vestibule and front hall. In the front hall itself, immediately beyond the archway, a door to the right in the south wall at the foot of the staircase led to the rooms on the south side of the house. These were living/dining rooms divided by a square archway (19<sup>th</sup> century double parlour). In the easterly room a door in the north wall led to the basement while two swinging doors in the east wall led to the large wainscoted “farm” type kitchen in the kitchen wing. Beyond the kitchen to the east was a pantry and woodshed.

On the north side of the house was a room that the Hignells called the “music room” accessed by a door on the north side of the front hall. Beyond the music room to the east was a “maid’s” bedroom and bath accessed by swinging door

at the east end of the front hall. Upstairs the configuration of rooms was as it is today: a central hall with bath at the head of stairs (east) and three bedrooms opening off the hall, one each on the south, north and west sides of the house.<sup>38</sup>

During the 1946 renovations, Dr. Hignell had the archway removed between the rooms on the south side and a steel beam placed across the ceiling to provide support. The swinging door to the bath at the east end of the front hall was closed off and a desk and chair sat there. The former “maid’s” room on the north side of the house was converted into a kitchen while the original large kitchen on the south side became a small self-contained apartment. The former pantry and woodshed at the east end became a new garage with a tack room above (Figures 47-51) (see Exterior above).<sup>39</sup>

The Matekas’ interior renovations since 1977 have been even more extensive. These include:

#### First Floor

Original horsehair plaster and lath throughout was removed and replaced with wallboard. Hardwood flooring throughout the first floor was removed and replaced, in the process removing the change in level between the vestibule and front hall.

#### Front Hall

On the south side of the vestibule area (Figure 36) a new powder room was created, on the north side the closet received a new door and the radiator was removed. The archway between the vestibule and front hall was removed. Door and window surrounds (except where new doors were created as noted below) in the front hall, living room (south side) and dining room (north side, Figures 40-42) and baseboards are original but have been altered. A strip of moulding along the outer edges of the original door and window frames (visible in the hall in Figure 35) was removed and the high baseboards (typical of the 1850’s) were cut down. Three new doorways were created from the front hall, a basement door on the south wall under the stairs (Figure 38), a new door into the kitchen at the east end (Figure 37) and an archway in the north wall (Figure 39), replacing the original door to the dining room, which was further to the west. The staircase has been stripped and refinished but is otherwise unaltered.

#### Dining Room

As noted above, all windows have new sashes with the original glass, original plaster was replaced with wallboard and original high baseboards cut

down in size by approximately 1½ inches. The chair rail and ceiling moulding are new. Some pieces of the original wooden surround of the west window have been replaced. Panelling directly beneath the low set windows is original and typical of 1850's style. A door in the east wall, which led into the kitchen, was removed (see below).

#### Kitchen (north-east room, Figures 43-45)

The northeast room, originally the “maid's” room or slip bedroom off the kitchen (common in early houses), then the kitchen after the 1946 renovation, was completely redesigned and redone by Mr. Mateka. In addition to the new windows in the east wall noted under “Exterior” above, the south wall is new, having been moved south three feet to incorporate part of the southeast room – an alcove that originally led into the basement stairs – into the kitchen. All cupboards, etc. are new and brickwork around the stovetop and ovens was designed and built by Mr. Mateka. A door on the west wall, which led into the dining room, was removed to accommodate the new stove and ovens. The window over the sink that replaced the outside door in the east wall, while new, also incorporated old glass.

#### Living Room (southwest room)

The steel beam put in during 1946 was removed and replaced with two equally spaced steel beams finished to resemble wood, and the north wall extended to the east, incorporating the alcove entrance to the basement of the northeast corner into the kitchen (see above). On the south wall a central fireplace with bookcases was installed, immediately behind the exterior door (Figure 21) (see Exterior above). Woodwork surrounding the three-window bay in the southwest corner (Figures 33-34) is original with the exception of some areas where rotten wood was replaced. The sashes, as elsewhere, are new, reusing the old glass. Panelling underneath the bay windows was absent and has been reproduced by Mr. Mateka to match that under the windows of the (northwest) dining room. A coved ceiling here was removed when the plaster was replaced with wallboard and the moulding at the ceiling is new.

#### Family Room (southwest room, Figure 46)

This originally had wainscoting on the east wall consisting of three wide horizontal boards capped by a smaller board. Mr. Mateka removed this and replaced it with the present wainscoting of vertical boards. A chimney on the east wall was removed. Both exterior door in the south wall and door to garage in the east wall are new. The entrance to the present kitchen at the northwest corner was widened and opened up.

## Second Floor (Figures 52-58)

As on the first floor, Mr. Mateka had new 6/6 sashes made for all the windows, reusing the old wavy glass. The hardwood floors were refinished. Door surrounds, staircase railing and baseboards are as found and have not been altered. All the original doors with two vertical panels typical of the 1850's similar to one in the basement (Figures 64, 67 and 59) have been removed and replaced with new doors.

## Bath (east room, Figure 54)

As noted above the door in the exterior east wall of the bathroom leading to the sun deck was replaced with a window. New wainscoting was added by Mr. Mateka. An existing tub from circa 1940's was refinished. All other fixtures and lights are new.

## Bedrooms (Figures 55-58)

Window sashes and doors replaced as noted above. Trim is unaltered with exception of panelling added beneath the window of the south bedroom. A linen closet was constructed in the north bedroom.

## Attic

A fire in the house at some time before the Hignells' and Mateka's ownership left burn marks on the front stair (Figure 52) and charring on the attic beams. Mr. Mateka added "helper" 2 x 4s to the damaged beams in the attic.

## Basement (Figures 59-67)

The basement has a stone foundation (Figures 59 and 66). A neighbour of Mr. Mateka's told him the stone for this was barged in from Thorold. On top of this foundation a wooden bottom plate supports the large crosswise beams (Figure 61-62). New "helper" planks have been added to strengthen some of the joists (Figure 61). Two upright posts were removed and a central block wall added in order to level the floor above. The original 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches thick, tongue in groove wide plank floors underneath the hardwood of the main floor are visible here (Figures 60 and 62). The left part of a large double door (Figure 59) leads to an outside stair and trap door under the back (kitchen) porch. Doors here have two vertical panels and old hardware (Figures 59, 64 and 67) and likely date to the construction of the house. A cistern under the southeast corner has been converted to a fruit and wine cellar (Figure 65).<sup>40</sup>

## 20. CONDITION

The building appears to be in good structural condition.



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4. See note 12.
5. Mortgage, 21 Dec. 1869, reg. 24 Dec. 1869, Ozial H. Round to John Dunigan; reg. no. 336.
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7. Interviews, Mrs. Lorna Hignell Rawlins, Dec. 4, 1998, Jan. 19, 1999; Mrs. Lorna Rawlins and Mrs. Frances Devereux, Feb. 6, 1999.
8. Niagara South Registry Office. Grant, 22 June 1796, George III to Captain Thomas Welch; reg. no. 1.
9. E. A. Owen, Pioneer Sketches of Long Point Settlement (Toronto, 1898; reprint ed., Belleville, Ont., 1972) pp. 311-312.
10. Niagara South Registry Office. Bargain and Sale, 2 July 1803, registered 15 April 1819, Thomas Welch to William Shotwell; reg. no. 5590. The City of Welland Centennial Edition of The Evening Tribune, July 19, 1958, page 23, in an article entitled "Auctioneer, Hotelman, Policeman and Livery Business Operator Recalled" noted "...Mr. Smith Shotwell, of whom a street is named for in the Fourth Ward, who donated the land which was instrumental in bringing to Welland, the town's first industry, a sawmill."

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35. Interview, A. Mateka, Dec. 3, 1998. Mr. Mateka found the original siding and transom underneath in the course of renovations undertaken since his purchase of the house in 1977.

36. Interview, L. Rawlins and F. Devereux, Feb. 6, 1999.

37. Interviews, A. Mateka, Aug. 8, 1997, Dec. 3, 1998.

38. As in note 36.

39. Interviews, L. Rawlins, Dec. 4, 1998, L. Rawlins and F. Devereux, Feb. 6, 1999.

40. As in note 37.



FIGURE 1

Dr. Charles R. Hignell on front steps of 196 Niagara, c. 1940's  
Photo source: Lorna Hignell Rawlins, Frances Hignell Devereux



FIGURE 2  
196 Niagara, winter, 1938  
Source: L. Rawlins, F. Devereux



FIGURE 3  
Front entrance, 1942. Nancy Rogers and Frances Hignell (centre)  
Source: L. Rawlins, F. Devereux



Figure 4  
Lorna and Frances Hignell on front steps  
Source: L. Rawlins and F. Devereux



Figure 5  
Lorna Hignell and William Rawlins  
on front steps on their wedding  
day, May, 1949. Note absence of  
rail and short posts at top of  
steps as seen in Figure 4 above.  
Source: L. Rawlins, F. Devereux





FIGURE 6  
196 Niagara, west (front) side from Niagara Street  
after purchase by Anthony Mateka in 1977  
Source: A. Mateka



FIGURE 7  
Front entrance, circa 1977. Source: A. Mateka



Figure 8  
196 Niagara, front (west) side, 1997



Figure 9  
North and west sides, 1998



Figure 10  
Front entrance, 1997

Figure 11  
Door under porch and porch ceiling,  
west side, 1998





Figure 12  
196 Niagara, west and south sides, winter of 1937-38  
Source: L. Rawlins and F. Devereux

Figure 13  
West and south sides, circa 1960's  
Source: L. Rawlins, F. Devereux





Figures 14 and 15

Top: Christmas Day, 1941. Ada Nagle (aunt), Lorna Hignell, unknown, Frances Hignell, Grandmother Nagle, Uncle Gordon at corner of front entrance on porch.

Bottom: Christmas Day, 1941.  
Same group at Elgin Street entrance.

Source: L. Rawlins and F. Devereux





Figure 16  
Elgin Street corner, circa 1970's  
Source: A. Mateka



Figure 17  
South side from corner of Elgin. Source: A. Mateka



Figure 18  
West and south sides from corner of Niagara and Elgin, circa 1970's  
Source: A. Mateka



Figure 19  
Garage off Elgin on south side  
Source: A. Mateka



Figures 20 and 21  
South side (Elgin Street), 1997-98







Figure 22  
Garage entrance and east end, 1998



Figure 23  
East side and back porch, 1998



Figure 24  
Original door to woodshed  
(now garage), east side  
1998



Figure 25  
Kitchen (back) porch, 1945,  
east side. Mrs. Edna (Nagle)  
Hignell seated on porch.  
Source: L. Rawlins, F. Devereux



Figure 26  
Dr. Hignell on back porch, 1946  
Source: L. Rawlins, F. Devereux



Figure 27  
Frances and Mrs. Hignell on back porch, spring 1950  
Source: L. Rawlins, F. Devereux



Figures 28 & 29  
Back porch, north and east  
walls of house, circa 1970's.  
Source: A. Mateka



Figure 30  
Back porch, north and east walls of house, 1998



Figure 31  
West Main Street, circa 1906. J.B. Taylor & Co., second block from left.  
Source: Welland Public Library

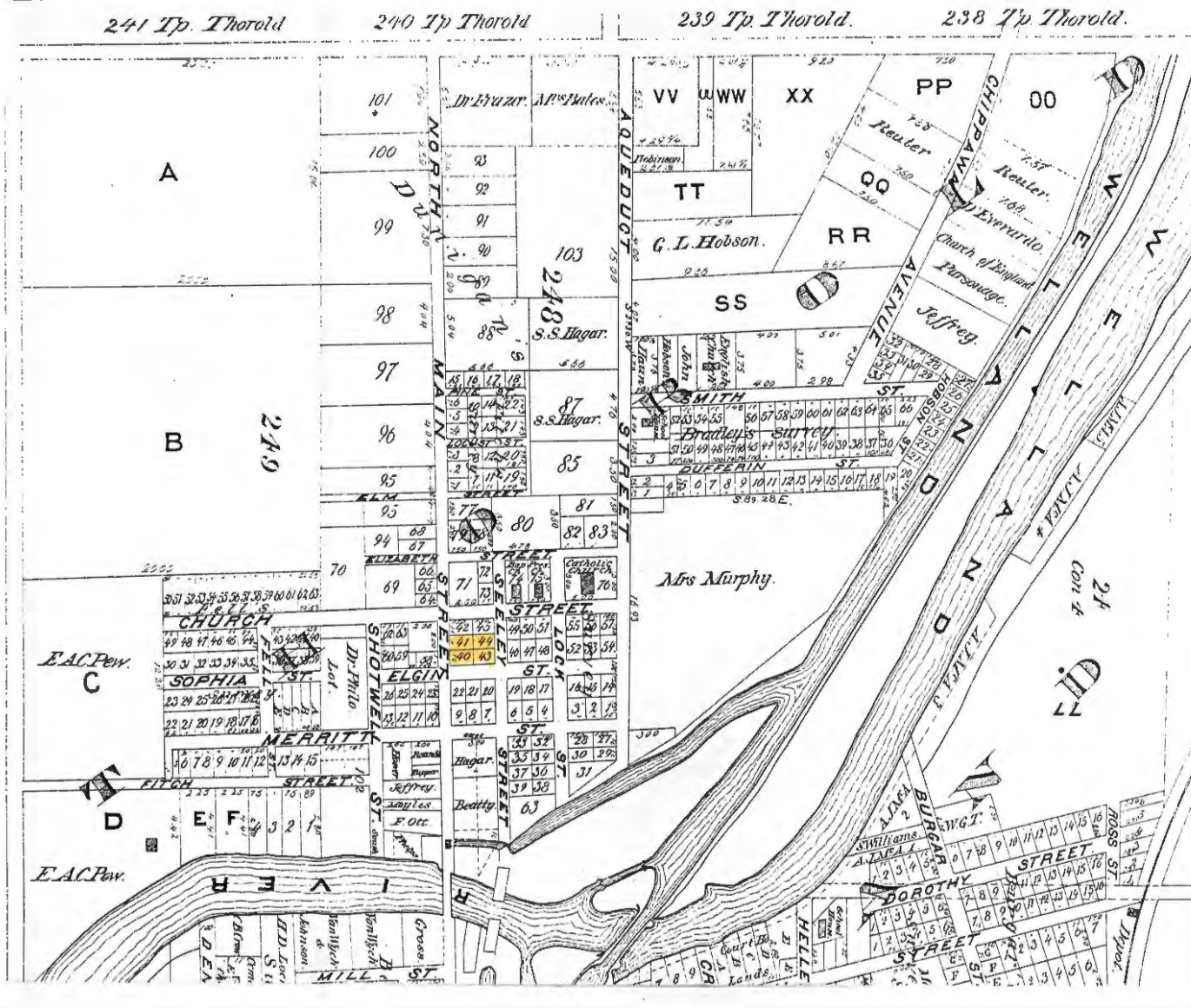


Figure 32  
 Map of Welland showing lots 40, 41, 43, 44, circa 1876  
 Source: H. R. Page. Illustrated Historical Atlas of  
 the Counties of Lincoln and Welland, Ontario



Figure 33  
Living room (south-west room) - three window bay at south-west corner.  
Lorna Hignell Rawlins wedding, May 1949



Figure 34  
Living room - three window bay,  
Christmas, 1953.  
Michael Rawlins, Ada Nagle, Edna  
(Pat) Hignell, Frances Hignell.



Figure 35  
Living room, door to front hall in  
north wall. Dec. 26, 1953.  
Frances Hignell and Michael Rawlins.



FIGURE 36  
Front hall and  
interior front doors.

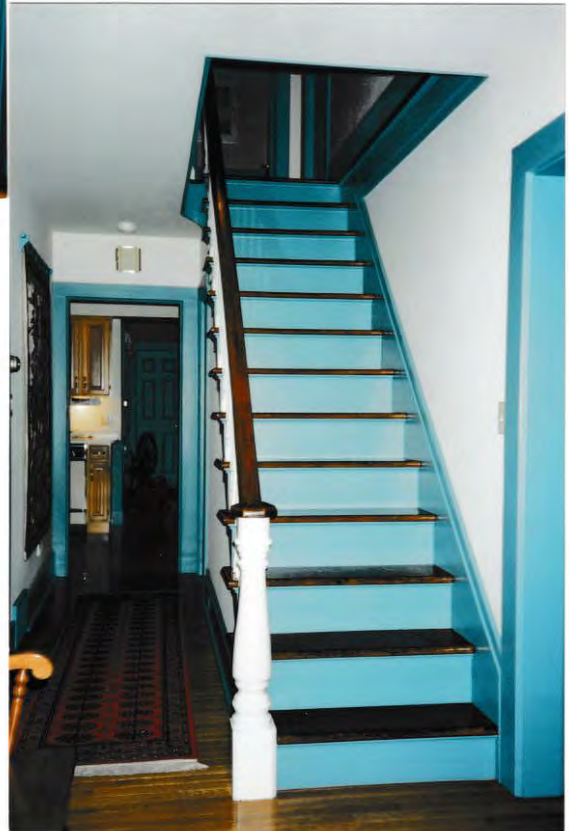


FIGURE 37  
Front hall and  
stair, looking east.



FIGURE 38  
Front hall, looking west



FIGURE 39  
New door to dining room  
north wall of front hall



FIGURES 40 and 41  
Dining room, first floor,  
north west room. Panelling  
under windows original.

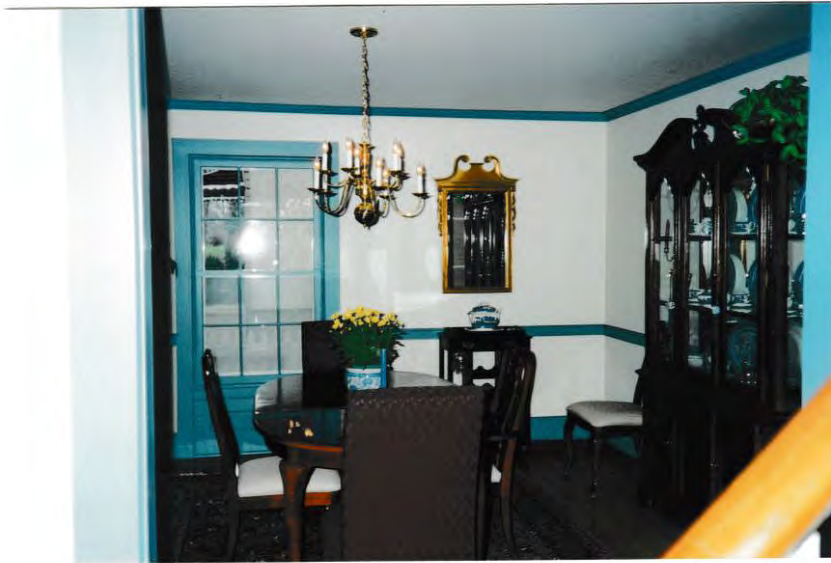


FIGURE 42  
Dining room

FIGURE 43  
Looking from family room, through  
kitchen to east end of front hall





FIGURE 44  
Kitchen, north-east  
room, first floor

FIGURE 45  
Kitchen, north-east corner



FIGURE 46  
Family room, south-east  
room, first floor.

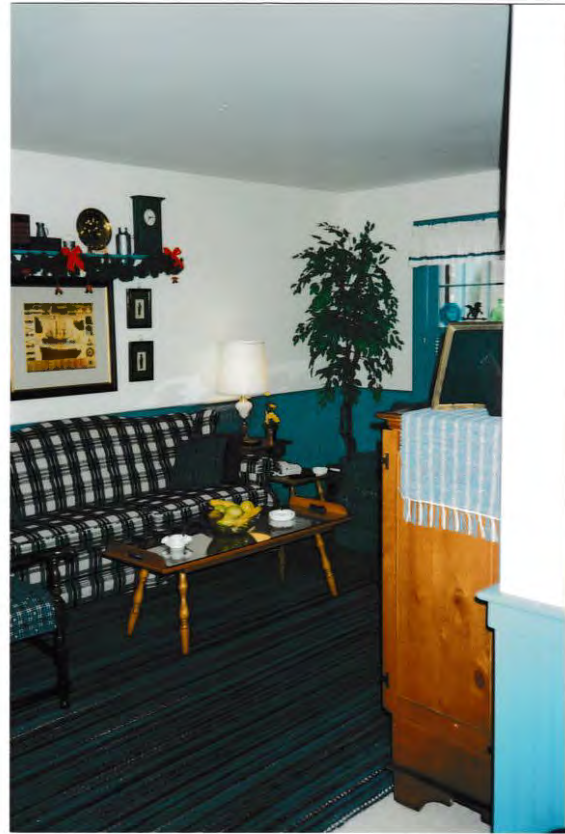


FIGURE 47  
Stairs to "tack room"  
above garage (converted  
1946)



FIGURES 48 and 49  
"Tack room" above east end  
garage, window in east wall  
and cupboard.



FIGURES 50 and 51  
"Tack room" above garage  
Door to attic (Fig. 50)





FIGURE 52  
Stairs to second floor from  
front hall. Burn mark from  
fire visible on fourth step.



FIGURE 53  
Centre hall, second floor,  
looking west.



FIGURE 54  
Second floor bath, east end.



FIGURE 55  
Second floor bedroom, north side.





FIGURE 56  
Second floor bedroom, north window



FIGURE 57  
Second floor bedroom, west end



FIGURE 58  
Second floor bedroom, west side.  
Window in west wall.

FIGURE 59  
Basement, stone foundation and door  
in east wall leading to exterior  
trap door in back porch floor.





FIGURE 60  
Basement ceiling showing  
original wide boards under  
first floor hardwood floors.

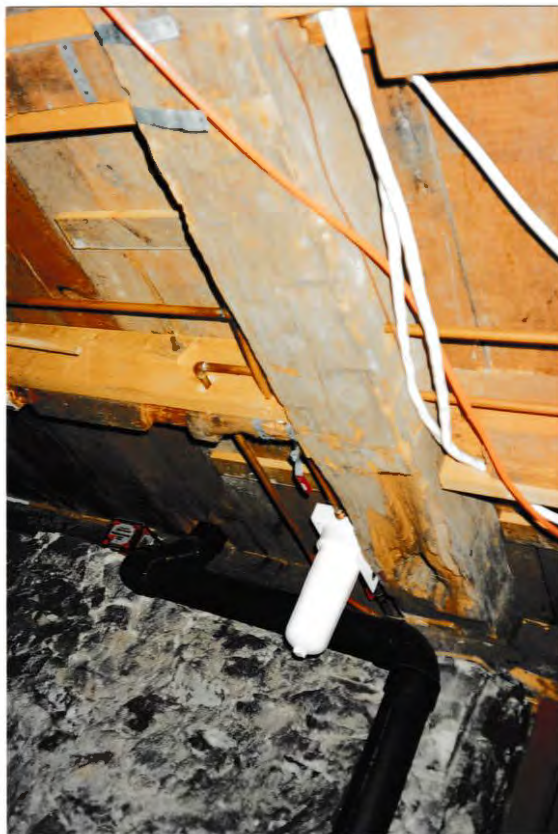


FIGURE 61  
Basement ceiling showing  
chestnut support beam.



FIGURE 62  
Basement ceiling and support beams

FIGURE 63  
Basement crawl space





FIGURES 64 and 65  
Basement - door and interior  
of fruit cellar, south-east  
corner.





FIGURE 66  
Basement - original stone wall  
and new central block wall (right)



FIGURE 67  
Basement door