

Report for Heritage Committee:

RE: Tennessee Avenue Stone Pillars – Humberstone Summer Resort Company

4 March 2022; Michelle Vosburgh, Archivist

History:

The Humberstone Summer Resort Company, incorporated in 1890 by the Province of Ontario, was a endeavour by American entrepreneur, Peter McIntosh, and his business partner, Charles Steele to create a summer cottage resort on Gravelly Bay. The company sold individual lots within the property to cottage owners, and managed the property and its amenities. In 1892, as per an agreement with Humberstone Township Council, part of the former Lakeshore Road was turned over to the company to become a private road, renamed Tennessee Avenue, stretching from Sugarloaf St. on the east, to Lakeshore Road in the west. The township then opened a road allowance for Sugarloaf St. from Steele St. west to connect again with Lakeshore Rd., so the public could bypass the resort's property.

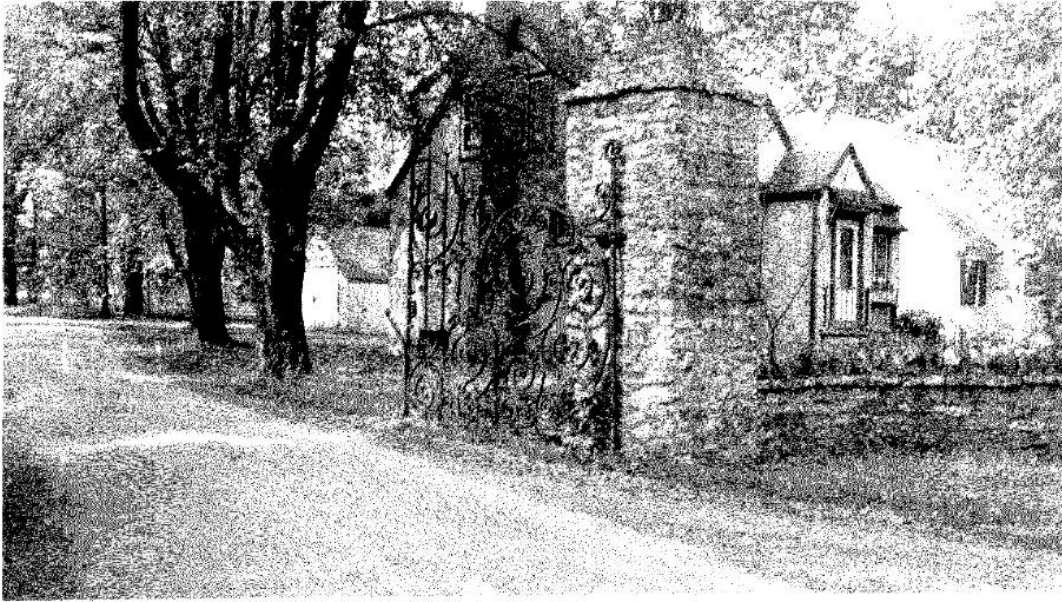
In 1895, as part of the process of enclosing the Humberstone Club property, the Humberstone Summer Resort Company oversaw the erection of a stone wall, and gateway, including two 10-foot-high stone pillars at either side of the entrance to Tennessee Avenue from Sugarloaf St. In 1896, large iron gates were added to the pillars, and large lamps placed on top of each pillar. The money to pay for the pillars and gates came from two cottage owners: J.J. O'Fallon of St. Louis and John Barclay of New Orleans. Contractor Harry Leslie (who did a lot of work for the Humberstone Summer Resort Company) built the stone wall and pillars assisted by members of the Wegerich family. According to the newspaper reports, Charles Steele supervised the construction of the pillars and stone wall. Oral tradition and local history accounts claim the pillars were named for the daughters of J.J. O'Fallon.

When the Humberstone Summer Resort Company went out of business in the 1930s, Tennessee Avenue reverted to public ownership. The original entranceway to Tennessee Avenue at Sugarloaf Street between the gates was only 50 feet wide, and it became necessary to widen the road. The stone pillars were also in a poor state of repair. As a result, the entranceway was dismantled, with the pillars rebuilt, further back from the travelled roadway. The rebuilt pillars were shorter than the originals, and the iron gates were reattached in a way which rendered them inoperable being now attached on the north side of the stone pillars, instead of the original position on the west side of the east pillar, and east side of the west pillar. See Appendix #1 for photo showing original position. The stone wall has also been reduced in height from its original. The Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum has, in its collection, some of the stones removed when the pillars were rebuilt.

Additional photos of the gates in their original state and position are included in appendices.

It is important to note that there is, in the vicinity, south of the gates on Tennessee Avenue, a confirmed burial mound from the Attawandaron or Chonnonton (sometimes referred to as the "Neutral") nation, c.1600-1650, along with other nearby archaeological evidence of the presence of First Nations who lived, hunted, fished, and traversed the area.

Appendix 1



PCHMM 986.72.200

Appendix #2



PCHMM 977.330.3

Appendix #3



PCHMM 986.72.10