

“Dr. Jones’ House & Barn”

Original Buildings
House – Downie Township, Perth County, circa 1880
Barn – London Township, circa 1900

Contributed by Lauren Burger

Housed in the collections at Fanshawe Pioneer Village is a unique piece of medical history belonging to Dr. William Anson Jones. Dr. Jones was born in Clandeboye, Middlesex County in 1867 and practised as a physician there until 1912 when he and his family moved to Ottawa.¹ The story of “Dr. Jones” will be interpreted at Fanshawe Pioneer Village in the near future using the former “Miller” house and barn. It was common for a rural doctor of this period to practise and see patients in their own home.² The Jones collection consists of medical and surgical instruments, physician’s texts, and an assortment of pharmaceuticals. A new exhibit will see the home’s summer kitchen set up as Dr. Jones’ practice, and the pantry converted to an apothecary display. Although this new interpretation is planned for the former “Miller” house and barn, the history of these two original buildings will not be forgotten in the Village story.

The Miller House was originally located on Lots 22 and 23, Concession 14, Downie Township in Perth County. Mr. Keith Lee built the house, and lived there before brothers Robert and Dorrington James Miller bought the property in 1899. Dorrington, commonly called James, became the sole owner of the house and property in 1908, and his family moved to the home.³ The Miller family consisted of parents James and Annie, and their children Bessie, Dorothy and Dorrington. “Uncle Sam” Hosago also lived with the family. In 1921, the Miller family moved out of the house and back to James’ father’s neighbouring farm

when James' brother became ill. The Miller house remained empty until its move to Fanshawe Pioneer Village.⁴

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority took over the Miller property and house in 1965 to facilitate the building of the Wildwood Dam reservoir at Trout Creek. Dr. Wilfrid Jury and the Fanshawe Pioneer Village Advisory Board decided that the farmhouse on the Miller property would be a good addition to the site and the building was relocated in 1967.⁵

The former "Miller" barn was never actually in the possession of the Miller family but came from the farm of Casey Bakema, located on the east shore of Fanshawe Lake at Look-Out Point in London Township. The barn was likely used by Casey's father in his mixed farming operation. The barn is of post and beam construction and built from white ash. The barn was dismantled before its 1963 move to Fanshawe Pioneer Village and was reconstructed in the Village during the winter of 1969-70. The barn's adjoining driveshed was installed in 1973, and features hand-hewn timbers. The frame barn therefore combines traditional, as well as late-twentieth century, construction. On its upper level, this unusually large barn displays farm implements from various periods used in London Township and Middlesex County.

¹ Fanshawe Pioneer Village Archives (Jones Medical Collection Archival Box). Tammy Coleman, "*The Jones Medical Collection*", unpublished paper (2004).

² Fanshawe Pioneer Village Archives (Jones Medical Collection Archival Box). Oral History Interview, Jean Hodgins and Betty Coughlin, January 29, 1990.

³ Fanshawe Pioneer Village Archives (Miller House Building Box). Bessie Miller, "The Miller Place", handwritten information, 15 October 1984.

⁴ Fanshawe Pioneer Village Archives (Miller House Building Box). Marcia McLean, "Miller House and Family History", unpublished document (2000); and, Dean Robinson, ed. *Memories of Downie: The Banner Township* Volume 2 (2002).

⁵Fanshawe Pioneer Village, *Guide Manual*, 1984 edition.