

Dixon's Hotel

Location: Brucefield, Ontario
Year built: c. 1860, 1897

A TAVERN OR HOTEL was one of the first buildings in a settlement, accommodating travellers passing through or looking to stay. It was more than a place to lodge or get a drink. The hotel often doubled as the community hall where public meetings, church services, court sessions, township-council sessions, and entertainments were held. Travelling salesmen could display their wares, and doctors, dentists, and photographers met and served their public from the local hotel.



James Dixon's Hotel c. 1885. The hotel burnt in 896.
(From the Collection of the Huron County Museum & Historic Goal)



William Dixon rebuilt in 1897.
(From the Collection of the Huron County Museum & Historic Goal)

The early hotels were usually known by their proprietor's name: Bossenberry, Cook, Dixon, Fach, Jones, Kaiser, Little, McDonald, McFarlane, Morrow, Murray, Rattenbury, Strong, Walker and Wilson. Since hotels also changed hands frequently, it is hard to say how many there were in operation at one time. It seems that Brucefield did not have more than two hotels at once.

Another hotel, the American Hotel on the southwest corner at the intersection, was purchased by Philip Murray in 1902. Unfortunately, he accidentally shot himself only two weeks later. His wife and father-in-law carried on, but bad luck seemed to plague the family — the hotel was destroyed by fire in 1903.
