

Commercial Hotel

Location: 84 Main St. South, Seaforth, Ontario

Year built: 1895

THE NEW COMMERCIAL HOTEL opened its doors on October 21, 1895. Only months before, the original brick hotel built by Thomas Knox in 1866 had burnt. Knox had a vault built into the north part of the hotel and in the fall of 1866 the first bank, The Royal Canadian, opened for business. Over the years, this end of the old and new hotel was used as a customs office, a telegraph/express office, and a barber shop.

In the late 1860s, Thomas Sharp had the hotel. He built a frame building at the back of the hotel called Sharp's Hall. By 1873, the Commercial Hotel was owned by Alexander Davidson who had come to Huron County from Ireland in 1872. He installed showers and baths for guests and boarders in Sharp's Hall in 1876. A billiard room was added to the hotel and opened in early 1877.

In 1874, an overnight stay with supper and breakfast included cost \$1; single meals were 25¢; farmers with two horses paid 35¢ for hay and dinner.



The original Commercial Hotel built by Thomas Knox in 1866. The stereograph above was taken some time before 1893 when the barber-shop seen at the left of the picture was torn down to make way for the town hall.



The Commercial Hotel as pictured in *A Souvenir of Seaforth* c. 1900. You can see the horizontal bands linking the window arches and sills of each storey. Pilasters mark off four sections vertically across the façade. Note that there are four separate entrances. The hotel's proprietor at the time was George E. Henderson.
