

# Lavoie House

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Location: 116 Goderich St. West, Seaforth, Ontario

Year built: c. 1875

BUILT IN C. 1875, the Lavoie House is a fine example of Queen Anne Revival architecture. The corner tower is a hallmark of this style. Here there is a small, square tower tucked into an inside corner. The verandah wrapping around two or three sides of a house is another feature of the style. Other features to note in Lavoie House are the asymmetry of the design, the varied rooflines, the columned balcony built into the front gable, the variety of window placement and size, and the extensive use of wood. Numerous stained glass windows can be found throughout the house, including a portrait window of the Canadian poet, William Henry Drummond, visible from the side street. The origins of the portrait window remains a mystery.

Queen Anne Revival houses were often built for wealthy merchants. It is unclear who had the Lavoie House built, but it was perhaps the first owner of the property listed on Land Registry records, Alex Davidson. He came to Huron County, Canada from Ireland in 1872. He was the owner and proprietor of the Commercial Hotel by 1874 and was still the owner in 1895 when the hotel burned. He rebuilt the existing cement block Commercial Hotel, which was reopened on October 21, 1895. Davidson does not appear to have lived long in the house, however, having sold the property in 1878.

Thomas Coventry bought the house in 1880. He sold it in 1885 to his brother, John, in trust for his wife, Annie, who owned it until it was sold again in 1902.



Lavoie House has many features of the Queen Anne Revival style of late Victorian architecture. The house is now the home of Ron and Sheila Lavoie.

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Henry Edge purchased the house in 1907. Henry is listed in the 1881 Census of Canada as a child of 12 resident in Seaforth, Huron Centre, Ontario, the son of William and Frances Edge. He was a builder himself and lived in the house for 19 years.

Henry Edge sold the house to Malcolm McKeller. McKeller was the longest resident of the house, living here until his death in 1974.



Malcolm or “Mack” McKeller was a familiar sight on Main Street, first with his horse “Dobbin” and later with his bicycle, working as an Express Agent. He made his first appearance on February 15, 1908, and continued on the job until he retired October 16, 1965, just four months short of his 58th birthday. McKeller was in charge of the Seaforth Custom Office some time after 1935.

### *Doth Then The World Go Thus?*



Doth then the world go thus?  
doth all thus move?  
Is this the justice which on earth we find?  
Is this that firm decree which all doth bind?  
Are these your influences, Powers above?  
Those souls, which vice's moody mists  
most blind,  
Blind Fortune, blindly, most their friend  
doth prove;  
And they who thee, poor idol Virtue! love,  
Ply like a feather tossed by storm and wind.  
Ah! if a Providence doth sway this all,  
Why should best minds groan under  
most distress?  
Or why should pride humility make thrall,  
And injuries the innocent oppress?  
Heavens! hinder, stop this fate;  
or grant a time  
When good may have, as well as bad,  
their prime!