

T H E B E E H I V E (Site)  
HISTORY SHEET  
General Information

Name of Structure: The Beehive

Address: 4119 Ridge Rd, Williamson village

Parcel ID: (544600) 65117-12-975541

Atlas: 1853: just a building mark; 1858: "Shop";

1874: "G.W.Miller, W.Sh.;"

1904: hatched (stone) building mark but unlabeled

When Built/Mason: Unknown

When Razed: 1911

Why: 1910 fire destroyed wooden buildings in village, this survived but was torn down in 1911 and the site was redeveloped  
(the postcard photo shows that the two bottom quoins on the SE corner were missing and some stones around the doors on the façade were falling off.)

Original Owner: Unknown

Subsequent Owner: n/a

Original Uses: Many, details below

Subsequently Use: n/a

Photographs: Several

Andrea T Evangelist's "Gathering of Memories", © 2003.

Description:

Design details:

The long side of this 2½ building faced East Main St. From the west end to the east end of the building on the ground floor: window, door, window, double-wide door, door, window, door, window; the upper level: window, window, window (over double door), window (over door), window, window, window. There was an interior chimney on each gable end. The east (right) side configuration on ground floor: window, window, door, window; upper level had 3 windows which were centered above the lower windows. In the gable peak were two side-by-side smaller windows. Windows were 2-over-2 paned (some were 3-over-3); the gable windows were 3-over-3.

Masonry details:

Small multi-colored round lakestones appear to have been set 4/Q, darker colored stone quoins. Lintels on the upper street side level were wooden; the others appear to have been split lighter color stone (limestones?) set vertically in flat arches; wooden sills.

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The double door, unlike the other openings, was set with a limestone lintel and "step up" (sill) from the dirt road.

**R e f e r e n c e s**

*Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, Aug 20, 1953 (not online<sup>1</sup>)

"Back in the late 1800s there was a large two story, cobblestone building on Williamson's East Main St, which everyone called the "Beehive". The building has been gone now for nearly half a century.

This week the local newspaper office is displaying a large picture of Williamson's Main St taken before the turn of the century, in which the old Beehive is pictured with a lumber wagon and team of horses backed up to the central door, and a line of other farm vehicles waiting to unload dried apples.

In the picture also is the late M.O. Engleson, the owner of the dried apple shipping business which occupied the ground floor of the Beehive at that time, and some 23 other Williamsonians, three of whom are still living, namely Cornelius Moorman, Minnie Pool, and Nellie DeFrine.

This old time picture has aroused much interest and many questions have been asked this week of the old timers about Williamson of those bygone days. Chief among the questions being asked is, Why was the cobblestone building called the Beehive.

To date, only one man has been found who knows the reason the old building should have been called by such a strange name. He is David Contant, for many years Williamson's chief constable, who states that the Beehive got its name from the fact that so many families occupied the second floor apartments at different times and because at the same time, there was so many business activities carried on, on the main floor (an undertaking establishment, a flour mill, jewelry store and millinery shop at various times had quarters in the building).

The younger generation in particular is intrigued by the stories about the Beehive. Almost any hour of the day a group of them can be seen clustered about the window where the picture is on display, trying to determine the spot on which the Beehive stood or listening to the tales of an old timer, who chances to pass by."

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<sup>1</sup> I visited with Town Historian Chet Peters on 4/13/2012, and a clipping of this article was in his personal collection.

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The Beehive and the Band Stand 8/24/1950

<http://nyhistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074529/1950-08-24/ed-1/seq-6/> Williamson Sun & Sentinel

"Back in the late 1800s a 2-story cobblestone building stood where the Hart Store building now stands here on East Main St. Old timers referred to the building as The Beehive... Irvin Pallister brought me a large picture of Williamson's East Main Street with The Beehive in the foreground and several teams of Horses hitched to a democrat and lumber wagons lined up on the street before The Beehive. Mr Pallister asked me to try to find someone who could identify the people in the picture and then write about it for this column, and perhaps display the picture in the *The Sun* office window.

I began trying to find out how the Beehive got its name. This two-story cobblestone structure at different times housed an undertaking establishment, a flour mill, and a dried apple packing plant, and probably plenty of other types of businesses...

After questioning some dozen and a half people, I found one man who seemed to have the answer. David Contant said it was called The Beehive because so many different families lived on the second floor and because there was so much business activity on the main floor..."

The article goes on to identify the people in the photograph (strangely the photograph isn't shown in the article). It then continues:

"At the time this picture was taken most of these men and women worked at The Beehive packing dried apples for M.O. Engleson who shipped out dried fruits from his headquarters at The Beehive ... The street, of course, was just a wide expanse of dirt lined with wagon tire tracks ... The Beehive, of course, has been gone now for nearly a half century, it having been torn down by Isaac Moorman Jacob Ver How, and M.O. Engleson when these three men were preparing to build the Moorman-Ver How block..."

My real purpose in telling this tale about The Beehive ... is to bring forth additional information about Williamson of the early days. Perhaps some reader will be able to tell me when The Beehive was built and by whom, Mr Pallister's picture will be in the window at *The Sun* office this week. Stop by and look at it. It may bring to memory long forgotten incidents, which should be recorded for future generations."

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Concise summary description:

Large 2-story cobblestone in Wmson, lower level conducted a variety of businesses; upper level housed a number of families--it was as busy as a beehive. Torn down in 1911; replaced by Moorman-VerHow Block. (photographs: Angela Evangelist book; and photographs from the late Chet Peters (he retired in 2014 as Town of Williamson Historian after 50 years of service))

Long side faced highway with 4 rows/quoin; right gable end with 3 rows/quoin. There were four doors along the front--one on each end each of which was flanked by one window on each side. There were two toward the middle, the left of which was double wide with a large trapezoidal lintel; other lower openings had stone lintels and wooden sills. Quoins were sandstone, lintels appear to have been of lighter color stone. That is a total of 8 openings on the lower level on the road frontage. Windows were centered above the lower openings on all except the door at the left end of the frontage (total of 7 upper windows). The right gable end had 2½ stories. Lower level had 4 windows equally spaced along its length. The upper level had 3 windows centered above lower openings, with there being no window above the third lower window. In the gable were two windows, about half the height of the lower windows. All windows appeared to have stone lintels, and perhaps stone sills. Cannot tell for sure from pictures if stone or wood sills. Lintels may have been one piece blocks or may have been brick-shaped pieces set in an arch configuration. Cannot deduce this detail. It was an enormous building.