

Matthew Faris House

c. 1855

2243 Sideroad 10

Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report

October 2026

Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury Municipal Heritage Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report, or CHER, is to determine if the subject property merits designation under Part IV, section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA). A Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report provides an overview of the property based on primary and secondary research and visual inspection of the property. Please note that all visual inspections of the property were taken from the public right of way and no site visits were made. It also includes an evaluation against the prescribed criteria of Ontario Regulation 9/06, including design/physical value, historical/associative value, and contextual value. This CHER also includes a draft Statement of Significance and identification of heritage attributes.

The designation of heritage properties is legislated by the OHA and is supported at a provincial level by the Provincial Policy Statement (2024). The conservation of cultural heritage resources is also supported by the County of Simcoe Official Plan, and the 2023 Official Plan for the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury.

Based on the contents of this report, the property located at 2243 Sideroad 10 meets the criteria for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Property Name	Matthew Faris
Municipal Address	2243 Sideroad 10
Legal Description	Lot 11, Concession 5
Property Size	39.39 hectares
Date of Construction	1855
Heritage Recognition	Listed on Municipal List of Heritage Properties
Lead Researcher	Thomas Dysart, MCIP, RPP, CAHP Senior Planner, Town of BWG

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SUBJECT PROPERTY

The subject property is located at the northeast corner of Sideroad 10 and Line 6 and is municipally addressed as 2243 Sideroad 10.

The properties legal address is South Lot 11, Concession 5.



Figure 1: Subject Property (2025)

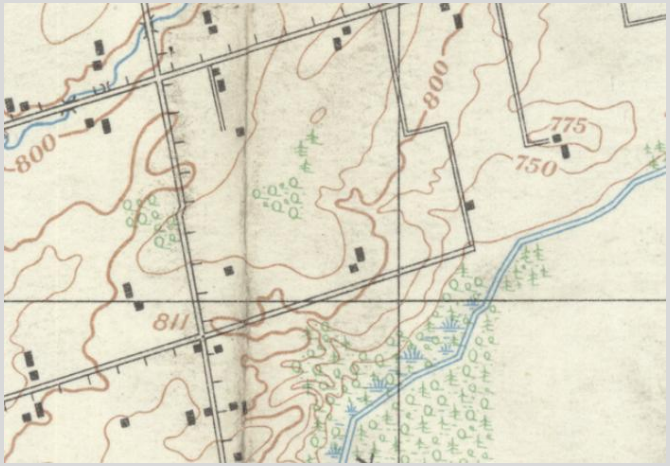


Figure 2: Topographic Map of property (1928)

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Design and Physical Value

The building at the subject property has characteristics of the Gothic Revival Architecture Style as well as elements of an Ontario Vernacular style.

Gothic Revival

The Gothic Revival architectural style (1840-1990) was the pre-eminent Canadian style during the Victorian period. It was influenced by European interests in Medieval Gothic History. It is often described as an “exuberant” or “flamboyant” style, as it reflected the prosperity and growth of many villages and towns during the mid-to-late 1800’s. Gothic Revival Architectural style is characterized by: steeply pitched gable roofs (typically found with dormers to break up the horizontal lines), elaborately carved gingerbread , such as bargeboard, dichromatic brickwork, wooden porch/verandah, use of brick and different brick accents to highlight door/window surrounds and quoins (corners).

In Ontario, the magazine, Canada Farmer, published plans and elevations for a “small gothic cottage” that lead to the popularity of the architectural style. The plan and elevations appeared in the February 1864 issue.

Ontario Vernacular Architectural Style

The Vernacular architectural styles makes use of local forms and material. The vernacular style can very from region to region. The Ontario Vernacular style is known for its largely conservative and simple rectangular design. Most of the Ontario Vernacular homes are either one to one and half or two stories, constructed of either rubble, brick or stucco. The architectural style is also known for gable roofs and end chimney designs with irregular window placement. Ontario Vernacular architectural styles can also borrow from other architectural styles, particularly the Georgian or Gothic Revival Architectural style.

The subject property is an excellent example of 19th Century gothic revival architecture. The five bay façade with gable end roofs, is very reminiscent of a simply designed farm house that dots the Ontario streetscapes.

The home has a steep gable, with symmetrical massing, with the front door, centered to the building, flanked by two windows, reinforcing the symmetrical design of the home. The property may also feature many elements of the Gothic Revival/ Ontario Vernacular architectural style.

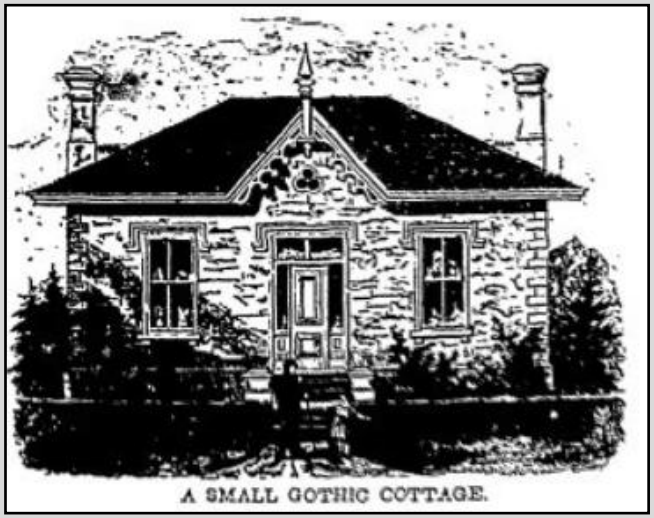


Figure 3: A small gothic cottage



Figure4: Subject property

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Historical and Associative Value

Pre Contact History

The subject property is in the traditional territory of the Anishinaabek Nation, which includes Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi Nation, collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy and that the Huron-Wendat, Chippewa and Haudenosaunee Nations have also been associated with lands. The subject lands were part of the Lake Simcoe-Nottawasgaa Treaty No.18 of 1818, where in exchange for 1,592,000 acres, the Chippewas were paid a yearly sum of 1200 pounds.

Land Ownership

The original patent in which the subject property is located was once owned by Kings College, who purchased the lands from the Crown for n 1828. The lands (South Half of 100 Acres) were then transferred (through) from University Colleges of Toronto to John Faris of West Gwillimbury.

Nature of Instrument	Instrument Date	Grantor	Grantee	Notes
Patent	Jan 1828	Crown	King College	All 200 Acres
Deed	Dec 1853	University Colleges of Toronto	John Faris of West Gwillimbury	S ½ of 100 Acres
B&S	Jan 1853	John Faris of W. Gwillimbury	Matthew Faris	$100
B & S	Oct 1904	Matthew Faris	William Faris	$1.00

Kings College tended to acquire Crown lands as the British government was hoping to finance a university in Upper Canada. The land was then used to generate income through leasing and sales, paying for the institution's buildings, operations and staff. The land was then eventually transferred to John Faris, through deed, who sold the land to his son, Matthew

Given the length of time the property remained under the Faris family, and based on the construction of the house, the subject property is mostly associated with Matthew Faris.

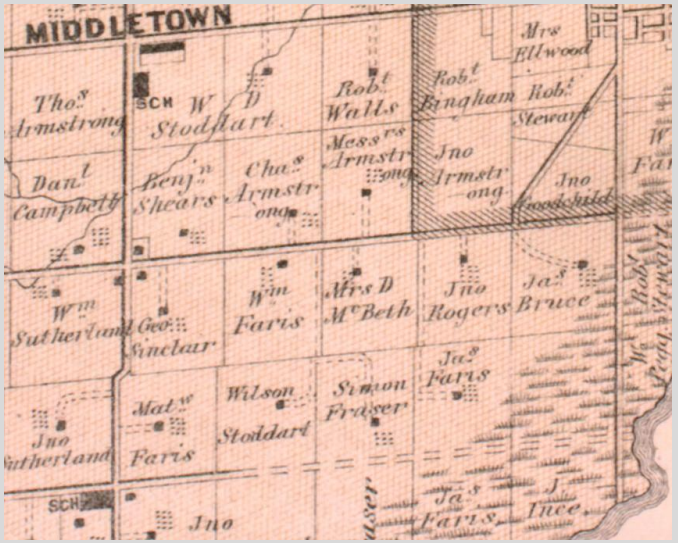


Figure 5: Map of West Gwillimbury (1860)

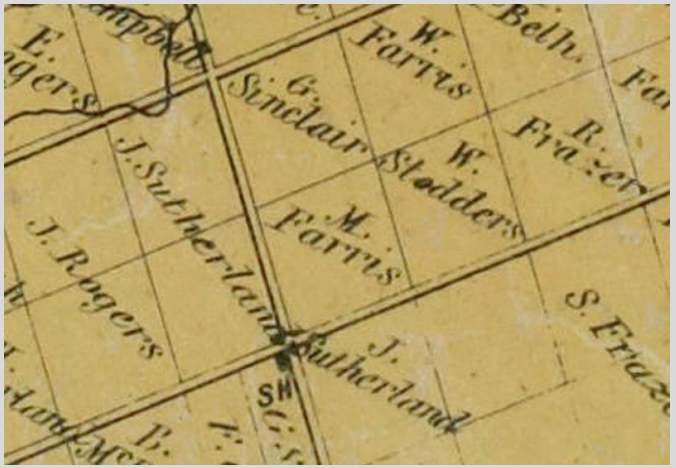


Figure 6: Map of West Gwillimbury (1871)

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Historical and Associative Value

Matthew Faris

Matthew was born to John Faris and Jane Coburn in January 1831 in West Gwillimbury Township. He was one of 13 children.

Matthew's father John was born in County Cavan, Ireland and arrived in upper Canada in 1818 with his step father, John Stoddart. John Faris was one of the first settler families in West Gwillimbury Township. John married Jane Coburn and they had 13 children, 3 dying in infancy, but several of their children went on to marry into well known Bradford families including the Armson, Evans, Goodfellow, Sutherland and Bowles family. Jon died and is buried in Auld Kirk.

Notably, John built his home on the 6th Line and eventually donated a portion of land to build the Auld Kirk. His property backed on to the Goodfellow/Williams property, which explains how Matthew may have met Susannah.

At age 25, Matthew married Susannah May Goodfellow in May 1856. They married at United Presbyterian Church by Rev. William Fraser in Bradford. They went on to have five children:

- Jane, b. 1856
- John b. 1858
- Peter b. 1826
- William b. 1864
- James, b. 1868
- Catherine b. 1872

Matthew and Susannah spent most of their life in West Gwillimbury Township, living at the subject property, first building a log cabin, until the present frame house was built.

The property earned the name "Maple Farm"- although not sure where the name came from, but many notices do mention the namesake.



Figure 7: Matthew Faris



Figure 8: Auld Kirk

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

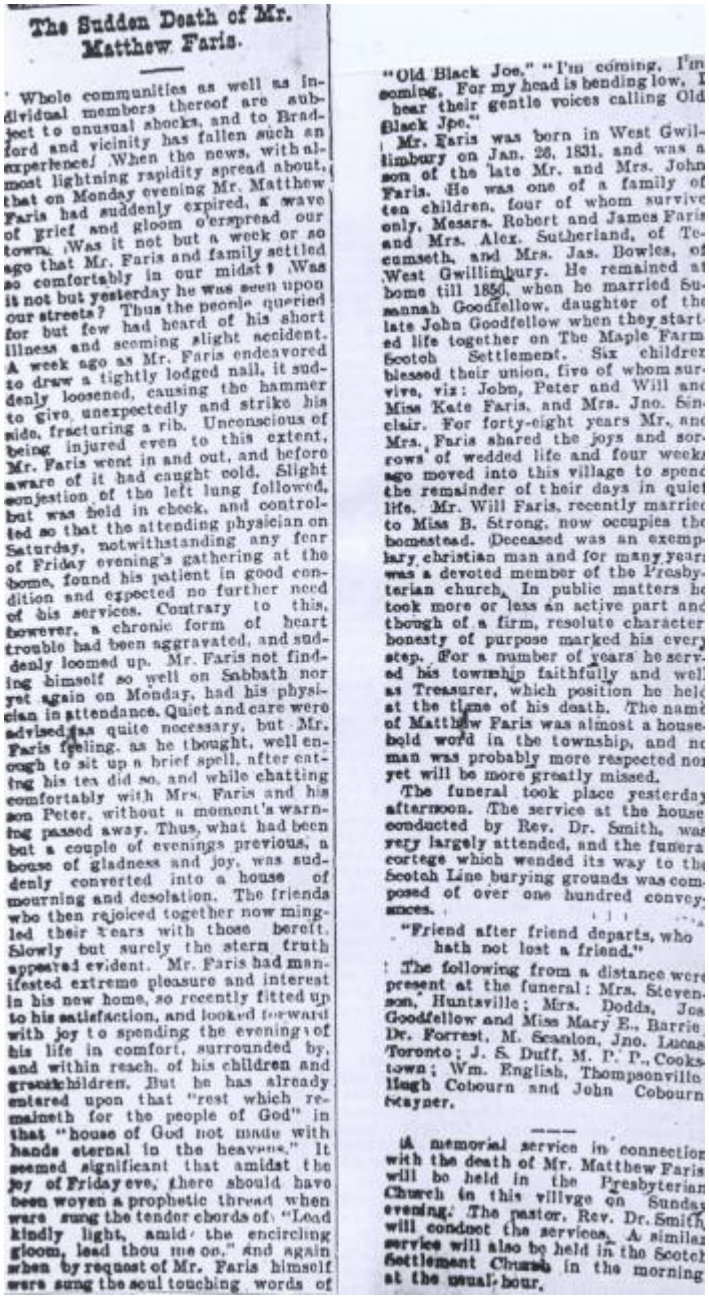
Historical and Associative Value

Following Matthew's life through the Census, it shows that he spent most of his life a Farmer, appearing to have retired by the 1901 (he was 70) census records show that his son William (36)is being now listed as a Farmer, who acquired the subject property from Matthew in 1904. It is also noted that Matthew Faris also served as the Township treasurer.

Death Certificate records show Matthew died in November 1904 at the age of 74 and died of heart disease which he had for 5 days.

His obituary is quoted as saying that the name Matthew Faris was a "household word" and that no man was more respected or will be as greatly missed. His residence is stated as John Street having just recently move there.

Matthew is buried at Auld Kirk Cemetery.



The Sudden Death of Mr. Matthew Faris.

Whole communities as well as individual members thereof are subject to unusual shocks, and to Bradford and vicinity has fallen such an experience. When the news, with almost lightning rapidity spread about, that on Monday evening Mr. Matthew Faris had suddenly expired, a wave of grief and gloom o'erspread our town. Was it not but a week or so ago that Mr. Faris and family settled so comfortably in our midst? Was it not but yesterday he was seen upon our streets? Thus the people queried for but few had heard of his short illness and seeming slight accident. A week ago as Mr. Faris endeavored to draw a tightly lodged nail, it suddenly loosened, causing the hammer to give unexpectedly and strike his side, fracturing a rib. Unconscious of being injured even to this extent, Mr. Faris went in and out, and before aware of it had caught cold. Slight congestion of the left lung followed, but was held in check, and controlled so that the attending physician on Saturday, notwithstanding any fear of Friday evening's gathering at the home, found his patient in good condition and expected no further need of his services. Contrary to this, however, a chronic form of heart trouble had been aggravated, and suddenly loomed up. Mr. Faris not finding himself so well on Sabbath nor yet again on Monday, had his physician in attendance. Quiet and care were advised as quite necessary, but Mr. Faris feeling, as he thought, well enough to sit up a brief spell, after eating his tea did so, and while chatting comfortably with Mrs. Faris and his son Peter, without a moment's warning passed away. Thus, what had been but a couple of evenings previous, a house of gladness and joy, was suddenly converted into a house of mourning and desolation. The friends who then rejoiced together now mingled their tears with those bereft. Slowly but surely the stern truth appeared evident. Mr. Faris had manifested extreme pleasure and interest in his new home, so recently fitted up to his satisfaction, and looked forward with joy to spending the evening of his life in comfort, surrounded by, and within reach, of his children and grandchildren. But he has already entered upon that "rest which remaineth for the people of God" in that "house of God not made with hands eternal in the heavens." It seemed significant that amidst the joy of Friday eve, there should have been woven a prophetic thread when were sung the tender chords of "Lead kindly light, amid the encircling gloom, lead thou me on," and again when by request of Mr. Faris himself were sung the soul touching words of "Old Black Joe." "I'm coming, I'm coming. For my head is bending low, I hear their gentle voices calling Old Black Joe."

Mr. Faris was born in West Gwillimbury on Jan. 26, 1831, and was a son of the late Mr. and Mrs. John Faris. He was one of a family of ten children, four of whom survive only, Messrs. Robert and James Faris and Mrs. Alex. Sutherland, of Tecumseth, and Mrs. Jas. Bowles, of West Gwillimbury. He remained at home till 1856, when he married Susannah Goodfellow, daughter of the late John Goodfellow when they started life together on The Maple Farm Scotch Settlement. Six children blessed their union, five of whom survive, viz: John, Peter and Will and Miss Kate Faris, and Mrs. Jno. Sinclair. For forty-eight years Mr. and Mrs. Faris shared the joys and sorrows of wedded life and four weeks ago moved into this village to spend the remainder of their days in quiet life. Mr. Will Faris, recently married to Miss B. Strong, now occupies the homestead. Deceased was an exemplary christian man and for many years was a devoted member of the Presbyterian church. In public matters he took more or less an active part and though of a firm, resolute character honesty of purpose marked his every step. For a number of years he served his township faithfully and well as Treasurer, which position he held at the time of his death. The name of Matthew Faris was almost a household word in the township, and no man was probably more respected nor yet will be more greatly missed.

The funeral took place yesterday afternoon. The service at the house conducted by Rev. Dr. Smith, was very largely attended, and the funeral cortege which wended its way to the Scotch Line burying grounds was composed of over one hundred conveyances.

"Friend after friend departs, who hath not lost a friend."

The following from a distance were present at the funeral: Mrs. Stevenson, Huntsville; Mrs. Dodds, Jos. Goodfellow and Miss Mary E., Barrie; Dr. Forrest, M. Scanlon, Jno. Lucas, Toronto; J. S. Duff, M. P. P., Cooksstown; Wm. English, Thompsonville; Hugh Cobourn and John Cobourn, Stayner.

A memorial service in connection with the death of Mr. Matthew Faris will be held in the Presbyterian Church in this village on Sunday evening. The pastor, Rev. Dr. Smith, will conduct the services. A similar service will also be held in the Scotch Settlement Church in the morning at the usual hour.

Figure 9: Matthew Faris obituary

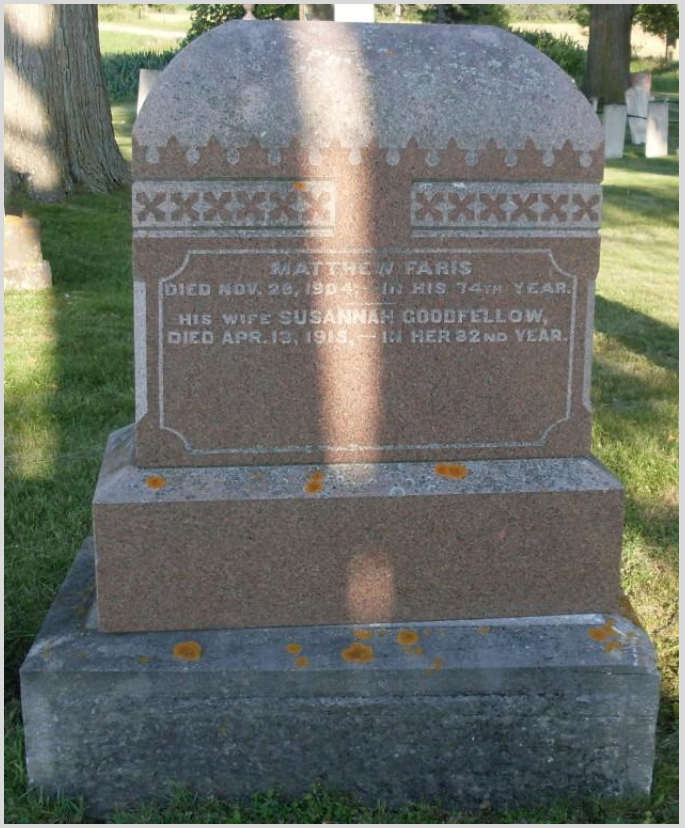


Figure 10: Final resting place of Matthew Faris

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Contextual Value

The subject property is situated in a rural area of the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury. The property is an excellent example of an early 19th century Ontario farmstead. The property remains linked to its surroundings physically, visually and historically. The property is linked to a number of historic West Gwillimbury families that have contributed to the development of Bradford West Gwillimbury

EVALUATION UNDER ONTARIO REGULATION 9/06

	Ontario Regulation 9/06 Criteria	Evaluation	Criteria met (Y/N)
i	is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method;	The property is an example of an early 19th century residential building designed in the Gothic Revival and Ontario Vernacular architectural style.	Y
ii	displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit;		N
Iii	demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.		N
iv	has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community;	The property has direct associations with the Faris Family. John Faris was one of the first settlers in Bradford, forming the Scotsh Settlement and establishing the Auld Kirk Cemetary and Matthew was a farmer on the subject property and Town treasurer.	Y
v	yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture;		N
vi	demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.		N
vii	is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area;	The property is historically linked to its surrounding area, being a 19th century rural property and supporting the agrarian routes of the community	Y
viii	is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings;		N
ix	is a landmark.		N

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Matthew Faris House c. 1855

The subject property has been researched and evaluated to determine its cultural heritage significance according to Ontario Regulation 9/06. This Regulation, defined in the *Ontario Heritage Act*, outlines several criteria for determining whether a property is of cultural heritage value or interest. For a property to be designated under section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act,* it must meet two or more of these criteria, which are outlined below. By using these criteria, staff can determine if the property's cultural heritage value or interest merits designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Description of Property

The property at 2243 Sideroad 10 is located on the west side of Sideroad 5. The property contains a Gothic Revival and Ontario Vernacular residential dwelling. Due to its association with an early settler family of West Gwillimbury, it is known as the Faris House. Its legal address is:
2243 Sideroad 10; Part of Lot 11, Concession 5

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Design/ Physical Value

The Faris House has design and physical value as representative example of a Gothic Revival and Ontario Vernacular property. The house was built around 1854 and has the following characteristics: two storey home with a central peaked gable and side gable roof.

Historical/ Associative Value

The Faris House has historic/associative value for its direct association with the Matthew Faris, Farmer. The Faris Family were an early settler family in the Bradford/West Gwillimbury community. The family were known farmers, which contributed to the growth and development of the Town.

Contextual Value

The Faris House has contextual value because it defines and supports and maintains the character of the agrarian routes of the community.

Description of Heritage Attributes

Key heritage attributes of the Faris House that exemplify its heritage value as a Gothic Revival and Ontario Vernacular house as it relates to the property include:

- One and a half story house with five bays and central peaked gable
- Side gable roof
- Front verandah that spans front façade
- Rectangular window openings and doors
- Second story door and Juliet balcony
- Rubble/Stone Foundation
- Brick chimney

SOURCES

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We Grew Up In or Live in Bradford West Gwillimbury Facebook Group. Facebook.com

SOURCES

Matthew Faris

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http://archives.bradford.library.on.ca/index.php/faris-house

http://archives.bradford.library.on.ca/index.php/obituary-for-matthew-faris

http://archives.bradford.library.on.ca/index.php/looking-back-over-century-auld-kirk

http://archives.bradford.library.on.ca/index.php/auld-kirk-records-tell-story-of-pioneer-church

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Figure 4: Governor Simcoe Slept Here (Improved with AI)

Figure 5: Map of West Gwillimbury Retrieved from https://digital.library.mcgill.ca/countyatlas/searchmapframes.php

Figure 6: Hoggs Map of Simcoe County (1871)

Figure 7: Retrieved from BWG Public Library Archives

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Figure 10: Retrieved from FindaGrave