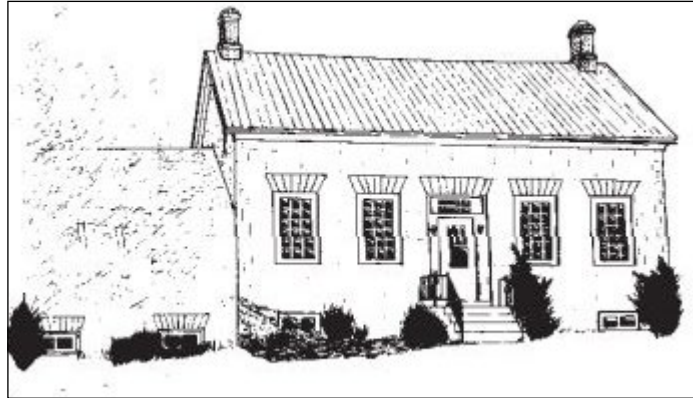


# Blair House

## 9277 County Road 42



Likely one of the oldest sandstone houses in the area! Known as Riley House or Blair House this charming home is set back from road with cedar rail fencing leading up driveway. House is end-gabled, constructed of sandstone, one and half storey with voussoirs above windows and doors. Two brick chimney visible at either end of house, at



Drawing from the Crosby to Salem Driving Tour, MHAC 2019

roof peak. Metal roofing, low pitch. Small, two-pane rectangular horizontal windows on bottom front and side of house by the foundation. Inset door with side sills, and rectangular transom above door. Five steps up to elevated front entrance door. One storey addition on side also of sandstone, with separate door into lower portion and covered back porch with knee railing. Many outbuildings, barns. Barbara Humphrys notes in *Architectural Heritage of the Rideau Corridor*, rectangular transoms came into use in the Rideau area in the mid-1830s and soon superseded the semi-elliptical shape throughout the corridor.

She also notes that rear wings, as featured here, were typical, built at the same time as the original structure to provide either the main kitchen or a summer kitchen, and in a few instances a carriage house, as well. Interesting to see the typical returned eaves at the corners of the roof.

Designated under bylaw number 86-7 in 1986 by the township of North Crosby. The reason for designation reads: "Built in 1850, this mid-19th century one and one half story sandstone house is an excellent example of the traditional Ontario Cottage style home, with a centrally located doorway on the front facade, balanced by two windows on each side." (Accessed on Dec. 7, 2022)

In the 1842 Census of North Crosby, as noted in History of the Township of North Crosby and Westport by Neil Patterson, Patrick Riley was noted as a deeded property owner who was a farmer and was noted as

having been in Canada for 20 years already, which puts his immigration at approximately 1822. According to the 1861 Walling Map of Leeds Grenville, the owner of this land in North Crosby and first house was noted as Patrick Riley, instead of ...Patrick O'Riley which was previously denoted on some material. Patrick

Riley was listed as a Farm-

er living on that land in the 1848 Census, however, it appears that the current home made out of local sandstone wasn't built by the family until the 1850s. In the 1871 Nominal Return of the Living Census in North Crosby, it notes that Patrick Riley was an Irish Catholic, widowed and having seven children ranging from 15 to 27 years old. The children appear to be in the United States except for the two youngest daughters, one of which was still attending school. In an interesting note, the census shows that Patrick could not read or write.

The Blair House is evidence of settlement of the fertile plain area in North Crosby. Neil Patterson notes in the History of the Township of North Crosby and Westport, that some of the farms in that exact area prospered greatly and owners built larger, stone houses and added more land to their operations. By the 1880s, he said the township had expanded its farm population growth to encompass all of the available land in that area.

A letter from the township to the Ontario Heritage Foundation used to designate the house in 1986 notes the house is of architectural and historical value and interest. (accessed December 2022: <https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/fr/oha/details/file?id=9777>) It is likely one of the oldest sandstone homes still in existence in the area. This house has many of the features which are highlighted in documentation distinguishing historic architecture along the Rideau Corridor.