

Van Egmond House

Location: 80 Kippen Road, Egmondville, Ontario
Year built: c. 1847

THE VAN EGMOND HOUSE, owned and operated by the Van Egmond Foundation, is an excellent example of a Georgian country-manor house dating to the mid-19th century. It was built by Constant Louis Van Egmond, son of Anthony Van Egmond who played a key role in opening the Huron Road to Goderich in the early 1830s. Constant Van Egmond founded the village of Egmondville in 1845.



The façade and side elevation show the symmetry characteristic of Georgian architecture. Note also the six-over-six windows, the large chimneys, the awning-profiled four-columned verandah, and the decorative brickwork frieze of the façade. The door transom and sidelights are covered in the above photograph. The slop brick used for the walls was made in the brickyard nearby.

Constant Van Egmond was a magistrate and, as there was no other jail in the village, he had the cellar windows of his house barred and used part of the cellar as a jail.

A dam and mill constructed by The Canada Company in 1832 was at the time to the east of the present village. In later years, the grist mill, flour mill and a distillery were operated by Constant Van Egmond. His brothers ran the other larger businesses of the village — Leopold ran the sawmill, William was the proprietor of the American Hotel, and August ran the woolen mills. August, the youngest son, started in the

manufacture of woolens in 1854. In 1866, he built a three-storey brick mill near to the boundary with Seaforth.

The Van Egmond family came to Upper Canada from Pennsylvania. The father, Anthony Van Egmond, was born in the Netherlands in 1775 and married Marie Susanne Dietz in 1808 in Mainz, Germany. He and his family immigrated to the United States in 1819. He failed to prosper there, and the prospect of fertile soil in Upper Canada, led the Van Egmond family to pack their bags again. Soon after arriving here in 1828, Anthony Van Egmond purchased 200 acres in Oxford East from The Canada Company. Van Egmond thus met and befriended John Galt, the representative for The Canada Company in Upper Canada.

The Huron Tract had been surveyed in 1827 and a Bridle Road cut out by the end of 1828. Four taverns were built at 20-mile intervals along the Huron Road, the one in Hullett Township near Clinton owned by Van Egmond. Anthony and Constant Van Egmond were contracted in 1830-1832 to widen a 45½-mile stretch of the Huron Road. They were paid 1/3 in currency, 2/3 in land credits. Thus, Anthony Van Egmond acquired 13,000 acres, becoming Huron's largest landholder.



Constant and his wife, Ann Johnson Van Egmond

Anthony Van Egmond's participation in the Mackenzie uprising of 1837 led to his imprisonment and death. After his death his land was sold to pay his debts. His sons, however, were able to keep enough of the land to enable them to carry out their father's plans for settlement.

In 1854, Constant Van Egmond deeded land to the Presbyterian Church in Egmondville for a church and burial ground. The Egmondville Cemetery is the resting place of Anthony Van Egmond and his descendants (*see the story of Egmondville Cemetery*).
