



Christ Church Community Museum
presents
A Walking Tour of Historic Lakefield

See the original buildings that formed the downtown business core.

Trace the owners' steps to their homes on quiet streets.

Find where they worshipped.

Find the railway station, the steamship dock, the post offices,
the sites of the first newspaper shop and the canoe companies.

Just follow the map.

The homes listed here are all private residences and are not open to the public.

Christ Church Community Museum (1)

Built in 1853-54, this old stone church and its cemetery, on the banks of the Otonabee river, filled the need for a place to worship. Samuel Strickland was instrumental in raising the funds to build it. A stroll through the cemetery reveals the names of many of the early settlers, including Strickland. Today, Christ Church is still an active church, as well as seasonal museum; it houses an impressive display of materials relating to the writings of Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill, Margaret Laurence, and Isabella Valancy Crawford.

St. John the Baptist Church (2)

Built in 1865-66, its architect was Samuel Strickland's son, Walter. It was built to replace Christ Church which, in 12 years, had become too small for the congregation. It was completed just three months before Samuel died, and his was the first funeral service. Later, in his memory, the bell tower was added.

Home of Margaret Laurence (3)

From 1975 to 1987 this famous author lived at 8 Regent St. In an upstairs room Margaret Laurence penned her last memoirs. In her earlier work, *The Diviners*, she demonstrated her close affiliation with Lakefield and its history when she wrote of Morag Gunn's imaginary conversation with Catharine Parr Traill.

Homes of Isabella Valancy Crawford (4)

Isabella and her family lived at 35 Regent St. from 1862 to 1865, then moved to 15 Charlotte St. After a short time she moved to Peterborough, and finally to Toronto where she died in 1887. Some of her most beautiful poems were inspired by the legends of the Ojibwa people who lived in the Lakefield area.

Lakefield Canoe Companies

The production of wooden canoes and boats began in 1858 at the Thomas Gordon Canoe Company and ended in 1970 at Rilco Industries. Prominent names such as Gordon, Strickland, and Brown were among the ten different wooden boat manufacturers through those years. Some of their canoes were presented to royalty and many were shipped all over the world. Walter Walker, one of the last great canoe builders, presented a canoe to Prince Andrew in 1977.

98 Queen St. (5)

Part of this building was the original Thomas Gordon Canoe Company established in 1858. The back portion of the building was built in 1893 by the Strickland Canoe Company and used as a paint shop and showroom.

1 Stanley St. (6)

Now restored, this building was the original Brown Canoe Company, est. 1887.

Other canoe companies were located at:

106 Queen St. (7)

One of the Strickland Canoe Company sites and

1 Strickland St. (8)

The site of the Lakefield Boat Factory

Railway Station (9)

Built in 1881 and enlarged in 1902, this is the third and only station to remain standing. At the peak of the era there were as many as four trains a day arriving and leaving, carrying mail, freight and passengers.

Pavilion in Isobel Morris Park (10)

This heritage building was once the depot of passengers and freight passing between the railway and the steamboats during the busy summer tourist season. It was originally located beside the current marina.

Lakefield College School (11)

Founded in 1879 by an Englishman named Sparham Sheldrake, this private school has played an important economic and cultural role in our community. It has had an impressive line of headmasters, and students from all over the world, including Prince Andrew who continues to be a trustee and has returned to the school often.

Hillside Cemetery (12)

Just north of the village, on Casement Lane, lies the Hillside Cemetery. Opened in 1886, it was originally intended to replace the small cemetery at Christ Church, but eventually it became the community burial ground. Catharine Parr Traill was buried here in her 98th year. It is also the final resting place of four of the headmasters of Lakefield College School.

58 Queen St. (13a)

This building was built in 1886 and was the first to have a plate-glass window. The original structure was three stories high and had a mansard roof. For over 60 years it was used as a general store managed by three generations of the same family.

56 Queen St. (13b)

This building was built in 1851 and is the oldest still standing in the village. Over the years this little shop has housed many businesses. At one time the owner was the clerk and treasurer for the village and part of the building was used as his office. In the 1870's the "Lakefield News" was printed here, and 100 years later the "Lakefield Leader" had an office here.

49 Queen St. (14)

Built in 1875, it has had many commercial uses, including a furniture and funeral business. It was also the site of the first public library.

46 Queen St. (15)

Built in 1860 as a private home, this building has been a hotel with livery stables, and a barber shop and pool hall. It was the last old-fashion family-style grocery store in the village.

26-28 Queen St. (16)

Built in 1877, number 26 Queen St. housed the first telephone exchange, and number 28 was originally a harness shop. A room on the upper floor was once used by Dr. Alex Fraser as a hospital room for minor surgeries. For many years it was a clothing store and is now part of Kawartha Home Hardware. See also (30)

21 Queen St. (17)

Built in 1875, the upper floor was once used as the council chamber. The main floor has had many commercial uses, but for many years it was a hardware store. This building and 49 Queen St. are often called the “bookend buildings”.

17 Queen St. (18)

Built in the late 1850s, this building has been used as a private residence, and has had many commercial uses. In 1861 it was advertised as a “new grocery store” with a “well assorted stock of groceries and liquors”.

Memorial Hall and Cenotaph Park (19)

The Memorial Hall, built as a memorial to the veterans of World War 1, was officially opened in 1921. In June 1930 the cenotaph was unveiled; its Celtic cross bears the names of those from the village and the surrounding area who died in that war. In the park there is a historical plaque commemorating Susanna Moodie’s contribution to Lakefield. There is also a unique sundial erected in memory of a local citizen, Roberta Copeland, and avid horticulturist.

Peterborough-Lakefield Police Station (20)

This building was constructed in 1912 as a post office, with William Casement as Postmaster. The first post office was located at 52 Queen St. See also (27). The site of the current post office (21), at the corner of Queen and Reid, was once a hotel, a service station, and then the Lakefield Dairy.

195 Concession St.: SGS Lakefield Research (22)

This is the site of the Lakefield Portland Cement Company, which was founded in 1900. From 1909 to 1932 it operated as a member of the Canada Cement Company. In 1905 Lakefield replaced its wooden sidewalks with cement at a cost of 12 cents per sq. ft. In 1934 the highway from Lakefield to Peterborough was paved with the last of the cement stored in the 16 silos. The silos were removed in 2010, but the “smokestack” which was built in 1932 as part of a dust control system remains as a prominent landmark. During the war years it was used as a landmark for flight training out of the Trenton Air Base. This structure currently houses telecommunication equipment for services such as the internet and cell phones. In 1941 Ventures Group (later Falconbridge) began operation in the old cement plant as Nepheline Products, which became Lakefield Research, and now is SGS Lakefield Research. The company provides testing, research, development, and consulting services to international mining, minerals, metals and environmental industries.

Many families were responsible for the founding of the village of Lakefield. However, three prominent families serve as excellent examples of the contributions of the first pioneers.

The Nelson Family

John and Margaret Nelson immigrated to Canada from Ireland and settled here in 1820. Their son, Hugh, was the first child born to a pioneer family in this area. Their land grant and subsequent land purchases were mainly in the south portion of the village. Indeed, at one time the area was known as Nelson’s Falls. *The following are locations of some of their homes and businesses.*

1 Grant Ave. (23)

John Nelson wiled the land on which this house was built to his son Samuel, who built the house in 1877. He named it Victoria Lodge. For many years it was the Lakefield Private Hospital. Now once again it is a private residence.

23 Nelson St. (24)

This home was built in 1862 for Margaret Nelson, referred to as Lakefield’s first lady, she lived here until her death 1884.

Casement Ln. (25)

John and Margaret Nelson’s daughter, Sarah, married Thomas Casement. They lived near Hillside Cemetery. The road leading to the cemetery was named Casement Lane.

39 Queen St. (26)

This is the site of the former Commercial Hotel, which burned down in 2002. The original part of that structure was built in 1855 and owned by Margaret Nelson. It is now the site of the Village Inn.

52 Queen St. (27)

The Royal Bank is on the site of the first post office and general store. Robert Casement was the first Postmaster. His nephew, William Henry Casement, continued as Postmaster for 63 years, the longest serving Postmaster in the Dominion of Canada.

The Sherin Family

Henry and Elizabeth Sherin immigrated to Canada from Ireland in 1822 and settled on a land grant near Omemee. Their son, John Christopher (J.C), moved to Lakefield in 1855, and was joined later by his brother, Samuel. A short walk around the block will show the impact this family had on the development of the village.

18 Queen St. (28a)

This is the location of the first general store established by J.C Sherin in 1855.

14 Queen St. (28b)

By the mid-1800s this section of Queen St. was known as the Sherin Block, which included the general store, a pharmacy, and the building at 15 Burnham St.

15 Burnham St. (29)

Behind these Queen St. buildings, a stone warehouse and a firewall for the general store were built in 1857. The warehouse is an apartment building.

20-24 Queen St. (30)

In 1875 J.C Sherin built three separate stores to be used as rental properties. The Lakefield News, the village’s first printed newspaper, occupied the north end of this building for over 40 years. Kawartha Home Hardware now occupies the ground floor of all these buildings, with apartments on the upper floors. See also (16).

33 Queen St. (31)

This building was built in the early 1860’s by J.C Sherin as his family home. It has since been used as a Doctor’s office, a funeral home, a restaurant and an art shop.

16 Albert St. (32)

In 1886 J.C Sherin built a new family home. It was occupied by members of the Sherin Family until 1985.

34 Reid St. (33)

This house was built in the early 1860s by Samuel Sherin, who worked for his brother in the general store. In 1869 Samuel was the division court clerk and, when the village was incorporated in 1874, became the first treasurer, a post held for 27 years.

47 Regent St.: Lakefield United Church (34)

The property for the church was deeded by Samuel Sherin in 1864; the cornerstone of the present church was laid in 1908. J.C Sherin, the first Sunday School superintendent, sold the lot next to his home for a church manse in 1869 for one dollar.

The Strickland Family

Samuel Strickland immigrated to Canada in 1825, followed by his sisters Catharine Parr Traill and her husband Thomas, and Susanna Moodie and her husband John, in 1832. The Strickland family holdings were mainly in the north end of the village. Samuel Strickland's fifth home was built in 1855 and was called "The Homestead"; it was located in the area which is now known as Winfield Shores (Queen St. & Stewart Dr.), but this home burned down on Halloween 1913. Roland Strickland had inherited this home after his father's death in 1867.

200 Queen St. Reydon Manor (35)

This home was built in 1857 for Robert Strickland by Robert Gordon (of canoe building fame). He called it Reydon Manor in honour of his father's childhood home in England. The carriage house and the main house have been restored to their original design, thanks to former owners Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Blake.

66 Queen St. Hendren Funeral Home (36)

The original part of this building was built in 1873 by the Strickland brothers. Rev. Vincent Clementi, rector of Christ Church and of St John Baptist Anglican churches lived here.

59 Clementi St. (37)

Built in 1860, this home was purchased in 1894 by Agnes Fitzgibbon Chamberlin, daughter of Susanna and John Moodie. Agnes did the artwork for the book *Studies of Plant Life in Canada*, written by her aunt, Catharine Parr Traill.

16 Smith St. "Westove" (38)

This home was built for Catharine Parr Traill in 1860, and she lived here until her death in 1899. Her daughter, Katharine, remained in the house until 1922. Here, Mrs. Traill continued her writing about pioneer life in Canada and her studies of local plant life.

Stenner Rd. (39)

Susanna and John Moodie purchased property north of Samuel Strickland's home in the vicinity of Stenner Rd. and Moodie Dr. Only a historical plaque marks this site.

