

THE VILLAGE OF STOUFFVILLE

Stouffville was founded by Abraham and Elizabeth — Stouffer who came from Chambersburg, Pennsylvania in 1804 and purchased land on both sides of the Town Line in Concession 9. Here they built a mill around which this community developed. Earliest development took place in what is now the east end, around the 10th Line crossroads.

A second development focus centred on mills near Duffins Creek in the vicinity of Mill and Market Streets. The railway line came through in the 1870s and brought prosperity and development further west.



Following the creation of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville in 1971, a crest was developed as a symbol of the Town. Its images represent the three entities which contributed land and population to the new Town, Whitchurch and Markham Townships and the Village of Stouffville. A white church represents the former, the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew symbolize the earliest founders of Markham, and the star and chalice are from the family crest of Stouffville's founding Stouffer family.

THE WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Historical Society was founded in 1987. Its purpose is to make the community more aware of its heritage through entertainment, education and participation. We encourage you to join us at our bi-monthly meetings. Further information is available in the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library.

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Historical Society hopes that you enjoy this walking tour, and asks you to respect the privacy and property of the residents by keeping to the roads and sidewalks.

Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy in this brochure. Corrections and additional information will be gratefully received.

Map and Illustrations by
Fenella Smith

photo credit:
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Previous Brochures include:

- 1 **Stouffville Centre North**
- 2 **Stouffville Centre South**
- 3 **Brimstone Point North**

STOUFFVILLE VILLAGE WALKING TOUR

4

Slough of Despond

including Main Street,
between Park Drive and Stouffer Street



The Holden House
c1870

Produced by the
Whitchurch-Stouffville
Historical Society
1994

The tour begins on Peter Street, now known as **Park Drive**, south of Main Street at the edge of Memorial Park, which was once farmland. Early Stouffville was a strip of widely-spaced buildings along both sides of the Town Line dividing Markham and Whitchurch townships. There were occasional streets cutting through to the farms behind.

Latham Hall, on the west side of Park Drive, was built in 1972 and is named in honour of Arthur Latham (1895-1979), whose generous donations to area communities have included a variety of public facilities.

Walk north on Park Drive to **Main Street**, past the town-owned lot which provides parking for users of Main Street and the park. A 1½-storey frame house owned by Thomas Shaw in 1900 and the garage Arthur Swift operated from the 1920s to the 1960s formerly occupied this site.

Walking east along the south side of Main Street, the first building is a sturdy, 2½-storey brick house, #6411, built c1914 for William H. Todd. A similar house will be seen at #6521. In 1914 this house and property were valued at \$1200. The verandah is Greek-revival with its simple columns and pediment over the stairs.

#6421 is a frame, 2-storey house of a design similar to many of the early east-end homes. The house was built in 1855 for Thomas Shaw, who co-published the first village paper, *The Pay Advocate*. The house features a full, front verandah and a summer kitchen extending out the back. In the 1860s, it was owned by cooper Thomas Brownlee, who worked his trade at Wheeler's gristmill.



In the 1890s, Thomas Brownlee built the double house to the east, #6429/#6431, as a rental property. His daughter, Annie, continued the tradition, and, at the turn of the century was renting to Mrs. Beater, a widow, and Chas. Pipher, a labourer.

The creek drains an area north of Main Street which was once swamp, earning the road from this

point to Baker Street the name "Slough of Despond". Wheeler's sawmill provided planks to build a plank road, but it sank into the swamp, as did the tons of gravel and dirt added later. Cedar logs were laid to make a corduroy road in the early 1900s, and the road was Macadamised in 1923. As late as 1935, there were still problems with this section of Main Street, contributing to a continuing division between the east and west parts of the village.

#6435 is the first house on what is known as the "Tannery Lot". This 1 acre lot gets its name from the tanning business, one of the necessities in a pioneer community, that had been conducted here since early in Stouffville's history. In 1855, the Tannery Lot was owned by Augustus Von Buseck, a saddler and harness-maker, who came from Markham. The lot was subsequently sold to Donald McMurchy, then William Button, who began the subdivision of the property. Land records show the next six houses located on this lot.

#6445 is a 2-storey frame house sitting very low on its foundation, which indicates its age. It may have been moved here in the 1920s, as it does not appear on the 1910 fire map.

Still on the Tannery Lot, #6461 is an old building which we can safely say was on the site prior to 1910. Could this have been a tannery building?



The last of the Tannery Lot buildings, #6465, is a brick, Victorian house built in 1875 for John B. Flint, who manufactured hay rakes. Note the bay windows on the east and front. This house stands out in the area for its size and Victorian features, such as the arched windows, gable woodwork and brick detailing.

#6481/6483 is another frame, double house, built in the late 1870s. The lot is lower than the street, perhaps indicative of the continued efforts to get the road out of the swamp. At one time the Church of England congregation met here. The owner in 1900 was R.P. Coulson. Coulson was a druggist, and also published the *Sentinel* newspaper in the 1890s. He was Village Reeve from 1907 to 1912.

#6491, built in 1890, was bought by William Malloy

in 1892 for \$500. While Mr. Malloy was the owner and editor of the Stouffville *Tribune* from 1890 until 1915, he gave much time to community works, including serving as librarian at the Mechanics Institute. His son, Howard "Pat" Malloy worked on the paper for many years; however, he did not take over the ownership or editorship from his father. Instead, A.V. Nolan bought the paper in 1922.

The two houses immediately west of **Pine Street** stand on land donated by Abraham Stouffer for the Baptist church and its drive sheds, built c1874. Prior to this, the congregation had met in the Temperance Hall on College Street (see below). The church building at Pine Street was demolished in 1926 and the bricks were used in the construction of the new church at Main Street and O'Brien Avenue.

Take a brief jaunt down Pine Street to see #16 on the back half of the church lot. It is a frame, farm-style house, which was built c1891 for Daniel Miller, a labourer.

#6525 **Main Street** (see cover illustration) is a 1½-storey, board and batten house with a rough stone foundation. It was built c1870 for Sinclair Holden, who was a general merchant in the east end.



To the east, #6531, is a unique blend of Victorian features in a frame house. This particular house design was more common in brick, as seen on George Street in the centre of town. The wings are bayed offering an opportunity for distinctive woodwork in the gables. The house is thought to date from 1895, but has a rough stone foundation, unusual at this late date. The house was built for the Milton Kesters, who had retired from farming. Milton's widow, Ann, owned the house until her death in 1926.

Summitview Public School received its current name as the result of a student competition in 1959. The first school in the village (c1855) was located in a frame building on the site of the United Church on Church Street (see Walking Tour #1). The school

moved in 1872 to three buildings in this area shown as **A** **B** **C** on map. **A** was a frame house owned by the Jacob Focklers, retired farmers. **B** was a frame building, just east of College Street. It was also used for various church congregations, Temperance meetings, Salvation Army meetings, clubs and activity groups. **C** was a one-room brick building on the site of the present school yard. **B** & **C** were reached by College Street, which also provided access to the farm to the south.



Stouffville Public and Continuation School, c1920

In 1874, the school trustees bought 9/16 of an acre from Ed Wheeler, including the site of **C** which was demolished in 1877 to accommodate the construction of a 4-room brick building. Mr. Hand, the teacher in the one-room school, served as principal for the enlarged school until it burnt in 1917. After the fire, classes were held in various locations to complete the school year. Construction of the original portion of the current building was undertaken immediately, and it was ready for the opening of school in September of the same year.

The west portion of what is now the school property was once occupied by a 2-storey red brick building, built c1853 for Edward Wheeler, the mill owner. In 1856, he sold it to Samuel Fenton who operated a post office and general store. The building was converted into a dwelling and, in 1900, it was owned by retired farmer George McKinnell and tenanted by William Avery, a blacksmith. It was demolished when the New School was built in 1917.

George McKinnell also owned a frame house to the east, where labourers Duncan and Hugh McLean were tenants in 1900. Mrs. McKinnell operated a girls' school here, "teaching culinary arts, needlework

and social graces". In 1917 this building was moved to a site further east on Main Street.

The school addition now stands on the site of College Street. To the east of the street stood a 2-storey house built in the late 1850s for Thomas Dawson. It was later owned by blacksmith John Jerman in 1890. It was demolished in 1990 to make way for the realignment of Stouffer Street and the addition to Summitview School.

Cross at the lights to the north side of Main Street. On the north-west corner is **Memorial Christian Church**, formerly the **Congregational Church**, built in



1874 to replace the congregation's original church (dating back to 1842) on the south side of Main Street east of Cemetery Lane. The church was purchased in 1903 by Jacob Burkholder to assure it would "always be a Christian Church". The church is simple, solid and symmetrical in design. It features trefoil windows, accented by the brickwork, and has fine wrought-iron hinges on the wooden doors.

West of the church is #6518, a clapboard house with a gambrel roof, built c1882. Note another stone foundation. Now being used as the Missionary Church offices, it was owned by only two families between the 1880s and the 1980s: the Taits and the Toazes.

Two homes were taken down to accommodate the present Missionary Church. The church sanctuary was built in 1968. The Christian Education wing to the west, built in 1987, replaced the 1903 Mennonite church. A planter in the lobby is built with bricks from the earlier church. Before the turn of the century school children enjoyed water from Billy Roddick's pump located near the road.

A jaunt up **Baker Street** will reward you with some small homes built early in this century. An exception is #36, which was moved here from the George Urquhart property on Main Street in 1934. This small, clapboard structure, now covered with stucco, was built before 1860.

Abraham Stouffer's widowed daughter-in-law, Anna, and her second husband, William Pingle,

registered an extensive subdivision plan in 1853. Narrow streets running north from Main, such as Baker, were part of the plan. In 1855, a twenty-acre portion, the entire section of Pingle's plan west of Baker, was purchased by James Johnston.

Johnston was a blacksmith in the village as early as 1843. He "gave money, land and energy" for the building of the first Presbyterian Church in 1863. Twenty years later his nephew, Francis Rae, acquired the major part of the property and donated additional land to the church.

The first two houses west of Baker, #6480 & #6476, may have been built c1860. While the first was used as a rental house, the other was a store operated by a succession of merchants. In 1900, Joel Stock, who had been a stone mason, owned both, renting out the former and operating a general store in the latter.

The double house, #6468/6472, was built by the Urquharts in the 1860s and remained in the family until 1951. In 1900, George Urquhart, a house painter, lived in the west side and rented the east



side to Hugh McDonald, a butcher. George's mother lived in the small house which sat to the west and was later moved to #36 Baker Street.

The rear portion of #6460 is the original farm house, built after 1855, and may have been the home of James Johnston and his brothers, Henry and Edward, until James' death in 1893. The more recent front portion stands on a lower foundation. It was later owned by James and Margaret (Rae) Mason, and became part of the Rae Estate. This included farm land behind the Main Street lots from Baker across to Church Street.

In 1904, farmer Sandy Jones bought the estate property, and continued to farm the property into the 1940s. He sold two lots on Main Street prior to the first war, including the one where #6448 stands. This was bought by prominent local builder, Nathan Forsyth, who built this house for East End Store owner, Milt Leavens. Note the decorative fish-scale



shingles in the gable and the large bay window on the east.

Bill Ball bought the property at #6440 from Sandy Jones in 1912. The house appears older than this, possibly having been moved here.

The first Presbyterian church, a frame building on the land donated by James Johnston, was



dedicated for worship in 1865 for the use of both the Free Presbyterian and Church of Scotland congregations. In the 1870s the two congregations joined. In 1894, a new brick church, St. James Presbyterian, was built by Nathan Forsyth on the site of the frame building using additional land donated by Francis Rae. The building is relatively unchanged since its construction.

The house at #6424 was built in the early 1880s, prior to being sold by J.J. Rae to Abe Stover in 1883. At the turn of the century it was owned by Ann Stouffer, who lived in Orillia and rented the house to labourer William Morden and barber Asa Brown. In the 1920s Albert Davis had a dairy here. Originally a frame house, it was stuccoed by the Cooneys, who bought the property in 1934.

The small plaza was built in the late 1960s. Previously, a 1½-storey house dating from the 1860s was on the east half of the property, and a blacksmith shop was on the west in the 1850s and 1860s. In this century, Henry Herman established a junk yard at the back of the property. His son-in-law, Benny Raxlin took over the yard from the 1930s until 1965 and also operated a second hand store near Main and Mill.

The house at #6408 was built c1890. For many years, the property to the west, where the creek runs, was a side lot for this house. One owner in the middle part of this century, Mr. Morrin, was well known for the roses he grew there.

A 1½-storey frame house preceded the fire hall at #6392. W. J. Mertens, a well-known local

photographer, was a tenant in this rental property at the turn of the century. The Village of Stouffville bought the property in 1964 in order to build a new



fire hall, replacing the old hall at the site of the clock (formerly hose) tower. The old fire bell, no longer used, has been moved to the roof of the new building.

The property to the west of the fire hall has been a manufacturing centre for over a century and a half, since Ira Anderson had his blacksmith shop here prior to 1837. He was followed by James Johnston, who blacksmithed here for 34 years, selling in 1877 to John Jerman who added carriage making. In 1894, William Todd reestablished his successful Todd Carriage Works here, after fire had destroyed his Goodwood home and business. As motor cars took over from carriages, the Todd Automobile Agency replaced the Carriage Works. Arthur Swift operated a garage here following a fire at his own property across the street. The garage was later taken over by Frank and Clayt Baker. In 1943 Walter Atkinson purchased the property, ran a farm machinery agency and

converted the upper floor to apartments. Look for evidence of the Carriage Works in the existing building.



Todd Carriage Works, 1895

Having moved his business to Stouffville, William Todd had #6372 built in 1895. The solid, 2-storey brick house retains its stained glass windows. The large curved verandah supports the matching balcony at the upper level. The house and Carriage Works shared a 1-acre lot. A private bowling green was once situated at the back of the property.

Back at Park Drive, cross Main Street carefully to return to the start of the tour.

