

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 Stouffville 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 dove 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
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STOUFFVILLE VILLAGE WALKING TOUR

5a

The Heart of Stouffville: West

including Main Street
between Mill Street and Edward Street
and businesses adjacent to the railway



Daley's Hall
1885

Produced by the
Whitchurch-Stouffville
Historical Society
1995

The tour begins at the corner of Main and Market Streets, and will take the reader west to the tracks (looking at the south side) and back (looking at the north side). *The reader is advised to walk on the north side to observe buildings on the south and vice versa on the return trip.*

The Main, Mill & Market intersection has long been the primary crossroads of the business area of Stouffville, and the names indicate why. Market Street and the lots on either side were created in 1889 by R.J. Daley's plan of subdivision. This property appears to have been the site of Abraham Stouffer's third mill, later owned by Edward Wheler (often spelt Wheeler).

On the southwest corner the Silver Jubilee seniors' club now occupies the former post office, built in 1926. It was



here that R.J. Daley had built Daley's Hall (pictured on the cover) in 1885. The famous frame hall was an imposing structure, and served as a market, public hall, skating and curling rink. In later years a livery stable occupied the lower level. When the hall burned in 1923, the fire took the lives of several horses.

The next building, #6291, was originally a house built in the 1890s for William and his son Wilfred E. Morden, who was later reeve of the Village. *The Tribune* office occupied this building for a number of years.

#6387/89 is a more recent building, constructed in the 1960s on the side lot of the Morden house.

The grassed area on either side of the creek is managed by the Metro Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. One of the earliest businesses

in this area was a carriage shop, built right over the creek. It was torn down in the 1920s when Alex Grubin had four buildings constructed in its place. Among the businesses were the Bank of Nova Scotia, Dick Ward's garage, Strong and Schell's butcher shop, Red Forsyth's barber shop, the Stouffville Fruit Market and the Bethesda and Stouffville Telephone Co. which took over the bank building. Sarah Birkett's house, on the rear of this lot on what is now conservation land, was reached by a 12-foot wide lane from Main Street. At the time of Hurricane Hazel



From the lane to the corner there were four houses. #6245 is a new building replacing a large brick house built by Matthew Flint, and later the home of Dr. Donald Smith, dentist. #6141/3 was the home of George McCallum, a retired tailor, in 1899.

#6237 was built for Thomas Shaw Sr. and was later the retirement home of James Daley Sr., a shoe-maker. His daughter, Susan, lived here until her death in 1942.

From about the 1850s Thomas Shaw Sr. had a print shop where #6233 now stands. It was moved across the street in 1883 to #6198. At that time a house was built here by Jacob Yake. It was moved in 1929 to #6447 Main Street making way for the present house, built for Elijah Pennock.

Lloyd Street (Fair Street when it led to the village fairgrounds) was named for Ed Lloyd, who owned much of the property in this area.

On the west corner at Lloyd Street, #6223 is a rare Stouffville example of

Italianate architecture with a mansard roof. Note the brick key-arches over the windows. The original owner was David Stouffer who had the house built in 1877. Henry Vanzant, an implement dealer, and his wife Julia bought the house in 1889 and lived here for many years.



#6219 was built in the 1870s by Matthew Flint in high-Victorian style with gingerbread in the gables. It was purchased by Alfred Johnson in 1880.

Stouffville Mills and Early Development

In the early settlement of Stouffville, two centres of population developed: one in the east end near the 10th Line crossroads and one at the creek around the early mills. It is important to remember that until the incorporation of the village in 1877 the north side of Main Street was in Whitchurch Township and the south side in Markham Township.

Sometime after Abraham Stouffer arrived in 1805 he constructed a mud dam, just north-west of the current library, to create a mill pond and sawmill on the east side of Stouffville Creek in Whitchurch Township. A grist mill was added on the north side before long. After fire destroyed the grist mill, Stouffer had the help of neighbours in building a new one on the south side of the road. Specific dates for the sequence of mills in this area are hard to determine.

Smith's Gazetteer tells us that in 1846 Stouffville had 'about 70 inhabitants, one physician and surgeon, two stores, two taverns, one blacksmith and wagon maker, one oatmeal mill, one tailor and one shoemaker'.

In 1871, Stouffville's population had reached about 700. Ed Wheler, who had purchased Stouffer's mills, was operating a sawmill with steam power, and when the railway came through in the same year, Wheler arranged to have a spur built to serve the mills, then located on both sides of Main Street at the creek.

(1954), these buildings were flooded. They were removed in the 1970s when the creek was rechannelled as part of the flood control plan.

The Baptist Church at #6273 occupies a lot that had a variety of uses in the early days of the village including Ed Wheler's pig pen, a frog pond and a dump. The present church was built in 1926 using bricks from the congregation's earlier building at Pine Street.

O'Brien Avenue is named for James O'Brien, a prominent businessman, the village assessor, and an active citizen.

#6211 was also built by Flint in the 1870s. It was owned by a succession of retired farmers. In 1918, the widow Byam and her daughter Ethel opened the Blue Bird Inn, a tea room and guest house, and most of its subsequent history has been commercial.



At #6209, Whitechurch-Stouffville Hydro is located on the site of the attractive, gothic home, built in the 1880s for the Wheler family. Frank Miller, manager of the Mansion House Hotel across the street lived here. Later, this was the home of Thomas Williamson, who willed this property to the village.

W.B. Sanders named Blake Street in recognition of his mother's family when he subdivided the property on the east side of the tracks.

Before crossing Main Street, look north to the railway area. The parking lot and small GO Train station mark the location of the original Stouffville Station. The Toronto & Nipissing narrow gauge railway began operation through the town in 1871. With the addition of a line to Sutton on Lake Simcoe in 1877, this became known as Stouffville Junction. Midland Railway purchased the line in 1878 adding a third rail for standard gauge cars. The line was bought by Grand Trunk in 1884. A 2-storey frame station, built in 1886 after fire destroyed the first station, was torn down in 1979. In steam days, the water tower stood to the north.

Station agent John Hodgins kept a fine garden here. His work in founding the Stouffville Horticultural Society is commemorated by the small fountain (1947) under the billboard.

The railway attracted commercial and



industrial activity. The following buildings can be seen by taking a brief detour up the west side of the railway tracks or up Edward Street. [The tour returns to Main Street at the #]

Right at the corner of Edward Street is the Mansion House Hotel. This fine brick building replaced the frame hotel built by Elijah Miller in 1875, which was destroyed by fire in 1879. The grandest of Stouffville's hotels, it boasted "every convenience" and could serve 100 guests. A large yard, driveshed and livery stable were at the back. Recent renovations and an addition are faithful to the original with the exception of main floor windows.

#33 Edward Street has been the site of a series of woodworking companies since 1878 when the Park brothers' brick sash and door factory and planing mill was built (the oldest portion of the building). Subsequent owners included the Cook brothers, Samuel George, Jacob Heise, and the Canadian Bee Supply and Honey Co. When the latter company moved to Aurora in 1922, Wes Schell and Clayton Stouffer (former employees) bought the property and business, Wes taking over sole ownership in 1928. Known as Stouffville Planing Mill until 1954, the Schell name is now used for this family business.

#47 Edward, now the Co-op, was built c1886 for Alex Fleury & Co., manufacturers of agricultural implements. Crown Brass & Steel succeeded Fleury. After World War I, F.T. Hill had a seed cleaning and packing business at this site.

The Co-op grain elevator is located on railway land next to the tracks. It was built for Todd & Co. around the turn of the century.

During the railway heyday various storage buildings were located next to the tracks in this area. W.P. Hartney's lumber yard was here. Coal storage and

cattle pens were located to the north while a second elevator, built for Stiver Bros. c1903 was located to the south until 1995. At the south end of the Stiver elevator was a warehouse where merchant John Sanders handled seeds, coal, salt and cement.

Across the tracks to the east, the Barkey



Brothers' Foundry, later Stouffville Machine and Tool Works, can be seen. A rare Stouffville remnant of early 20th-century industrial architecture, the main building was built for Ed and Isaac Barkey in 1908. Barkey Bros.' products included the Haggas pump, designed in 1879 by a railway employee, which used steam pressure from the train to pump water into the train's holding tank from creeks or cisterns.

The reader should now cross to the south side of the street for a better view of north side buildings. #6180-88 (built in 1970) is on the site of an earlier commercial/residential building, built by John Jennings c1882, which had in it a feed store (Seth Fleury and Stiver Bros.) and a barber shop. When it burned in 1935, the owner, Hugh Anderson lived here with his family, provided lodging for travellers, and had a confectionary shop on the main floor. It remained vacant until Neil Patrick operated a used car lot here in the 1960s.

For 110 years there has been a monument works at #6194, the longest continuous business on one site in Stouffville. The Widemans moved the business here from Ringwood in 1885. Wideman monuments can be found in cemeteries throughout the region.

#6198 was once the home of Ed Davey, section boss for the railway. This had been Thomas Shaw's print shop across the street. Martha, Ed's wife, was well-known for her work with the Women's Institute and United Church.

#6204 is an example of restored heritage. The original bricks have been used to recreate (with additions) the house built here in the 1890s by Matthew Flint. The interior, though opened up for the business, preserves much of the original floorplan.

Freel Lane was named for three generations of doctors who served this community. On the lot east of the lane, Dr. Sylvester Freel had an 18-room, Victorian mansion built, c1886, with 16-foot ceilings on the main floor. It had a two-storey, projecting bay flanked by



ornate verandas. After Sylvester's death, nephew Herbert inherited the property and in 1949 replaced the mansion with a more manageable, 1½-storey Cape-Cod-style home (torn down in 1994). This lot was the site of Abraham Stouffer's first house and Ed Wheler's home from 1851 through the 1870s.

At the site of #6220-26, still on the Freel property, there once stood a giant elm tree, the focal point of a community park that had playground equipment and a bandshell. Dr. Ira Freel, Sylvester's brother, had a bowling green and a tennis court on the property, often used for club competitions.

As on the south side, the succession of business buildings did not break for the creek. Now the conservation lands provide a pleasant stretch of community open space.

In 1874, the old Congregational Church building from the east end of the village was moved to a site spanning the creek. Remodelled as two stores, its occupants have included a "chinese laundry", a barber shop, John Monkhouse's tailor shop, and George Baker's Sweeteners. This building burned down in 1951.

Back from the road, where the public library stands, there was for a few years from 1889 the Campbell Carpet Works. After it was destroyed by fire, Campbell consolidated his business in his Markham factory. The new library was built for the Village Centennial in 1977, replacing the Carnegie Library east of Church Street.

The parking lot in front of the library was part of Margaret Gibney's 13 acres (1883) which went from here to Mill Street and to the north of



Stouffville Machine and Tool Works. The Ed Wheler tannery building, a barn-like frame structure, was on part of this and was later used as a **blacksmith and carriage shop** by Byron Beebe and Robert Duncan.

Fire destroyed the building in the late 1920s, and Beebe's widow sold the property to Roy Strong for a garage and gas station. This building was demolished in 1975.

On the lawn by the flagpole there is an historic plaque commemorating the founding and early history of Stouffville. Near this spot Wheler's spur rail line crossed Main Street to serve his mill on the south side.

Next to the east, #6242-48 is the site of the Stouffville Bakery started by J.B. Wurts in 1889. The central portion of the building still stands behind the storefront. The bakery used 12-15 barrels of flour a day. There was a succession of

operators, including Frank Gordon, Frank Rowbotham, Ambrose Stover, Wolfgang Dams and Gerhard Hartung. In the 1950s and 60s the bakery served 12 villages as far away as Port Perry. In recent years, the building has been renovated, with other businesses occupying parts of the space. The bakery closed in 1995.

#6252 was built in the 1890s as a grocery store for Eleanor Brown, who sold it to Peter Myers. It was one of three telephone centrals of the Bethesda and Stouffville Telephone Co. early in this century. Some Stouffville residents can still remember Simpson's

Brown Betty Tea Room here.

#6258 & 6262 Main are located on the site of a post office on an 1850 map and George Kemp's buildings from the 1880s - his house on the corner and his butcher shop to the west. He was succeeded in both by Nelson Smith, auctioneer. In 1926 Harry Leadbeater, another butcher, sold the west building to A.V. Nolan for *The Tribune* and adapted the main floor of the house to become the butcher shop. Harvey Schell purchased the butcher shop in 1928 and had the new corner building constructed after the second world war.

For a continuation of the Main Street tour further east, pick up a copy of *5b: The Heart of Stouffville - East*.

THE FOUNDING OF STOUFFVILLE

In 1805-06 Abraham Stouffer (1780-1851), a Pennsylvania Mennonite, acquired 400 acres of land in this area. By 1824 he had built a saw and grist-mill on Duffin's Creek, near which a hamlet developed, and in 1832 a post-office named Stouffville was established. The community grew steadily and in 1852 a village plot was laid out. By 1864 Stouffville, with a population of about 700 inhabitants, contained several prosperous industries, including carriage-works, harness-works, and the mills of Edward Wheeler, a prominent merchant. The construction of the Toronto and Nipissing Railway, completed in 1871, and growing agricultural prosperity stimulated the community's growth as an important milling and commercial centre. Stouffville was incorporated as a Village by a County by-law of 1876.

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