

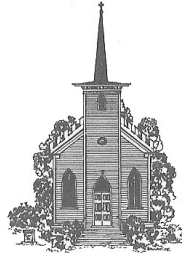
Historical Walking Tour of Port Stanley, Ontario

In 1804 John Bostwick was granted 100 acres of land at the mouth of Kettle Creek by his friend, Colonel Thomas Talbot. He settled in the area in the early 1820s and ran an important warehouse and mill. Although Bostwick is sometimes referred to as the founder of Port Stanley, other early settlers had names like Zavitz, Minor, Smith, Stephens, Price, Begg and Mason. These names reflect the wide diversity of settlers who poured into southwestern Ontario in the years between 1825 and 1875. Port Stanley was an important portal of entry. In one year, 1844, its busy harbour recorded the arrival of 148 boats. As early as 1822 a road had been opened linking the port to St. Thomas and London, and in 1856 the London and Port Stanley railway started operation, connecting Port Stanley to the vast rail network which was spreading across North America.

As well as being an important center for the movement of goods and people, Port Stanley was and still is, the home of a thriving commercial fishing fleet. In 1910 there were 22 fishing tugs operating from the Port Stanley harbour. It was not until the early years of this century that Port Stanley came into its own as a summer resort. Many of the readers of this pamphlet will remember the L&PS which brought close to a million vacationers a year to the village. This is a walking tour, so it will not include various of the original cottage enclaves, such as Orchard Beach, Hillcrest, Mitchell Heights and Invererie Heights. We do urge you, before leaving our village to take a short drive to some of these outlying areas of Port Stanley to enjoy the magnificent views of Lake Erie, and to appreciate how many of the lovely old summer cottages are being transformed into gracious year round retirement homes.

Our walking tour will begin in front of Christ Church, at 289 Colborne street. There is usually ample parking beside the church.

Christ Church 289 Colborne Street



Christ Church, Port Stanley's oldest place of worship was constructed in 1845. Col. John Bostwick donated the one acre site in 1826. In the young village, the church played an important part in the religious and social life of the early settlers. *If the church is open, you are welcome to walk in and view the lovely stained glass windows commemorating family names as well as aspects of the village's history.*

In 1854, a 400 pound bell was acquired to complement the most outstanding architectural feature of the church, its tower and spire. The church is a synthesis of two architectural styles: British Classical and American Colonial. The grounds surrounding Christ Church to the north, south and east comprise the oldest cemetery in the village. Here you will find headstones of prominent church members, the grave of Colonel John Bostwick and a provincial historical plaque giving details of his life.

From the church, walk south on Colborne Street. On the right hand side of the street, you will see another lovely church, St. John's Presbyterian Church.

St. John's Presbyterian Church 238 Colborne Street

Built in 1852 by Congregationalists, St. John's Presbyterian Church was rented by the Presbyterians soon after their congregation was established in 1854 and later, in 1871, purchased for \$420. This attractive white frame building is a fine example of pioneer architecture, with its classical shape and gothic and romanesque windows.

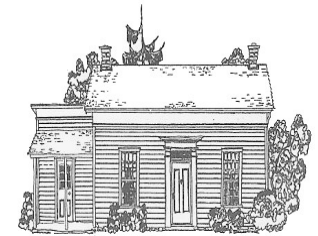


Port Stanley United Church

Across Colborne Street from St. John's is the United Church. This structure was originally a Methodist Church, erected by a congregation that existed as early as 1836. The present building was erected in 1889 and included a rectory on the north side, and carriage sheds behind. The front vestibule was added after the building became a United Church. *South on Colborne street, on the west side, is a single story white home on the Corner of Hetty and Colborne Streets.*

Thomson House 232 Colborne St.

This one and a half story white clapboard home was built in 1840 in the Greek Revival style with returning eaves, cornices and pilasters. The exterior is basically unaltered and the building is very well preserved. The south



extension served as the Port Stanley library for four decades around the turn of the century. Eliza Thomson acted as librarian while the house was her residence. It later served as the office of Dr. Clinton A. Bell.

Continue south for one more block.

Bank Building

At the main intersection, the CIBC building is a fine example of a "flat iron building". The concrete block structure was built by local entrepreneur Matt Loney about 1910. The front part of the building has been used as a bank ever since. The horse trough in front of the bank originally stood at the curb and was erected by the Elgin Humane Society and the Band of Mercy Leagues in 1916. Mr. Loney also owned and operated Port Stanley's largest inn, the Hotel Loney. It was one of a succession of hotels known as the Batt Hotel, the Hotel Loney, the Gilmour House and finally the Clifton Hotel which was destroyed by fire in 1991. A parking lot opposite 207 Main Street now occupies the site.

Cross the intersection and read the historical plaque on the stone cairn. You are now at what has always been the main intersection of Port Stanley, where Colborne St, Bridge St. Main St. and Joseph St. meet.

Kettle Creek Inn Corner of Bridge and Main Streets

In 1849 Colonel John Bostwick sold the two lots the Inn is situated on to Squire Samuel Price, Justice of the Peace. In 1918 John C. Price sold the house to the Williamsons who opened it as "The Garden Inn" and operated it until 1952. During the thirties their son sculpted the two frogs which are located on the sidewalk. The Inn was purchased by Gary and Jean Vedova in 1983 and reopened as The Kettle Creek Inn in 1985.

Continue walking south on Main Street, one of the oldest streets in Port Stanley. On your left is the Livery, now known as the Darbyshire House.

The Livery 215 Main Street



This whimsical building may well be the oldest structure on the tour. It has been a livery, a confectionary shop, a retail store and temporarily the Village hall. Typical of the early 19th century, the main level was built to be used as a commercial space and the upper level to be used as living quarters for the owner. Its deeply paneled pine doors and large display window are distinctive features of a building whose location has always kept it at the hub of village commerce.

The Russell House 211 Main Street

The Russell house was built in the early 1870s of locally made strawberry bricks by a newly arrived settler, John Sweeney. It was one of the first hotels in Port Stanley, and one of a number of similar inns required in the



early days of lake, rail and stagecoach travel. Over the years it has served a variety of functions, including butcher and plumbing shops and doctor's, lawyer's and insurance agent's offices. It later became the Sterling Bank, and several staff members have lived in rooms on the second floor, including a young banker named Mitchell Hepburn, later to become Premier of Ontario.

The Bostwick Warehouse 207 Main Street

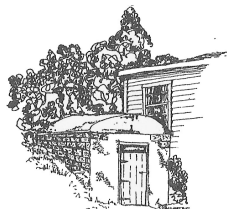
This building was built in 1822 by Col John Bostwick as part of his Grist Mill at the foot of Hillcrest Hill and moved to its present location south of Russell House in 1870. Bostwick also dealt in grain, potash and black salts. Purchased in 1879 by James Bake, the building became his home, to which his butcher shop was attached. Sold in 1928 by the Bake family, the warehouse has since served primarily as a residence and has been recently renovated with the classical architectural details of pilasters, cornices and dentils.

The Payne House 205 Main Street

The Payne House was built in 1873 by Manuel Payne on the site of Col. John Bostwick's original residence and encompasses its foundation. Manuel Payne was a landowner,

railway agent, telegraph and telephone operator, a custom's officer, express agent, issuer of marriage licenses, and the first postmaster of the village. Built of yellow brick in the early Victorian style, it mixes the gables of Gothic Revival and the bay windows and quoining of the Italianate style.

The Cork Kiln



187 - 183 Main Street

Located near the end of main street is the cork kiln. Built around 1915 during the boom of the fishing industry, the cork kiln was important for the drying of the cork used for floating fish nets. The kiln was built into the side of the hill as a natural means of

maintaining dry heat. Its preservation makes a unique architectural contribution to the streetscape.

Turn around and walk back north on Main Street. The large grey building on the west side of the street was once the home of the East Side Fish Company.

The East Side Fish Company 194 Main Street

The building was constructed about 1917 by the East Side Fish Company, although it was not completed until after the fishing industry began to decline. It was never used as a fishery but did serve for net mending and storage. The symmetrical design and the number of windows is very significant as they expose east, south and west facades to both natural light and the sun's heat in a large structure that was originally heated only by small coal stoves.

Return to the intersection of Main and Bridge Street and turn left on Bridge Street. Continue west on Bridge street until you reach the King George VI lift bridge spanning Kettle Creek.

The King George VI Lift Bridge

During the construction of the bridge in 1937, a coffer dam collapsed killing 8 of the 13 men working on the bridge at the time. More about this tragedy can be learned by reading the brass plaque on the east tower. The bridge is a bascule bridge which is so finely counterbalanced that in the event of an emergency it can be raised and lowered manually. During the navigation season the bridge opens every half hour, giving pleasure and commercial craft free passage between Lake Erie and Kettle Creek.

Cross the bridge and continue walking west.

The London and Port Stanley Railway

In 1856 the L&PS, as it was always known, opened for traffic and operated until 1965. In the early years its main business was hauling coal. It was only after its electrification in 1913 that the emphasis changed to passenger traffic. In the years before the depression it carried over a million passengers a year who came to Port Stanley to picnic, to swim, to walk the board walk and to dance in the L&PS dance pavilion on the main beach. These were the years when Port Stanley was referred to as the Coney Island of the Great Lakes. Since 1983 Port Stanley Terminal Rail has operated as a tourist attraction, running excursions along the banks of Kettle Creek.

Continue walking in a westerly direction until you get to the corner of William and George Streets.

St. Joseph's Catholic Church 335 George Street

Services were being held in Port Stanley for followers of the Roman Catholic faith as early as 1852, and they had their own hall in 1860. The present red brick church was erected in 1912 as a seasonal facility but the congregation has grown to the point where it is now used year round.

When you come to William Street, turn left and continue south for one block. The beautiful old house on the corner of William and Smith Streets is known as the Samuel Shepard House.

The Samuel Shepard House 324 Smith Street

The beautiful old house on the southwest corner of William and Smith streets was built in 1854 by Samuel Shepard who was active in Port Stanley as an insurance agent and grain and produce merchant. Samuel Shepard's windjammers were considered by many to be the finest boats that ever sailed into the harbour. He began the tradition of awarding the first captain to arrive in Port Stanley after the spring break up a top hat. This tradition has continued and is known as the "Shepard Hat". The Shepard House stayed in the Shepard family until 1947 and much of the original character of the house remains.

From here you can return to the main intersection, or continue south on William Street. A five minute walk will take you to Port Stanley's famous main beach.

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We hope you have enjoyed this walking tour of Port Stanley. This brochure was prepared by Heritage Port, devoted to preserving the history of our village..