

# *Bluewater* **HERITAGE**

*Walking & Driving Tours*

## **STANLEY TWP** *'Stagecoach Stops'*



*Produced by the Municipality of Bluewater Heritage Advisory Committee in 2018 with the generous assistance of the Huron Heritage Fund.*

This tour will take approximately 60 minutes at a comfortable driving pace.



Municipality of  
*Bluewater*

## WELCOME!

*This is a Driving Tour.*

### **TOUR ETIQUETTE:**

Please respect people's privacy. Many of the places on the tour are private businesses or residences and their inclusion is meant to highlight their history or architecture. Their presence on the tour does not include permission to enter the properties, unless they're public spaces or businesses offering public services.

Keep in mind that construction and other temporary events may involve the need to adjust your tour route; please keep a Huron County map in the car (available at tourist information centres and libraries) or have your GPS (app or device) at hand to help make any necessary detours.

Water and picnic supplies are also nice to have along for a tour in the country, not to mention a cooler for refreshments or to store the goodies you'll find at the farm markets, local breweries and cider shops along the way.

Don't stress if you get lost ... sometimes you find the

best treasures that way! Just remember: in this area, the lake is always west. That's why we have such great sunsets!

*So! Let's go on a driving tour of Stanley Township's stagecoach stops. Along the way, we'll point out some interesting sites to see and make sure to recommend at least one stop for ice cream for those summertime explorers.*

As soon as roads were created from inland to Lake Huron shores and harbours around 1830 to 1860, those with the coin to afford a horse and buggy could earn money driving people who had no such luxury but needed to get either themselves or their produce to a nearby or far-away market. Teamsters and drovers with horses or oxen made themselves available.

It wasn't until the government established post offices with regular mail service that stagecoach routes began. Bayfield's post office was created in 1847, the fourth one in existence in the Huron Tract. Before the train tracks were laid down in the 1870s, mail was carried into the area by ship, the main port being Goderich. The ships also brought new residents who needed transportation for themselves and their worldly goods to wherever they were settling. The stagecoaches delivered both mail and settlers to their destinations.

*We're going to start our tour in Bayfield, Stanley Township's largest post office centre where mail arrived by boat, or later by stagecoach from the train stops.*

*Hop aboard and see the area through the lens of the past.*

## **7 THE SQUARE Middleton House**



This house, built in 1859, was once owned by Charles Middleton, a farmer in Goderich Township. His oldest daughter, Sarah Anne Middleton married Thomas R. Jowett, who owned land in Goderich Township and for a time they lived in the house and ran the store attached to the house. Their two storey gravel house is a rare survivor from the 1850s.

In the 1850s, this home's roughcast or pebbledash exterior were very fashionable in Britain and used with many different house designs. This unique finish for a home is becoming popular again today, as people seek to update the exteriors of their brick homes. It is also a sought-after finish for new houses. But the material and technique are quite different today, than in 1859.

According to William Millar's book, 'Plastering - Plain and Decorative,' published in 1897, Charles Middleton's builder would have coated the exterior walls in 'strong-haired coarse stuff,' probably lime mortar mixed strongly with animal hair, at least twice, with plenty of time between for drying. The second coat was put on evenly, while the first coat was scratched up to provide a strong base. Whatever material was to be dashed on, Millar advised, "should be well washed, passed through a quarter to half inch sieve, mixed with hot lime and water in a tub." When the second coat was ready, the material, be it pebbles or bits of concrete, would be thrown quickly and evenly onto the soft surface, starting at the top and working downwards. For exposed environments, Millar suggested using Portland cement, which had been perfected in 1852.

Roughcast is as old as lime mortar, and was used extensively for medieval buildings like houses, castles and tower houses. In the 1861 census of Bayfield, Ontario, there were many "ruff cast" houses among the frame, brick and log homes of the small village.

The Middleton House with its lovely quoins (projected corners), symmetrical arrangement of windows and door on the front, all one over the other, all windows of equal size are typical of Georgian-style houses.

For an Englishman, like Charles Middleton, the house would have been a reminder of his former home. The woodwork of John Gemeinhardt, a noted Bayfield cabinetmaker, resides in many museums, among them the Huron County Museum in Goderich as well as the Museum of Canadian History in Ottawa. He did the finish carpentry and created the beautiful woodwork inside the Middleton-Johnson house, which may have been started in 1859 but was not finished until 1870.

Sarah Ann Middleton and Thomas Jowett were the parents of William R. Jowett, who lived at 19 The Square in Bayfield and began Jowett's Grove.

When they sold the house, the store business evolved into a livery business and many of the drivers of the early stagecoaches lived at 7 The Square. The stagecoach's mail route began when the London, Huron and Bruce Railroad line went active in 1875. The railroad stopped at Brucefield at least twice a day with passengers and mail. The Bayfield stagecoach took mail and passengers from Bayfield to Seaforth. The stagecoach started around 1877 when John Morgan bought the equipment needed from Mr. Polly in Goderich.

Early stagecoach drivers included J.A. Yuill who drove the Bayfield to Clinton route. In 1888, the route changed and became the Bayfield to Seaforth, which many complained about with letters to the editor of the local newspaper. Those driving the new route included Mr. Beattie, David Hays and John Simpson. Hays and Simpson both died in 1891.

Mr. McGee began driving the stagecoach and mail route

in 1897. In February 1902, the local paper reported that “Stage driver, Mr. McGee, had difficulty making his trips and getting mail owing to the storms and blockades on the railway.”

In 1905, McGee sold his stagecoach business and possibly 7 The Square to Harry Little of Egmondville. Little worked the stagecoach business for six years, before selling to George Copeland. Harry Little ran an ad in the newspaper - “For Sale - property and stage business. Beautiful residence in Bayfield. House 2 storey, concrete, situated on the square, one quarter acre land in connection, on which is a barn. Also livery business and mail route between Bayfield and Seaforth and Brucefield. Sold together or separately.”

George Copeland drove the stage from 1911 to 1918. He sold the Middleton House and left with his wife and son, Alfred, to return to their former home in Sprucedale, near Parry Sound. Copeland was the first one to use cars in the stagecoach business.

Ed Weston and his brother bought the business & property from George Copeland in 1918. By the time Highway 4 was paved in the 1920s, the stage business was dying. Trucks and cars were replacing horses, allowing people, goods and mail to go further, faster.

The Weston’s had no business to sell with the house and property when they transferred ownership to the Jack Sturgeon and his wife in 1942.

## **8 THE SQUARE**

### **Connor House**



In the 1845, William W. Connor and his wife, Jane (Rutledge), built this large Georgian style red and yellow brick house to

replace the log house William had built on Lot 6, when he came to the area in 1834, as an 18 year old Irishman looking to make his way in the world.

Within two years of arriving, he found himself in politics as the Clerk and leader of Stanley Township's 385 residents. He joined the first Huron militia and patrolled with others at the Huron and London Road crossroads (present day Clinton) in 1838 to deal with an uprisings caused by William Lyon MacKenzie's Reform Party, who were threatening military revolt.

At a very young age, in a very young country, he seized opportunities denied to him in Ireland. He served as Stanley Township clerk/treasurer from 1836-1844, as district counsellor from 1844-1845, as clerk/treasurer again from 1849-1856 and again from 1856-1858. He was a member of the Harbour Committee for years and a founding shareholder in the Bayfield Cemetery.

After the new brick house was built in 1845, he hosted the first religious service in Bayfield with the Episcopal Reverend Mr. Cooper. In 1845, he was founding member and First Master of Bayfield Orange Lodge #24. His home served for many years as the Lodge's meeting place. He held many positions within the Orange Lodge, such as Master of the Lodge and honorary member of the Grand Lodge of British North America.

It didn't matter if he was working as clerk/treasurer, administrator or justice of the peace, he also ran a number of businesses. He and his wife had an inn and store as part of their house at the top of Clangregor Square.

Their establishment had a yellow brick front with large front windows and rose-coloured brick in the back. For stagecoaches and travellers their inn was the first stop when entering Bayfield. In the 1850s, Connor built and owned The Exchange Hotel (27 Main St. North) in downtown

Bayfield for a few years.

William W. Connor worked hard to support his wife, Jane and daughter, Catherine as well as help grow a community.

When he died in 1889, his wife rented their home to one of the stage drivers, Mr. Beattie. He painted his Bayfield stage and added a cover to make it comfortable and attractive for his riders.

The Connor house has had a number of owners, one of which was George and Ada Little who bought the house before buying and renovating The Little Inn. They renovated the Connor building and opened up a successful bakery. When they bought The Little Inn in 1942, they already had a customer base for the Little Inn's restaurant.

In 1963, the Connor House became the parsonage for the Baptist Church, located behind it.

*Let's continue our way out of town. As we move from the age of horse and carriage, we must stop at a mecca for the automobile - the Bayfield Garage.*

*Just turn right onto Bayfield Main St. South and go around the corner.*

## **8 MAIN STREET SOUTH Bayfield Garage**



This is just a quick stop to see one of Bayfield's longest running gas station.

The Bayfield Garage is not the first, but it is the survivor.

It began as a one of the first Supertest gas station and morphed into Don McIlwain's Esso station through many transfers of ownership. As cars gained popularity so did the number of gas stations open to serve them.

In various locations around the village were BP, Imperial, Sunoco, White Rose, Cities Service and Red Indian gas stations with the old style pumps sporting their logo on lit-up signs atop the pumps.

One of the early gas stations was owned by Murray Westlake and located just south of the Albion Hotel and downtown Bayfield. He later expanded and moved to a site next to the present-day Foodland grocery store.

*So gas up if you need to and let's follow Main Street South to The Rectory (#27 Bayfield Main Street South), otherwise known as Camborne House.*

## **27 MAIN STREET S Camborne House (The Rectory)**

Located on the corner of Main St. South and Euphemia Street is this lovely three storey white brick house, another example of the early Bayfield's settlers' love of Georgian style - simplicity, balance and elegance.

This house was built in 1882 as the Rectory for Bayfield's Anglican Church. The congregation raised \$3,000 to build the house. Its front entrance's original door had a semi-circular transom (window over the door) and was set off by finely crafted wood. The raised brick lines set off the symmetrical placement of the first and second floor windows. The whole house was topped off with beautifully carved brackets that called attention to the roof perching like a fancy hat upon the house.

Reverend Robert McCosh and his family were the Rectory's first residents. This splendid house sheltered 21 Anglican Church rectors (ministers) and their families. This house was witness to several special occasions.

Harry Baker wrote about the annual Garden Party held on its lawn in his book, My Memoirs, "At one time the big event of the season was the Garden

Party, sitting on the lawn of the Anglican Parsonage. The Clinton Kilty band would always be in attendance and the long tables laden with food. Prices were 50 cents for adults and 25 cents for kids. I was running the booth and was opening a can and put a nasty cut in my hand, ice cream and blood didn't go well together, so Rev. Pitts, being a good scout, closed it up with a handkerchief and I went on and sold lots of ice cream made by George Greenslades, whose wife used to play the organ in the Anglican Church, a lovely lady." (p. 24)

In 1948, Canon F.H. Paul bought the house as his retirement home. He named it Camborne House, after the birthplace of his English forefathers.

It is one of Bayfield's gems.

*Now it's on to our last stop in Bayfield - Orlagh. Keep a keen eye out for 41 Main St. South, its extensive and lush gardens make it easy to miss the house. Just keep driving up Bayfield Main St. South and watch for the palm trees sculptures on the right.*

## **41 MAIN STREET SOUTH Woods House aka Orlagh**



This three storey buff brick house is a stunning example of Georgian beauty, that is set off by its lush gardens and parklands. This lovely house once had extensive gardens and parklands, reminiscent of estates in Ireland, Dr. Ninian Woods' homeland.

Dr. Ninian Mahaffy Woods built and designed it in 1868, seventeen years after coming to Bayfield. Dr. Woods was not your average settler. He was born in 1819, son of a Dublin architect, who went to university and graduated in medicine from Trinity College, Dublin in 1842 at the age of

23. In the fall of 1843, he sailed for New York to see the New World, then returned home to practice medicine, get married to Rebecca Mary Hill and have two children, William (born 1846) and Isabella (born 1848).

When the Canada Company were recruiting doctors and dentists for their Huron Tract settlers in Ireland, Dr. Ninian Woods was definitely interested. At the time he left Ireland, the Potato Famine was devastating the population and creating a dangerous climate of political unrest. The family packed up their household, china, engraved silver and two treasured family servants, Ann Kinsella and Martin Findlan and headed to the New World.

When Dr. Woods got to Bayfield, it was an empty slate to write upon. Along with fellow visionaries like William W. Connor, Dr. Woods rolled up his sleeves and went to work on creating a community while serving its residents in sickness and in health.

His list of accomplishments are long - as long as his semi-permanent position on Stanley Township as its reeve and/or counsellor. Along the way, his family motto, "Patience conquers all" got put to the test. He was doctor, politician, economic development whiz, merchant, infrastructure advocate for Bayfield harbour, piers, bridges, railroad and roads, and development and spiritual champion for the Anglican Church and the Bayfield Cemetery.

His house was a wonder of 1860s convenience. Included in the house was his medical surgery and dispensary. The house was connected to the barn via a covered walkway, that he called 'The Tunnel,' making it less of a struggle to go out on wintry/rainy night calls, when fighting through blowing snow or rain to get the horse harnessed to the sleigh (or buggy).

In the barn was a Fenian hole, a hiding place covered by a false floor. In 1866, the Fenians, Irish-Americans home from the American civil war and not

quite ready to settle down, began to poke and threaten the British Crown from North America. Upset over the treaty of Ireland and treatment of its people by the British, the Fenian Brotherhood began to attack British army forts, customs and other British colonial targets in Canada. Dr. Woods, aware of the short distance across the lake from the United States to Bayfield, built a place for his family to safely hide in should an attack come by lake or by land. It was never used because the attack never came.

Dr. Ninian Woods was everywhere in Bayfield. Look at the early maps and you'll see large amounts of land with his name on it across Stanley Township. He was on council in Stanley Township from 1853-1857 and 1867 as Reeve, and from 1858 to 1863 as councillor, back on from as councillor from 1866 to 1876. He built business buildings downtown. He was a driving force and constant advocate for Bayfield in all things bridges, harbours and trains. His name shows up in House of Parliament minutes and reports. Even children were named after him, like former Bayfield general store merchant, Robert Morrison's fourth son, Ninian Morrison.

*Let's move down Bayfield Main Road South to Bayfield Road (aka Mill Road) and turn left. We are going to following Mill Road east to Hwy 4. The river that winds it way along the back of the properties on the left side of the road is the northwest boundary of Stanley Township. On the other side of the river lies Goderich Township.*

## **1 BAYFIELD ROAD Pollock's Corners**

When you turn left up Bayfield Road North (aka Mill Road or Road 3), there's a peculiar little triangle piece of property with 2 storey brick Georgian style house on it. The house has seen many better days.

The house goes by many names. Some people call it the Cheese Nook, some people

call it Pollock's Corners. Many people don't really notice it, especially when the lot was filled with trailers, not flea market tables as it was in the 1990s.

The house was built in 1852 by Donald Murray as a hotel, offering rooms, hot meals and alcohol. The name of the original hotel is not widely known, but when James Pollock bought it in 1902, he changed the hotel name to Pollock Corners.

In addition to running the hotel, he installed a forge so he could do both blacksmith work and ironwork. Pollock ran, owned or managed most of Bayfield's hotels - owned the River Hotel in 1893, was proprietor of the Queen's Hotel in 1897 and 1902 and he sold The Albion to Edward Elliott in 1890.

His hotel evolved into a tavern that sold more drinks, than accommodations. One of the regular Bayfield fall fair events was races, probably horse races from Pollock's Corner to the Queen's Hotel (27 Main St. North, across from the Little Inn) in three heats. On those days, the bars at both places would be full to overflowing.

At one time Pollock's Corners hotel had a dance hall on the second floor of the barn, accessed by a covered walkway (perhaps inspired by Dr. Ninian Woods' 'Tunnel') from the hotel's second floor to the barn's second floor dance hall.

The barn was torn down by owner Len Bannister who created the Paul Bunyan Trailer Park in this location.

*Let's head up the road into the countryside.*

Many of the surviving farmhouses in the country are typical 1.5 storey frame house you will see throughout the countryside of Huron County. This Ontario Gothic Revival design adapted well to Ontario conditions. The houses could be built out of wood, stone or brick. The steeply pitched roof prevented roof cave-ins from the large build-up of snow that accompanies a Canadian

winter.

The houses could be personalized based on the talents of the local builders. Talented Scottish and German bricklayers of southern Huron County embellished the houses with raised brick quoins (corners), and decorative brickwork borders around doors, windows and under the eaves. Local carpenters made the plain design fancy with intricate vergeboard (gingerbread trim on the eaves).

Depending on the wealth and taste of the original home builder, an Ontario Gothic Revival designed house can feature Gothic details like:

- vergeboarding (gingerbread trim);
- finials (ornamentation added to the top of a gable, pinnacle or spire);
- scalloping (a decorative band around towers, roofs or the top of buildings);
- lancet windows (windows with a pointed arch, usually located above the door);
- hood molds (decorative wood/stone/brick work around arched windows and/or doors, originally used to direct rainwater; away from the openings)
- carved label stops (decoration at the end of an arch).

Many of these homes were enlarged over the years with additions to back of the house. In the 1970s, as now, the fashion was to cover the brick with siding. The predominant colour in the 70s was white or baby blue, while today's siding either mimics stone or is beige or greige (grey-beige) in colour.

### **Tour Challenge:**

How many Ontario Gothic Revival houses can you spot on this tour?

How many still have their original brick, wood or stone exteriors?

How many are sided?

**35102 BAYFIELD ROAD N  
Bayfield Cemetery**

I know you haven't been driving long but the Cemetery is a great place to stretch your legs, go for a walk and meet some of the people whose houses we've visited: William W. Connor, Dr. Ninian and Rebecca Woods, Thomas and Sarah Ann Jowett, Charles Middleton and many others.

Before this Cemetery existed, pre-1861, those that died in Bayfield were buried in their backyards, behind The Hut (26 Bayfield Terrace), on unused road allowances or in church cemeteries. Problem was not every church had a cemetery, and there were those who did not, or could not attend the church of their faith because it had no physical building and place to rest in the hallowed ground of their faith.

To ensure Bayfield had a cemetery for all its residents, a meeting was held December 27, 1861, at which time the Bayfield Cemetery Company was formed.

It conformed with an Act of Parliament that stated, "An Act respecting companies for the establishment of Cemeteries in "Upper Canada" and we do hereby agree that the Capita Stock of the said Company shall be three hundred and twenty-seven dollars, to be divided into shares of three dollars each entitling the holder to one hundred superficial feet and we the under stock holders, do hereby agree to accept and take the number of shares set by us opposite our respective signatures, and we do hereby agree to pay the calls thereon according to the provisions of said Act and of the Rules, Regulations and By-Laws of the Company, to be made in that behalf."

The first shareholders of the company were:

James Gairdner - 10 shares  
Andrew Rutledge - 10 shares  
Thos. H. Bateman - 10 shares  
William Hall - 10 shares  
William W. Connor - 10 shares  
William Bengough - 10 shares  
James Thompson & Co - 10 shares  
George Erwin - 10 shares  
William Rankin - 5 shares  
Alex Cameron - 5 shares

Dr. Ninian Woods - 2 shares  
Henry Howard - 2 shares  
Charles Middleton - 2 shares  
Donald Shaw - 2 shares  
Matthew Westlake - 2 shares  
Robert Watson - 2 shares  
F. Kandhide - 2 shares  
Hugh Bannerman - 2 shares  
Christian Ebernhart - 2 shares  
Tudor Marks - 1 share  
Thomas Jackson - 1 share  
Alexander Falconer - 1 share  
George Castle - 1 share  
John Esson - 1 share  
Christopher Johnston - 1 share  
Thomas Elliott - 1 share  
Valentine Homan - 1 share  
Aaron Walton - 1 share  
Frances Phelps - 1 share  
Edward Looby - 1 share  
John Bolton - 1 share  
William Church - 1 share  
Andrew Elliott - 1 share  
William Jowett - 1 share  
John Hanley - 1 share  
Peter Dezing - 1 share  
Henry McCann - 1 share  
Nicholas Kahlar - 1 share  
Daniel McDonald - 1 share  
Isaac Erratt - 1 share  
D.W. Ritchie - 1 share  
Robert Cranston - 1 share  
James McDonald - 1 share  
Robert Snowden - 1 share  
George Beatty - 1 share  
William Rathwell - 1 share  
John Rathwell - 1 share  
Jacob B. Bettchen - 1 share  
George Eberhart - 1 share  
John D. Cameron - 1 share  
John Gemeinhardt - 1 share  
B. Snowden - 1 share

The land for the cemetery was once part of Andrew Bronson's farm. He sold 1 acre to Stanley Township clerk, John Esson, and it became the first acre of the cemetery's eventual 9 acres. Andrew Bronson was the first person to buy a burial plot in the cemetery, at the cost of \$3.00.

Sadly the first burial in the Cemetery was a 4 year old Rathwell child.

A few of the men who have served as its sextons (caretakers) and taken care of the cemetery's needs and maintenance included: James Sturgeon (1881), Richard Elliott (1904), Robert Johnston (1911), Richard Elliott (1913), Robert Orr (1929), Harry McClinchey (1930), Ben Rathwell (1950), George Little (1959), Reheny Larsen (1961),

Walter Orr (1968).

It was not until 1967 that the Chapel was built. A fundraising committee raised the necessary money for construction, while a building committee oversaw its creation.

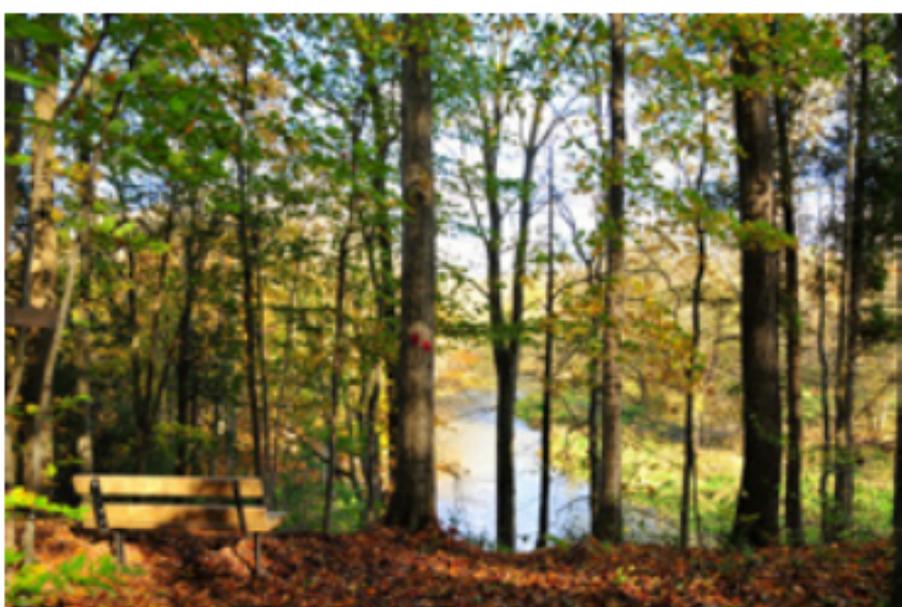
There are at least three heritage cemeteries in the Township of Stanley, all connected with churches that are no longer active and have been either torn down, moved or re-purposed.

Bayfield Cemetery is one of the two cemeteries still open and active in the township. The cemetery records for Bayfield Cemetery, Baird's Cemetery, Bayfield Memorial Cemetery and Varna's United Cemetery and Memorial Cemetery are available at the Bayfield Archives (20 Bayfield Main St. North, beside the Library).

The Bayfield Cemetery is no longer under the care of the Bayfield Cemetery Company. The Municipality of Bluewater now cares for the maintenance of the Cemetery and encourages visitors but discourages picnics, pets, ATVs and unaccompanied and/or unsupervised children on cemetery grounds. All visitors are asked to drive their vehicles slowly and to park on the avenues.

A walk through the cemetery is like walking through history. Please walk through it with the respect due the dead and their lives.

### **38594 Mill Road Mavis/Taylor Trails**



On the property, once cleared of trees by the Johnson and Robertson's families and farmed by McClinchey family, there exists now: the Taylor and Mavis walking trails, two baseball diamonds, the Stanley Community Complex and the

Stanley Landfill site.

It all started in 1974 when Stanley Township bought the McClinchey farm on west part of Lot 16, Bayfield Road North (BRN). One year later, a baseball diamond with lights was in place, with the second baseball field following in 1980. By 1983, a new township complex, that included a municipal office, community centre and 5 bay garage, was under construction. The landfill site was up and running before the Complex.

Two walking trails soon followed, started by Bill and Mark Taylor and supported by the Taylor and Turner families.

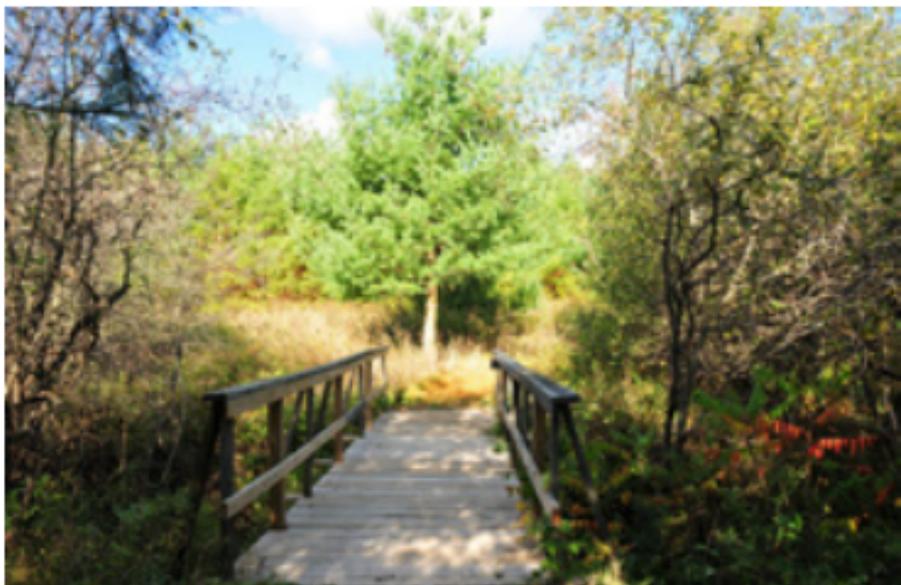
The Taylor trail was, and still is, a 1 kilometre loop trail over fairly easy terrain that takes walkers through bush and meadow.

The Turner trail was twice as long. It traversed a ravine to lead walkers through bush, meadow and wetlands to the Bayfield River.

The trails were later abandoned due to upkeep and erosion problems.

But thanks to the Bayfield River Valley Trail Association volunteers, Varna volunteers, Rob Milligan of West Coast Property Care, Optimist Club of Bayfield, the Bayfield Lions' Club, the Stanley Millennium Fund, Bluewater Municipality, Mavis Govier and her application for a Bluewater Community Foundation grant, the Ram Jack Systems company and many more the trails were revived.

The Taylor trail was re-routed, cleaned up and made



accessible to those with legs or wheels, thanks to its relatively flat terrain and hard surface. It is rated Level 1, as far as difficulty goes.

For those who want to enjoy the view of the Bayfield River from the viewing platform, they are in for a 2.5 km looped trail with a challenge Level of 3, due to its change in scenery and terrain at each bend. This trail was renamed the Mavis' Trail, in recognition of the work and support put into this project and other Varna community projects by Mavis Govier.

The work on the trails began around 2006. It took three years alone to complete the 65 foot bridge that spanned Stanley Creek. The bridge was a head scratcher from the start but innovative thinking and a lot of volunteer everything – labour, materials, equipment – resulted in approval from every level of regulators, Ausable Bayfield Conservation, engineers and government.

This six year project could have cost upwards of \$250,000 but with volunteer help, problem-solving, financing, materials and heavy equipment, it came in at a fraction of that price tag. Varna, Stanley and Bayfield residents pulled together in several old-fashioned work bees to create the incredible **Varna Trails**.

The trails are now open 12 months of the year and used by walkers, cross-country skiers, snow shoers and mountain-bikers of all ages and abilities.

Don't be put off by the Stanley Landfill signage, these trails go in the opposite direction of Landfill and offer everyone an opportunity to enjoy forests, meadowlands and river valley nature. The variety of ecosystems make this a walker and photographer's paradise.

## **38798 MILL ROAD Varna General Store**



The Varna General Store was not in this location when Varna

was surveyed into town lots. The northwest corner (Lot A, BNR) of the intersection between Mill Road and Parr Line was a school lot, bought by Stanley Township from the Canada Company in 1850.

A log school with a dirt floor, log tables and benches was built by the community in the 1850s and christened School Section (S.S. #6). Joseph C. Ward kept order in the classroom that swelled with students in the winter and dwindled in the fall and spring.



As Varna developed, John Crawford bought the rest of Lot A after the town lots were surveyed. The log school was transformed into a tailor shop in 1865, when a new, bigger brick school was built further south on Parr Line, beside the St. John Anglican Church.

In 1900, Joseph and George Beatty bought the property and built a 2 storey brick store in the typical flat roof, main street style of the times. Little has changed style-wise - it has 2 large storefront windows with recessed door between them that opens onto a gingerbread-embellished porch. There is some decorative brickwork around the top of the building.

The building to the west of the store at first housed the post office. The stage stop was in front of the hotel. It was close to the post office for delivery of the mail and in front of the hotel for those passengers who needed a stiff drink or warm meal before continuing their bouncy journey down the dirt road.

Beatty's opened a general store, that they sold to Joseph Mossop and his family. Although the Mossop's sold the store in 1945 to Clarence Brown, he flipped it in less than a year to Harold Soper. Soper ran the store for a decade and sold it to Ida McClinchey.

From 1955 to 1976, Ida

welcomed everyone in with a warm smile, while the smell of homemade baked goods ensured everyone left with something delicious tucked under their arm.

Since 1976, the store has been the Peck's Appliance store, later reverting to a general store again. It functions now as a private residence.

## **VARNA (East of General Store) Cenotaph**



Varna may appear to be a small hamlet today, but until the early 1900s it was a small boom town. It had a two general stores, a shoemakers' shop, a post office, mills, a hotel, a cabinet factory, and all the businesses that go along with the horse and buggy mode of transportation - blacksmiths, wagon makers and harness shops.

When WWI began in 1914, many Stanley Township lads and men answered the call to arms. At the time, the only plausible excuse for not going to war was working in war industries (farming included), being too sick, too young or too old.

War took its toll on the men who fought. Within two years of the end of WWI, the people of Stanley Township, under the leadership of Reeve Morton Elliott had pulled together the money and support to unveil the Varna Soldiers' Monument. On June 26, 1920, on part of town lot donated by the township clerk at the west end of Varna, Clinton's Colonel Combe, head of the Huron

161st Battalion and seasoned soldier, helped dedicate the memorial with “vivid accounts” of how bravely and well the Canadian soldiers had fought.

The cenotaph was unveiled with the inscription, “Erected by the Township of Stanley to perpetuate the names of those who were killed or died of wounds in the Great War 1914-1918.” On the cenotaph were the names of 14 soldiers who would never return home - William Palmer, George McBride, William Davidson, Malcolm Keys, Alexander French, William McNaughton, Henderson Forest, Percy Diehl, James Ward, Fred Salter, Fred Richardson, Bruce Logan, George Weekes and Arnold Rathwell.

In 1919, all those Stanley Township men who had fought and returned home received medals. Those who fought on the bloody battlefields of France received a cross with three bars.

After the end of WWII in 1945, a second inscription was added that stated, “To perpetuate the names of those who gave their lives in World War II 1939-1945.” By 1945, there no longer existed the myth that such a thing as a “great war” or a “war to end all wars” existed. Only two names, with the date of their deaths, were added - William A. Graham, Aug. 10, 1944 and Harvey C. Parsons, Sept. 7, 1944.

Stanley Township residents who enlisted in WWII received a \$50 bond, while those who fought overseas in any one of WWII’s many theatres of war received a ring and a \$50 bond, which was presented after the war at a picnic in Bayfield’s Jowett’s Grove.

In 1967, Stanley Township moved the Soldiers’ Monument from the west edge of the village to part of the northeast corner lot of Varna’s only intersection. The hotel, on the east part of the lot had changed names from the Traveller’s Home to the Union Hotel and the building was being used as a store and/or residence. The west part of the

lot, initially a grand residence for Sam Moffat, George Beatty, Rev. Daniel Johnston and lastly Alfred and Laura Ing, burned to the ground early one morning in 1960.

If you stop to check out the cenotaph, you can see down Varna's second main street, **Parr Line**.



To the northwest still stands the Loyal Orange Lodge 1035 Hall between pine tree sentries. Although it is weatherworn and covered in asphalt siding, it still stands. On that spot once stood the Methodist Church and its stables.



Further down the road, on the east side of the road, once stood the Varna Presbyterian Church that was demolished just a few years ago. The lot still holds the stones of the Presbyterian Church cemetery.



To the southwest, down Parr Line is the yellow sided St. John's Anglican Church, that has been a private residence and/or decor business since its congregation shrunk in size and the church closed in 1965. The next lot, to the south of the

church was the location of the 1865 Varna brick schoolhouse, that closed in 1967.

## **75805 MILL ROAD**

### **Varna Mill**



The Varna Mill grew out of the original general store and post office established by the village's founder, Josiah Secord, a direct Huguenot descendant from France, in 1854.

When Secord became postmaster in 1855, he named the village, Varna, after the Bulgarian city of Varna that the British and French used as their logistic headquarters on the coast of the Black Sea from 1853 to 1854, during their war with Russia. During summer of 1854 during the Crimean War, over 724 British soldiers died in Varna from cholera.

Secord's choice of name was meant to honour the British and French as they fought against the Russians.

In 1875, Josiah Secord built a new store on the southeast corner of the lot with a solid stone foundation and a brick basement floor. Secord retired in 1883 to his home located just south of the mill. He sold the store and post office to Joseph Morrow, who stayed in the business for a decade.

In 1893, he sold it all to J.T. Cairns, who rented it to John Harnwell. Harnwell had built a brick house adjoining the store. In 1903, the post office moved to the new grocery store and residence that Thomas J. and Elizabeth McAsh built on Lot 4, south of Josiah Secord's house. The general store stayed at this location.

The store eventually closed in 1920, when owned by Albert Horner and Alfred Ings, and was transformed into the Varna branch of the Standard Bank, which then merged with the

Canadian Bank of Commerce.

As industries began to disappear in Varna in the late 1920s and 1930s, so did the Bank branch. It closed in 1933.

From 1935 until the present, the store was transformed, with the addition of power, equipment and buildings into a chopping mill run by a number of owners over the years - William Reid, Roy Keys, Wilson McCartney, John Adlington, J.H. Broeze and Frank Roth, to name a few.

On Golden Paws, the store in the bright red mill, is a destination spot for dog lovers. It offers grooming, obedience training and pet food. Check out the foundation, and you'll see the 1875 stone foundation that Josiah Secord built and the outlines of the original store.

## **38906 BAYFIELD ROAD Magnolia Manor**



As you drive east out of Varna and along Mill Road, you will see a lovely country estate on your left (to the north) that is called **Magnolia Manor**.

It is fronted by two stone walls that create an entrance, beautifully framing the two storey Classical Revival house, rich with details, like the triangular pediment entrance supported fluted columns. Similar to Georgian designs, the house's front is very balanced with an equal number of windows of similar size on either side of the first storey entrance and the second storey level of the 3-windowed portico.

The early origins and occupants of this home are a bit of a mystery. According to early maps, Lot 20, BRN was divided into two sections in 1861. The west part of the lot was owned by Alex. Blackwood and the

east part was owned by John Patton. In 1879, John Patton owned the west side and Arthur Forbes owned the east side, both of home had homes built in the middle of their half of Lot 20. By 1924, the whole lot belonged to Dr. L. Moffatt.

What is known is that Thomas James McAsh, who was raised on Lot 20 BRS (across the road) by his parents, John and Jane McClymont, bought this property in 1880. He married Elizabeth Thompson in 1881 and they had three children, John Thomas (born 1882), May and Jane. The McAsh family sold the property in 1886 and moved to Marlette, Michigan for a short time before moving back to Stanley Township.

Within the last 10 years, Magnolia Manor was a bed and breakfast, that received some rave reviews as current as 2013. Its website with B&B Canada describes the interior as having 12 foot high ceilings with ornate plaster mouldings around the rooms. Its tall windows and French doors are crowned with ornate gingerbread trim. Lighting the first floor rooms are original chandeliers. Massive fieldstone fireplaces create a cozy elegance in the great room. Antiques fill the dining room and guests are invited to curl up with a drink and magazine in the “breezy sunroom overlooking lush gardens.”

Magnolia Manor has 3 acres of property with “shady weeping willows, secluded outdoor pool, secret garden and walking trails.” It is a beautifully set gem of a house.

*Now look to the south and you will see another house that has fascinated many people throughout the years.*

## **39247 MILL ROAD Foote House**



On Lots 24 and 25, BRS, is a house with quirky character and grace. This house began existence as a one storey Regency Cottage owned, and possibly built by John Foote Sr. and his wife, after they emigrated from Dundee, Scotland.

John Foote Sr. was living in the area by at least 1838, possibly leasing his property until it came up for sale by the Canada Company. He had his deed paid off by 1855, suggesting the family came to Upper Canada with more than the average settler.

His son, John Foote Jr., was born in Bannockburn, Upper Canada in 1838. Bannockburn was a pioneer settlement that never really grew. The Foote's property was in the lot designated as Bannockburn on the early maps. But due to Bannockburn's location in a low area, near a creek of the Bayfield River, its spring flooding discouraged the development of business, industry and settlement.

Bannockburn did not even have a post office, or stage stop. But John Foote was the toll-keeper for the toll booth placed at Bannockburn in 1863, to collect tolls from anyone going down the road. The income from the tolls was for the building and maintenance of Bayfield Road, that stretched from Bayfield north to Brucefield.

Despite this the Foote family did well. John Sr built the Regency Cottage stone house in 1860. At one time, it was a one storey home, probably with a wrap-around porch. It's situated on the high elevation of the property with a lovely front entrance with sidelights (long, thin windows on either side of the door) and an arched transom (window over the door).

As the family grew, so did the house. It sprouted a second storey by putting another deeper hip roof on top of the original hip roof, only this one had one large central gable flanked by a gable window on each side, of similar size

to the ones on the first floor. The first roof appears to have been made of parquet-shaped slate, while the second roof is presently shingled.

Whoever designed and enlarged the Foote's house kept its additions true to the original house style. Regency design is decorative with flourishes that make it more ornate than the Georgian houses of the area. Of note is the decorative green and red carved wood patterns in the peak of the second storey gable windows, and the green wooden roof brackets under the second and first storey eaves and the dentil (square) wooden roof border, painted white, with the square dentils painted green.

An addition has been added to the rear of the house with a beautifully crafted gingerbread border, brackets and carved porch supports. The modifications to the original house are estimated to have been done around 1906. This house was not only luxurious in appearance, it had spring water piped into the kitchen for cooking and drinking, long before interior plumbing was available in the country.

John Jr. Foote took over the farm in 1895. He married Stanley Township girl, Anne J. Reid and they had six children. Five out of the six children lived on the farm most of their life. The eldest, John Jr. Jr., became a doctor and moved away. His brother Will remained on the farm and looked after the fields and lime kiln. James became a Presbyterian minister and retired to the farm, the youngest boy, Andrew, travelled to the Yukon and Alaska when he was a young man, then came home to the farm. Foote's twin girls, Elizabeth and Ann, grew up on the farm. Elizabeth went out to Vancouver, but Ann stayed home, only moving to Detroit and London after the farm was sold in 1952.

For many years, the Foote family operated a busy lime kiln in the early 1900s, in which they removed limestone from the riverbed and heated it in a fire. The heated limestone

was pulverized to create an early form of cement. The powder could be mixed with sand, gravel or water to use as plaster, mortar or concrete.

George and Doris Wilson bought the property in 1952 and were still in residence in 1986.

*For the hikers and outdoor lovers, if you turn north on Bannockburn Line, the road goes to the **Bannockburn Conservation Area**, that has a walking trail through a lovely combination of valley land and woods. The trail has footbridges across Walden Creek and the Bannockburn River and hosts a popular annual autumn hike.*

## **BRUCEFIELD**

As you continue to drive north, you will reach the village where the stage stopped to pick up mail and passengers: **Brucefield**. The hamlet was named after the Major Bruce, who was aide to Governor-General in Upper Canada in the 1830s. Brucefield wasn't surveyed into village lots until 1857, even though settlers began to live in the area around 1831, following a dirt track, not a paved road from London or Clinton.

Brucefield lies at the northern corner of Stanley Township, at the corner of Mill Road (known earlier as Bayfield Road North) and Highway 4. Across the highway is Tuckersmith Township. The stage often drove from Bayfield to Brucefield in the morning, picked up/dropped off its passengers and parcels, then headed north to Seaforth. It did the reverse route in the afternoon.

The London, Huron and Bruce rail station was on north end of Brucefield, just off Mill Road. When the railway station was built in 1875, it resulted in the building of stockyards, a grain elevator and a steam sawmill.

The hamlet of Brucefield grew quickly as it attracted businesses aimed at the local farmers and growing number of residents. By 1890, Brucefield

had three general stores, two hotels, a public school, a livery stable, two blacksmith shops, a butcher shop, a tailor shop, a shoemaker shop, a harness maker, an implement business, a wagon maker, a saw mill, two cheese factories, a doctor, a postmaster, a veterinarian, two churches, a cemetery, a livestock dealer and a builder. Its population grew to 200.

In the 1920s, Highway 4 was paved. In 1927, hydro power was available. But as society transitioned from horses to cars for transportation, the culture and businesses changed too. Without horses, there was little need for wagon-makers, livery stables, and a declining demand for blacksmith services.

Vehicles, like cars and trucks, slowed down the demand for railway transportation. While garages replaced livery stables and blacksmiths, nothing replaced wagon-makers and harness makers. Catalogues took away retail business.

Around 1940, Brucefield began to decline in numbers and in population. By 1986, the village population was down to 95. Brucefield has held on but is mainly a residential hamlet with very few services or businesses.



The tall green chopping mill on the north west corner of Mill Road and Highway 4 was transformed into a restaurant at one time.



The former blacksmith shop on the southwest corner of the intersection was an antique shop for many years until it became property of Incredible

Spread'Em, a renowned local garlic spread producers.

Many of the older houses along Highway 4 were once shops, including Scott's store and H.F. Berry's shop.

*Turn to the south on Highway 4 at the intersection for a journey along Stanley Township's east border.*

On the outskirts of Brucefield is a popular stop for local residents and travellers looking for great ice cream, and delicious summer fried and grilled fare, like onion rings, french fries, mushrooms, foot longs, hamburgers and more. **The Farmer's Dell** is a traditional road trip stop for those heading from the area into London, or those heading from London into the vacation land of Huron County.

This classic, practically unchanged, summer drive-in restaurant has the best soft ice cream in the area. Its amenities include outside picnic tables and public washrooms. The Farmer's Dell clientele either discover it by accident, hunger or have been coming there with their parents and grandparents.

Pull in, order your favourite and look around while you wait to be served. Beside the Farmer's Dell is the only Church left in Brucefield. Across the road and up is the remnants of the Methodist and Presbyterian cemeteries, gathered together in a small Union Cemetery.



When you've enjoyed your treat and stretched your legs, head south along Highway 4. If you watch the scenery on the north side of the road, you might catch a glimpse of the former raised railway track bed of the popular London, Huron & Bruce railway, a subsidiary of the Great Western Railway that stopped operating in this area around 1956. The railway track ran parallel to Highway

4, resulting in all farms along Concession 1 of Stanley Township to have railway tracks between their homes and their fields.

The railway's nickname was the Butter and Eggs Express because the farmers took it and their produce to the market in London in the mornings and came home on the late afternoon or evening run. Kids attending high school (or in their terms - model school) in Clinton or Exeter did not have to board in town during the week. The train made it possible to travel to and from school each day. In many communities going to 'model' school meant leaving home after graduating Grade 8.

*Now sit back and enjoy travelling onward past a mix of beautiful old farm houses - plain and fancy, 70s style bungalows and new homes.*

*Next stop: Kippen!*

## **KIPPEN**

### **South East border of Stanley Township**

When the small community between Stanley and Hay Township got a post office in 1855, its Scottish postmaster, Robert Bell, christened the community after a landmark familiar to him - Kippen, Scotland.

Within 25 years, the community had grown to 40 residents and had not only a post office but a hotel, a store, a railway station (with an addition on the back to house the station agent and his family), a Methodist and a Presbyterian church and mail service to Hillsgreen, Blake and Drysdale three times a week.

By 1899, Kippen hit a peak population of 210 people with 13 businesses. It had a hotel, two general stores, two blacksmiths, a saw mill, a tailor shop, a carriage-maker and two churches.

In 1925, when the Methodists and Presbyterians combined to create the United Church,

the Kippen congregation kept the former Presbyterian church and sold the Methodist Church to Dr. Alex Moir, doctor and owner of the Huron Spring Sanitorium, who had it dismantled brick by brick. He had the bricks stored in a shed for future building projects, and probably used them in the creation of the Sanitorium and its grounds.

In the 1920s, the carriage works and harness shop sold and was converted into a garage and implements dealer business by John Workman. By 1934, the Mousseaus bought it and opened a garage and auto parts store in the bottom half and converted the upstairs into living quarters. The building remained a garage until 1979.

The only store remaining in Kippen today is the General Store on the southwest side of the intersection of Highway 4 and Kippen Road. It was built in 1879 by Henry Shafer and served as a store until 1982. The business that began Kippen is the last one remaining: the post office. The rest of the boomtown front store with the large front windows and porch is a private residence.

*Turn west down Kippen Road toward Lake Huron. Our last leg of the tour involves a country drive through communities that are as see-through as a ghost.*

*Keep your eyes peeled and you may catch a glimpse of a 'spirit' of the past.*

*Hillsgreen once thrived at the intersection of **Kippen Road** (aka Townline) and **Parr Line**.*

## **HILLSGREEN** **A 'Grave' Town**



Hillsgreen was reputedly named after a family named .... Hill. Very little remains. There might be a building which used to be

a store, once known as Currie's General Store, and maybe a house.

One of the most famous facts about Hillsgreen is that Sir John Stephen Willison (1856-1927) was born four miles northeast Hillsgreen, in Hay Township on November 9, 1856. His father was a well digger. John Stephen Willison went on to become an influential political journalist, in the days when the newspaper were either Conservative or Liberal, depending on the politics of the owner.

There are two plaques about Sir John Stephen Willison - one in Zurich at the new library and one in the Huron County Courthouse in Goderich.

Willison began his journalist career at the London Advertiser in 1881, moving on in 1883 to the Liberal Toronto Globe, where he became chief editor in 1890. In 1902, he left and did a 13 year stint with the independent Toronto News, during which time (1910) he was named the Canadian correspondent to England's influential paper, The Times of London.

He was knighted, and became Sir Stephen Willison, the farm boy from Hillsgreen in 1913 for his contribution to journalism, after backing the Conservative in the 1911 election.

By 1876, there were 50 people living in Hillsgreen - that's five to six families in the days of large, extended families where two generations shared the same house and farm.

By 1900, there was a hotel on the southwest corner beside the brick Presbyterian Church, a Methodist Church to the northeast, the general store on the southeast corner, an Orange Hall, a stable, a Methodist parsonage (home for the Methodist minister and family), a blacksmith shop, a cider mill and ten houses.

In 1953, when the United Church (formerly the Presbyterian Church until Church Union in 1925 with the Methodist Church) was de-consecrated, it was sold to

William Chuter who removed the wooden flooring and sold the building to Ivan Kalbfleisch of Zurich, who demolished it.

In the mid-1930s when storekeeper, William Jarrott died, the store was sold to William Davidson and Charles Robinson, who attempted to start peat farming in the swamp west of the hamlet. They met with little success and sold the store. The store changed hands until not another owner could be found.

By this time, the buildings of Hillsgreen were in bad shape. Most of the homeowners had moved away. The buildings were then recycled. The Orange Hall was torn down and remade into a summer cottage on the lake. The blacksmith shop was moved onto another property for use as an implement shed. The Methodist Church was converted into a chopping mill.

By 1980, the post office was gone. This once thrice-weekly mail depot was closed. All that remains with the hamlet's name upon it, is the Hillsgreen Cemetery.

*Continue your drive west through the north tip of the Hay Swamp and down towards the lake. The more water you can see on the horizon, the closer you are getting to Drysdale.*

## **DRYSDALE**



Once you've reached the intersection of Kippen Road and Bluewater Highway (aka Highway 21), you're in the formerly bustling community of Drysdale, named after the area's first settler, the hotelkeeper of the Royal Oak Hotel, Robert Drysdale.

Drysdale's hotel opened in 1855, but the community did not get a post office until 1873, with its first settler as postmaster. Drysdale was a

go-getter.

When James Rumohr opened a general store in 1874, Robert Drysdale added onto his empire by opening a second general store.

When Drysdale retired, he sold his store and post office to Joseph Gelinas, who was the postmaster and storekeeper of Drysdale for years. Following in his footsteps were Joe Bedour, Louis Brisson, Jerry Corriveau and John Denomme. The general store closed in 1961. It was owned by the Gascho brothers of Zurich.

In the 1960s, Roy Vodden built the last store in Drysdale, a variety store. Under the ownership of his daughter and his son-in-law, Glen Latour, they kept the store open until the mid-1980s.

Drysdale is a true ghost town. Little remains of its existence, except the corners it occupied at the intersection of Kippen Road and Highway 21.

### **The Stanley 'Stagecoach Stops' tour is now complete.**

At the Drysdale corner, you have a couple options.

If you turn north (to the driver's right) at Hwy 21, your journey will take you back to **Bayfield**. Keep an eye out for Danceland Road: down that little road was once a dance pavilion that was as popular as Bayfield's Jowett's Grove dance hall.

If you turn south, you'll be exploring the lakeside in Hay Township between Drysdale and the little community of **St. Joseph**, home to an innovator and a saint.

This area along the lake between Drysdale and Bayfield or between Drysdale and St. Joseph is a lovely drive, even on a rainy day. To the west are farms shaped like those in Quebec along the St. Lawrence, long and narrow. This area between Drysdale and St. Joseph, on the lakeside was at one time a French-Canadian

community whose relatives may once have come to this area for jobs clear-cutting the land so it could be farmed.

While they were here, they saw an opportunity to own their own land, something that was more difficult and more expensive to achieve in Quebec. Many bought land in this area, and returned home in order to move their relatives and families to the shores of Lake Huron.

Just as the Scottish settlements often spoke and read in Gaelic only, so too did the French community of the area, just as the German area residents did around Zurich. The townships of Stanley and Hay were probably the two most multi-lingual townships in the county.

Whichever way you decide to turn, keep an eye out for farm roadside stands and markets and local craft breweries, all places to enjoy the deliciousness of locally grown and produced food and drink.

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If you find any historical inaccuracies in this tour, please contact us at [ecdev@municipalityofbluewater.ca](mailto:ecdev@municipalityofbluewater.ca).

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