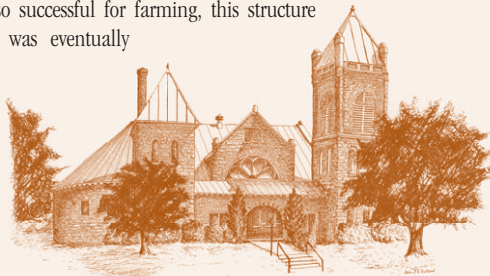


Lakes and is being meticulously restored by the Elgin and Area Heritage Society as a tribute to the economic strengths and educational priorities of this community, past and present.

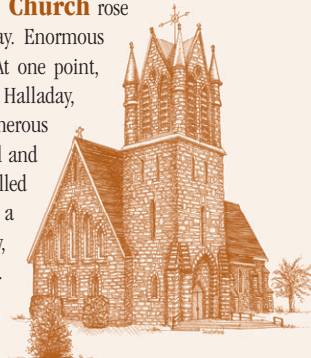
Churches

One of the commendable aspects of the churches in Elgin is that considerable community volunteer effort was focused on the fund raising and construction for each one, regardless of religious adherence. As a result, Elgin boasts three elegant churches, each of unique and distinctive style

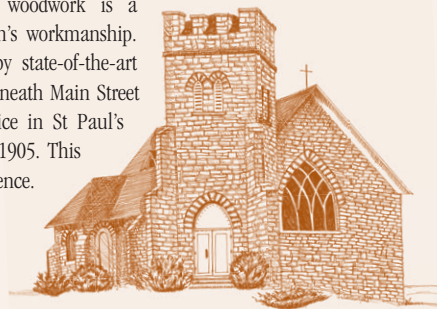
9. United Church - In 1856 Ebenezer Halladay donated land and money for the construction in stone of an Evangelical Methodist Church beside the existing Halladay Burial Ground. Erected on the same deep sandy soil that proved so suitable for burying and so successful for farming, this structure soon proved unstable. It was eventually demolished and the present church arose on the same site in 1884. It became the United Church in 1925 and was declared a Heritage building in 1986. Obviously, Frederick Tabor of Morton established a firm foundation for this second raising. Its twin towers and interior gallery make it an attractive example of late Victorian church architecture.




10. St Columbanus Roman Catholic Church rose in 1897-98 on land purchased from Phillip Halladay. Enormous community effort was involved in its construction. At one point, canvassing for the purchase of a bell fell short. Phillip Halladay, a Methodist completed the fund-raising with a generous donation. He asked that the bell be rung at his funeral and legend has it that was the only occasion when the bell tolled for a member of another faith. The Church manifests a strong late Victorian Gothic influence with its narrow, arched windows enclosing beautiful stained glass. Its belfry is highlighted with four pointed towers in contrast to the tall single spire so typical of churches of that era.



11. St. Paul's Anglican Church - In 1903, John R. Dargavel spearheaded the construction of St. Paul's Anglican Church when he donated land on the north-east corner of Main and Perth Streets and engaged Frank T. Lent, architect of Gananoque. The square bell tower and low roofline of the Church give it an exquisite "Romanesque" appearance. The intricate interior woodwork is a beautiful testament to James Stanton's workmanship. Eventide services were illuminated by state-of-the-art lamps fuelled through a gas main beneath Main Street from Dargavel's store. The first service in St Paul's was very fittingly on Christmas Eve, 1905. This elegant building is now a private residence.



Our Heritage Tour brochures of the villages of Rideau Lakes Township are designed to acquaint visitors and residents with our rich local history and to illustrate the variety of architectural features that appeared as our communities matured. This Heritage Walking Tour of Elgin starts with the earliest settler in the area and progresses through time. As you amble from building to building, learn of individuals and families that made significant contributions to the development of Elgin. Special credit must be given to "Hub of the Rideau, A History of South Crosby Township" by Sue Warren (1997), copies of which are for sale at the Elgin Branch of the Rideau Lakes Library. Edition #1 by Paul Dean.


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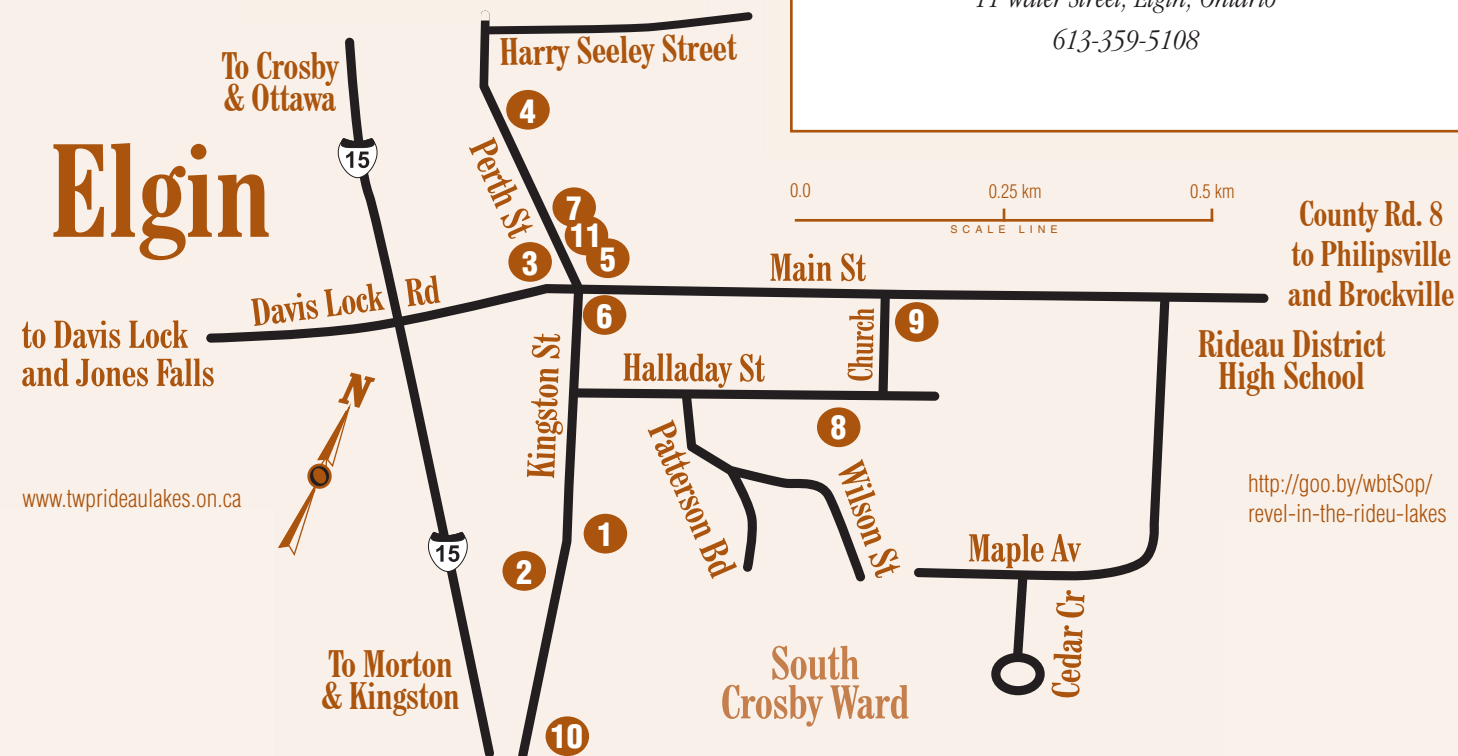
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Heritage Walking Tour of Elgin

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Drawings by Julia Scotland



8

Introduction

Each community is unique in time and place. Among the people places in the Township of Rideau Lakes, Elgin is unique. Communities such as Delta and Lombardy were nurtured by falling water and rumbling mills. Portland and Newboro attracted early travellers with canoes and steamboats. But Elgin prospered without waterpower or waterside. Its pioneers of the early 1800's found that nurtured by a benign mid-latitude climate there grew a luxurious mix of white pine and oak. This forest thrived on a deep sandy loam, almost boulder-free, gently sloping and easily drained, easily plowed and very fertile. This fledgling community soon won the notice of the surveyors and builders of the Rideau Canal. By coincidence of geology, this pioneer site became the source for much of the sandstone used to construct the great dam at Jones Falls and the locks there and nearby. Bustling work camps presented an insatiable demand for local teamsters and teams, a lucrative market for food and fodder. Families with names like Delong and Halladay prospered. They came to this emerging centre of commerce to trade their barrels of potash and salt pork for tea and fine tea cups, to have their horses shod and harnesses stitched, boots cobbled and buckets smitbed. Even after the completion of the Rideau Canal in 1832, the community that was to become Elgin persevered and prospered on its foundation of rich soil and strategic location. Elgin has persevered through economic depressions across country and continent. It has prospered through wars fought near and far, a Civil War to the south and two World Wars. It has seen the rise and the fall of a century of cheddar cheese industry. It now thrives as a commercial hub for citizens and tourists here at the Keystone of the Rideau Corridor, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a National Geographic Destination.

The village developed on Lots 12 and 13 on Concession 2 of the Township of South Crosby (Hub of the Rideau, p.200). Those lots were granted in 1801 to Leeds County women,

Susannah Wiltse and Rebecca Wing, both daughters of United Empire Loyalists. Neither took occupancy and both parcels were eventually purchased by Samuel Halladay. In 1818, Ebenezer Halladay bought a 100 acre portion of Lot 12, Concession 2 from his brother and settled on that portion which now forms the south-east quarter of Elgin bounded by Main and Kingston Streets. As a young boy Ebenezer had been blinded in one eye when he tried to undo a knotted shoelace with a fork. The utensil flew out of his hand and struck his eye. His handicap did not prevent him from enlisting in the 2nd Leeds Militia during the War of 1812, nor did it hinder his many farming, business and civic activities. Within a decade Eben had cleared 25 acres, built a log house and was becoming a prosperous farmer. After the death of his first wife Jane Leggett, he married Parthena Olds and the couple raised a family of 11 children from his two marriages. Ebenezer and his sons Benjamin and Phillip played significant roles in their hamlet, Halladay's Corners. Along with selling lots along Main St., they donated land for the first two schools, the South Crosby Community Hall, the Evangelical Methodist Church and the Halladay Burial Ground.

1. The Ebenezer and Parthena Halladay House - In 1844 when his youngest son Phillip was born, Ebenezer built a new stone house for his sizable family. The one-and-a-half storey, white stucco-over-stone house with a roofed verandah on two sides is the oldest surviving private stone house in the township. Stucco on stone was common in pioneer north Leeds. Traces of large bake ovens inside the building were discovered during recent renovations. Phillip continued to help his father run the farm. Later when mechanized farm equipment revolutionized local farming, he became a successful salesman travelling a wide territory with horse and buggy.



The 1840s was a period of rapid growth in the area. The population nearly doubled. The neighbouring centres of Newboro on the Rideau Canal and Delta with its industries were far away by horse and wagon. But by the 1850s, main roads linked Elgin to Kingston, Brockville and Perth. Local roads, dusty in summer, muddy in spring and fall and sleigh tracks in winter led to Jones Falls, Davis and Chaffey's Locks. Eben's land was located in the heart of the oldest settled part of the township where most of the second and third generation farmers lived and retired. During the 1850s Ebenezer Halladay promoted development by selling lots along the south side of Main Street. The stage was set for the growth of the village.

About 1845, Ira Mitchell leased a lot from Ebenezer Halladay on the south-east corner of Main St. at Kingston Rd. Here Ira built a house from which he marketed shoemaking services, sold whisky to a wide clientele and marketed lots from the Halladay farm. In 1848 Henry Laishley opened a store in a log building across from Ira Mitchell's business. In 1851–52, Henry replaced his original store with a larger frame building called the Seven Dollar Store, the amount of capital he had invested in it. The Seven Dollar Store soon drove Mitchell out of business and it thrived under different names until 1989 when it was destroyed by fire.

In 1853, Benjamin Halladay purchased the land on the north side of Main Street and began selling lots. Soon there was a string of businesses as far as the Halladay Burial Ground. The growing village was officially named Elgin in 1850 to honour James Bruce, 8th Earl of Elgin, Governor General of Canada (1847-54). With rapid growth and prosperity came architectural changes. Simple log and frame buildings were replaced with more spacious homes and businesses. Fine architectural styles and details appeared. In February 1887, Phillip Halladay petitioned to open two new streets in the southern section of the village; Halladay Street in honour of his father and Church Street.

2. The Phillip and Harriet Halladay House - When his father died in 1884, Philip inherited the family farm. In the following year, Phillip and Harriet built South Crosby's only known two-and-a-half storey Second Empire House of brick across the street from the homestead. The wrought-iron details, mansard roof and decorative roof urns distinguishes this building as Second Empire, a style popular in the last quarter of the 19th century. The front façade manifests a central projected core and symmetrical flanking wings. Each wing consists of a ground floor bay topped by a decorative roof dormer and a first floor window. Each window is crowned with a low vertical brick arch. The dormers are extremely decorative with harp-like treillage sides and a touch of Classic Revival in the pediments over the arched windows. Decorative slate tiles fringe the dormers. The central entrance has a rectangular pediment around the porch with well-modeled details on the columns and the same iron cresting as on the side bays. The door is slightly inset and crowned with a low vertical brick arch. A second storey door leads onto the pediment with a small balcony. Originally the property had a perimeter fence of wrought iron with cresting that reflected that on the bays. Sales of farm machinery were good!



3. The Henry and Almeda Laishley House - Meanwhile Henry Laishley had become one of Elgin's most prosperous entrepreneurs with a lucrative potash industry. Here Henry bought ashes from settlers who were clearing their lands, then refined and exported the leachate for the making of soap, glass, and baking soda. He owned and operated several farms near Chaffey's Lock and was influential in local educational and municipal affairs. He acquired the lot on the north-west corner of Main and Perth St. and in 1886 hired carpenter John Stanton to erect a frame "mansion", a fine example of "Queen Anne" architecture. Ornamental brackets, fine latticework and numerous bay windows made this one of the most imposing homes in the village. The summer kitchen facing Main St. was altered c1897 into the present two-storey addition with bay windows. Henry and Almeda Laishley died in the mid-1890s and the house was acquired by Augustus Coon, a local retired farmer. His son Dr. Darius Coon served as Elgin's doctor until his death in 1941. Subsequently the Guthrie Bros. purchased it as a double residence. For several decades, Ron Guthrie operated a garage and machinery dealership across the street and Glynn was the local pharmacist. The house was declared a Heritage Building in 1986. The "Guthrie House" is now owned and operated by Country Roads Community Health Centre and provides a variety of essential social services for area residents.



4. The Stanton House - With income from his land sales, by 1858 Benjamin Halladay was able to invest in a new brick house and carriage shop on Perth Rd. The original brick is now covered with stucco. You may wonder about the "Stanton House" inset above the door. Benjamin's daughter Isadora inherited the house. When she died, the house passed to her only daughter Belle who was married to Fred Stanton. It then passed to George Stanton and today the house remains with the fifth generation of Stantons.

Benjamin Halladay's carriage shop prospered until the early 1870s when it was used as a drive shed until the early 1900s. Then it was converted into a honeymoon home where

Belle and Fred Stanton lived until they moved into the ancestral home in 1936. You can still see traces of the large arch doorway of the carriage shop and a small inset above it where Benjamin Halladay once hung his business shingle.

The Stanton family was renowned for their fine carpentry. John Stanton was hired to build Henry Laishley's home. James Stanton was responsible for the exquisite woodwork inside the Anglican Church. A common architectural feature of a Stanton-built home is the truncated pyramid roof, an architectural solution to the dilemma of excessive height of pyramid roof on a large house. It became known as the "Stanton Roof" and is seen on numerous homes in Elgin and area. A trap door accessed the flat part of the roof. At times of neighbourhood fires, a few pails of water frantically poured over the shingles might save a Stanton house.



5. Alman Newman Store - By the late 1860s, Laishley had competition from two new merchants, Alman S. Newman and John R. Dargavel. Each saw potential in Elgin as a commercial mecca. Newman purchased a lot from Ira Mitchell and in 1867, the Year of Canada's Confederation he constructed a brick store with a stylish false front. In this classic design, the living quarters and shop were combined in one structure. Notice the door to the original residence is framed by a multi-paned, rectangular transom and similar sidelights, half glass and half panel. All the original windows were 6-over-6 sashes topped by vertical brick trim. The window in the centre gable is crowned with a wooden arch and vertical brick. Alman was an energetic entrepreneur. He built a cheese factory on Sand Lake Rd. and acquired businesses in Almonte, Carleton Place and Whitefish Lake. However, the Newmans had no children and when they died in the late 1880s, the store passed through a number of hands and in 1958, the building became a private residence.



6. The John R. Dargavel Store - Commercial competition increased in 1871 when John R. Dargavel opened another store on Main Street. In 1893 he expanded the business and built the largest general store in North Leeds right opposite Newman's on Main St. Up two-and-one-half storeys, an attic tank provided internal water pressure. Many small dormers in the roof lighted the attic. The Dargavel Store boasted the latest in gas lighting in that era prior to local electrification. On the second floor one of Dargavel's daughters sold fine chinaware and linen. On the ground floor Dargavel displayed a wide selection of merchandise visible through grand front windows encased by wooden pillars and a moulded pediment. There was a telegraph office; "Facebook" of that era. John R.'s general store was the most up-to-date establishment in Elgin, indeed in South Crosby. The eastern wing of the building



served as the family home with one upstairs bedroom for the clerks who worked in the store. Downstairs, John R. had a private office where he carried out his duties as Township Clerk, Justice of the Peace and for 14 years, a Member of the Provincial Legislature.

7. The Santelle Dargavel Barn - Dargavel purchased the rival Newman store in 1903 and turned it into a plumbing shop and a gas station for horseless carriages. During the 1940s and 1950s it housed the Elgin Post Office. When John R. was elected to the legislature in 1905, his son James Santelle (pronounced "Sottle") took over the family's commercial empire. He added a cheese factory near California (west of Jones Falls), a grist mill at Chaffey's Lock and helped found the South Crosby Rural Telephone Company. Santelle Dargavel had a fine brick mansion built opposite the Stanton House. But, of interest to-day is his barn diagonally across Perth Street. The typical entrance doors at street level are flanked by large multi-paned windows atypical of barns of that era. Through these windows, passers-by could feast their eyes on the finest of Dargavel's conveyances. The horse power for those vehicles was stabled in the lower (and less visible) level. Legendary John R. died in 1930 at age 83; Santelle in 1937 at age 61. Dargavel's impressive store is now an impressive antique shop. But few now need feast their eyes through Santelle's barn windows.



The evolution of schools in Elgin reflects the growing prosperity and pride its citizens held in their community. In 1842 Ebenezer Halladay donated land near the corner of Main and Kingston Streets where a one-room school (20'x24') was built. In 1865, a slightly larger school was built on Church St. This place of learning even boasted a blackboard. Now a private home much modified, it stands opposite the United Church. During the early 1880s, Ontario's Department of Education surveyed rural schools and found them cramped, poorly lit, lacking ventilation and of drafty clapboard or log construction. To remedy these failings, the Department published a set of guidelines for the construction of rural schools including good natural lighting from one side of the room. Hence students would sit with light coming over their left shoulders. There must also be better ventilation plus greater attention to architectural style and landscaping. Schools had to be significant public buildings that reflected the importance of education in the community. In April 1887, Phillip Halladay sold a lot on Halladay St. for the construction of a new school. The Elgin column of the Brockville Weekly Recorder proclaimed "Preparations are being made for the erection of a fine school house in our village this coming summer." and Frederick Tabor of Morton was contracted to build it. His skilled craftsmanship in brick was directed by John Power & Son, Architects of Kingston, a firm still in practice as Mill and Ross Architects Inc., possibly the oldest continuing architectural practice in Canada. Recent research suggests that this Red Brick School" may have been the first rural school in Ontario constructed according to the guidelines published by the Department of Education in 1886.

8. SS #5 is of red brick on a stone foundation. It appears to be two storeys in height but, in reality it consists of two spacious rooms with very high ceilings. Facing Halladay St., the school features three very large multi-paned windows, each with a gable. The central gable is ornately curved with a stone insert, while the flanking gables are more traditionally triangular. Each window is ornately crowned with a slightly curved pattern of yellow bricks which are repeated in the quoining. The bell tower has been recently restored. The Red Brick School served the children of Elgin and area from 1887 to 1964. It was designated a Heritage Building in 1986. The Red Brick School is now honoured with a Historic Plaque, is owned by the Township of Rideau