

Welcome to the Perth County Stone House Tour

Stone houses are steeped in old world character and nothing showcases the talent of a stonemason like the custom workmanship evident in a century old building. The quality of construction and the strength of the stone are apparent in the fact that there are still so many stone structures still standing. The heritage of Perth County is captured in the stone house, bridges, churches, and walls found in the area.

A drive through Perth County offers examples of 2 distinct styles of stone buildings:

1. **Ashlar:** This style is identified by smoothly cut stone constructed with minimal space between the stones, much like a typical brick design.
2. **River or Field Stone:** This style has a more whimsical appearance. Because the stone is used more or less as it is found, these buildings constructed with river or field stones give each structure its own unique character.

The use of stone in the construction process was a well-developed response to the resources that were locally available in the mid to late 19th Century. Scottish immigrants, who tended to be skilled in cutting stone, preferred to refashion the stone into regular rectangular blocks. Other immigrants, mainly German, were more likely to be skilling in working with wood. When working with stone, they preferred to split the stones but did not otherwise change the shape of the stone. This required a large amount of mortar.

The variety of stone houses, buildings and other structures reflects the heritage of Perth County, specifically the large pockets of settlers of German and Scottish descent.

Hand quarrying was the method used most in the St. Marys' area. It involved the use of iron wedges, known as feathers, inserted into hand-jumper drilled holes and forced apart by a cylindrical iron plug. After the stone was removed it required time to cure before being used in building projects. "Quarry sap" – the water contained in a block of limestone – would evaporate, leaving the normally porous limestone nearly impervious to saturation. St. Marys limestone is known to be soft when quarried, hardening upon contact with air, whereas several nearby communities have limestone that is hard to quarry but softens as it ages.

Visitor Guidelines

Please respect that these homes are private property. Visitors should remain on the public roads or sidewalks and not trespass on private property. Visitors should conduct themselves in a quiet, orderly manner and not disturb any activities of the property owners. Children should be accompanied by an adult who will remain in close contact with them and be responsible for their actions. Visitors should drive slowly and carefully, following all municipal regulations, including parking restrictions. Many of the homes on this tour are in residential neighbourhoods where children play so please be watchful!

1. www.raisethehammer.org/article/1491/use-of-fieldstone-in-southern-ontario-buildings
2. St. Marys Museum

127 O'Loane Ave., Stratford



By evaluating the architectural styles on the Avenue, it is clear that the house at 127 O'Loane Avenue is by far the oldest house on the street. It's Regency Cottage Style architecture can be noted by the projected eaves and gently pitched hip roof.

The property was granted to William Dunn on December 3, 1853 by the Canada Company. William Dunn had a brick house beside the river and, presumably, the stone house that is now 127 O'Loane Avenue was built later for his son George. Although tax records for this area are not available for that time period, Census data suggests that the stone house was built between 1861 and 1865.

This house had housed several "famous" residents including John Richardson who served as the Member of Parliament (Liberal) for the riding between 1993 and 2002. Another resident was Canadian Actor Bruno Gerussi who was best known for the lead role in the CBC Television series *"The Beachcombers"*.

77 John Street North, Stratford



This stone and stucco home was built in approximately 1912 by a dentist named Dr. Bothwell.

Dr. Norman Bethune stayed at the house for 2 months in 1917. Dr. Bethune was a Canadian physician, medical inventor, and noted anti-fascist. He became internationally known as a frontline surgeon during the Spanish Civil War. In the late 1930s, He brought modern medicine to rural China, treating both sick villagers and wounded soldiers. Bethune is credited with developing a mobile blood transfusion service for use on battlefields.

There have been few changes to the original structure other than the addition of a deck in recent years.

170 Douglas Street, Stratford



This home is a great example of Jacobethan Revival style construction with front and side gable and large corner brackets. It is characteristic of this style to have an arch or decorative wooden door along with distinctive windows, gable, and copper roofs. It is one of few homes of this style in Stratford. The property was originally owned by C.E. McIlhargy, a wholesale merchant, until 1924 when it was sold to the Joseph Rankin Family who built the house in 1927. Joseph Rankin ran a local confectionary business that was started in 1874. His son Gordon, who also lived in this house, ran the business until his retirement in 1953. Rankin Store was known as a Soda Fountain, Ice Cream Parlour, and a Lunch Room.

Gordon Rankin was the last surviving member of his family of eight boys and one girl. The family set a Canadian record by forming a hockey team of eight brothers on one lineup! In later years it was sold to local physician Dr. Peter C. Roberts and then Dr. and Mrs. Ronald Heitbohmer, a local dentist.

York Street & Huron Street, Stratford



This stone bridge over the Avon River across from the Courthouse was built in 1885 to replace the original wooden bridge (about the same time that the courthouse and jail across the street were built). It joined the northwest area across the river with the rest of Stratford.

It took 150 wagon loads of stone (compared to 200 wagon loads for the county buildings!) to complete. The contractor hired to build the bridge was John Corrie and the City Engineer who oversaw the project was Alexander Hepburn. Today, the bridge is one of Stratford's most photographed landmarks.

207 St Patrick Street, Stratford



Since 1930, this stone building has been the home of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 8. The old stone building on the front was originally owned by A. Seegmiller in 1863. Tax assessment roles then show Joseph Salkeld as the owner in 1864. On May 4, 1872, the property was acquired by the Scholz family. Major S.M. Loghrin lived in the house with his wife Jessie Scholz. Major Loghrin was one of 2 of the original officers of the 18th Battalion of the Perth Regiment and was killed at the Battle of the Somme on September 15, 1916.

The building was sold to the Legion in 1929 and underwent some renovations before opening in 1930. Additional renovations occurred in 1950 (taking over a year to complete) including the addition of an assembly hall, bowling alleys, and kitchen. The addition was over 100 feet long. More renovations were completed in 1975. The building is known as The Loghrin Memorial Home.

4369 Line 26, Sebringville



Partially hidden by a large tree planted in recent years, this home was originally built around 1865 by William Neill. William Neill was born in Ayrshire, Scotland in 1810 and came to Canada in 1841 with his wife Elizabeth Tannock. William purchased the property from William Byers in 1843. The Neill family lived in this home through 1944.

5033 Line 32 Mitchell



The property was first inhabited by Valentine Barthel in 1836 but was settled by Michael Bald by contract in 1834 and then by deed in 1854. The 100 acre lot was purchased from the Crown for 55 pounds, 8 shillings and 4 pence. Michael's son George bought the farm from his father in 1865. Michael's 5 children walked through the bush to attend the school on the Huron Road. A side porch was added in 1978, the garage in 1979 and a front veranda in 1995.

186 Salina Street, St. Marys



This house was built by Joseph O. Hutton. The first residence built by a member of the well-known Hutton Family in St. Marys was this stone cottage known today as Ardmore Park. It was constructed sometime between 1853 and 1855 and, apart from the Tracy House (the present St. Marys Museum) it was the first house of any sophistication in the village. Isolated from other houses, with a commanding view of the Thames River, Ardmore Park's setting and architecture fulfill the requirements of the Regency Style.

The back portion of the home was added in the 1860s for Edward Taylor Dartnell, a lawyer and Upper Canadian landscape painter. One of Dartnell's paintings, "A View of the City of Toronto" currently hangs in the Royal Ontario Museum.

Construction around the home is building new houses on what was once the original 14 acre plot of land that surrounded Hutton's house.³

181 Thomas Street, St. Marys



181 Thomas Street was built circa 1863 by stonemasons Alexander Grant and John Grant.

Alexander Grant was from Elgin, Morayshire, Scotland and came to Canada in 1856 living first in Holland Landing and in 1858 moving to St. Marys. Alexander and his son John, both stonemasons, built 181 Thomas Street as their own residence in 1863. They remained active as stonemasons in St. Marys throughout their lives.

Early records of the house were lost in a fire but a log structure still visible in the basement suggests a log house was probably in place originally. The summer kitchen was added later (the foundation is different from the main house) but now has been winterized and is in use full time.⁴

3. History recorded by Ken Telfer with the St. Marys Museum staff.

4. History recorded by Ken Telfer with the St. Marys Museum staff.

210 Thomas Street, St. Marys



This home was built circa 1883 by Robert Barbour. Mr. Barbour was active in St. Marys as a builder, contractor, and architect from 1854 until his death in 1989. Although not a stonemason, he had a profound impact on St. Marys' architecture and stone construction. Many masons and stonecutters likely got a start to their careers or gained employment working for him.

Barbour was born in Coldstream-on-Tweed, Berwickshire, Scotland in 1826. At 15 years of age, he worked as a joiner apprentice. He and his wife Agnes immigrated to the United States in 1851 where he worked in New York City and Rochester as a foreman for several contractors. When he arrived in St. Marys, he was employed in the Whimster factory and then commenced business for himself as a builder and contractor.

Barbour designed and supervised construction projects and was hired by the Town Council in 1865 as "Inspector of the Work" for construction of the West Ward School. In 1871 he was referred to as "designer and builder" of the Garnett House Hotel, Church Street, St. Marys.

In The St. Marys Journal, March 24, 1898 edition, the following obituary was printed:

The town was shocked on Tuesday afternoon to learn that Mr. R.F. Barbour, an old and well-to-do resident, was found dead in the cellar of his residence. Mr. Barbour was not home to dinner and as the hours wore by and he failed to put in an appearance, Mrs. Barbour became anxious and went out to look for him. He was found dead in the cellar. There was a target at which he had been shooting, a number of bags lying on the floor and stretched upon them in cold death with a bullet hole behind his right ear and his arm holding the revolver laid across his breast, lay the body of the missing man. Medical assistance was summoned but he had evidently been dead for some time. The deceased was 75 years of age, owned considerable real estate in town, including two stores on Queen Street and was in past years identified with municipal and other matters. His widow and a large family of grown up sons and daughters survive him.⁵

216 Thomas Street, St. Marys



This home was designed and built circa 1866 by Robert Barbour (see notes for 210 Thomas Street) and the house remains as a shining example of small scale stone construction. Through the next two decades, Barbour became the most prominent and innovative master builder in the St. Marys area.

The one and a half storey house at 216 Thomas Street has a renovated room which appeared to have been a summer kitchen with an attic bedroom above. The roof style is hipped with a ridgeboard running north/south complete with a large, centred cross gable running back to the ridgeboard on the east façade. The walls are limestone rubble, rough cut, regular coursed with a quarry faced finish. The windows are double hung, six over six mullion style, wood framed with the gable windows being single pane.⁶

5. History recorded by Ken Telfer and the St. Marys Museum staff.

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St. Marys Town Hall, 175 Queen Street East, St. Marys



This Romanesque Revival building, designed by George Wallace Gouinlock, a Toronto architect, was built in 1891 of local limestone. Red sandstone was used as the contrasting for the window arches and checkerboard effects in the façade. The massive entrances on the south and west façades of the building and the two towers on the south, emphasise the wishes of Councillor Mathieson, a member of the building committee, who stated the following:

“We should not adopt a florid style of ornamentation, but yet we should not erect a painfully plain building simply because it is cheaper. The ornamentation should be of a lasting and permanent character. We are not building a hall or market for right now, but for years or generations to come. Let us build right.”

Due to its prominent location on the north side of the main street, and dominating as it does the sky-line of the Town, it plays an important role in the character of the downtown area.⁷

St. Marys Museum, 177 Church Street South, St. Marys



The community museum for the Town of St. Marys is located in a lovely heritage home sitting on a hilltop in a park at 177 Church Street South. It was constructed from locally quarried limestone in 1854. When George Tracy, an early settler to St. Marys, had it built for his family, it was by far the largest home in the small village of log shanties. Almost immediately, it was nicknamed the Castle in the Bush. It has been the location of the St. Marys Museum since 1959.

Visitors interested in 19th-century construction are welcome to visit at any time throughout the year. They will see exhibits and materials on local history and can also explore the interior of the house itself. Although it has not been restored to any fixed historic period, it contains a great number of original features from 1854: pine flooring, four fireplaces, plaster crown moldings, high ceilings and strange sets of small rooms off larger chambers.

“Bell's Corners”, 4022 Perth Road 107, Shakespeare



The Bell family came to this property in 1832 from Scotland. David Bell (recognized as the founder of what is now the Village of Shakespeare) was in his 40s when he came to Canada with his 4 sons, each of whom took a 100 acre parcel at the corner of Hwy 7/8 and Perth Road 107. The area was known as Bell’s Corners. One son left the area shortly after and his 100 acre farm was sold. The other three farms have stayed in the Bell family since then (one was sold in 1974) and you can see the similarity of the three houses in size and style. The family originally built a shanty where the church now sits and the stone home at 4022 Perth Road 107 was built in 1861 by David’s son William. (cont.)

7. Town of St. Marys; <http://www.townofstmarys.com/en/recreation-and-culture/Heritage-and-Historic-Landmarks.aspx>

“Bell's Acres”, 4118 Perth Road 107, Shakespeare



(“Bell’s Corners” cont.)

When the current owners moved to the farm in 1969, the house had no running water, indoor plumbing, or electricity. The house is of Gothic Revival-Italianate style, 1½ storeys, rock-faced, coursed, multi coloured granite. The stonemason was Grant of St. Marys. The barn with a stone foundation was built around 1840.

The second farm, “Bell’s Acres”, was built by David Bell's son John in 1860 (the first of the 3 homes to be built). Note the rough stone barn to the northeast of the house

4956 Perth Line 104, Nithburg



This property has been the site of the Schmidt family homestead since 1844. Balthasar Schmidt was only 19 years old when he leased this land in 1844 after emigrating from Germany. He and his widowed mother and brother came to this area to meet friends and relatives who had settled in the Philipsburg area. Balthasar and his wife Barbara built the existing stone home in 1862. Henry Braun and George Schaefer were hired to lay the stone and do the plastering at a cost of \$100 plus board. There was a stone outbuilding built just to the south of the house at that time and in recent years was attached to the house with an adjoining room. The current residents are the fifth generation of the Schmidt family to live on this farm. They are working at replacing the white mortar with a more natural grey style that would reflect how the house looked back in 1862. The stonemason for this project is the nephew of the current owners so again, this is a family project!

At one time, stucco covered the stone under the front porch to give the house a traditional German look. This style also helped cover smaller stones that were often used on walls that didn't face the road. Luckily, this home was built with split stone on all four sides.

27 Arena Drive, Milverton



This colourful stone home was built in 1867 with a commanding view of the surrounding countryside. The original owner was David Pugh who was born at “Pennybank Farm” in Wales and immigrated to Canada in 1847 with his father. During the voyage to Canada from Wales, David Pugh's mother and 8 month old brother died of cholera and were buried at sea, leaving David's father to raise 4 children alone in a new land.

The home was built by stonemasons from the Poole area with window ledges that are 20 inches thick. The living room has an exquisitely decorated Plaster of Paris ceiling. The home has been in the Pugh name since it was built in 1867. The 5th generation of the Pugh family moved into the house in 2013.

62 Main Street N, Milverton



The original stone structure was built as Milverton's school house in 1870. It was all stone, one story. In 1896 the red brick was added and it was converted into a 2 story home. It was owned by the Macbeth family who also owned the local newspaper, the Milverton Sun. In 1978 Maribeth and Richard Fobel, the present owners, purchased the home from the Estate of Isabel MacBeth.

The Macbeths and Fobels have jointly occupied this home for 120 years!

The left photo shows the house today and the right photo was taken in the early 1900s.



4864 Line 67, Milverton



This beautiful stone house has been owned by the same family for over 60 years. Currently, 3 generations of the family are living together in the home! Although a number of renovations have been done over the years, the current residents are Amish so the home does not have modern conveniences that require electricity.

The house has beautiful stained glass windows inside that are hidden from outside view by the closed in brick porch that was added in recent years. The brick addition behind the house was built in the spring of 2003. Later that summer in July, the property hosted the annual Amish School Sale where thousands of people come together for a massive day-long auction of everything from quilts to horses to furniture, all in financial support of the local parochial schools.

To the east of the house is an active Amish parochial school. The land the school is built on was once part of the farm property but was donated to the school.

Grace Anglican Church, 6995 Freeborn Street, Millbank



Grace Anglican Church was one of the first churches in Mornington Township. It originated as a small brick building on this site in 1856. On July 6, 1905, the first stone was laid and the new church building opened for use in 1906. The church was deconsecrated by the Anglican Church in 1998 and became the Heritage Mennonite Church.

The pioneer cemetery beside the church is known as the "Old Methodist Cemetery". William Rutherford gifted the land to the town for a cemetery for all denominations and the community has followed his wishes. The cemetery holds the grave of Rutherford's wife as well as the remains of a young native (his grave is marked by closely planted cedars).

Fryfogle Tavern, 1931 Hwy 7/8, Shakespeare

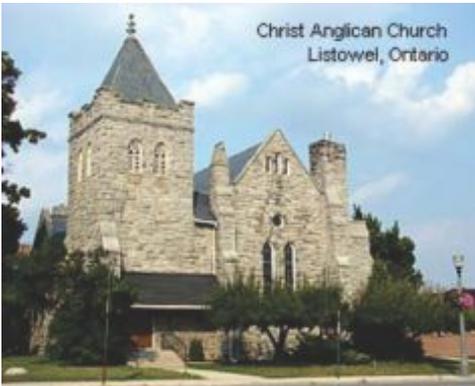


Fryfogle Tavern was a 19th century stagecoach stop and resting place for incoming settlers to the Canada Company's Huron Tract. The Canada Company arranged to have taverns at intervals along the Huron Road of which this is the sole survivor. Fryfogle Tavern was built by Perth County's first settler, [Sebastian Fryfogel](#), in 1844-45. It replaced a log shelter built in 1827 at the time the Canada Company's Huron Road was being surveyed in 1827-28.

The first log building was probably 3.8m x 7.5m, set back a fair distance from the road and Tavern Brook. The year when it was replaced by the present building is not known exactly, because Sebastian Fryfogel, township assessor at the time, "omitted" listing his new building. It wasn't until a new assessor took over that it first appeared on records. Other sources indicate construction during 1844-45.

Fieldstones, located on the site, and used in the south wall and basement, are in a random Germanic design, positioned to expose as much surface as possible. Large stone surfaces with the least mortar are placed along the front and back foundations where stoops or verandas would be built.⁸

Christ Anglican Church, 295 Main Street West Listowel



The Anglican Church is one of the oldest organizations in town, it being first established in 1862, when the first church was built on Main street, west of the Grand Trunk Railway crossing. Rev. Canon Newman held the first services in the early days, succeeded by Rev. Andrew Elias Miller. This small frame edifice served for many years, eventually being moved down town to the present site, where it burned in 1895. The present magnificent edifice was planned by the late John Bamford assisted by J.L. Darling and the corner stone laid in 1896. The contract for \$10,000 was given to Bamford Bros. and was completed and opened by Right Rev. Maurice Baldwin, D.D., Bishop of Huron in 1897.

The building follows an old English style of architecture with heavy buttresses in the walls and massive copings. The interior of the church is beautifully furnished and equipped with a fine pipe organ. The officiating rectors in the new church were Rev. H.W. Jeanes, Rev. A.P. Moore, Rev. C.H. Buckland, Rev. N.A.F. Bourne, Rev. H.M. Lang-Ford and the present rector Rev. W.H. Dunbar, since 1916.

The church was consecrated Sunday, Nov 7, 1920, by the Right Rev. D. Williams, D.D., Bishop of Huron. A very beautiful rectory was built the past summer, adjoining the church which enhances the appearance of the property.

8. <http://stratfordperthheritage.ca/tavern.html>

260 Main Street West, Listowel



This stone building houses the North Perth Public Library, Listowel Branch.

This beautiful stone library was opened to the public in 1907. The community received a grant from the Carnegie Foundation in November of 1903 in the amount of \$10,000 to fund the construction of the building under the supervision of Architect W.E. Binning. Andrew Carnegie was a [Scottish-American](#) industrialist who led the enormous expansion of the American [steel industry](#) in the late 19th century. He built a leadership role as a [philanthropist](#) for the United States and the British Empire. During the last 18 years of his life, he gave away to charities, foundations, and universities about \$350 million— almost 90 percent of his fortune. His 1889 article proclaiming “[The Gospel of Wealth](#)” called on the rich to use their wealth to improve society, and it stimulated a wave of philanthropy. Carnegie devoted the later part of his life to large-scale philanthropy, with special emphasis on [local libraries](#), world peace, education and scientific research.

The Library is open Mon-Thurs 10am-8pm, Fri 10am-5pm, Sat 10am-3pm (closed Sundays) and they have a public washroom if you need a pit stop!

#5563 Line 87 Listowel (Wallace Twp)



This 1 ½ story stone home was built circa 1869 by William Chamney who came to Listowel from Ireland in 1859. On February 22, 1869, Chamney purchased the 100 acre property from the Crown at a cost of \$200. By 1879, the property included a log barn that was in poor repair although the farm was well cultivated and well fenced. The farm was sold in 1882 to William's brother Thomas Chamney for \$3000. Thomas then sold the farm to Andrew Torrance for \$4350 in 1898.

3803 Road 160, Mitchell (corner of Line 32 and Rd 160)



This lovely home was originally built as Fullerton Township Schoolhouse #6 in 1866. The building suffered a fire in 1938 and was rebuilt. It operated as a school until 1969 when it was decommissioned by the school board. Some of the current neighbours even attended the school!

185 Wellington Street, Mitchell



These lovely stone gate posts flank the entrance of the Mitchell Arena and Fairgrounds. The plaques indicate they were placed “In Honour of the founders and promoters of the Agricultural Society from Mitchell and the townships of Fullerton, Logan and Hibbert”. The plaques were placed to recognize the Mitchell Agricultural Society's 100 years of service between 1854 and 1954.

4608 Road 164, Mitchell



This property belongs to Paul and Rose Hill. Set back from the road is the stone barn on the tour. This property has been in Paul's family since 1958 when Paul's father Bill purchased it from Dr Cecil Packham, a local veterinarian.

The Hill family operates a unique swine operation where they raise all of their animals without the use of any antibiotics and the animals feed is enriched with Omega 3's, allowing their pork to be the only pork in Canada allowed to make a health claim. The stone barn is very much in use today, in 1988 there was an addition to the original stone barn, and in 1996 another addition was added. There is a farmgate store operated out of the house on the property as well. Please feel free to stop in to the farmgate store and do a bit of shopping. Willowgrove Hill products are on many fine dining menus and in butcher counters across Ontario. www.willowgrovehill.com