

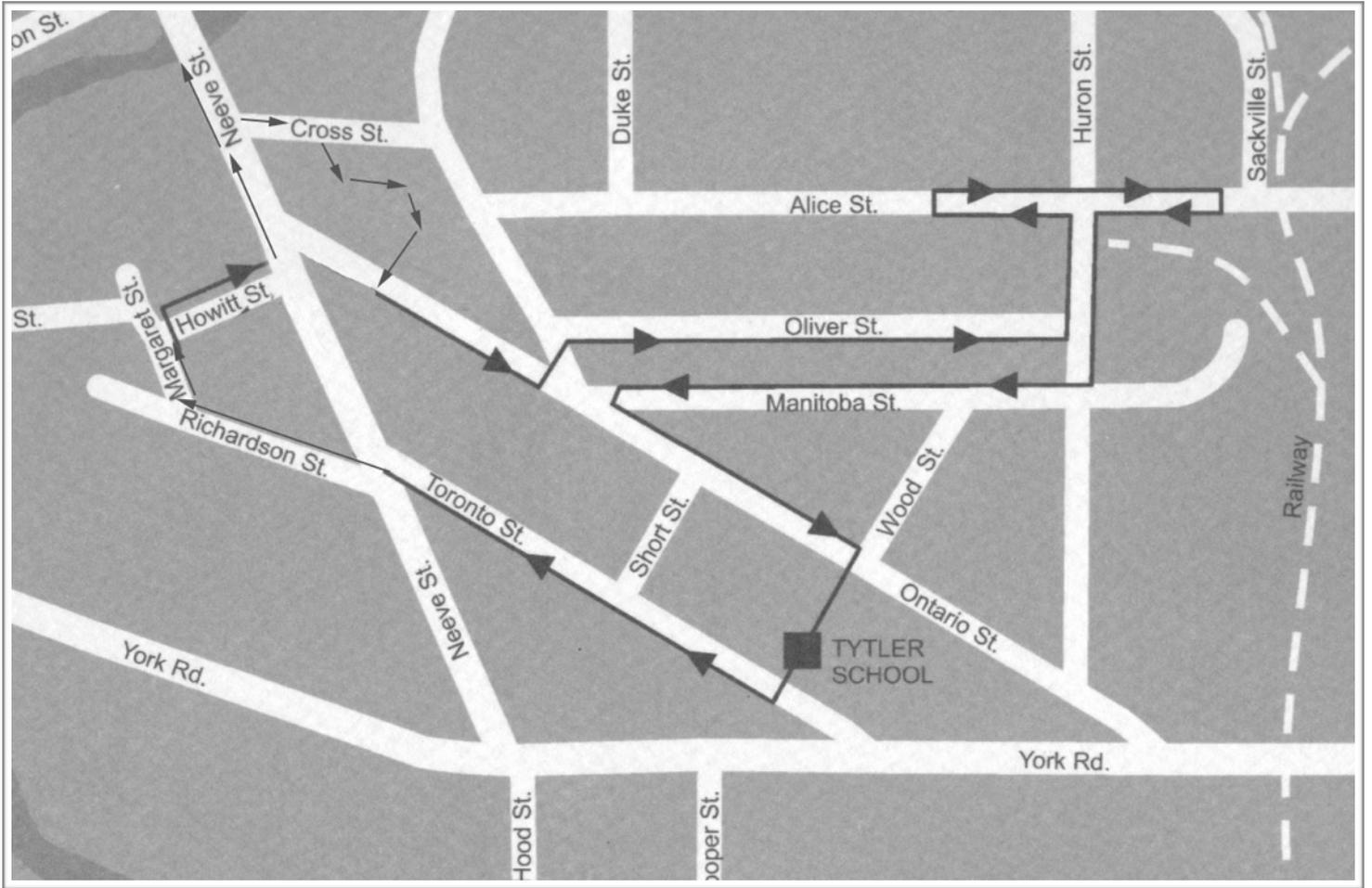
# Ward One

*Original text by Terry Crowley  
Digital revision by Guelph Arts Council (2016)  
Some photos courtesy of Guelph Museums  
Map by Andy McLennan*

Begin this tour at Tytler Public School, the parking lot at the Toronto Street entrance.  
This tour is approximately 3-4 km and takes about 1.25 hours.



*Drawing of the Mill Lofts by Robin Baird Lewis*



## Introduction to Ward One

*The walking tour begins at the back of Tytler School on Toronto Street, which angles off York Road and is located between York Road and Lyon Parks.*

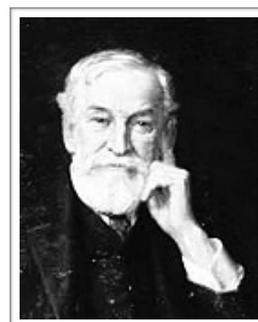
In the 1855 John A. Macdonald survey for the development of this area, Toronto Street angled in parallel with Ontario Street to meet Neeve Street, allowing pedestrians and horse-drawn vehicles access to the bridge across the Speed River, while the Eramosa River was not far away just below York Road. The Neeve Street bridge led to Guelph's second downtown that grew along Wyndham Street in response to the coming of the Grand Trunk Railway during the mid-1850s. Another bridge connecting Wyndham Street with York Road served as the main east-west axis through the original city and is provincial Highway 7.



Ward One has long been a diverse area. Not far from here, on York Road near where York Road Park fronts the street, stands the Holy Protection Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church, called St. Mary's, on land that was once a garbage dump. This church (shown above) is clearly visible by its three onion-turreted towers. Ukrainian Catholicism is a distinctive unit within the larger Roman Catholic church and follows some worship rites similar to eastern orthodox churches. The sanctuary and hall were built between 1954 and 1963 to designs by Toronto architect Ewen Gren.

### Tytler Public School

Starting the tour, we are looking at the back of Tytler School (shown below). This building began as St. Patrick's Ward School in 1908 with four rooms in brick replacing an earlier structure constructed in stone and called the East Ward School. In 1922 it was renamed Tytler Public School in honour of William Tytler (right) who had promoted the continuing education of working people through the local Mechanics Institute (the beginnings of Guelph's public library). As a school teacher, Tytler also helped Guelph become the first Ontario community to have a free public library in 1883. William Tytler served as the first principal of the Guelph Collegiate Institute, a school inspector, and secretary of the Board of Education.



Tytler School was designed by Guelph architect William Austin Mahoney in the restrained style of Edwardian (1901-10) Classicism. The building is of red clay brick with limestone lintels, sills, banding, and ornamentation. The front entrance on Ontario Street, shown on the 1912 postcard (middle right) features a central squared bay with gabled roof line, an imposing Romanesque arched entry, matching arched windows above, roof dormers and tall, narrow windows. The rear facade features a crenulated entry and roof parapet with banks of large windows and an imposing arched entry with fanlight and limestone quoins (delineated corners) and accents. Lion gargoyles adorn the front entry and the lion became the school's mascot.



## Toronto Street - Residences



The Ontario cottages at 63 and 69 Toronto Street (left), dating from 1885 and 1880 respectively, are examples of the most common nineteenth-century residential style in the province. Built of logs, frame, stone, or brick, Ontario cottages were found in towns and countryside. One storey, or a storey and a half, Ontario cottages had central doorways and windows on either side of the front entrance. Often a kitchen extended out the back, built in this way as a precaution against losing the whole house in the event of a fire. Such popular construction styles are generally referred to as examples of vernacular architecture.

The property at 51 Toronto Street (bottom left) was part of the Sir John A. Macdonald survey. The house was built in 1908-09 for George and Jennie Wilson. Wilson was a master blacksmith in a shop first on Cork Street and then on Macdonell Street. William Douglas, of Perth Street, was the builder/contractor. In 1922 the home was purchased by Ernest and Jennie Potton. He was a switch operator with the Grand Trunk Railway and the house remained in the family for many decades. The restrained lines of such residential construction after 1900 are sometime called Edwardian Classicism (since Edward VII was king).



Courtesy of Guelph Museums 2015\_64\_8

## St. Paul's Presbyterian Church - 44 Short Street

At the corner of Toronto and Short Streets stands the former St. Paul's Presbyterian Church which was established as a mission in 1899 by the Quebec Street Presbyterian congregation and called Knox Sabbath School. Within ten years a Presbyterian church was organized and this modest Edwardian building was constructed. The Gothic touches seen in pointed windows are carried over into interior transepts.

When the number of adherents declined and Westminster-St. Paul's was formed in the city's northeast end, the building was sold to Emmanuel Canadian Reformed Church. This denomination derived from Dutch immigrants just as Presbyterianism was associated with Scots. In 2002 the building was again sold as Emmanuel Church moved to Highway 7. The owners spent six years converting the structure into a residence with a separate apartment unit. With Lloyd Grinham as architect, a third storey was added and dormers placed in the second-floor roof.

### **John Oliver House – 23 Toronto Street**

The Guelph limestone cottage at 23 Toronto Street was built by John Oliver in 1860. In 1990 it was doubled in size by a board and batten addition. Guelph was fortunate to have more than a half dozen limestone quarries in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The characteristics of Guelph limestone were its brownish-grey hue and relative softness – a contrast to the harder grey-blue stone found around Kingston.



John Oliver was part of the original contingent wintering in the new settlement of the Canada Land Company in 1827-28. The Oliver family participated in a famous blood feud in early Guelph between the Irish Orange (Protestant) and Green (Roman Catholic) that involved the Coghlin family. As a result of this vendetta, Richard Oliver died in 1847, Charles Coghlin was hanged, and civil disturbances erupted in the town.

### **26 Toronto Street**



At 26 Toronto Street there is a red brick house with white trim that is one of the oldest on the street. It retains the character of the period 1870-74 when it was built, though the porch is not original, and it previously served as the site of the commercial Crown Dairy operation. This business began with Sanford King at 147 Ontario Street. It was bought in 1943 by Maxwell Robertson and moved to 156 Ontario Street, relocating to Toronto Street in 1946. Crown Dairy became a distributor of Sealtest products in



1966.

*Continue to the intersection of Toronto and Neeve Streets.*

### **159-161 Neeve Street**

Ward One was home to many mixed residential/commercial properties. The types of businesses varied with such enterprises as grocery stores, barbering / hair salons, hardware, and locksmithing being conducted in close proximity to living quarters. At the end of Toronto Street, 159-161 Neeve Street was built in 1905-08 as a single family dwelling and Neeve Street grocery store. The grocery was once owned by the parents of Gordon Couling, a founder of heritage conservation in Guelph, but it also housed a shoe store at another time. The sign showing S.E. Wiggins as proprietor is a fabrication of recent times, though the store part of the building may have been added after the residence and before 1914. Such mixed-use properties continue today, but they have been changed by the automobile and the computer to service activities of a different order.

The ground falls away steeply below Richardson Street to a flat area that flooded badly during Hurricane Hazel and the associated second storm with it on October 15, 1954. Before the municipality installed storm water run-off, the area was swamplier and known as Richardson's Pond. In winter it was flooded as a skating rink. Another part, where there are springs and a small stream, was used as a market garden. Vietnamese immigrants, arriving in the wake of the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, attempted to grow rice there.





*Proceed down Richardson Street.*

### **1 Richardson Street**

At the end of Richardson Street is a house built c. 1905. It has a rock-faced concrete-block exterior, which was popular in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century as a cost-effective alternative to quarried rock construction. This Edwardian style home features a transom window above the entrance and is positioned as a focal point at the end of the street.

*Turn right onto Margaret Street to the corner of Howitt.*

### **Paisley Memorial United Church - 40 Margaret Street**

Howitt Street was named after Charles and Jane Howitt who were in the early cattle business. Paisley Memorial United Church, dating from 1907, was the third building to serve the congregation. This Tudor Revival design was originally created by well-known Toronto architect Henry Langley (1836-1907) for Second Baptist church on Woolwich Street (later St. Paul's Lutheran), but the plans were sold to the Methodists to construct this building. The stunning feature of the church is its windows, the most original in the city's churches. Designed by heritage advocate and University of Guelph Fine Art professor Gordon Couling, they were created and installed between 1962 and 1984.

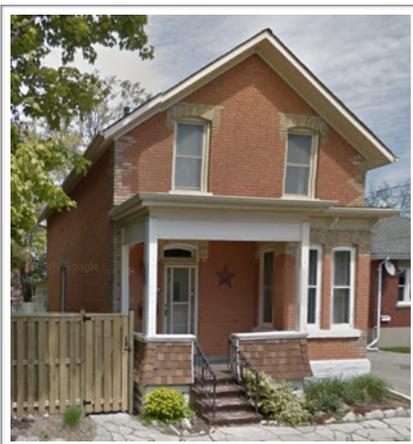


Paisley Memorial had its origins with Primitive Methodists who began to worship on Waterloo Avenue in 1846 and moved to Paisley Street where their church burned in 1906. Methodism had created a rupture within the Church of England, but Primitive Methodists in particular shunned religious rituals, hoping to emulate early Christian practices, and they drew on working-class adherents. In 1925, Paisley Memorial joined the new United Church of Canada. The manse, or parsonage, for the church stands next door at 57 Howitt Street and was built in 1913 by T.W. Taylor.



*Proceed along Howitt to Neeve Street.*

### **Neeve Street**



Neeve Street was named after John Neeve, a nineteenth-century landowner. Notice the irregularity of the street pattern of Ward One (from the 1855 Macdonald survey) that deterred motor vehicle traffic after 1900 and made the area less accessible.

At 132 Neeve Street (left) there is another 1870-74 red brick house with yellow brick fretwork, whose first owner was W. C. Lawrence. It is similar to the smaller home we saw around the corner at 26 Toronto. The house at 115 Neeve Street, originally owned by D.E. Rudd, reflects residential architecture evolving by 1890 to incorporate a stick and patterned metal single gable. Notice that this house has a limestone basement; poured concrete foundations did not gain ground until after 1900.

Houses such as these are basically vernacular (common) architecture and they are difficult to characterize accurately because builders and contractors borrowed eclectically from various styles. The yellow brick fretwork at 132 Neeve Street is derivative of an architectural style called Italianate. The fashion emanated from Italy to Britain and its colonies during the mid-nineteenth century. Italianate residences often have a doorway set out, large rounded windows, quoins, and ornate detailing on the windows and roof brackets.

The stick and gable flourishes on the house at 115 Neeve Street (right) became popular in association with the newer Queen Anne Revival style around 1900. Queen Anne Revival homes, in the period between 1870 and 1910, were more decorative and whimsical in their borrowings. This fashion was influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement which, at the turn of the twentieth century, sought to re-emphasize the aesthetic and visual importance of hand production as a reaction to industrialism.



*Proceed west (left) on Neeve Street.*

### **Dennis and Catherine Coffee House - 101-103 Neeve Street**

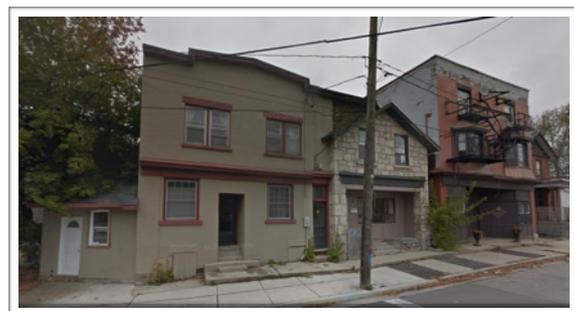
The Irish Roman Catholic innkeeper Dennis Coffee was the original owner of the stone duplex at 101-103 Neeve Street built in 1865. The building is Neo-Classical in style and retains its original chimneys. Neo-Classicism refers to an eighteenth-century fashion emphasizing simplicity and symmetry in the manner of buildings in ancient Greece.



Coffee had come to Guelph in 1848, the year after the worst of Ireland's great famines. He moved to the United States and there married Catherine before returning to Guelph in 1855. They ran Coffee's Hotel, Victoria Hotel, and the old Wellington Hotel in the downtown (this earlier Wellington Hotel stood on St. George's Square on the corner later occupied by the Customs House and Bank of Nova Scotia). Dealing extensively in real estate, Dennis and Catherine abandoned innkeeping in 1875 for contracting. By this time they were sufficiently wealthy and aspiring to call themselves gentleman and

gentlewoman. The couple had at least three children, and sons John and Thomas in 1886 headed the St. Patrick's Benevolent Society that helped poor Roman Catholic Irish. Towards 1900, Dennis Coffee oversaw the operations of the quarry in St. Patrick's Ward that we will see later from Huron Street. As city councillor for this ward for twelve years, he insured that his co-religionists and constituents were represented.

### **Neeve and Ontario Street Intersection**



Ontario Street had municipal street car service, stretching from Surrey Street to York Road, beginning at the turn of the twentieth century until 1937 when buses supplanted the rails. This transportation link influenced the character of the street by promoting small businesses.

The four structures at 2-8 Ontario Street, now conjoined, reveal adaptive re-use of buildings. The oldest is #4, formerly a store and built around 1870. Those at #6-8

were constructed between 1905 and 1915 as stores with apartments above. Exterior fancy tinwork now painted over can still be seen. The unit at 2 Ontario Street came last in 1927 and also contained a store and apartment. Businesses here included Ambrose jewellers, Smith grocers, and Bingman's pharmacy.

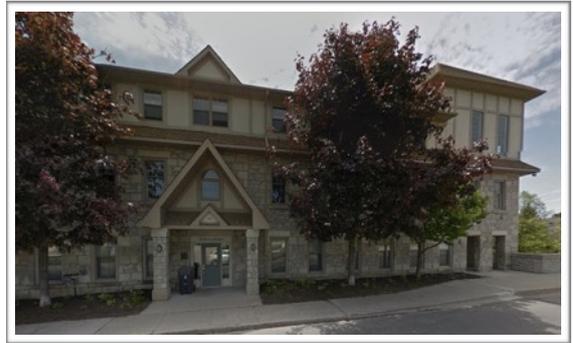
## 92-100 Neeve Street

Across the street there is a six-unit terrace dwelling unit built in 1914 with a modern Mansard roof. This type of roof, that envelops the top floor of a building, is named after seventeenth-century Frenchman François Mansart and it regained popularity around 1870. If you do a closer inspection, you will notice the poured concrete lintels over the windows. This manner of construction began at the beginning of the twentieth century to replace stone slabs because it was cheaper.

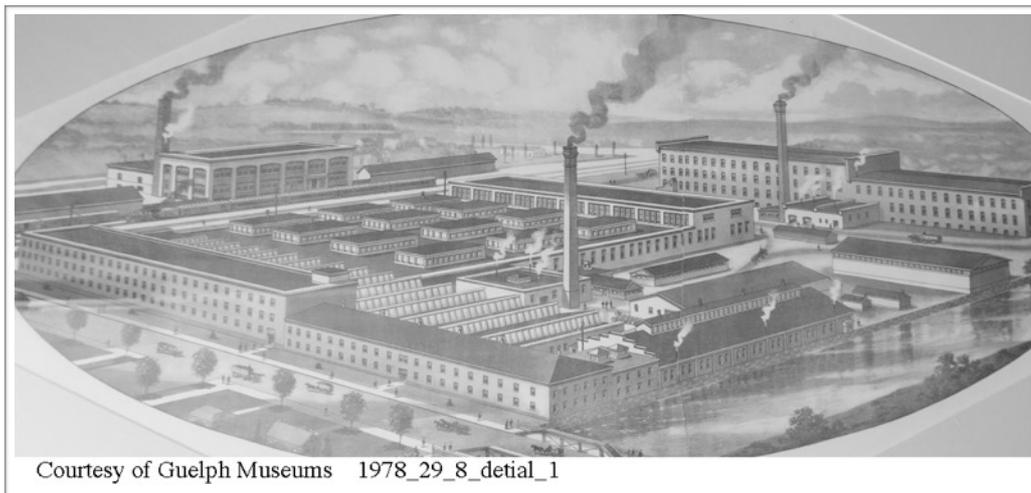


## Guelph Carpet Mill - 83 Neeve Street

Just before the Neeve Street bridge over the Speed River, is a multiplex dwelling along the river bank. The Guelph Carpet Mill began business here in 1873 and the site later became a Danby appliance factory stretching to Wyndham Street. Step inside the open doorway at the far end of the building and you will see a map with heritage images of this area.



After the factory buildings were torn down, special provision was made for physically-challenged citizens in the new construction finished in 1999 by J. Lammer Developments (below 1910).



Courtesy of Guelph Museums 1978\_29\_8\_detail\_1

*Backtrack slightly and travel down Cross Street.*

## W.C. Wood Property

On the north side of Cross Street, between Neeve and Arthur Street once sat the W.C. Wood Company. This was a large factory where refrigerators and freezers were built for many decades during the twentieth century. The Wood Company had preserved structures from the original distillery unit of the Allan's Mill built in 1846-47. The company expanded into Mexico and failed during hard times, falling into receivership in 2009 and the property sold in 2010. The city's 2002 brownfield redevelopment strategy, one of the first in Ontario, encouraged creation of urban housing on the site. It provides municipal incentives that help the city reach provincially-mandated residential densities that were especially important after Ontario created the green belt around Metropolitan Toronto in 2005.

*Enter the Mill Lofts property on your right  
and walk past the accessory building to the front entrance.*

## The Mill Lofts – 26 Ontario Street

In 1902 Guelph Carpet Factory and associated Guelph Spinning Mills commissioned Guelph architect W. Frye Colwill, who also created the Carnegie Library on Norfolk Street (now demolished) and Torrance School on Waterloo Avenue, to design their new factory. The first section was constructed in 1902 as a two-storey timber-framed brick structure with a low-slope gable roof. The second middle section, in 1907, was a three-storey brick addition that filled in the Arthur Street frontage. By 1920, when the company needed a third three-storey section on the left of the entrance, Guelph architect W.A. Mahoney (who also designed Tytler School) chose a concrete framework with large multi-paned windows, timber posts, and beams with steel trusses. Apart from the main building stood a tapered brick Powerhouse Chimney and brick, gabled-roofed Bleach House. Textiles were major industrial pollutants. A stream runs under the property feeding into the nearby Speed River.

In the mid-1920s there were eighty power looms with over 400 employees producing worsteds, yarns, and carpet fibres. As Arthur Street was once called Queen Street, during the interwar period (1918-39), the factory was referred to jokingly as “Queen Street College” – the destination for youth not proceeding through advanced education and needing paid employment to earn a living. During the floods of 1929 the company suffered major losses when metre-high water damaged the boilers, machinery, and yarns and carpets. Later the company was sold to Harding Carpets which in 1952 was listed as Guelph’s largest employer with more than 600 workers, but by the mid-1970s when the company closed it had fewer than 100 employees. Until 2000, the former factory housed several commercial and industrial operations, notably Len’s Mill Store, but then it was converted to residences -- The Mill Lofts. The accessory building you passed, once the Bleach House, is now the communal social space for the condo owners. The units are known for their exposed brick interiors and industrial height ceilings.

*Walk out the Mill Lofts main driveway to Ontario Street and proceed to the left.*

## 19 Ontario Street

The house at 19 Ontario Street shows how houses can be so modified as to be unrecognizable as historic structures. This home was built of frame with stucco about 1860. It once had two front entries and served as home and grocery store, making it one of the oldest businesses on the street. The inventories of historic architecture in the Guelph Public Library help in identifying the rudiments of many structures in the city.



## 23 Ontario Street

At 23 Ontario Street the duplex Guelph-stone house, dating from 1865, reveals an original bay window with a Roman arch on the right but the similar feature on the other side has been modified. This building shows dressed stone quoins. Such delineated corner blocks were characteristically smoothed and stippled through hand-tooling by British and Canadian stone masons, though sometimes expensive houses had entire fronts fashioned in such manner. Less costly stone alternatives were generally chosen for side and back walls of residences.

Pointing (i.e. mortaring) sealed between stones. Sometimes the style of pointing attempted to make a wall look smoother through feathering of the mortar. At other times mortar is recessed to emphasize the qualities of the stone, while taping (or blocking) was especially popular around World War II (1939-45). Changing tastes have dictated varying fashions in pointing.



## 35 Ontario Street

John Robertson was the original owner of 35 Ontario Street, a frame and stucco house built about 1875 and with original six over six sash windows. The porch was added later.

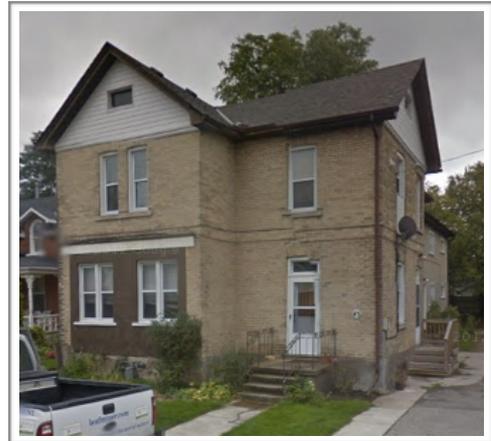


## Sam and Jessie Enchin House – 43 Ontario Street

The house at **43 Ontario Street** reminds us of ethnic and religious diversity in Ward One. Built of white buff yellow brick in Queen Anne Revival style with stick and patterned shingle gables, the building was originally a grocery store and dwelling, 1882 to 1892. The shop front has been removed, but this property was once occupied by Samuel Enchin, a Jewish immigrant shoemaker by trade. Later, another couple operated Harvey's variety shop on the property.

Sam Enchin's brother Zolman emigrated from Russia to Canada in 1906, just two years after the first Jewish wedding took place in Guelph. Within a half-dozen years Zolman's two brothers, Samuel and Alexander, joined him. The Enchins wanted to improve their lot in life and escape anti-Semitic persecution. Hostility against Jews, which surfaced in Russian pogroms, was harsher than that seen more light-heartedly in the musical/movie, *Fiddler on the Roof*. The 1917 city directory places Sam Enchin at 6 Ontario Street and later in life he operated a used-furniture business on Wilson Street near City Hall. Sam and Jessie Enchin had seven children.

At 43 Ontario Street Sam built a shoe store that abutted the sidewalk in the manner of Vincenzo Valeriotte's shoe repair shop on Alice Street, but only part of the shop's concrete footprint remains visible. As practising Jews, the Enchins worshipped with others in a house on Albert Street that continued to serve as a place of worship after it was moved to 31 Surrey Street West.



*Proceed to Arthur Street, turn left, and then cross the street and walk down Oliver Street.*

## Ontario/Arthur/Oliver Intersection

As you cross the street, notice Bradburns Auto on the left. There was once a number of auto-related shops on Ontario Street. Bradburns' business was originally owned by Nelson Minto who entrusted it to Bruno Borghese when he enlisted during War War II. Arnold and Mel Wolfond, important postwar developers in the city, acquired the property before the Bradburns purchased it in 1964. Across from the auto shop on Arthur Street, the former Snow White Laundry became a site for hookers to operate from during the 1950s.



## 8 and 14 Oliver Street

Oliver Street was named in 1878 after Henry H. Oliver whose house we will see near the end of the tour. The little house at 8 Oliver Street (top) dates from about 1870 and has finished quoins and keystones above two windows on the first floor. The bargeboard (gingerbread) was added during a retrofitting late in the twentieth century. The stone house at 14 Oliver Street (right) is of similar vintage and clearly shows a rubble stone side wall with dressed limestone front.



## Oliver Street Duplexes

Along the south side of this street is a series of duplex homes that illustrate a variety of architectural styles. The yellow brick duplex at #15-17 (right) was built in 1895. It is a late Neo-Classic vernacular with two-storey, two-bay units and front gables with patterned shingles. The red brick units at #21-23 Oliver Street (below left) were built in 1890. The style here is late Gothic Revival with a shared centre gable. The front doors have transom windows. The home at #33-35 (below right) was built in 1885. Late Italianate, it is constructed from red brick with decorative white brick band courses and window accents. The small, centre front gable has varied windows. Across the street at #50-52 is a more contemporary duplex. Using it as a landmark look to the south side to notice a nineteenth-century rubble-stone stable.



*Turn left at Huron Street.*

## Northern Rubber Company 120 Huron Street



Courtesy of Guelph Museums 2014\_84\_609

The large industrial building to the right on Huron Street was built for rubber manufacturing. Making rubber was one of the growth industries in the early twentieth century, but it was an activity initially reliant on the production of natural rubber often under slave-like conditions in Africa and Asia. This five-storey factory was constructed with the use of reinforced concrete in 1920 by the Northern Rubber Company. It produced foot

apparel and soon employed nearly 600 people. After World War II, the workforce dropped to between 300 and 400 people and the company became Dominion Rubber and then Uniroyal and later Chemtura. The close proximity of factories to homes, once acceptable to reduce transportation costs for workers, was phased out by municipal planning departments as industrial parks gained ground starting in the 1950s.

## Neighbourhood Retail



As you walk towards Alice Street you notice on your left a very small house with shop in front at 131 Huron (left), and then another at #111 on the corner of Alice Street that served as a variety store. This combination of business with residence became increasingly

common in this newer part of Ward One as it became occupied at the turn of the twentieth century with a variety of immigrants.



## J.W. Lyon - Industrial Developer



Courtesy of Guelph Museums 1969\_69\_1

The Eramosa River and York Road industrial district was developed by J. W. Lyon between 1903 and 1910 (left 1913). Lyon was a publisher from Pennsylvania, and his company, the World Publishing Company, had its head office in Guelph. Although they were not printed in Guelph, his books were distributed throughout the world and the business was very successful. Lyon then became involved in real estate ventures in the United States and Canada. In Guelph he bought 400 acres of land in the area of York and Victoria Roads, then he offered free building sites to large manufacturers. Eight factories were built in this way. Lyon recovered his investment, and more, by selling building lots to those employed by the factories, which

numbered over 2,000 at one point. Lyon Park, on York Road, was named in his honour.

When J.W. Lyon duplicated the narrowness of Alice and area streets in his subdivision in Ward One, complaints were raised at city council. An unidentified epidemic also broke out in the ward in 1915. The contagion was probably intestinal, and it was attributed to broken sewage pipes leaking into water conduits. Improvements arrived after the municipality assumed control of the water works in 1919. Lyon himself lived in a stately home called Wyoming, at 67 Queen Street on St. George's Hill.

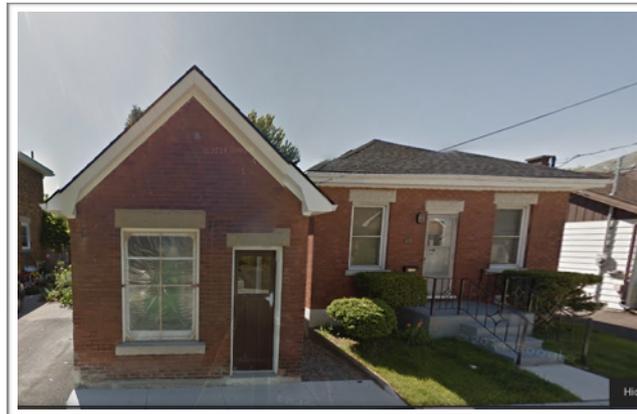
*Turn left at the corner of Alice and Huron Streets.*

### **Alice Street and Guelph's Italian Community**

Alice Street constituted the heart of Guelph's Italian community during much of the twentieth century (although it was named in 1875 after one of Queen Victoria's daughters). Italians came to Guelph after 1900 looking for employment or to start a new life that might be better for their children. Single men boarded and new families occupied houses with other families until they could begin on their own. Many laboured at backbreaking jobs – in the city's stone quarries, building its street railways, and laying conduit for improved water and sewage along Guelph's streets. As initial sojourners soon brought relatives to settle, chain migration and cluster settlement prevailed.

The largest early groups came from Treviso (near Venice) in northern Italy and Calabria in the south, especially San Gorgio (St. George) Morgeto in Italy's "toe." Most were former rural labourers, who had perhaps only secured seasonal work as "giornalieu" (day labourers), or they had been "contadini" (peasants who owned or leased small plots of land). These people brought traditions of providing for themselves and settling their own disputes without government involvement. Such characteristics fostered vendettas and mafia activity, although the clandestine nature of the Mafioso makes it difficult to say much except that the dominant Anglo culture exaggerated the extent of mafia activity within the Italian community. During prohibition in Ontario (from World War I (1914-18) until 1927 when the Liquor Control Board of Ontario was established), the Alice Street area was known for bootleggers and speakeasies.

The size of the Italian community was increased with the migration of compatriots, primarily northerners, from Cape Breton during the great economic depression of the 1930s. By 19061, after high Immigration from Italy following World War II, some ten per cent of Guelph's population was Italian. As people prospered, Italian Canadians moved east and north in the city along Victoria Road (where St. John's Roman Catholic church was built) and then eventually fanned out in all directions.



#### **47-49 Alice Street**

Walk west (left) down to 47-49 Alice, another neighbourhood retail site. Vincenzo Valeriote built a red brick residence in 1924 and a shoemaking shop close to the sidewalk. Vincenzo was one of five Valeriote brothers to emigrate from Italy to Guelph early in the twentieth century. He married Anna Anunziata Raco and they had ten children, but only five survived. The builder of the Edwardian cottage was Ralph Macri and the business called V. Valeriote Shoe Repairing Shop.

*Walk back towards the corner of Alice and Huron Streets.*



### **Sacred Heart School and Church**

Sacred Heart Church and School were the site of collective festivities for the early Italian community, though baptisms here of Italian children did not equal those of other Catholics until 1941 during World War II. The school was originally called St. Patrick's, having been relocated here in 1912 from 158 Ontario Street. The nuns who ran the school maintained exacting discipline using a wooden spoon to hit students on the head, though brutal punishments in the name of discipline were common everywhere until the 1960s. The Jesuits at the Church of Our Lady established a mission here and used a portable altar for purposes of worship. A priest who spoke Italian travelled regularly from Hamilton to serve the mission. Immigrants in particular preferred observing religious obligations at the mission because pews in Church of Our Lady were rented and non-paying adherents entered by a side door where they sat apart in the church's transept.

A plaque in front of the current school recounts its history. The school's most well-known students were Niagara auxiliary bishop Matthew Ustrzycki, ordained in 1959, and federal member of parliament for Guelph-Wellington, Frank Valeriote. See the booklet, *The Sacred Heart Parish of the Ward*.

Four women were especially important in having the mission transformed into a new parish: Maria Veroni, Rose Carroll, Martha Heffernan, and Sarah Meagher. In 1922, when a chapel was constructed on the corner beside the school, the Jesuits chose the name of Sacred Heart. The cult of the sacred heart of Christ was longstanding in Catholicism, but re-emphasized during a late nineteenth-century liturgical revolution when women became more important in church activities (and the new name avoided confusion with the Anglican St. Patrick's on Morris Street). Constructed of red tapestry brick with white stone trim, Sacred Heart's seating capacity was nearly doubled from the original 350 with extensions in 1932 at both front and rear. The architectural style of the church is reminiscent of worship spaces in Rome.

When the mission became a parish in 1930, the first priest incumbent had the very un-Italian sounding name of Father Patrick O'Brien, but, as he had earned a doctorate in Rome, O'Brien spoke Italian (though the Mass was said in Latin with the homily provided in vernacular languages) and served for sixteen years.

The religious processions on the feast of Corpus Christi (Body of Christ) were the most colourful of religious rites observed annually in the Sacred Heart parish between the first and second world wars. Altars were set up around church and school where the procession stopped for observances. The Crowning of the Blessed Virgin in May and the Feast of Christ the King were also well attended, as was the annual garden party in July. The Sons of Italy served as a popular service club here for fifty to sixty Italian men until it was disbanded during World War II, while women attended the Legion of Mary and later the Catholic Women's League.

More casual hangouts were Sam and Carmel Embro's grocery store and snack bar (still called Sammy's), on the corner of Elizabeth and Huron Streets, and Domenic and Marguerite Tersigni's barbershop beside it. The Spaghetti House restaurant, owned by Rose and Domenic Ferraro, stood towards Elizabeth Street at 49 Huron Street. Jazz great Lionel Hampton patronized the Spaghetti House when he performed gigs in the area.

*Proceed down Alice Street by first crossing Huron Street.*

## Alice Street



The building at 116-118-120 Alice Street (top left) started as attached residences at #118-120 built in 1923-25. An adjoining grocery store on the corner with apartment was added in 1925-26.



The single family red brick dwelling at 124 Alice Street (middle left), built during the first decade of the twentieth century, is indicative of the smaller and less ornate dwellings constructed in this section of Ward One during its high tide after 1900. The brick building at 128 Alice Street covered in flagstone veneer was built in 1923-25 and served as Veroni's Bakery.



The building(s) at 132-34 Alice Street (bottom left) belonged to Dominic Tedesco and then Michele (Michael) Valeriote who arrived in Canada from San Giorgio Morgeto. Michele worked first as a railway labourer laying track and later moved to Guelph. He married Elisabetta (Elizabeth), opened Valeriote's Groceteria here in 1911, and ran a butcher shop as well as a postal outlet (acquired as a political plum through the good auspices of Tory M.P. Hugh Guthrie). Michele assisted the immigration of four brothers: Guiseppe, Angelo, Vincenzo, and Domenic. Angelo opened another grocery store down the street at 176 Alice (below right) and his brother Vincenzo the shoe business down the street in the opposite direction. Michele and Elisabetta had a piano where Michele loved to play the music of Guiseppe Verdi. The

couple also enjoyed listening to opera on the radio, although Michele fell into a deep depression later in life. Elisabetta gave birth to sixteen children, of whom only ten survived past the age of six. She was a religious and charitable woman whose most frequent expression was "Dio lo vuole" – "God's Will." Italian immigrant women such as Elisabetta took care of home and family, but gradually moved out into the workforce for paid employment. As they did, the number of very large families subsided, but Italian women also played a major role in domestic production of a different order. Animals abounded in Ward One with chickens, rabbits, goats and cows being particularly popular for eggs, milk and meat. Home production was vital to reducing the cost of living in order to provide education for the young. Gardens and grape arbours were seen nearly everywhere.



*Continue walking until Sackville Street.*

## Sackville Street

Sackville Street was named after a street in Dublin, Ireland. The Guelph Junction Railway that transects Ward One was built through here by the city in 1888 to tap the Canadian Pacific Railway in order to overcome the Grand Trunk Railway's monopoly. To the north, the bluffs in the distance are visible, but not the G.T.R. (later Canadian National Railway) tracks just below them. The pedestrian passage up this glacial drumlin is called the 100 Steps.

Sackville Street was known as a small red-light district. In the opposite direction, there once stood a steam engine round house. During the great depression of the 1930s, people were so poor that they followed the trains to gather unburned coal discarded with engine box embers. Hobos took the opportunity to hop off the train and get something from Valeriote's Groceteria, although the hobo decampment in Guelph was located nearer to the C.P.R. station on Howitt's Pond (just above Waterloo

Avenue and east of Woodycrest Drive). Rambunctious boys sometimes stole brake linings from the trains and set them on fire. There was also once a lime kiln just off Alice Street.

Northwest from here, on Ferguson Street in the distance, the Italian Canadian Club was begun in 1953 as successor to the Sons of Italy. On that street as well, hockey player Lou Fontinato grew up and remembered quarrels with siblings about who would fetch the backyard cow for milking. At least in the early years of Italian settlement, more northerners appear to have settled along Ferguson and Morris Streets north of the junction railway line.

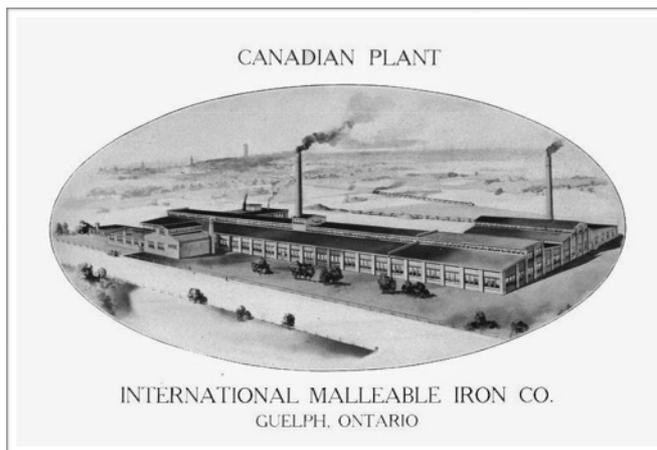
Italy was and remains highly regionalized with important differences in wealth and outlook between north and south. John Tantardini, a northern Italian from Trecate, in the province of Piemonte, arrived shortly after 1900 and operated a fruit store on Wilson Street close to City Hall. Making money, John Tantardini extended his efforts to developing a travel agency that secured steamship tickets and transacted money orders for Guelph's Italians. Like Michele Valeriote, John Tantardini also served as a reference point for new immigrants, helping to get them settled, and deriving small profits. Rooming and boarding were common phenomena, especially among sojourning immigrants.

Ward One has also been home to other ethnic groups, such as the Polish Alliance of Guelph Club which is on Empire Street in the vicinity of Elizabeth and Stevenson Streets. The worship space for the Guelph Sikh Society from 1996 was located at 70 Stevenson Street in a former Brewers Retail building, although that group is looking to build a larger structure elsewhere to house their growing numbers.

## International Malleable Iron

Looking down Alice Street, you can see the buildings of International Malleable Iron Company (IMCO). Lou Fontinato's father worked here for about forty years even though he also owned five acres of land above the bluffs on Lane Street where he maintained a market garden. International Malleable Iron, a tremendous polluter as were so many metal working plants, was one of eight businesses that Guelph businessman J.W. Lyon credited himself with attracting. IMCO began production in 1913

and within five years was the city's largest employer. The company closed in 1990. Rampant soil contamination and the cost to clean it up led the property to pass to the Church of the Universe, run by Walter Tucker, whose sacrament was marijuana and vestment the naked body. The new church headquarters was named Hempire Village. The property reverted to the city for tax arrears in 1998, but the cost of reclaiming the contaminated soil has deterred development. Photos below, left 1924 and right 1948.



*Turn around and return to the junction of Alice and Huron Streets.  
Turn left on Huron Street and continue up the hill to the junction with Manitoba Street.  
Before turning right on Manitoba, look to your left for the Quarry site.*

South of Northern Rubber on Huron Street was the Birmingham Quarry. It was one of more than a half-dozen stone quarries around Guelph and it was not deeply excavated. Boys loved to play in this area. Most of the former quarry was eventually filled in but parts are still visible along the rear of the property.

### **Sacred Heart Rectory – 75 Manitoba Street**

At the south-west corner of Huron and Manitoba Streets is the impressive Sacred Heart Rectory which was constructed in 1935, during Father O'Brien's tenure, in the Neo-Georgian style that became popular during the interwar period. Although essentially simple in design, Georgian (eighteenth-century) edifices often had elaborate porticos just as this rectory has. The large house possesses such a commanding view that on at least one occasion local police used its upper storeys to identify whisky stills on people's properties in the Alice Street area. The town garden plots across from the rectory recall how backyard gardening remains viable, and in this area many gardens had bocce alleys to play Italy's game of bowls/billiards.

Notice also the three Ontario cottages on Manitoba Street: #74, buff brick sandblasted, 1880, but with modern sash and door; #66 – 1875; and #48 with unusual decorative treatment of the brick where four courses form a decorative frieze above doors and windows – unusual in Guelph.



### **Samuel Carter's Cottage Industry – 60 Manitoba Street**

The unprepossessing structure at 60 Manitoba tells us much about the evolution from small manufacturing during the nineteenth century. This house was built about 1878 in L-shaped style on a tenth-of-a-hectare (a fifth of an acre) property. Within a year, eleven people were identified with this site.

English-born Samuel Carter began his business career here between 1884 and 1892 with a small knitting factory – a cottage industry. Manufacturing in a house such as this was almost akin to the scale of contemporary production in the lower eastside tenements ("sweatshops") of New York City and the tiny domestic weaving manufactories on the Scottish islands of Lewis and Harris.

Samuel Carter was a smart businessman who went on to establish the Royal Knitting Company with a factory at the south-west corner of Cardigan and Norwich Streets (which today houses apartments). His residence was at 76 Cross Street.

A keen Methodist who helped build Paisley Memorial Church, he also worked to organize the Guelph Co-operative Association in 1904. Growing to have between 300 and 400 shareholders who received reductions on purchases, the association presaged the formation of a student co-op at the Ontario Agricultural College in 1913. As city councillor, Samuel Carter championed municipal ownership of public transport (the streetcar) and electricity. He served as mayor and member of the provincial parliament. Carter's philanthropic endeavours continued throughout his life.

When a proprietor wanted to subdivide this property, Heritage Guelph (Guelph's municipal heritage advisory committee) secured city council's approval in 2008 to initiate heritage designation under the Ontario Heritage Act. The proprietor then sold the house to environmentalist and Green Party candidate Ben Polley and his wife Jen Woodside. As owner



of Harvest Homes, the Polleys undertook a green heritage renovation. Green heritage implies recycling as many original materials as possible and incorporating sustainable products such as bamboo rather than vinyl floors. The renovations included straw bale walls and a living roof as well.

### Henry H. Oliver's Residence – 172 Arthur Street

At the end of Manitoba Street where it meets Arthur Street, there is a fine Guelph stone Neo-Classical house with a Roman arch window on the second floor. This house was built by Henry H. Oliver about 1860 and sports particularly impressive hand-tooled window frames, door transom, and decorative carved keystone. Henry Oliver was an early landowner who in 1838 subdivided forty building lots. In 1852 he became a teacher for one of Guelph's two common schools for boys after a scandal forced his predecessor to depart hastily. There were forty students in Henry Oliver's charge and he was paid £21 per annum. In 1878 the city named Oliver Street after him.



### Former Ontario Street Commercial Nexus

As you turn left onto Ontario Street, notice how the juncture of Ontario/Arthur/Manitoba Streets was once a commercial nexus of which only vestiges remain. The following can be singled out:

- #61 (top right) was built as a store, 1918-22, and became Butchers Bakery. When the children in the neighbourhood had a nickel, they would buy Butchers famous pineapple tarts;
- #65 (second photo, house on right) was a butcher shop built in 1917;
- #69 (second photo, house on left) was built as a house, 1905-13, with a front added to serve as a shop;
- #70 (third photo) was a fish-and-chip shop with an unusual door directed towards the convergence of the four roads;
- #72 (also third photo) was a hair salon;
- #74 (below left) was Ontario Street Hardware owned by the Card family. It later contained Poole's Plumbing and was converted to a wool outlet and a variety store that closed in 2007;
- #76 (below second left) was a motor repair shop;
- #85 (below second to right) at the corner of Short and Ontario Streets, was at one time Husson's grocery store. Kate and Jack Quarrie ran the business as Quarrie's Lucky Dollar from 1966 to 1972. Kate Quarrie later became Mayor of Guelph
- #93 (below right) the classic board and baton frame house at the corner of Short Street, is one of very few in the city with its original outside woodwork. It was built about 1875



*Turn right on Short Street to return to Toronto Street and the back of Tytler School where the tour began.*



*If you have time, finish up with an alternative route along Ontario Street, noting the gargoyles on the front of Tytler School as you pass by.*

### **119 Ontario Street**

Abutting the school property at 119 Ontario Street is a brick house (partially clad in siding) on rubble-stone foundation where George H. Woods began the Victoria Dairy in 1929. It continued in operation until 1962.

### **154, 157 and 158 Ontario Street**

The house just beyond the school at 157 Ontario Street (right) was built about 1883 and has a Heritage Guelph plaque on it. The design of this house is unusual, and, while the face is Guelph limestone, the sides and back are made of field stone. There are carved keystones over the windows, and during restoration of the home, the original gargoyle over the transom was found and mortared above the door again.

Across the street at 158 Ontario Street is the house where in 1908 the first Roman Catholic (one-room) school for this area, called St. Patrick's, was located.

The residence at 154 Ontario Street was once the sole motor vehicle registry office for the entire city. It was operated up to the 1970s by Bill and Josephine Carere and had two front entrances, one for the public and one for the family.

Just beyond, on York Road at Morris Street, was one of the oldest continuing industries in the area. Biltmore Hats in Guelph began as the Fried-Grills Hat Company on Suffolk Street towards the end of World War I and was reorganized in 1920. The company sponsored a Junior "A" hockey team that at one time had Eddie Shack among its players. Biltmore made hats for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, but hats diminished as required objects of apparel for businessmen, and from the 1960s the company's economic fortunes varied to the point that the factory was sold and torn down for residential development.



*Return to Toronto Street where we began by crossing the Tytler School grounds or retracing your steps to Short Street.*