

Mount Pleasant Historical Walking Tour

Within decades of its founding in 1799, Mount Pleasant was a prosperous and cultured settlement, home to men and women who distinguished themselves in many fields, as well as flourishing farms, inns, mills, schools, a drill hall, and commercial establishments.

Today, though much has changed, Mount Pleasant's long and lovely main street retains much of its rural charm and many of its old homes, churches and farmsteads which evoke a strong aura of the past. This tour begins at the corner of Mount Pleasant and Burtch Roads and takes you around to significant 19th century period houses, churches and sites which convey its proud history, although there are other fine homes built then and in later periods which enhance the historic street scape. The road itself is part of the Long Point Trail, an old Indian trail which went from the Grand River in Brantford south to Lake Erie.

Proceed North towards Brantford

1 Windmill Country Market
(Mount Pleasant Road & Burtch Road)

2 Eadie/Ellis House & Store - "Site of First Telephone Test"
(693 Mount Pleasant Road)

3 United Church Manse
(681 Mount Pleasant Road)

In keeping with their prosperity and large congregation, Methodist church leaders of the day wanted a fine, substantial manse to accompany their new church (669 Mount Pleasant Road). This circa 1885 house with plain Georgian styling was designed by prominent Brantford architect John Turner and repeats some of the architectural details of the church also designed by him, such as the hooded moldings over the windows.

4 Mount Pleasant United Church
(669 Mount Pleasant Road)

Built in 1858 by the Wesleyan Methodist congregation and designed by prominent Brantford architect John Turner in the Italianate style, this was and remains the largest church in the village and the first structure to be built using the "new" white brick.



5 Dr. Emily Stowe & Dr. Augusta Stowe Gullen Plaque

(Mount Pleasant School, 667 Mount Pleasant Rd.) Described in her obituary in 1903 as "one to whom honour is justly done," Emily Stowe was the first woman to practise medicine in Canada and also the first woman school principal. After her marriage in 1856 to carriage-maker John Stowe, she taught at the renowned Nelles Academy then on this property. Later, Stowe had to study medicine in the U.S. because she was refused admission to a Canadian medical school. She campaigned vigorously for increased educational opportunities for women, and her daughter, Augusta Stowe Gullen, born in Mount Pleasant in 1857, became the first woman to graduate in medicine from a Canadian university in 1883. Ardent feminists, both women were leaders in the women's suffrage movement which culminated in the franchise for women in 1917.

Dr. Augusta Stowe Gullen

6 Brucefield

(657 Mount Pleasant Road) Abraham Cooke, a local "merchant prince," built this Georgian/Greek Revival mansion circa 1840. Though now time-worn and stripped of elaborate features such as its roof cresting, two storey entry pediment and wrap-around porch, it was the most ostentatious house in Mount Pleasant and among the most pretentious in Upper Canada. It became a great social centre with elaborate parties lasting up to a week. It is notable for a visit in 1846 by Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada Lord Elgin, who was so impressed he asked for the privilege of naming it "Brucefield" after his family. This is the birthplace of soldier adventurer William Winer "Willie" Cooke who joined the U.S. cavalry and died at the Battle of the Little Bighorn with General Custer. At one time Brucefield was owned by Morgan Harris, grandson of Mount Pleasant entrepreneur Alanson Harris, founder of the Massey-Harris farm implement company.



"Willie" Cooke

7 Phelps/McAlister House

(641 Mount Pleasant Road) Built in 1860 on the lot of Arthur Sturgis, an original settler, this house is a good example of a prosperous period farm house. It has distinctive Regency styling, particularly evident in the long front windows with fitted panels. The bay window exhibits fine Victorian detailing. Both the Phelps and McAlister families have a strong multi-generation history in the village, reaching back to the early 1800s. This intact farmstead with barn and silo, along with Hydome Farms (653 Mount Pleasant Road) and Pleasantholm Farms (660 Mount Pleasant Road) gives the village much of its enduring rural charm.

8 Emily Townsend House

(637 Mount Pleasant Road)

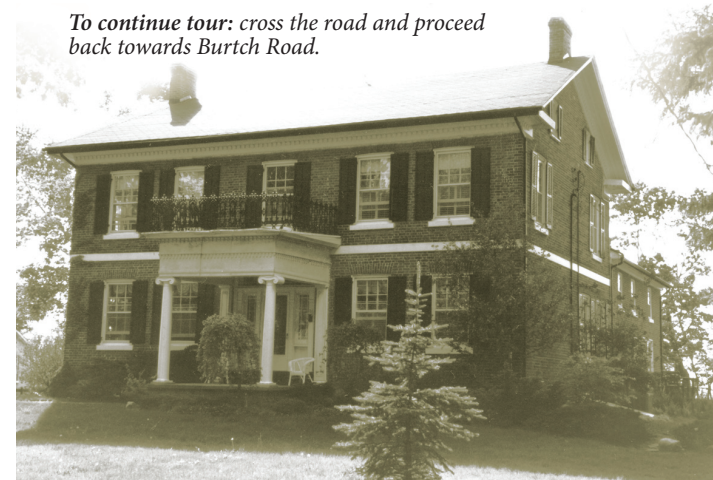
9 Townsend Mansion

(597 Mount Pleasant Road)

This circa 1848 mansion was built for landowner and carriage-maker Alva Townsend by the same builders as "Brucefield." A reflection of the wealth and social ambition of its first owner, this well preserved example of elegant Georgian Revival architecture exhibits the strong horizontal profile and symmetrical arrangement of windows and doors characteristic of the style. The interior details are formal and elaborate. There is a story that Townsend was quite incensed that the builders had not used the same type of stairway as they built in Mr. Cooke's "mansion." Townsend sold the house in 1883 to Dr. Duncan Marquis for \$12,000.

NOTE: This house is a bit of a distance but well worth the walk.

To continue tour: cross the road and proceed back towards Burtch Road.



10 Hardy Terrace Nursing Home

(612 Mount Pleasant Road)



11 Tennant Octagon/Scape Spa

(646 Mount Pleasant Road)

This circa 1850 Neo-Gothic style octagon is the only survivor of three similar buildings in Mount Pleasant. The others were the Nelles Academy and the Stowe Brothers carriage shop. Shoemaker Richard Tennant took eight years to build this landmark architectural oddity in the faddish style promoted by American Orson Fowler who believed the shape, with its openness and absence of corners, provided health benefits and warded off evil. Much altered and used for many purposes, the building has been stripped of many of the details which gave it its architectural character. A barn in matching style is also long gone.

12 Bryning Manse

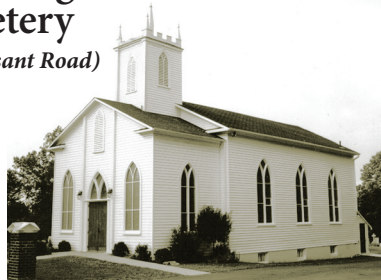
(676 Mount Pleasant Road)

Built circa 1830, this Regency/Gothic board and batten cottage, expanded with side and rear additions, retains many original features including the porch and windows. It was the manse of Mount Pleasant's first resident minister, Reverend John Bryning, a Presbyterian, and his wife Nancy Lee Bryning. An important founding figure in the early history of the area, Bryning rode a circuit of miles on horseback to care for his flock, was also a schoolteacher and helped establish churches in other communities. Designated under the Ontario Heritage Act (Part IV) by the County of Brant for its architectural and historical significance.

13 All Saints Anglican Church and Cemetery

(688 Mount Pleasant Road)

Erected in 1845 by the parishioners using lumber milled from the local forest and consecrated by Bishop Strachan in 1854, this is the oldest surviving church building in the village. It is an excellent example of simple but dignified church architecture of early Upper Canada when the Anglican Church was the establishment church of the colonial elite. It retains its original oak interior furnishings and pine floorboards. Handsome tombstones mark the graves of well-known Church of England villagers.



14 Hardy Store/Devlin's Country Bistro

(704 Mount Pleasant Road)

Notable as the birthplace of the Hon. Arthur Sturgis Hardy, this has been a village landmark since 1834. Hardy, a descendant of the village's founding Sturgis family, was born here during the Rebellions of 1837. A distinguished lawyer, he became the 4th Premier of Ontario and Attorney General in 1896. Hardy's legacy includes Algonquin and Rondeau Provincial Parks, the Ontario Department of Mines and the Department of Fisheries. Owned by the Devlins since 1879, the property has been a general store and post office.



15 Grantham House

(722 Mount Pleasant Road)

Constructed with 18" thick walls using clay and straw fill between stacked horizontal planks, this is an appealing example of a typical vernacular farm house prevalent throughout rural Ontario from the mid 19th century. It displays distinguishing features of the style such as the prominent centre gable peak decorated with fanciful barge board over a front door with sidelights. Tax records assign an 1870 date, but the core of the house could be older. A renewed exterior, classic colour scheme and gardens enhance this traditional composition.



16 Marquis House

(726 Mount Pleasant Road)

This was the home and office of Dr. Duncan Marquis, Mount Pleasant's "most beloved doctor," who practised in the village beginning in 1865, and became a stalwart of the Presbyterian Church. Marquis came from Scotland as a young boy, was raised and educated here before going on to Victoria Medical College in Toronto. Dr. Marquis was the first of what became a prominent Brantford medical family. The house is a fine example of a vernacular rural doctor's cottage. The upper dormer is a later modification.



17 Eadie House "Idylbrook"

(756 Mount Pleasant Road)

18 Mount Pleasant Nature Park

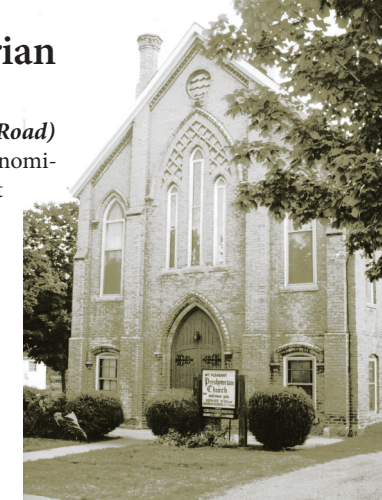
(755 Mount Pleasant Road)

About 1842, Elijah Haight took advantage of this natural and prized mill site to build a grist and carding mill which used water from the Mount Pleasant Creek to power the mill. The new mill pond became quite celebrated as a trout pond and swimming hole for the local boys. The mill was demolished around 1911 when the province opened and operated the first provincial fish hatchery here. The hatchery building and rearing ponds were constructed then. This approx. 25 acre property has been popular for generations as a picnic and recreation spot. The park is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act (Part IV) by the County of Brant for its historic and natural significance.

19 Presbyterian Church

(715 Mount Pleasant Road)

One of three extant denominational churches built in Mount Pleasant in the 19th century, this Victorian Gothic church was completed in 1878 (hall added 1962) and testifies to the strong Scottish presence in the village at the time. The front façade features three lancet windows framed by a single moulding accented by lattice brickwork above, a composition designed to symbolize the Trinity. The property originally included horse and buggy sheds behind the church and a manse built in 1884 where the Memorial Garden is now.



20 Premier A.S. Hardy Historical Plaque

Community Centre, Postal Boxes, 711 Mount Pleasant Road.

Born in Mount Pleasant (Upper Canada) Arthur Sturgis Hardy, (December 14, 1837 – June 13, 1901). A lawyer and Liberal politician who served as the fourth Premier of Ontario, Canada, from 1896 to 1899.



21 Telephone Test Commemorative Plaque

(705 Mount Pleasant Road)

Mount Pleasant was the site of the first successful test of the telephone between two communities on August 3, 1876, when Alexander Graham Bell transmitted a signal over the telegraph line from Brantford to the Wallace Ellis store located on the lot at 693 Mount Pleasant Road. The words heard at that epoch-making moment were "To be or not to be." It was to be, and curious villagers who gathered for what they saw as a fine social event would have had no inkling of how the telephone would transform the world.

22 Mount Pleasant Cemetery

Mount Pleasant was originally part of the Six Nations Territory and Mohawk leader Joseph Brant granted this plot of land to be used as a burying ground upon the death of founding pioneer Thomas Sturgis in 1802. Until 1845, when the Anglican Church cemetery opened, this was the only cemetery in the village, and is the resting place of many pioneers and United Empire Loyalists. It has many examples of early headstones with inscriptions and motifs typical of the period. The Pioneer Monument was erected by descendants in 1930. The cemetery is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act (Part IV) by the County of Brant for its historic and cultural significance.



23 Mount Pleasant Park

(555 Burtch Rd. -TH& B and LE & N Trail heads)

LEGEND

- KIOSK
- INFORMATION
- WASHROOMS
- PARKING -
- PICNIC
- PHONE
- FOOD
- DRINKS

Historic Walking Tour of Mount Pleasant (1.7 kms each way)

Fitness Loops (2.5 kms + 2.5 kms) -

South TH & B / LE & N Loop (1.1 kms) -

North - TH & B / LE & N Loop (1.8 kms) -

TH & B or LE & N RAIL trail

Mount Pleasant Nature Park



BRANTFORD
↑
TO SHELLARDS LANE

MacBrae Holsteins #597 **9**
McAlister Heritage Farm #637 **8**
0.45 KMS
#641 **7**

#612
↑
BRANTFORD
10

ELLIS AVENUE

Hydome Farms #657 **6**
Merritt Heritage Farm

#646
11

Pleasantholm Farms #676 **12**
Guest - Heritage Farm

FITNESS LOOP (2.5 KMS) -

NORTH LOOP (1.8 KMS) -

#667 **5**

#669 **4**

#681 **3**

#688
13

#693 **2**

0.45 KMS

1

BURTCH ROAD

#704
14

#705 **21**

#711 **20**

#715 **19**

#722
15

#726
16

#756
17

FITNESS LOOP (2.5 KMS)

SOUTH LOOP (1.1 KMS) -

#755 **18**

22

23

MOUNT PLEASANT CREEK

TO WETMORES ROAD

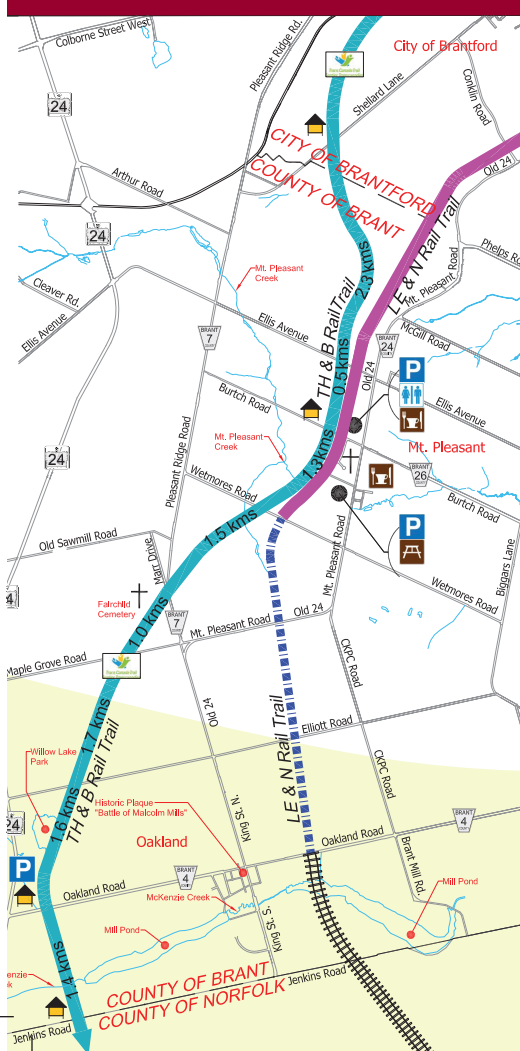
WATERFORD

MOUNT PLEASANT NATURE PARK

4

WATERFORD

MAP NOT TO SCALE
TH & B and LE & N Rail Trails



MOUNT PLEASANT HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR

#1- corner of Burtch Rd. & Mount Pleasant Rd.

- 1** Windmill Country Market*
Deli, restaurant, picnic tables, washrooms for customers. Closed Sunday & Monday
- 2** Eadie/Ellis House & Store*
Site of First Telephone Test
- 3** Mount Pleasant United Church Manse
- 4** Mount Pleasant United Church
- 5** Mount Pleasant School -
Augusta Stowe Gullen Plaque -
- 6** Brucefield Manor
- 7** Phelps/ McAlister House
- 8** Emily Townsend House*
- 9** Townsend Mansion
- 10** Hardy Terrace Nursing Home*
- 11** Tennant Octagon (The Scape Spa)
- 12** Bryning Manse (Designated Historic Property)
- 13** All Saints Anglican Church & Cemetery
- 14** Hardy/Devlin House (Devlin's Country Bistro)
- 15** Grantham House
- 16** Dr. Marquis House
- 17** Eadie House "Idylbrook"* -
- 18** Mount Pleasant Nature Park
(Designated Historic Property) Trails, Fishing, Picnic Shelters
- 19** Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church
- 20** Community Centre/Postal Boxes
Premier A.S. Hardy Historical Plaque
- 21** Bell Telephone Building
Historical Plaque for First Telephone Test
- 22** Mount Pleasant Cemetery
(Designated Historic Property) Pioneer Monument
- 23** Mount Pleasant Park*
Parking, Picnic Shelter, Playground, Ball Diamond, Skateboarding, Johnny-On-The-Spot, Tennis Court

Sites marked with * not described on front.

Brochure sponsored by:



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With support from:



Tour compiled by: -

Linda Guest and Delia O'Byrne -
Photos courtesy Linda Guest

County of Brant Trails

Building better health, fitness, strong communities and appreciation of the natural environment. For more information about trails visit www.brant.ca or call 519.442.6324

DID YOU KNOW...

The Trans Canada Trail is the world's longest network of trails. When completed, the Trail will stretch 22,000 kilometres from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic Oceans, linking 1,000 communities and 33 million Canadians.

Trail Etiquette -

- Obey all trail signs
- Use caution when crossing the well-marked local roads
- Stay on trail surface
- Pass on the left
- Give way to slow moving trail users
- Use a horn, bell, or voice when signaling to others
- Respect those living along the trail
- Stay off private property
- Keep two abreast when walking
- Do not litter - help keep the trail clean
- Take nothing but photographs
- Do not disturb the wildlife, protect it
- Keep pets on a leash and please pick up after them
- No motorized vehicles are permitted on the trail, except for those used by disabled persons