

Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee (MHAC)

MHAC is a standing committee of Council for the Township of Rideau Lakes. Consisting of volunteers of the community and representatives of Council, MHAC is mandated to provide research and advice to Council on the recognition, designation and conservation of the rich heritage of our Municipality.

Our MHAC has undertaken a number of projects to promote the awareness and understanding of the amazing natural and cultural heritage of our broad and diverse community. Our very popular Heritage Map, first published as a millennial project has been revised and reprinted for over 250 000 copies, proving to be a very welcome resource for visitors, citizens and students alike. "Our Best-Kept Secret", available on CD provides a visual overview of our history and heritage. We have accumulated a catalogue of over 6 000 digital pictures and are in the process of listing and researching over 900 sites of heritage significance within our Township.

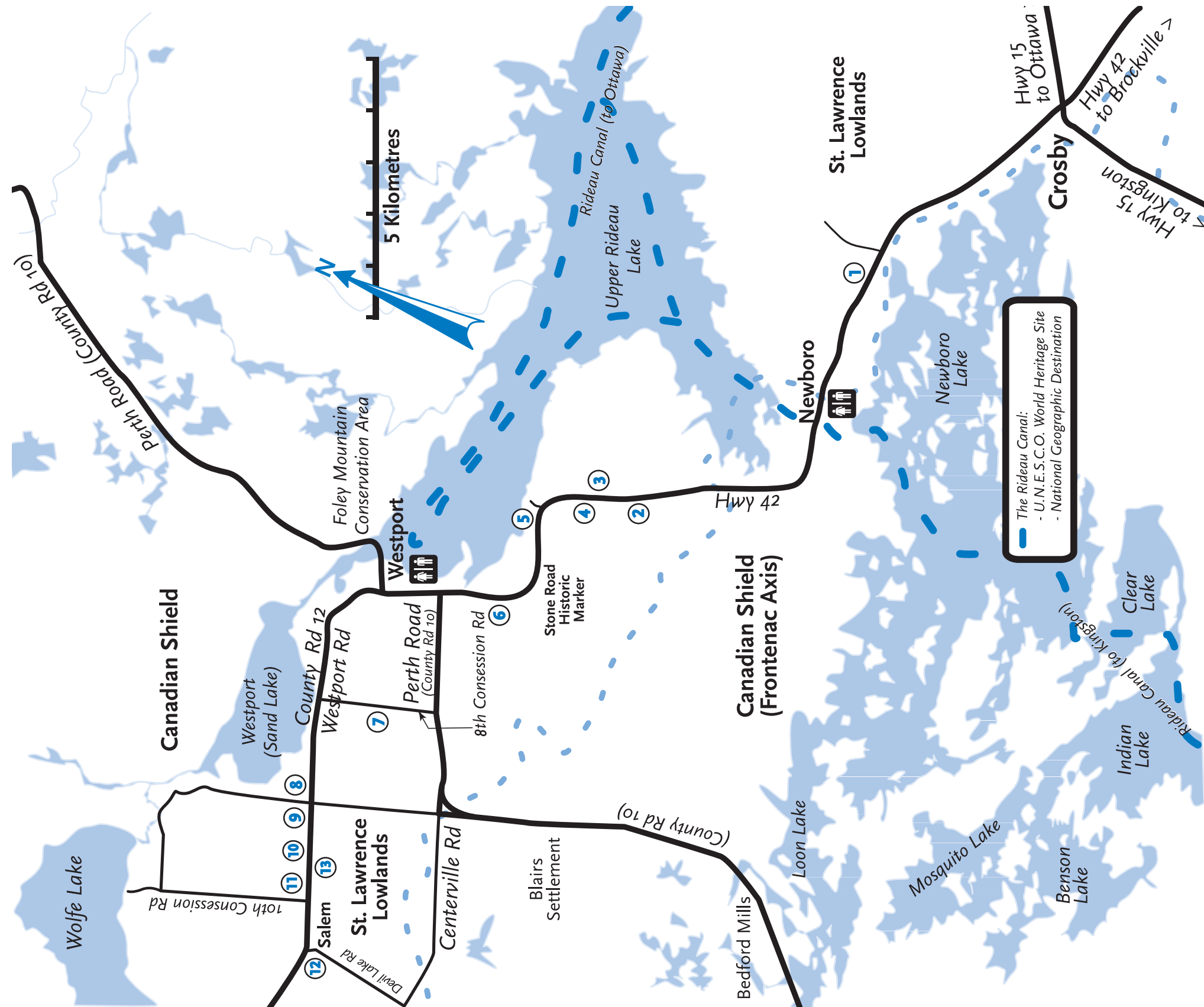
Heritage Walking Tour brochures are currently available for each of our communities of Delta, Elgin, Newboro and Portland. Also available at local libraries are our Heritage Driving Tours - Morton to Crosby, Crosby to Salem and South Burgess - South Elmsley. Further, we have devised over a dozen bicycle routes of various lengths. These are also available on our Township website.

You can find further information on heritage life and architecturally significant buildings in the Township of Rideau Lakes at any branch of the Rideau Lakes Library.

Ask to peruse the following ...

- "Cranworth Chronicles"* (South Burgess)
by Barbara Gibson
- "History of the Township of North Crosby and Westport"*
by Neil Patterson
- "Hub of the Rideau - History of the Township of South Crosby"*
by Sue Warren
- "My Own Four Walls"*
(Bastard Twp.) by Diane Haskins
- "South Elmsley in the Making"*
by James Kennedy

... and many other resources to be found in the Westport Library and the Westport Museum.



Driving Tour

Travel the historic Stone Road... Crosby to Salem

For millennia, people of our First Nations paced the portages that linked the Rideau and the Cataraqui River Basins. They hunted and gathered the riches of the mid-latitude forest and fauna. They fished the bounty of the lakes. Their trails were followed by European explorers and traders of the 17th and 18th centuries. Sightings by surveyors and sounds by timbermen's axes lead to exploitation of rich forests of pine and oak. Early in the 19th century, pioneer families hastily built their log shanties, their first-stage shelters against oncoming winter. In time, they built more permanent abodes of squared logs with amenities like doors of sawn lumber, windows with glass, stone fireplaces and chimneys, their second-stage pioneer homes. By the decades about the 1840's, farmland was being cleared and wealth flowed from grains and livestock. Fine third-stage homes began to appear, crafted by talented artisans from stone, brick and lumber to grace the countryside along the "Stone Road".

A Brief History

Join us as we travel along the north shore of Newboro Lake. Cross over the World Heritage Rideau Canal west of Newboro. Continue along the western shore of the Upper Rideau to the intersection with Leeds County Road 10. You have traveled the “Stone Road”. Completed in 1857, the Stone Road boasted a macadamized surface made of compacted layers of crushed stone. Repeated winter frosts pushed larger stones to the surface and made the road extremely bumpy for wagons having iron-rimmed wheels. Payment of tolls just east of Newboro and near the junction of Perth Road caused even more consternation for weary travelers. But now you are free to turn left onto the historic Perth Road and travel along country lanes to Salem. No witches were burned at the stake here! Our Salem was once a peaceful and thriving farming community boasting a cheddar cheese factory, general store, school and church. Thence you will turn north-eastward onto County Road 12, now called the Westport Road but once the “Mast Road”. Here tall sturdy pine “sticks” destined to mast British Navy ships were hauled to Rideau Lake and on to the seas of the Empire. Much of this area west of Newboro was settled following the completion of the Rideau Canal in the early 1830s. Prosperous farms emerged on this flat and fertile extension of the St. Lawrence Lowlands. Relatively straight roads and square fields distinguish this trek and terrain, strikingly different from the rugged Canadian Shield north of Westport or south toward Bedford Mills. Pause to study more than a dozen fine buildings crafted by skillful masons and carpenters back in the 1850s and 60s. Appreciate the riches of climate, soil and vegetation along the Stone Road and Mast Road. Sense the toil and talents, joys and sorrows of the families who cleared farms and built community here over a century ago.

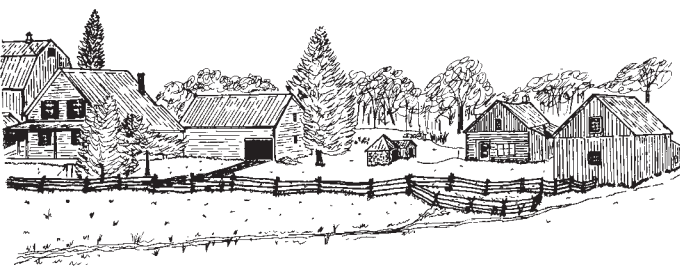
Civic addresses are cited for specific buildings where available. Kilometer readings will vary slightly with vehicle and tire wear. GPS values are given for intersections noted along this heritage route. GPS values are rounded to 4 decimal places of degrees. Suggested duration of tour, 1 to 2 hours including some stopping and shopping time.

Crosby (N.44.6545°, W. 76.2571°)

Back in the 1800’s, this hamlet was called Singleton’s Corners. Early in the 1900’s this community boasted a number of shops, a church, a school and a cheese factory. In the 1950’s you could watch Ma and Pa Kettles at the Crosby Drive-in Theatre, one of the first such environs of entertainment (and romance) in eastern Ontario.

Ladies and Gentlemen, start your engines, set your odometers.

Drive westward on Hwy. 42. First stop at 2.6 km., Little Rideau Lake Road (N.44.6603°, W.76.2901°).



1. Poole Farmstead - 8286 Hwy 42

This is one of the most complete turn-of-the-19th century farmsteads to be seen here in Keystone Country of the Rideau Corridor. The log building standing near the centre of this scene was the home to which Mary Ann Poole, wife of Samuel Chaffey, founder of Chaffey’s Mills, moved in 1835. Widowed twice, Mary Ann found shelter with

her brother and family at this homestead. This eleven log house has square-jointed corners, the logs chinked with shavings. It is now used for storage. Note a board-and-batten barn, a stone ashery where the Poole family once stored ashes for making lye soap, a traditional farm house with verandah and a hired man’s house adjacent to Highway 42. The hip-roofed barn with 2 concrete silos is a legacy of 19th century pioneer toil and talent that prospered through 20th century wars and depression. Also note the rail fence so typical of 19th century farmstead.

As you travel on toward Newboro, note to your left the embankment of the old B.W. and S.S.M. Railway that parallels Highway 42. Where trains once chugged all year, now snowmobiles roar in winter. Also to your left you can see a maple bush that still provides its sweet nectar each spring time.

At 4.6 km., at the eastern edge of Newboro is where the toll gate for the Stone Road was located back in 1862. But you need pay no toll now. Feel free to explore historic Newboro. Pick up a copy of Heritage Tour of Newboro at Newboro Library or Newboro Lock of the Rideau Canal.

The Sappers and Miners Grave Yard is located west of Newboro (N.44.6490°, W.76.2370°). You will see it just after you cross the Canal. The very challenging canal cut at Newboro was supervised by the Royal Sappers and Miners. Tragically, some did not survive the accidents and diseases suffered in that harrowing exercise of Empire.

2. Brewster House - 9107 Hwy 42

This majestic stone home was built in the early 1860’s by James and William Brewster, sons of John Brewster from Scotland. Masoned of local Cambrian sandstone, note the massive stone lintels over the windows and the main entrance on the lower storey and the key-stoned arch over the upstairs dormer. Paintings on the front hall wall, done in 1892, remain as part of the interior decor.



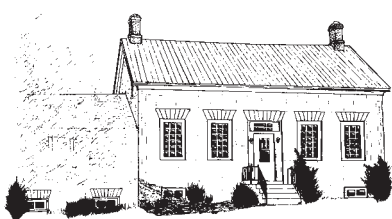
3. Windmill, Ryan Farm - 9160 Hwy 42

One of the last functioning windmills in the area, this one is still connected to a hand pump. Prior to electrification in the 1940’s, virtually every farm had a windmill to pump fresh and refreshing water for home and stock.



4. O’Riley House - 9277 Hwy 42

Patrick O’Riley was a school teacher who emigrated to Canada from the Emerald Isle. In the 1860s, he constructed this fine home out of beautiful local sandstone formed by waves breaking on ancient Paleozoic beaches. Carefully masoned ashlar were



meticulously fitted to make this secure abode for Patrick, his wife and their 8 children. Note the typical returned eaves at the corners of the roof.

At 10.2 km., turn right at Forrester’s Landing Drive (N.44.6682°, W.76.3669°).

5. Forrester House - 12 Forrester’s Landing Drive

Gabriel Forrester, a lumber merchant began construction of this magnificent 5-bay, 1½ storey stone house in 1859. Tragically, Gabriel fell from a stage coach and died before his house was completed. Stoically, his wife Catherine saw their home completed in 1866 fashioned from fine local Cambrian sandstone. From the balconied veranda,

generations of Forresters enjoyed a magnificent view across the Upper Rideau to the steep face of the haunting and daunting pre-Cambrian Shield.

Proceed back onto Highway 42 and continue west.



6. Catton Hall - 9825 Hwy 42

The other toll gate on Stone Road was in front of this house. This grand home, of 1½ storey Classic Revival style with 5 bays was built in 1851 by Agamondesham Roe. He was the toll keeper at the Westport end of Stone Road. Note the sectional stone lintels above the 6/6 windows downstairs, its symmetrical main entrance with its headlight and side lights illuminating the central hallway; its central dormer with key-stoned Roman arch and casement window enlightening the upper hallway. An elaborate veranda once graced the front of Mr. Roe, toll keeper’s home from whence many words, profound and profane were undoubtedly exchanged.



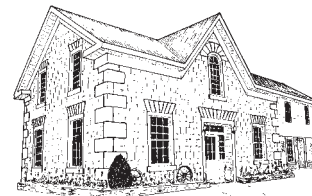
At 13.5 km. (N.44.6706°, W.76.3936°), turn left from County Rd. #42 onto County Rd. #10, the historic Perth Road that once bore horse, wagon and teamster from Kingston to Perth.

At 15.1 km. (N. 44.6619°, W. 76.4080°), turn right, northward onto 8th Concession Rd.

7. McCann House - 1036 8th Concession Road

The North Crosby census of 1848 shows Andrew McCann as a non-proprietor farmer living on Concession 8 in the Township of North Crosby. In 1858, he and his wife, Mary purchased land on Concession 8, Lot 11 for 262 £. Sometime between that purchase date and 1875, the McCanns had their fine stone home constructed and it remained in the McCann family even after the farm acreage was sold in March of 1932.

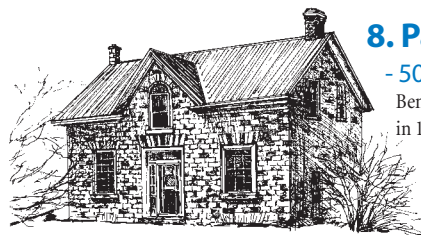
Masoned of a blend of local sedimentary rock, this fine home is a classic example of Ontario Cottage architecture. Especially note the massive quoining at its corners and the keystone lintels over its windows and main entrance. Beside and above its front door, typical sidelights and a headlight shed rays from sun and moon into its central hallway. From its arched casement window in its dormer and through seasons and generations, the McCanns cherished a grand view across the valley to Westport Mountain.



Proceed northward along Concession #8 to the intersection at km. 16.1 (N. 44.6729°, W. 76.4206°) with County Rd. #12, also called Westport Rd. Turn left (westerly) toward Salem and to your right, treat your passenger to an undistracted view of several fine stone homes. Or carefully stop on the shoulder of the road to admire these dream homes of pioneer families; decades and generations of sweat and labour manifest in masonry and mortar.

8. Palmer House - 5020 Westport Road

Benjamin Palmer was born in Canada in 1801, moved to North Crosby in 1840 and purchased 25 acres of this lot. In 1861, he was still living in a log home, a second-stage pioneer dwelling.



But shortly thereafter, he built this fine 1½ storey, 3-bay stone home, a typical and beautiful third-stage pioneer house. The Palmer family still welcomes guests through their grand front doorway graced with headlight and sidelights and feast in a dining room illuminated through nine-over-nine windows.

9. Halladay School - 4992 Westport Road

This beautiful school house, now converted to a residence, is evidence of the priority of education for their children among families living along “Mast Road”. Previously a log school, dated 1848 occupied this site. The last teacher in the log school (S.S. No.5) was Matilda (Hamilton) Palmer and she with her students moved into this fine new school in September 1868. Note the 12/12 windows, small of pane but especially large of window for schools of that time. When not attentive to their 3 Rs, Matilda’s students, especially boys might cast an envious eye to fishin’ on nearby Westport Sand Lake or to huntin’ on Westport Mountain and the granite wilds beyond.

At km. 24.8, note the maple sugar bush along the ridge to your right. It is a sample of the remarkable mid-latitude forest that graces our area and provides habitat for a wide range of fauna including white-tailed deer and red-tailed hawks.

10. Ewing House - 4852 Westport Road

William Ewing purchased this lot of 50 acres in 1841 and in 1850 his brother, Peter Ewing masoned this house of local stone. William originally bought 50 acres on this lot in 1841. This stone house was listed in the 1861 census. Again they manifest Peter’s skill and versatility. Note the unique quoins masoned of large ashlar quarried from an exceptional local stratum. This work of his artistry is distinct from other stone homes in the immediate area: similar in having a roofline with returned eaves; different in having no central dormer.



11. Ripley House - 4748 Westport Road

This large and typical 1½ storey house is one of the earliest third-stage pioneer homes built of stone in the area. Samuel Ripley was a blacksmith by trade and came to North Crosby in 1837. The smithy was essential to every pioneer community.



*“By the fierce red light of his furnace bright,
the strokes of his hammer rung”.*

TUBAL CAIN BY CHARLES MACKAY

Samuel prospered and commenced building this house in the early 1840s. Highlighting its carriage shed is a unique stone arch over its wide double doors.

12. Salem Church - 12 Devil Lake Road

This Wesleyan Methodist Church was constructed in 1865 of local Cambrian sandstone similar to that quarried two decades earlier for the next five homes you will see on this drive. It is now a private home but still graced with beautiful gothic windows and subtle gingerbread trim. Turn around at Salem Church at km. 20.1 (N. 44.6557°, W. 76.4536°), the intersection of Devil Lake Rd. and the Westport Rd. Now travel eastward toward Westport. Welcome back to Leeds County, to the St. Lawrence

Lowlands, to roads that are straight and level (almost) and to fields and farms that are rectangular (usually).

13. Taggart House - 4809 Westport Road

Again, another beautiful home fashioned from local stone in Ontario Cottage style. Typically 1½ storeys, the Taggart house has 3 bays and is built on an “L” design. It was built by talented mason, Peter Ewing who learned his trade as a youth in Scotland and built this house in 1848. Like most master masons and carpenters of his time, Peter carried his plans in his head. The dormer and its window reflect Peter’s slightly different interpretation of these architectural features of a one and on-half storey Ontario Cottage.



Continue north-eastward along Westport Road to the village of Westport at the corner of Bedford and Main Street at 25.9 km. (N.44.6795°, W.76.3949°). Spend some leisure time at Foley Mountain Conservation Area, its Spy Rock vista, enjoyable hiking trails and fine beach. Enjoy the hospitality of the many fine services and activities of the Village of Westport, a “Community for All Seasons”. Follow Hwy. 42 back to Newboro at km. 34 for fine food and shopping. Take a leisurely walk around this historic village at “the Top of the Rideau” with the guidance of our Walking Tour of Newboro brochure. Newboro boasts some of the finest fishing and boating in North America in the summer and snow fun in the winter, some of Newboro’s many attractions.

Follow Hwy. 42 back to Crosby at km. 39.6.

We hope you enjoyed this driving tour of the Township of Rideau Lakes. This tour is just a sample of our many scenic highways, byways and waterways that make our Township an “Experience to Remember”. Thank you for your interest in some of our many “World Class” natural and heritage treasures.

Disclaimer:

Please note that the Heritage Advisory Committee of the Township of Rideau Lakes has made every effort to ensure that the information provided herein is accurate and is to be used as an information source only. We welcome new information as it becomes available and will consider refining details in future publications. We cannot be liable for any injuries, inconvenience or financial loss that may occur to persons participating in this tour. Please be advised that our walking, driving and bicycling routes are not maintained exclusively by the Township of Rideau Lakes. Accordingly, the Township of Rideau Lakes does not take responsibility for the condition of said routes or paths. Please enjoy your amble through the past here in the Keystone of the Rideau. Please use courtesy and common sense when traveling our Heritage Routes. Our World Heritage and Biodiversity is a privilege and responsibility. Please help us preserve our keystone of the Rideau and keep it neat.

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