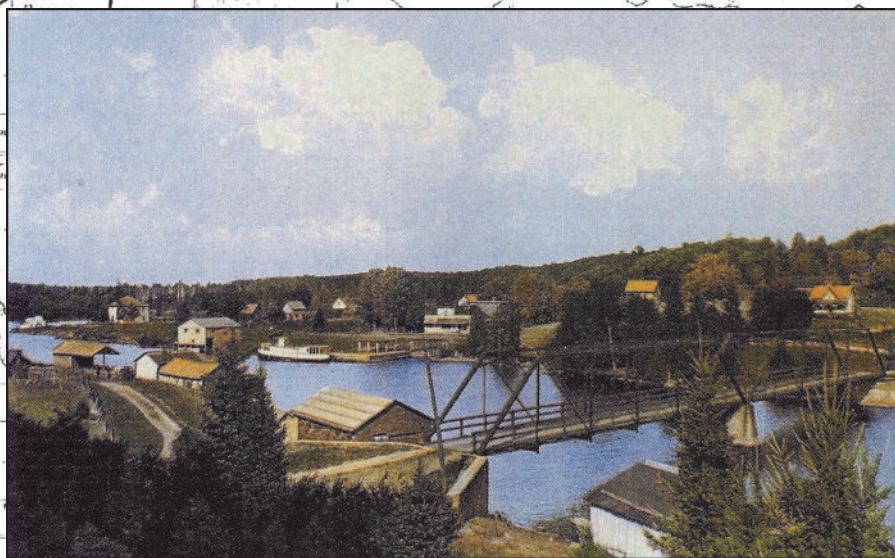


TAKE ONE,  
IT'S  
FREE!

# BAYSVILLE HERITAGE WALKING TOUR



MAP & GUIDE

# WELCOME TO BAYSVILLE IN LAKE OF BAYS

*Welcome to Baysville, and this self-guided tour of the village. Please always be respectful of private property. Note that private homes are not open to the public at any time, but please do visit our businesses while you are here.*

**Please refer to the last page for a map of plotted locations.**



*Looking West at early Baysville*

Lake of Bays, “Nagatoagoman,” was well known to the First Peoples as a summer hunting and trading ground. At one time, the area around Baysville was considered for an Indian Reservation, but since Mr. Cockburn, owner of the steamboat company, gave glowing reports of the area’s natural beauty, it was decided to open this land for settlement. Placards touting its beauty and suitability for farming were posted in England, Scotland, Ireland and Southern Canada. The beauty was undisputed. The ability to farm was open for debate on the unforgiving Canadian Shield. Loggers had more success, working their way upstream in 1871, following the pine.

Baysville was the second village settled on the Lake of Bays, following Dorset. The village is almost as old as Canada, and is well named, as there are four bays in the immediate vicinity.

The Townships of McLean and Ridout were surveyed in 1862 by Robert T. Burns, and opened for settlement in 1868. The first habitation was a hut built by four young men: Messrs. Langford, Attridge, Forrester and Gilbert, in October 1870.

They walked from Bracebridge to fulfill the requirement for claims in McLean Township, following surveyor blazes on trees along the way. That meant establishing a house on the site—after one look at the land, they went back, but Langford's father insisted they return. After the first rough hut was built, the men returned three weeks later to build shanties on their sites. Together they cut and split trees to build two shanties. Forrest and Gilbert surrendered their claims to this rocky place, but the other two persevered. Many hardships accompanied those early days—early pioneers recounted using greased rags for lighting as candles were not readily available, pets freezing to death, scooping snow off the top of the bedding in the morning, mice coming and going freely indoors, and sometimes the odd porcupine, since the doors were made of green wood that was quite tasty to these creatures. Rough holes were left in ceilings to let out the smoke.

Settlers also followed the water. Early settler Mr. Wattie, who settled at Wattie's Creek, built the first boat on the lake (other than canoes) in 1872—a row boat, the bottom was crafted from a 23 foot long pine plank, two inches thick and 34 inches wide. It was meant to last. Side boards and hardware were hauled to within five miles of the Langford Farm (on Langford Rd.) and then carried by hand to the river and from there to the construction site.

The village of Baysville sprang up where the Muskoka River left the Lake of Bays. "A good heave would plunk a fair sized rock into the river from any section of this beautiful but tiny northland community. The river winds and twists through the settlement, providing coolness, docking facilities for small boats, good fishing, excellent swimming for the small fry and scenery beyond compare." (Peter Ward, *The Telegram*, 1957)

Farming the Muskoka granite was almost impossible and lumbering continued as the main means of support. Logs were hauled to lakes and rivers, then towed down Lake of Bays by an amphibious craft called an Alligator that could winch itself overland. River drivers guided the booms down the river. They set up camp on the site of the current Baysville Marina. School children from the village were allowed to come here to visit the cookhouse after school and were treated to pie and



*Logging Tents on the North East Shore*

tea. Apparently there was nothing sweeter or more delicious than the Date Pie served there. Adults soon caught on to this, and were invited on Sundays. A log slide was built over the falls, and seven hotels sprang up to house the river drivers. The southern terminus of the lake steamers, with two large docks on opposite sides of the river, was a bustling community in the late 1800s.



With the new century, Muskoka became a popular tourist area. Farm houses took in tourists, and many added an extra wing to their home to accommodate guests. Hotels sprang up along lakeshores. More affluent families built cottages along the lake. In Baysville, many of these properties are still owned by the descendants of those original cottage families. Baysville soon became well served by roads, as well as lake steamers, creating a well known resort village for tourists and sportsmen alike. One of these sportsmen was H.P. Dwight, for whom the village of Dwight is named at the northern end of the lake. Determined to spend more time here, Dwight, owner of the Great Northern Telephone and Telegraph Company, had the first telegraph installed in the village so he could stay in touch with his business interests and not interrupt his time on the Lake of Bays.



*W.H. Brown*

Marie Armstrong Vancleave arrived in 1936, and in 2014 was quoted that the biggest change she had seen was how pretty the town had become. She recalled unpaved roads, plain houses, a few shacks and wandering cows, and related how jobs were scarce, and poor roads prevented people getting to Bracebridge or Huntsville to find work. She and her siblings walked to school through knee-deep snowdrifts, due to haphazard snowplowing. We would comment that Marie, instrumental in the formation of the local horticultural society, deserves much credit for the village's transformation into "pretty."

*This tour will take you through the village of Baysville,  
and takes approximately 1 ½ hours to complete.  
Please refer to **map** at the end of the booklet for location keys,  
and be respectful of the residents living in these private houses.*

## PLEASE REFER TO THE LAST PAGE FOR A MAP OF PLOTTED LOCATIONS

**1.** Start the tour here, at **Grist Mill Park** on the south-west side of the bridge. The name is taken from W.H. Brown's mill that once sat here. There are a variety of pictorial plaques and markers showing much of the location's history—take the time to browse around them. One of the old wheels from the mill is also located here, and it is the site of the Veterans' Wall. The gazebo and public washrooms here were built in 2010, one of the projects completed during the G8 Summit in Huntsville.

**2. Pulford House.** On Terrace Drive, this hotel was also built on the former mill property. Named after the proprietor, Judson Henderson's son "Pulford," it opened for business in 1906.

At the north end of the lake, in the village of Dwight, when a hotel opened with a bar, H.P. Dwight was on record saying that "drinking would ruin the village". With the heavy drinking of the rough living log drivers, so it came to be in Baysville. So much so that in 1906 a local option vote was taken in McLean and Ridout, and the bars were CLOSED. Local hoteliers vowed to close their doors if that happened. Mr. Judson Henderson, a brother-in-law of Mr. W.H. Brown, took advantage of the situation to build a Temperance Hotel for the travelling public. The irate hoteliers were full of hot air, and stayed, resulting in stiff competition. Mr. Henderson's brochures described his hotel: "Management: the preparation of foods and management of dining room and sleeping apartments will be conducted by carefully selected graduates of a school of 'domestic science'. Alcoholic liquors will be excluded and none will be employed in the cooking."

It later became a summer resort, two storeys high, complete with a winch to lift heavy steamer trunks to the upper storey. With a dozen rooms, dance floor, and a boathouse it became very popular. Henderson owned the first gas-powered boats in the area, renting them to guests, along with two elegant steam launches, *The Monitor* and *the Pulford* which ferried guests to picnics on Burnt Island and sightseeing the wild shorelines. After the drinking and carousing of the rougher logger trade, the introduction of happy sounds and children's voices made this new wave of 'resorting' a welcome attraction. Although it was less popular with the log drivers themselves.

Baysville was promoted as having "no drunkeries here. No fear of drunken men and accompanying profanity to spoil the pleasure of your vacation. This attractive village and the townships of McLean and Ridout, of which Baysville is the municipal capital, are under a longer option prohibitory liquor law, which the authorities have undertaken to strictly enforce."

You might want to ponder how times change, when you later stand in the Parking lot of the current LCBO.



*Pulford House*

The First World War caused the tourism industry to go into decline. Pulford House closed and was sold in 1922 to John James Robertson. Renaming it the Robertson House, he began extensive renovations including the first cement tennis court around—with lessons offered by a local summer visitor from Gary, Indiana, himself a world class player. The first guests in the new hotel were a pair of trout fishermen from London, Ontario, and the resort flourished. J.J. Robertson died in 1933 and the building passed in 1936 to the Chambers brothers who had vacationed there as boys. The name changed again to Riverview Lodge. In 1939 the Second World War erupted and again business dwindled. Enterprising, the brothers hatched a plan, approaching several munitions plants in Toronto and working out a deal whereby a small portion of a worker's salary was set aside every week to pay for a summer vacation at the Lodge. This plan carried them successfully throughout the war years. In 1946 a fire broke out due to faulty wiring and four decades of great summer memories were destroyed in less than two hours.

The outbuildings were saved, including the boathouse, dance hall, three cabins and staff quarters. John and Jessie Walsh purchased the remains, and turned it into the Riverside Lodge, housing up to 60 guests, and it remained busy with weekend dances and a four piece orchestra. Six years later, 1952, it sold again, but with little experience or enthusiasm on the part of the owners, again met its demise. The new bridge construction provided the chance to sell the property to the Department of Highways, and the buildings were torn down to accommodate the road reconstruction. The unused portion of land was returned to the Township of McLean and set up as Grist Mill Park.

All that remained of A.J. Henderson's dream resort was the eight room, two storey former staff quarters later used by Jean Dickson, daughter of J.J. Robertson, as her summer home. She willed the property to the Township of Lake of Bays, hoping it might become a museum, but the condition of the building was unsuitable and it was demolished. There is a plaque to her memory here, and the site of the new Public washrooms and Gazebo, built to coincide with the G8 meeting in Huntsville, are located in her back garden area for the public to enjoy. (As an aside, on Old Hwy 117, near the entrance to the Bigwin Island Golf Club, there is an historic plaque for the Robertson Farm).

There is a historic plaque located here, by the river, celebrating the Explorers of Muskoka and Haliburton.

**3. Miss Nelle's Antiques.** Built in 1872 by W.H. Brown, this was the second building in Baysville, and sat empty until 1876 when Captain Marsh opened a dry goods store there. (Capt. Marsh also operated a sawmill and boat works at the northern end of the lake, at Marsh's Falls on the Oxtongue River.) The store sold to William (Bill) Langmaid in the early 1920s and he operated it for many years along with his business of running supply boats on the lake. Needing someone to run the store, he hired Nelle Connelly. At 18, she was his first employee, and while it was rumoured that he was "sweet" on her, nothing concrete came of it. She did nurse him through his later years, however. It is a marvel that Bill prospered, as he extended credit to all and sundry, with a good portion never repaid.



*Bill Langmaid at Miss Nelle's, 1920s*

Always the first to offer a helping hand, he was well thought of by all in the village, and no homecoming was complete without a visit to Bill. In 1966, Miss Nelle acquired the building. Wendy Maynard helped run it for many years as Miss Nelle got older. When Nelle reached her one hundredth birthday in 1985, she felt ready to sell, and the property went to Don and Mardy Barker, who converted the old butcher shop into a cafe and swapped out groceries for antiques. Miss Nelle continued to visit, sitting on the patio watching the river. The original woodwork, hewn in the 1870s still exists in this unique building, with its second floor balcony and awning. Be sure to go inside and look around.

**4. #3 Bay Street: *Burton's B&B***, also known as the Brown House, or Scotty's Place, was built in 1872—look for the date over the door—by William Henry Brown, the first resident of Baysville. This is a lovely old Gothic Revival brick home. Brown served as Justice of the Peace in 1872. He was Reeve of McLean and Ridout from 1876 to 1885, and Warden of Victoria County in 1885. Bricks for this house came from Washago and were hauled by oxen from Bracebridge, with other materials coming from Dorset by canoe. Note the twin bay windows, the transom over the front door, and the decorative bargeboard trim on the gables. Lumber for the construction came from W.H. Brown's sawmill, right across the street. The dining room floor was planed from a single maple tree. It also served as the post-office for four generations, from 1874 to 1920, starting in the kitchen, before re-locating into the dining room. Shirley Burton (great grand-daughter of W. H. Brown) commented that "the letters could be kept in the sewing machine drawer. That tells you what the volume of mail was." With her husband Bob Burton, she operates the building as a Bed and Breakfast. It is important to note that this home has been modernized for safety and comfort without the loss of its very unique heritage features. Old family photographs decorate the walls. Outside the original front door, the porch lights are electrified coal stage coach-lamps from the days when Shirley's father, Scotty Campbell, ran the horse-drawn services between Baysville and Bracebridge. There is original wavy glass in many of the windows, while two holes in one window-frame mark where the telegraph line entered the house (thanks to H.P. Dwight) when it became the village Post Office.

The new Post Office is located across the road, and while perhaps more modern, it is certainly less charming.

**5. The historic landmark *Baysville House*** stood at the corner of Bay and Bridge Street until this three storey, 132 year old beauty burned down on Sept. 10, 2008, due to electric malfunction, with damages of over a million dollars. Baysville House was the village's first hotel, built in 1876 by Mr. J.R. Smith, who ran it with his wife for seven years to serve the needs of the lumber industry before selling to Mr. John Jelly in 1883. Mr. Jelly sold to his brother-in-law, Mr. R. Richards about 1891. In 1922 it sold again, to Mr. and Mrs. John Rowe, the former mail carrier from Bracebridge to Baysville. They operated it until 1946. Then it sold to Mr. and Mrs. Menzies, was renamed Lincoln Lodge and gained the famous slogan "The Best Place to Eat by a Dam Site." For thirty years it ran as both restaurant and bakery, with cottagers stopping by for the famous Boston cream pie. In 1976 Robert Menzies suffered a heart attack, and his daughter Betty Maynard and grandson Glen took on the business, retiring in 1995. It was then leased to Scott Kendrick, who changed the name to the Rock Tavern—stay with us on these name changes, because it sold again in 2001 to the Bay Street Boys Inc. who named it the Four Oaks Restaurant and Bakery, operated by Dan and Nicole Lavallee.

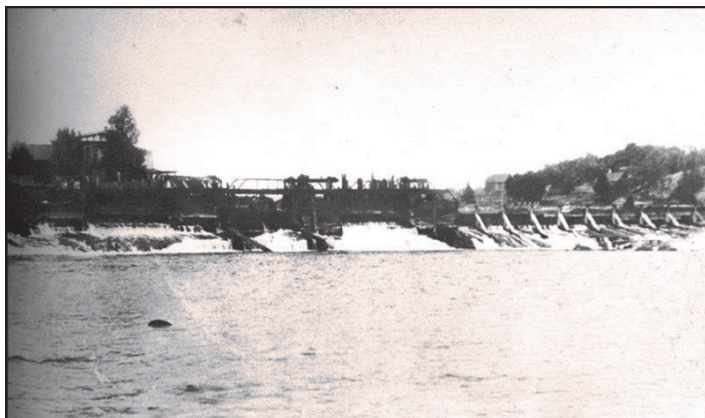




*Baysville House*

By 2005 the old building no longer met current safety and fire codes. It was closed for a major overhaul, carefully done to retain the history of this landmark, and incorporating some of the original wood. The name was returned to Lincoln Lodge, but in 2006 David Ervington leased the building and operated it as the Wendigo Restaurant. All those name changes came to a fiery end, and all that currently remains is a patio overlooking the dam.

**6. The Dam.** There were two other dams before the current structure. The first was built in 1873 by W. H. Brown, to get the water power to run his mill. There were three sets of stop logs in the first dam, and the rest was what was called a 'curtain'—when the water gets high enough it just runs over.



*First Dam, 1873*

The second dam was built in 1918. It served to raise the water level in the lake almost 5 feet, facilitating the movement of both log booms and lake steamer traffic. The current dam opened in 1960, a project of the Provincial Government. Close to the edge of the dam is another historic plaque, commemorating the founding of Baysville.



*Second Dam, 1918*

**7.** The trail along the south-west side of the river will bring you through the Parkette and up the stairs to Dickie Street. Named for Dr. Dickie, a retired British army surgeon stationed in South Africa, who made his retirement home on a nearby lake that bears his name. While not actively practising, he was called on frequently in emergencies and for medical advice. His son Moses was a member of the first Councils in McLean and Ridout in 1874.

Turn left on Dickie St, and you will find the **Baysville Union Cemetery**. This was the original Community Cemetery, and is located on two acres of land donated by W.H. Brown in 1872. The bridge was not built until 1873, and prior to that the only means of crossing was by a small cedar raft. In 1872, Mr. Spong and his young son, while rafting across the river to make their land claim, were swept over the falls and drowned. A large pine tree was cut, hewn into slabs and made into two coffins. There are many wooden crosses in this cemetery without dates. Each of the early settlers was given a burial plot. The burial sites of Mr. Spong and son are on the far back right corner, marked with two wooden crosses.

**8.** At the southwest corner of Dickie and Carol St. You will find the **Catholic Cemetery**, founded around 1888. Continue along Dickie St. Towards the river, and just beside the Catholic Cemetery is the **Anglican Cemetery**, purchased by St. Ambrose Anglican Church in 1919. The first full-time minister's mother, Mrs. Hazelhurst, 70, was the first to be interred here.

**9.** Follow Carol Street to the **Baysville Community Centre, Library, playground and Seniors Centre**. The latter is located in the last schoolhouse, built in 1955 and closed in the late 1960s due to low enrolment. Students are now bussed to schools in Huntsville and Bracebridge. When the school first opened by MPP R. J. Boyer Mrs. Fannie Beal presented the principal, Leo Peltomaki, with a case of seventy year old taxidermied birds, in perfect condition. Much older now, this collection has recently, in 2015, been refurbished and is back in the old school, now the Autumn Leaves Seniors' Centre.

The community centre is very accommodating, with rink, gym, private meeting rooms and community kitchen area. Be sure to stop in the library to look through their collection of local historical texts and photographs. You will also find public washrooms located here. Behind the Library at #10 Carol St. is the **Baysville Curling Club**, built in 1949, where new members are always welcome.



*The second Baysville School on University Street*

**10.** Walk between the Community Centre and the Curling Club along Howard St. to University St. In summer, this is closed to traffic and becomes a Youth Activity centre, with skateboarding, volleyball, and basketball equipment. At the **intersection of Howard and University Street**, to the right, a red brick house now stands. This corner, and this house, were the location of the fall fairs from the early days until the 1960s. It has been developed into family residences, but a small open area on the corner lot remains as a reminder of the fairground days. University St. was named by the schoolteacher, Mr. Albert Harvey, because both the second and the third schoolhouses in the village were located along this street.

**11.** At the corner of Howard and Bridge St. on the left is **#2 Howard Street**, currently the Royal LePage Real Estate Office. This was home to “Grandma” Vancleaf, who moved here after the death of her husband, early settler Daniel Vancleaf. Their son Henry drowned in a tragic accident on the Lake of Bays, but many of their descendants are still active in the village to this day. Look for the historic information board at this location. ‘Grandma’ made her living by taking in the *Home Boys*, and would frequently have five or six at a time living with her. These were orphans who had been brought to Canada from Dr. Bernardo’s Home orphanage in England to be settled on farms and homes in the New World. An excellent book, *The Little Immigrants*, describes the work of Dr. Bernardo, and many of the “Home Boys” (and girls!).

To extend your tour, cross the road to the LCBO.

*Be careful crossing the Highway!*

**12.** The corner of Hwy 117 and Brunel Rd. was once referred to as Kokkas’ Corners. Anna and Socratis Kokkas bought this in 1986 and ran it for over ten years as a convenience and gas store. It is now the location of the **LCBO** (and wouldn’t the town founders have turned in their graves!).

**13.** A new restaurant, **Cast Iron**, is located on the site of the family homes of early settlers George and Cecil Rykman, who were related to the Bastedo family. At one point the Bastedo family owned more than a thousand acres along the western shore of the lake. This land was left to Burleigh and Marie Bastedo, who built Burlemarie Hotel in 1914 on a point of land on Bastedo Bay. When the Cast Iron restaurant was being renovated, two old signs were found supporting the duct work: one for RC Sanborn Real Estate, and one for Jack Biesik RealEstate, so the property we can assume has frequently changed hands. These are now framed and hung in the restaurant, so drop in for a coffee, lunch or dinner and take a look.



**14.** Just beyond the restaurant, at 2627 Hwy 117 is the new Catholic Church, **The Blessed St. Kateri Tekakwitha**. This is the only Catholic Church in Canada named for this First Nations' Saint, *Kateri Tekakwitha, Lily of the Mohawks*. (there is one other, in Dearborn, MI.) Born to an Algonquin mother and a Mohawk father, she was orphaned at the age of four in the wake of a smallpox epidemic that left her scarred and with poor vision—which led to her being named Tekakwitha, a name which translated into “she who bumps into things.” She lived from 1656 to 1680 and was the first Native American to be declared a Saint. Her feast day is on July 14, and, (as is St. Francis of Assisi) she is patron of the environment and ecology. Several miracles are ascribed to her through the Church.



*St. Kateri Tekakwitha, Lily of the Mohawks*

**15.** Almost directly across from the Cast Iron, across the road on the east side #2630, an interesting **timber building**, was once the home of Len Vancleave, Jack's son, (Daniel's grandson). Len was a trapper and a craftsman of canoes and snowshoes. Married to a First Nations woman, he learned the construction techniques, and how to tan leather from First Nation Chief Bigwin's tribe who summered in the area. From the highway, you can glimpse the old original Tannery building by the river where Len worked the hides.

**16.** Returning back into the Village along Bridge St., (*again, be careful crossing the street!*) you come to the old S.A. Robinson Family home at **#2 Bridge St.** Known as the Preston House, which was once a rooming house for loggers. It is notable for the same style of bargeboard trim as the Burton B&B, described at Tour Point 4.

**17. #4 Bridge Street** was built by the Piper family. Richard Piper came and went from Baysville over the years since arriving in the 1870s as he followed the lumbering business in the region. He finally settled in Baysville in 1899 while working as foreman and woods manager for the J.D. Shier Lumber Co., overseeing their operations at Canoe Lake, Kawagama Lake, Bear Lake and throughout McLean Township. He purchased the Forest House Hotel from William Higgins, tore it down and built the family home that remains today.

**18.** There is a grouping of three houses here—**#12, 14 and 16**—all identical in construction and all once serving as housing for the loggers. They are an interesting example of how ‘company towns’ built for their employees.

**#14** was the family home of Cecil Langmaid, and operated as a boarding house in the 1890s and early 1900s. There was a fire upstairs caused by one of the boarders smoking in bed. Cecil’s father, John Langmaid, was a noted shoemaker and much sought after by the loggers working on the river drives. John Langmaid organized a Fife and Drum band which was the pride of Baysville. On one occasion, playing in front of the Albion Hotel in Bracebridge, Angus McLeod, Member of Parliament for Muskoka at that time, was so pleased with their performance he ordered new uniforms for the band at his expense. Step into this old Baysville home—now renovated to be **Robin’s Touch** store—the original maple flooring of this building was all milled from one tree. Some of it still remains but much has been covered up over the years.

**19. General Store.** It has always been a commercial store, although it has changed hands many times. It is worth poking about inside to get a taste of that ‘old time’ shopping feeling. Earlier in its career, it was owned by Betty Findlay, who came from England and introduced Girl Guiding to Baysville, with her friend Rona McCormick.



**20. #22 Bridge** is an example of a river stone home, built by the Kelly family, and the site of the first taxi service operating in Baysville.

**21. #21 Bridge**, at the corner of Bridge and Dickie St. is another wonderful example of river stone construction, built by the Kelly family, who settled on Kelly Rd., near Burlemarie. At one time it was the location of the Bell telephone operator. Much of it remains in the original state. River stone was an easy material to come by, and made a change from wooden construction—plus, it was harder to burn down!

**22.** Across the road, **#8 Dickie St.** was once the location of the town hall. It was quite the building, housing the small creaky-floored library upstairs and the jail in the basement. In the early years there was a travelling Mechanics' Library loan arrangement that provided vocational reading materials for a small fee to those unable to afford subscription libraries. Such libraries were subsidized by benevolent groups and individuals. Since Baysville was not financially able to obtain books, H.P. Dwight purchased books, and two bookcases, to begin the library in 1897.

A young cottager in the 1940s, Nellie Crichton recounted that the library would open one evening per week, and “you had to walk up the outside stairs, through a cloak room and then ever so quietly across those creaky old wood floors and then another set of stairs! Phew!” The youth group later held movie nights here, until it sold to become the town garage. Nothing remains of the original town hall.

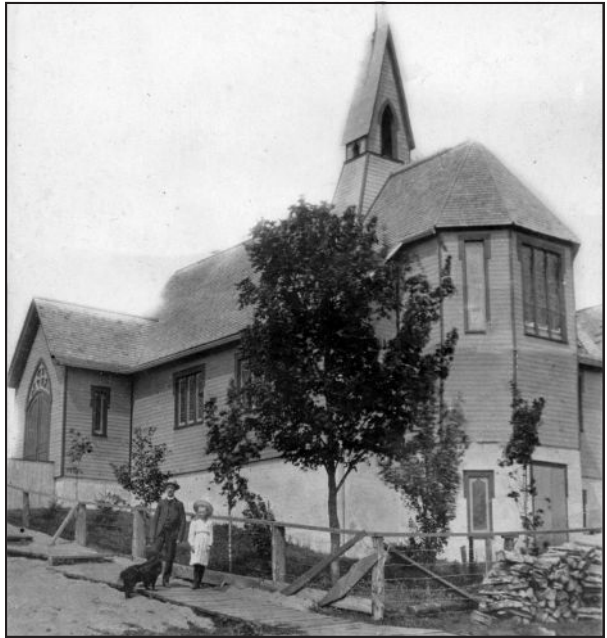
**23.** Travelling to #3 Dickie Street you will find the original Catholic Church, St. George's. It is now an interior design and accent store, **Rafters of Muskoka**, and well worth a stop inside. Built in 1888, it was not used until 1906. It began as a Mission Church, served by a priest travelling from Bracebridge. Money needed to finish the church was raised by young people performing plays there until it was consecrated.

**24.** At #2 Dickie St, the **Bethune United Church** (formerly Presbyterian) was built in 1882. The driving force behind its construction was a Christian student in the ministry, Mr. Bethune—father of Dr. Norman Bethune. Norman, of course, became famous for his service with the Communist Eight Route Army in China during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Still considered a National Hero in China, Bethune's childhood home in Gravenhurst is a popular museum for many visitors. Mr. W. H. Brown gave the land, Alex Pretsell built the foundation, Walter Secord constructed the chimney; Mr. Rhodes did the plastering while other labourers hauled stones and logs that were hewn for lumber and shingles. Very little cash could be contributed so they relied on the many excellent skilled men within the community who shared the desire to build a Christian community. The church was dedicated July 29, 1883. In 1956, when Hwy 117 was built, the church had to be moved, and a basement excavated. The original steeple and gothic windows remain.

*At this point, we recommend you cross Hwy 117—be watchful of traffic.  
As an alternative, you can return towards the bridge—there is a walkway  
underneath the bridge that avoids all traffic.*

**25.** To your left you will find **St. Ambrose Anglican Church**. It was built in 1898 with the help of a grant from the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. It is the only church in Canada dedicated to St. Ambrose, consecrated as Bishop of Milan, Italy in 374 AD. The site for the church was donated by (who else?) W. H. Brown. During the first years the Mission at Baysville was under the care of the priests of St. Thomas Parish, Bracebridge. The first full time priest was Rev. Alexander Wm. Hazelhurst, a young married Englishman appointed in 1895, who spent 35 years at this parish mission. Sadly, his mother became the first person buried in the church cemetery. The Parish Hall was originally the first school house in Baysville, in 1875.

W. H. Brown donated land for the school, which remained in its original location for over 20 years. In 1919 the school was sold to the Women's Auxiliary of St. Ambrose and the school was moved to its current location beside the church. For the first two years, it served as the church while the current church was under construction. Very minor changes have been made to this building, which features a barrel vault ceiling and unique windows.



*Original St. Ambrose Church*

**26.** Returning towards the bridge, you will find the striking red brick **Jackson House**, once owned by Ruby Jackson. This historic building offers a beautiful large wooden spiral staircase, Italianate arched and paired windows with under-cross gables adding a Gothic Revival ambiance. Note the distinctive and decorative brick work, including bricks laid on their sides.



**27.** Next we come to the **Dickie House**, just to the west of the Brewery. While he was not officially the town doctor, he did plenty of work for the logging company's employees, and the house was built for him by one of the town's first lumber companies. Dr. Dickie and his family lived here while their personal residence was being completed on their land claim east of Baysville, on the lake that now bears his name.

**28.** Here you will find the **Lake of Bays Brewery**, located on the site of the second telegraph office, run by the Langfords, and later a hardware store. Now it is home to a popular craft brewery, and is a good spot to pause on the patio and take in the sights and a little refreshment, or take a tour of the brewery itself.

**29.** Leaving Hwy 117, turn left along Bay Street. **#11 Bay Street** is the site of the **Prittie/Alldred House**, built by the Alldred family in 1890.

**30.** Next door is the **Manse Art Gallery**. This was built by the Alldred family in 1892, it was purchased in 1918 by Bethune United Church to serve as the manse. The current owner, Shirley Prittie, has operated the Manse Art Gallery here for seventeen years, and much of the original building remains. It is now open four days a week during the summer months.

**31. #12 Bay Street**, across the street from the Gallery is the Maynard House, also built by the Alldred family, in 1890. In the 1940s, this building became the home of two nurses who ran a famous gift store, known as The Croft and featuring First Nations' artwork

**32. #4 Spruce Street**, at the corner of Bay and Spruce, is the Ellis Homestead. Mr. Bushnell, a teacher at the first schoolhouse (now the Parish Hall at St. Ambrose) built this Queen Anne style home in 1899, with its notable verandah roof. In 1919 it sold to Robert and Emma Ellis. With its large windows and veranda on three sides, it was once surrounded by acres of land and many feet of shoreline. After Robert died in 1939, Emma remained in the home until 1976. To support herself, she divided the waterfront into cottage lots, and sadly the home no longer has waterfront, but the beautiful gardens have been retained.

**33.** Turning towards the river, #2 Spruce St., "Waterlot" was built as the home of the first official doctor in Baysville, Dr. Jeffries.

**34. Town Docks** were built on both sides of the river to accommodate the lake steamers. The signature roofed area is a common theme on the steamer docks located around the Lake of Bays, offering shelter for those waiting for the boats. The Lake of Bays Navigation Company was owned by C.O. Shaw, who also owned the Anglo-Canadian Tannery in Huntsville, the **Portage Flyer Railway** at North and South Portage and the iconic **Bigwin Inn**. Steamships such as the **S.S. Mohawk Belle** and **S.S. Iroquois** regularly connected the ports-of-call around the lake. The S.S. Iroquois was sunk and buried to become the parkette at South Portage.



*Regatta at Baysville near the town docks, with the S. S. Iroquois in the background*

**35. Centennial Park** was developed by the Baysville Community and Horticultural Society in 1967 for the Canadian centennial celebrations. This village has a long tradition of community service that over the years has led to the development of the Centennial Park, Gristmill Park and the River Walk. There is a walkway that runs underneath the bridge and returns you to the Gristmill Park and the beginning of this tour.

**36.** If you are ending your tour here, be sure to visit several interesting businesses at the corner of Hwy 117 and Bay Street along the edge of the Gristmill Park. These have been built on the site of the Wilkins House. Captain Wilkins purchased 2/5 of an acre from Mr. Brown to build his retirement home. Now you can browse through **Fork in the Road**, **Humble Pie Butter Tart Factory**, and **Yummies in a Jar**, offering all you could need for lunch, dinner, dessert, and then some.

**37.** If you wish to extend this walk, follow the bridge over the river and turn onto North Road toward the site of the Baysville Marina. Here you will find a restaurant, **The Hound Lounge Bar & Grill**, and apartments, located on the site of the original White store. This building began as J.D. Smith's house, until 1890. One day while the labourers from the McQuarrie Mill—located on the opposite side of the river—were

enjoying their noon meal, an explosion occurred at the mill. The boiler and stack were seen flying across the river and then went right through the front living room of the Smith's home, coming to rest on a side street nearby, "all in the blink of an eye" as they used to say. Fortunately no-one was hurt.

Mr. Smith rebuilt and opened a small store carrying paints and

hardware. Mr. McQuarrie soon left town, abandoning the mill. The boiler sat where it landed and was the talk of the village for many years until it was sold as scrap during World War Two. Fate was not done with this house, however. In 1925 the store was struck by lightning and totally destroyed. Again, no-one (miraculously) was injured. Neighbours pitched in to rebuild and it stayed in the family until 1957, when it sold to the McCormack family, who in turn sold to Mr. White. It has since been demolished and replaced with **The Hound Lounge Bar & Grill**.



*The White Store*

**38.** Next door is **#8 North Drive**, the original home of Mr. Hanes, owner of one of several mills in the area. The house was built in the 1890s. An addition was added to serve as his office. Mrs. Hanes suffered from diabetes, and a dormer was added to accommodate a nurse who cared for her full-time. The porch is quite unique, and many of the original features remain.

**39.** The **Baysville Marina** has been developed on the site of the original boat-houses built by Cameron Peck. To describe Cameron Peck as a 'boat enthusiast' falls short of the mark. His father, Dr. David Peck of Chicago, owner of the Bowman Milk Company, began visiting Lake of Bays in 1908, establishing a private cottage on Burnt Island. Cameron began to create a collection of vessels, large and small, which by the 1950s became a veritable flotilla. With unlimited resources at his command, within two decades Cameron commanded a fleet of fifty vessels including forty-two gas launches and eight steamers. Most of these were housed either at Burnt Island or in Baysville.

Look for the trademark of the old bathouses—the distinctive vented cupola which allowed smoke to escape as the steam yachts were fired up—are still preserved on one of the bathouses here.



*The Naiad*

Among the collection was the beautiful steam yacht **Naiad**, originally built in Toronto for Senator Eli Sanford of Hamilton. When Sanford was contemplating summering in Muskoka he knew he would need a boat. A trip to England afforded him the unusual experience of cruising on the Thames with Queen Victoria on her private yacht. Sanford was so impressed that he requested and was granted royal permission to build an identical craft in Canada. Sixty-eight feet long and a slim ten feet wide, she was rated to carry forty passengers. Her steel frame was planked in mahogany, the stern was round and the windows of British plate glass and the doors were installed at a ten to fifteen degree angle to give the vessel a sleek, rakish appearance. With a gilt ornamented clipper-like bow, small brass cannon on the deck, and the flag fluttering at the stern, the **Naiad** under full steam was a very impressive sight. In 1940 Cameron Peck acquired the steam yacht and transported her from Lake Rosseau on heavy sleighs—a task that took a month with a bulldozer hauling as well as a bulldozer pushing. Stored amid snowdrifts at the roadside adjacent to the west public dock, she was launched that spring and became a regular sight on the lake. Of all the boats in his collection, the **Naiad** is reportedly the most beautiful.

Until 1951 Harvey Vanclieaf captained, maintained and repaired the yachts for the Pecks. Abruptly, in 1951 the entire fleet went up for sale, with no explanation. The **Naiad** ended her days on Lake Temagami until 1965, when she was destroyed.



**40. The Wright House at #11 East Rd.** In the 1870s, Mr. Alfred Newton and his wife sailed from the UK on the ship “Rolling Polly”. They were stranded in ice for several days off the coast of Newfoundland, but eventually arrived at their destination on Lake of Bays, where they took up 200 acres of land on Dickie Lake. Here Newton established a logging operation, hauling logs to Baysville and sending them downriver for milling. Employed by E. Fowler and Sons (now Fowler Construction) to build the corduroy road from Bracebridge to Baysville, he sold the Dickie-Lake land for \$800 and moved to this site in Baysville in 1925. All the wood came from his logging operation, and was hauled in by horse and wagon. The home was left to his daughter, Mrs. Wright, who lived there from the age of six until she died in 2009. She operated a laundry business for the local resorts and tourists. The home was recently sold by her son, Murray Wright. The original woodwork remains, and hopefully the new owners will preserve this heritage home.



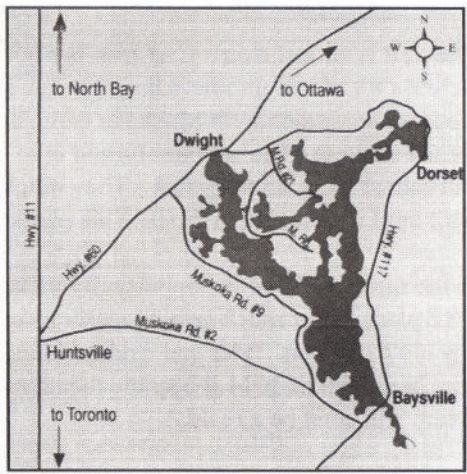
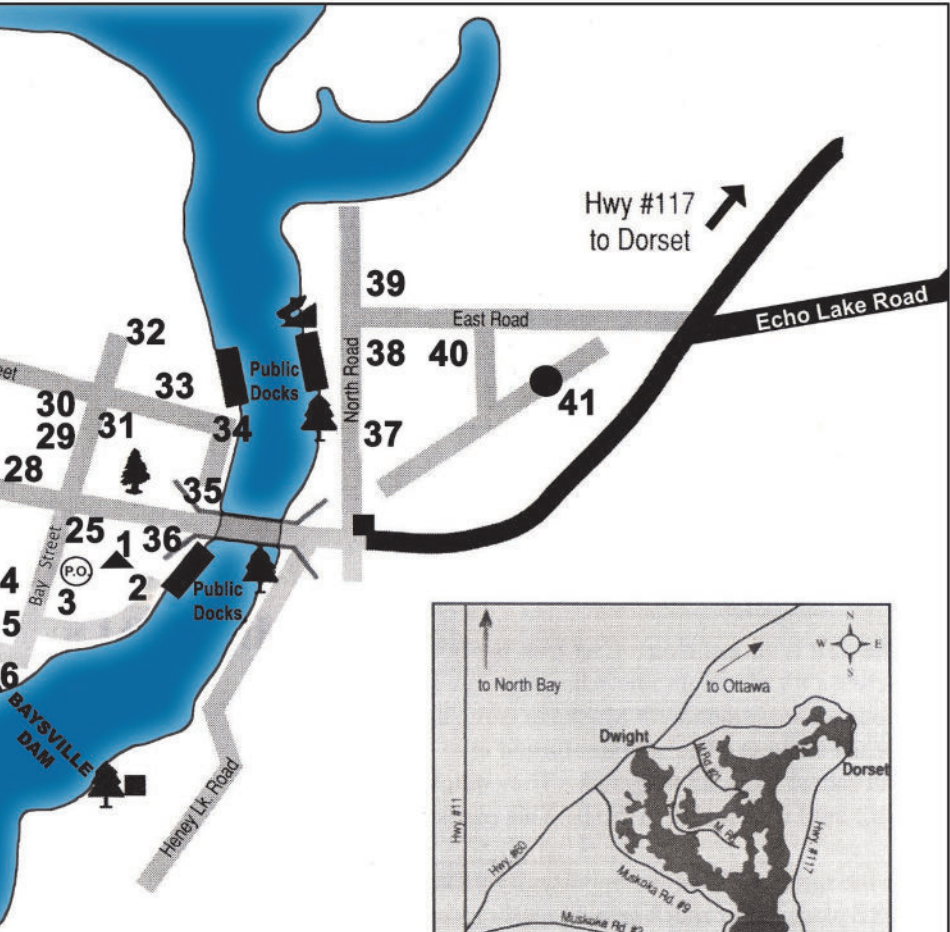
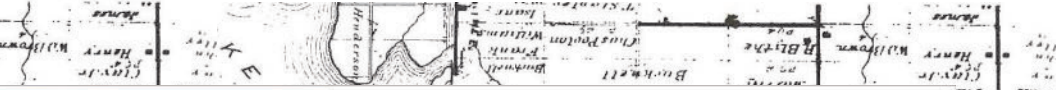
*Bringing Logs from Dickie Lake to build the Wright House*

**41.** Just beyond the marina are the community **tennis courts** and the entrance to the new **Lions’ Club Pavilion** overlooking the village. Built in the autumn of 2015, this is a lovely addition to the community and a wonderful spot for a picnic.



***Return across the bridge to complete your tour.***





- |                               |                       |  |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Parks                         | ATM                   | Gas/Propane  |
| Post Office                   | Bandshell & Washrooms | Community Centre including Library, Arena & Lions Fitness Room |
| Lions Volleyball & Basketball | Church                | Farmers Market   |
| Curling Club                  | Historical Kiosk      | Lions Public Tennis Court                                      |
| Seniors Centre                | Firehall              |  |

Thank you to the South Shore Times and their business partners for the use of their map.



**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TOUR!  
WE HOPED YOU ENJOYED THE  
VILLAGE OF BAYSVILLE.**



Credit for this project must go to the volunteers of the Heritage Committee and residents of Baysville for their invaluable insights into their hometown.

Special mention to Jacqueline Godard and Nancy Tapley, and a special thanks to Rebecca Krawczyk for crafting the map. Thanks to Leanne Fetterley for production. Edited by H.W. Muirhead.

Thank you to FedNor for generously supporting this project.

We hope you enjoy this Historical Tour, and welcome your comments at [www.lakeofbays.on.ca](http://www.lakeofbays.on.ca) to help us make it even better.

For other insights into Baysville history refer to:  
[www.baysvilleontario.com](http://www.baysvilleontario.com)

For more information regarding heritage in Lake of Bays please visit the Heritage Register at  
[www.lakeofbays.on.ca/content/heritage-register](http://www.lakeofbays.on.ca/content/heritage-register)



**CREATED IN 2016 BY THE LAKE OF BAYS  
HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**