

BROOKLIN, ONTARIO HERITAGE

1847-1997



Fig.1

Located on Winchester Rd. at the corner of Anderson St., where Michael Kelly's restaurant is today, this was the site of Brooklin's Railway Station. Fig.1 shows the station with today's Winchester Rd. crossing the tracks. The tracks ran up the west side of Queen St.



Fig.2

The Port Whitby / Port Perry Railway was built in 1871 and extended to Lindsay in 1877. Locally it became known as the "Nip and Tuck" that is, it was Nip and Tuck whether you would get to your destination. The first station burnt and the second station was built in 1895 (Fig.1).

The grain elevator was built in 1892. In the early years, the railway was used primarily for shipping grain and lumber. Between 1880 and the 1930's, one of the principal uses of the railway was to take high school students to school in Whitby. Apparently, the train moved so slowly up the grade to Brooklin, that students would jump off the front of the train, pick raspberries and strawberries and get back on the last car of the train. On April 19, 1937, the station burnt down and was not replaced. The tracks were removed in 1941. Fig.2 shows station masters Cecil Joynt and Dick Ray in 1929.

In 1892, the grain elevator was operated by the Guy Brothers. Between 1915-1920, William Croxall (1875-1950) bought a coal and gravel business located south of the station from Charles Mackey. In 1932, his son Edgar C. Croxall (1907-1968) joined the business. When the grain elevator was demolished in 1950, they purchased the land and constructed coal sheds. In 1956, the land where the old station was located was purchased and a store was built. Latterly, the Croxalls got into building supplies. When coal became unmarketable, they converted their gravel trucks to furnace oil trucks. Croxalls closed in 1973.

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Fig.1 Circa 1880



Fig.2 1954

The Brooklin Mill, located on Cassels Rd., two blocks east of Baldwin St. (Hwy.12), is one of the historic gems of this small town. It operated as a flour mill for 143 years, until 1991. One of the longest running mills, if not the longest, in Ontario.

The first mill was a frame building built by John Campbell and Daniel S. Way in 1840. It was burned in 1847 and was replaced by a brick mill in 1848. The brick mill was built for brothers John and Robert Campbell, by George Sonley, of the 4th concession, Whitby Township. Since the site was a cedar swamp, Mr. Sonley had to dump 15 feet of trees and stones into the swamp until it reached Bedrock, in order to construct the foundation. A unique feature is the date "1848" under the eaves on the west side of the mill. The Mill Pond was located where the Meadowcrest subdivision is now (West of Baldwin St. or Hwy.12), and was linked to the mill by a mill race cut through the village. When the mill was running at full capacity, it would empty the pond in less than a day. Production was 50 barrels a day, with five employees. In the 1880's and 1890's, the mill was operated by John Robson. He was succeeded by William Henry Elviss in the early 1900's. In 1919, the mill was purchased by Charles M. Wilson who, with his sons, operated it for 59 years. Mr. Wilson changed the mill from water to electric power in 1919. The mill was sold to Jim and Jane Hughes in 1978, and in 1990 was sold to Bill Little of Whitby.

Note in Fig.1 to the left of the mill is the W.J. Murray Tannery, which burnt in June, 1890. On the right is the United Church (built in 1867) and the parsonage (built in 1879). In fig.2, "1954", the date on the west end of the building is evident. Note as well, the wagon out front with bags of flour.

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BROOKLIN DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION WITH COMMUNITY SUPPORT

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Fig.1



Fig.2

Church St. runs south of Cassels Rd., east of the Brooklin Mill. The street comes by its' name honestly, as there were in the late 19th century to early 20th century three churches on a street that is only a block long. Fig.1 shows Church St. from the corner of Cassels St.

On the right, in Fig.1, is the building which today is the community centre. The building was built in 1876 as the Bible Christian Church, and was a Baptist Church between 1884 and 1916. The Township of Whitby Municipal offices were located here between 1920 and 1966. The building housed a lending library for part of this period. It became the community centre in 1967.

To the left, half way down the street, can be seen the front of the Presbyterian Church. It operated between 1863 and 1926, at which time the congregation joined with what is today's United Church and the church was demolished. McPherson Builders' Supply Co. subsequently operated from this location, operating a lumber mill with building supplies. In 1950, the business was purchased by the Mitchell Brothers. At the time, a local paper reported the change of ownership as follows: "Purchased by Brothers Bruce & Donald Mitchell....Both are natives of Brooklin, best known as members of Brooklin Softball Team and both take an active interest in lacrosse....The business has a spacious mill and roomy yards. For many years, it has enjoyed a clientele from a wide area and hopes so to continue. It is a matter of pride among Brooklin residents to see the Mitchell Brothers at the helm of a local business."

There also was the Methodist Episcopal Church on the corner of Church St. and Albert St. which operated from 1847-1884 at which time it closed and the congregation amalgamated in what is today Brooklin United Church. In the 1890's, the building was moved to the corner of Baldwin St. (Hwy.12) and Roebuck St.

At the end of the street in Fig.1, can be seen Brooklin Public School, which was built in 1880 and demolished in 1923. Fig.2 shows a closer view of Brooklin Public School.

The irony is that today Church St. has no churches on the block long street.

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