

Tavistock - Hickson and points in between

1

Our trip starts at the corner of Maria and Adam Streets in Tavistock.



These gates are appropriately and affectionately known as “Pillars of the Community”. In 1927 the women of the village (the Tavistock Women’s Institute) went to see the men (the Village Council) with a bold plan to build an archway at the entrance to the park. Granted! Very soon events were in full motion fieldstones were donated by farmers, housewives contributed goodies for bake sales and a stone mason was hired. The fundraising bank account grew but so did the expenses. Letters were sent to former residents asking them to contribute. Tavistock roots run deep and former residents came through with donations to pay the final bills. The official opening in 1929 was a grand affair complete with Senator Rankin cutting the ribbon and a program that featured the best of the best of Tavistock talent.

To learn more check tavistockhistory.ca

- (1) Newsletters for YESTERDAY Volume 24, Winter 2013, for information about the gates.
- (2) Features for the story “Thank you, Adam Mohr” on page 1.

Proceed west along Adam Street.

This was a brand new street in 1876 when Adam Mohr, the farmer who owned the land, commissioned a survey and sold part of his land for a new housing development in Tavistock. Lots were sold by public auction, a sale so popular that one lot was sold twice. The house at 20 Adam Street has been known as “the magnolia tree house” for generations. One owner boasted that they bought the property because it had a magnolia tree in the front for her and a barn in the back for her husband. The house was a bonus.



To learn more about the neighbourhood, the house and the many owners check tavistockhistory.ca ...

- (1) House Histories, 20 Adam Street.

2

Stop at the corner of Adam and William Streets.



Close your eyes and picture the northeast corner when it was a flax mill. Flax was a major industry in Tavistock starting with the first mill built in 1867. Between 600 and 700 acres of flax was pulled each year on fields rented from the local farmers. Wages ranged from 25 cents per day for children to \$1 a day for the top pullers. The work day started at 7 am and finished just in time for supper at 6 pm. At the mill the flax seeds were separated from the stalk. The stalks went back to the fields to rot or “ret” and then be collected again to be “skutched” at the mill.

To learn more check tavistockhistory.ca

- (1) Newsletters for YESTERDAY Volume 6, Spring 2007 for a story about the flax industry in Tavistock
- (2) Lemp Studio Collection photos. Search on “flax”.

Looking across the street you’ll see The Maples, once a prized family home. This was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Krug and their 9 children. Fred Krug was known as “Mr. Tavistock” for his many roles in developing our community. This was quite the home, complete with a maid and a private tennis court. Built circa 1879 it is a fine example of the Second Empire style. The yellow brick house boasted a mansard roof with coloured slate tiles and intricate ironwork at the roofline. Many of the original elements remain today. The house was sold in 1933 and from 1948 to the present day has served as a rest home / long term care home and retirement home.



To learn more check tavistockhistory.ca

- (1) Newsletters for YESTERDAY Volume 18, Winter 2011, for stories about Fred Krug.
- (2) Lemp Studio Collection photos. Search on “Maples”.

Turn left (south) on William Street. Drive to the Maplewood Sideroad and turn right (west). Continue past the stop sign at Hwy 59 and stop just past the first concession which is the 11th Line. Pull off at the side of the road at # 964855. Be careful. This is a very busy road. Remember that this is a private home so please be respectful.

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This building, now a private home, was once S.S. No. 8, known in the community as Goring's School. Let's go back in time to 1885 to the very first school house in this School Section No. 8. Picture this. As you enter the log building the first sight is the big box stove sitting solidly in the center of the room. The desks are all bolted to the walls on the two sides of the building. You take your place on a moveable bench facing the wall. Miss Teeple, the teacher, calls the pupils in all 8 grades to order and the school day begins. It's important that you listen and learn. Your parents are paying 2 shillings 3 pence per month for you to attend. In today's money that would be the equivalent of \$15 a month ... a small pittance now but a huge outlay for yesterday's pioneer families.

To learn more check tavistockhistory.ca

- (1) Schools and download S.S. No. 8 - Goring's School for the full story and school pictures.
- (2) Newsletters for YESTERDAY Volume 21, Winter 2012, for a story about Christmas Concerts at the one-room schools.

U-turns are a feature of shunpikers, sometimes because you are lost, sometimes because you overshot the mark and sometimes because that's the most expedient way to get where you are going. This is the latter. Again, be careful because Maplewood Sideroad is a busy thoroughfare. Go back to the 11th Line corner and turn right (south).

Travel one concession to the Cassel Sideroad and turn left (east).

Drive away and pull off to the side of the road at the brick house #924944.

4



The house was once S.S. No. 15 known locally as Rockett's School.

Remember that this is a private home so please be respectful.

This is the third school known as S.S. No. 15 and the second built on this property.

Just for fun let's take ourselves back in time to schoolhouse number two built on this site in 1858. The second school was frame construction. The old records note that the walls were riddled with holes gnawed by squirrels. Even though paper was stuffed in the holes each Fall it wasn't uncommon for snow to drift in on windy wintry days. An old box stove at the back of the school seemingly could never compete with the draft and the caretaker, finding the kindling always damp, would place the wood on the stove all night to dry it out. This proved disastrous in 1885 when the kindling caught fire and the schoolhouse burned down. That wasn't the end of the problems with the second school. A well dug on the property provided drinking water but of poor quality. This was blamed on the cemetery across the road, an opinion we perhaps don't want to think too much about.

To learn more check tavistockhistory.ca ...

- (1) Schools and download S.S. No. 15 for the full story and school pictures.
- (2) If you are on the driving tour you may wish to stop in at the Second Freewill Baptist Cemetery just across the road. The church associated with this cemetery was organized in 1858. The last service was in 1916. The building was sold by auction and moved to another location.

Continue driving east to Hwy. 59 and turn right (south).

At the four-way stop in Hickson turn east on to Oxford Road 8 / Loveys Street. Stop in front of # 75.

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This postcard depicts the former Hickson School known as S.S. No. 6.

It is now a private home so please be respectful.

An account written by a student circa 1928 tells us that "the strap was used but sparingly.

It was used for cheating, swearing or lying.

They had other punishments that seemed just as severe".

Don't you wonder what those other punishments entailed?



Continue straight ahead and stop at # 86 Loveys Street. Again, a private dwelling. You know the routine by now



This photo from the Lemp Studio Collection shows one of Hickson's iconic old buildings with a long list of good stories associated with it.

Perhaps the best and also least known story is about Samuel Goodwin Vance. The year was 1924. The place was Paris, France. The event was the Summer Olympics. Samuel Goodwin Vance, born in Hickson, was awarded a Silver Medal in Team Clay Pigeon Shooting.

Sam's parents, James and Susan, operated the General Store seen in this photo.

To learn more check tavistockhistory.ca ...

(1) Features Section, page 1, "A Local Olympian" for the full story about Samuel Vance and his shooting successes.

(2) Lemp Studio Collection photo # 0576 to read about the many uses for this building.

(2) Postcards Section, search for Hickson and find a different view of this building when it was Rowe's General Store.

This part of Hickson was once a hustling, bustling, jam-packed center of activity. The area that is now an empty lot across and down just a wee bit from 86 Loveys Street was once the Hickson Train Station, the Grist Mill and T.S. Russell's Blacksmith Shop.



The new station was built in 1904.
Sir Joseph Hickson was the General Manager of the Grand Trunk Railway.
The station closed in 1962 and moved.



Grist mill is a term we don't hear much anymore. It was where the farmers brought grain to be ground into flour.
The Hickson mill made Thistle brand.



Built by T. J. Loveys and sold to Tom Russell in 1907. It was remodelled to be a service station and repair shop before it was demolished.

To learn more check tavistockhistory.ca

(1) Newsletters YESTERDAY Volume 30, Fall 2016. (2) Fact & Fantasy. Click on Hickson in the Table of Contents.

Just a little bit up the road by the entrance to Hickson Park is the start of the Hickson Trail. The trail was once the old train tracks. If you need a little stretch take a little walk up the trail and back. The trail is 20 kilometers long. You may want to return on a good day when you have your hiking boots on and do the whole stretch.

Continue east on Loveys Street until you come to the 13th Line (Hickson Public School by the corner) and turn left (north).

Shunpikers, like most everything else in life, are fun if you make them fun. If you think you need a little pick me up at this point on the route play some of the old-fashioned car games from your childhood. Depending upon your vintage it could be I Spy or 20 Questions or the Name Game or whatever fits your mood and your memories. Not into games? Turn up the radio and sing. Think of a song that goes with each of the spots on the shunpiker and burst forth into an a capella version. We will be coming up to the site of an old tavern so you might want to start "100 Bottles of Beer On The Wall" right now. Not a singer? Tell stories. If you don't know any good ones, make them up. Your imagination can lead you to all sorts of wonderful tales.

When you come to the Cassel Sideroad turn left (west). Continue to the stop sign at Hwy 59 and turn right (north).

A bit up the road you will pass the red-brick Trinity Anglican Church on the right (# 596682). There has been an Anglican Church (first log now brick) on this site since 1847. The first burial in the cemetery was baby Sarah Susanna Armstrong, 5 months old, in 1849.

To learn more check tavistockhistory.ca

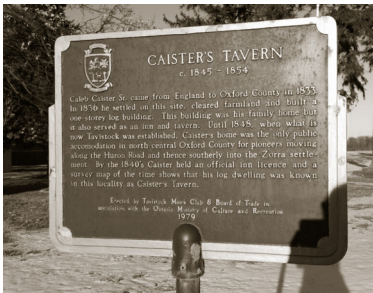
(1) Features, page 3, for "The Missing Link" story.

Did you know you are driving on a stretch of road once called "The Missing Link"? The North Highway (now # 7&8) and the South Highway (now # 2) have long been well travelled official thoroughfares. It took until 1931 for the Ontario government to announce "Twelfth Line East Zorra Will Be A Provincial Highway". The Twelfth Line is now Hwy 59.



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Continue until you come to # 596996 and stop by the side of the road. Take a moment to read the official plaque on the lawn between the big house and the small house.



Caleb Caister left his home in England and arrived in Oxford County in 1833. Three years later he took up residence at this site, clearing the land and starting farming operations on his 100 acres. By 1849, when the Woodstock and Huron Road Company was formed, Caister's Tavern was already established and ready to serve an increasing number of travellers. The 1851 census shows Caister having a one-storey log house and a household including two Irish Catholic servant girls. The log house served as both family home and tavern or inn.

To learn more check tavistockhistory.ca

(1) Features, page 5, for the story of "Caister's Tavern" and the plaque.

Continue north on Hwy 59. Just past the bridge over the Thames River turn left onto Road 34. This is known locally as "the short road".

What is now # 537097, better known as the U-Turn Ranch, was once the home of Edward and Rachel Alles.

Turn right (east) at the stop sign and head into Tavistock on what will become Hope St.

When this area was first surveyed in 1819 the surveyor, Shuball Park, wrote in his field book that he found a brook and a cedar swamp at this spot. The brook has disappeared but there are still cedars in the bush.

To learn more about the first survey and Shuball Park check tavistockhistory.ca

(1) Newsletters for YESTERDAY Volume 22, Spring 2013.

8

As you drive by the large and impressive Saputo Cheese operations take a minute to think about the humble beginnings on this site in 1896. Long gone are the days when it was a small but very prosperous factory. In 1896 the Tavistock Cheese and Butter factory shipped 435 boxes of cheese to London England. The first Dairy School in Ontario was held in Tavistock.

Continue to the corner of Hope Street and William Street and turn left (north). Stop at the first corner which is William and Oxford Streets.

9

This is the last stop and a chance to admire some of Tavistock's beautiful old homes and a church.



39 William Street North
In 1910 George Pepler purchased this house for \$2,700. In 1919 he sold it for \$3,800.



45 William Street North
This 1905 Queen Anne-style home is the only house in Tavistock that has a name. It's called Hillcroft.



26 William Street North
Look up, right to the roofline, to appreciate the architectural details of this home c. 1895.



Knox United Church (now Tavistock Bible Chapel) was well known for its religious services, Christmas Concerts and special anniversary celebrations.

To learn more check tavistockhistory.ca ...

- (1) Newsletters for YESTERDAY Volume 14, Spring 2010 for information on Tavistock's real estate.
- (2) House Histories for the stories behind 22 Oxford Street and 94 Hope Street West and a series of articles entitled Tavistock's Victorian Architecture.
- (3) Street Names, Part 13, for the origin of the William Street name.

That's all, folks. We hope you had a good time and learned a little bit along the way. Now it's time to head home but not before you've stopped into one of our local eateries for a coffee and a cupcake or a piece of pie or stay for a full meal and think about your next shunpiker.