

Town Walking Tour

What better way to see St. Marys than on a relaxing walking tour?

Pace yourself — go as quickly as you want or stretch it into the better part of an afternoon with some leisurely stops and shopping.

(1) Start at our Town Hall. One of the most impressive municipal buildings in Canada, the town hall was built in 1891 of local limestone and trimmed with imported red sandstone. Its design shows the influence of the nineteenth century American architect H.H. Richardson, who adapted traditional medieval architectural features. Note the round-headed windows and arches, the rusticated (or rough faced) stone and the overall impression of robustness - all characteristics of Richardsonian Romanesque.

If you are taking your walking tour on a weekday during business hours, make sure you see the interior of the town hall. Just ask for 'Tom' and our unofficial town host will give you a tour. If the mayor is free, you might even ask him to don his official chain of office and have your picture taken with His Worship on the town hall steps.

(2) Going north on Church Street, immediately behind the town hall is the Public Library. It was built in 1904, one of many constructed in Ontario as a result of the generosity of Andrew Carnegie.

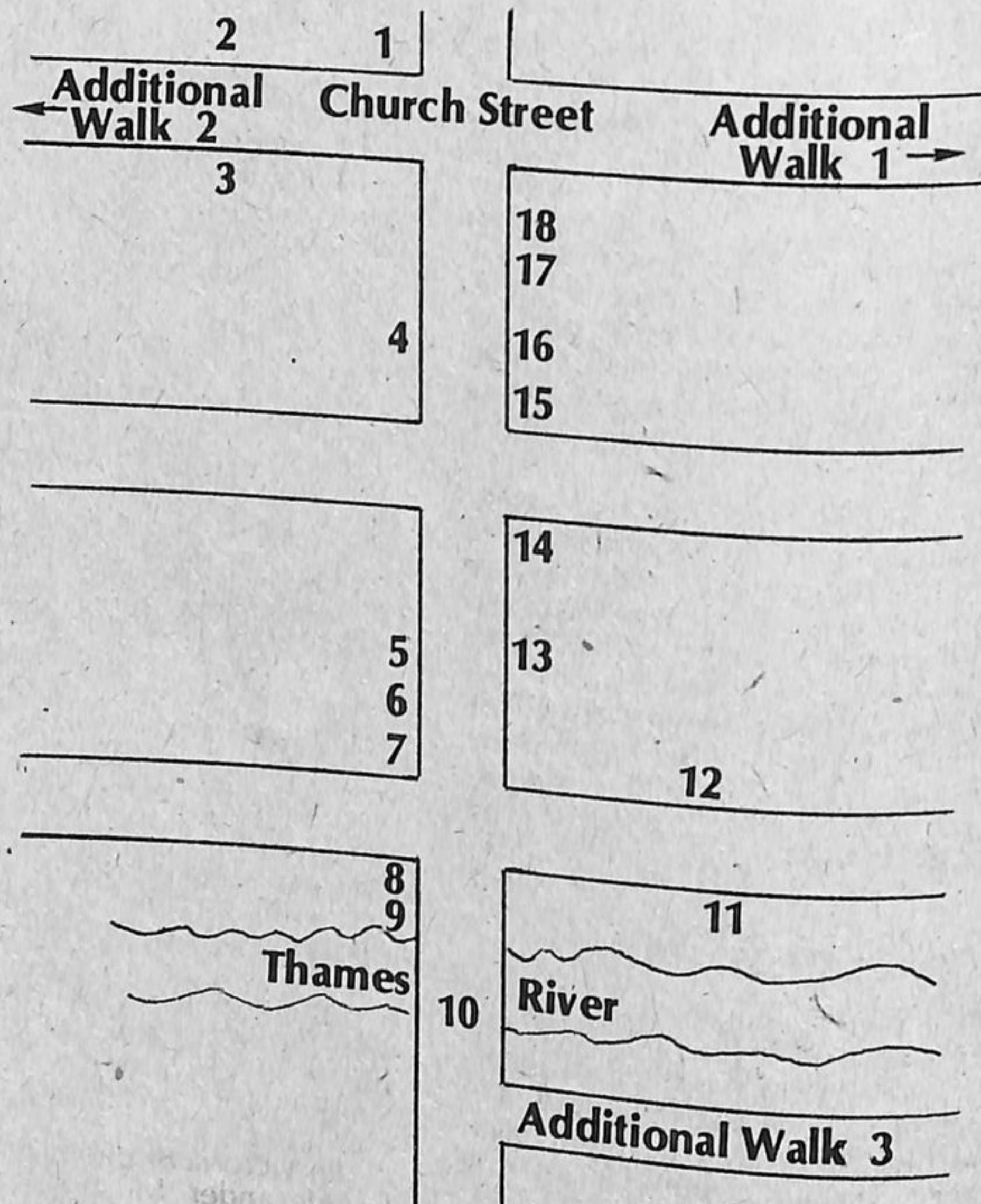
(3) When the Garnet House, across from the library, was built in 1871, smooth-faced limestone (not rough as seen in the town hall) was still in fashion. Note the Mansard roof - the earliest example in town. In years gone by, you might have stayed at the Garnett House as it was built and operated as a hotel for many years. Now it is a private building, rented as apartments.

While you are up Church Street, be sure to see the recently refurbished Church Street Bridge. One of very few double arch stone bridges left in Ontario, the 80 foot span was completed in 1884 at a cost of \$3,800. Total cost of the 1979 refurbishing was almost \$175,000.

Turn and come back to the main street now. Head down the hill into the heart of the business section.

A handsome row of Victorian brick buildings starts with McIntyre Drug Store, built in 1883. Note the round-headed windows on the second storey of these buildings. If you have an interest in old buildings, you'll want to stop at the Perth Country Gallery where hasti-notes, prints and originals of many local buildings are for sale.

The highlight of this block and in



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300 THOMAS ST., ST. MARYS



fact the entire town is — (4) the Andrews Building built in 1884, now housing Smith Jewellery. The store which has always housed a jewellery business was designed by an architect by the name of Williams and is a splendid Victorian building. The variety of detail in the facade and the Mansard roof and clock tower stand in striking contrast to the sober, perhaps even severe, limestone blocks which dominate the rest of Queen Street.

Again, the interior of this building is as delightful as the exterior and demands a visit if open. If not open, take a peek through the door — it's worth it.

Cross Wellington Street and continue walking westerly.

(5) When you spot Marty's Men's Wear stop and take a step back from the building for a good look. This building, originally built for John McDonald, is one of the three earliest limestone buildings on Queen Street, all built in 1855.

(6) Further along Queen are the Jean Connection and Fabridashery. This was originally built as one store for Fred Hutton who sold groceries on the main floor and china on the second. It is an outstanding example of red brick construction common around the turn of the century. Note the art nouveau windows and stone pilasters on the second storey of the facade.

(7) On the north-east corner of Queen and Water is the L.A. Ball Block. It was built for Edward Long as a general store. The projecting keystones over each window provide a visual accent. Over the central window of the third storey can be found the date of construction - 1863.

(8) Cross Water Street to the M. & M. Block. In a log building on this site, John Ingersoll opened the first store in Little Falls, the original name of St. Marys. In 1855, Lauriston Cruttenden built for William Veal Hutton a stone commercial block which incorporated four stores and was known as the Toronto House. In 1884 John Chalmers, who owned the two stores occupied by M. & M. today, added the Mansard roof with its pedimental dormers. The well preserved facade, giving a fine indication of the nineteenth century store-front, makes this one of the more remarkable buildings on Queen Street. It has the distinction of being the first privately owned building in town to be designated by Heritage St. Marys under the Ontario Heritage Act.

(9) An Impressive Home can best be seen from the Victoria Bridge. Originally built as the miller's house for the Hutton family in 1858, it faced on the river. The mill race now seen at the front of the house, once ran beneath the house at the rear. This building has served various functions and is at present an apartment building.

(10) Victoria Bridge was built in 1868 by Alexander McDonald, a Scottish stone mason whose descendants still live in the area. It was built to the plans of another local man, Alexander Niven, a provincial land surveyor. It's worth walking up to the dam or down Water Street to have an unimpeded view of the beautiful arches of the bridge. The view from the bridge itself is equally striking for it includes the dam which was built in 1907 and the Sarnia railway bridge, built in 1858, seen to the north.

Come back to Water Street and turn

south. In the early days of the town, Water Street was also a 'main street' but over the years the pull to Queen Street diminished its importance.

(11) The former Opera House, a century ago, was the centre of the social and cultural life of St. Marys. Here Sir John A. Macdonald spoke during his final political campaign; the Scottish soprano, Jessie McLaughlin sang; and Nora Clench, St. Marys' most famous native played the violin.

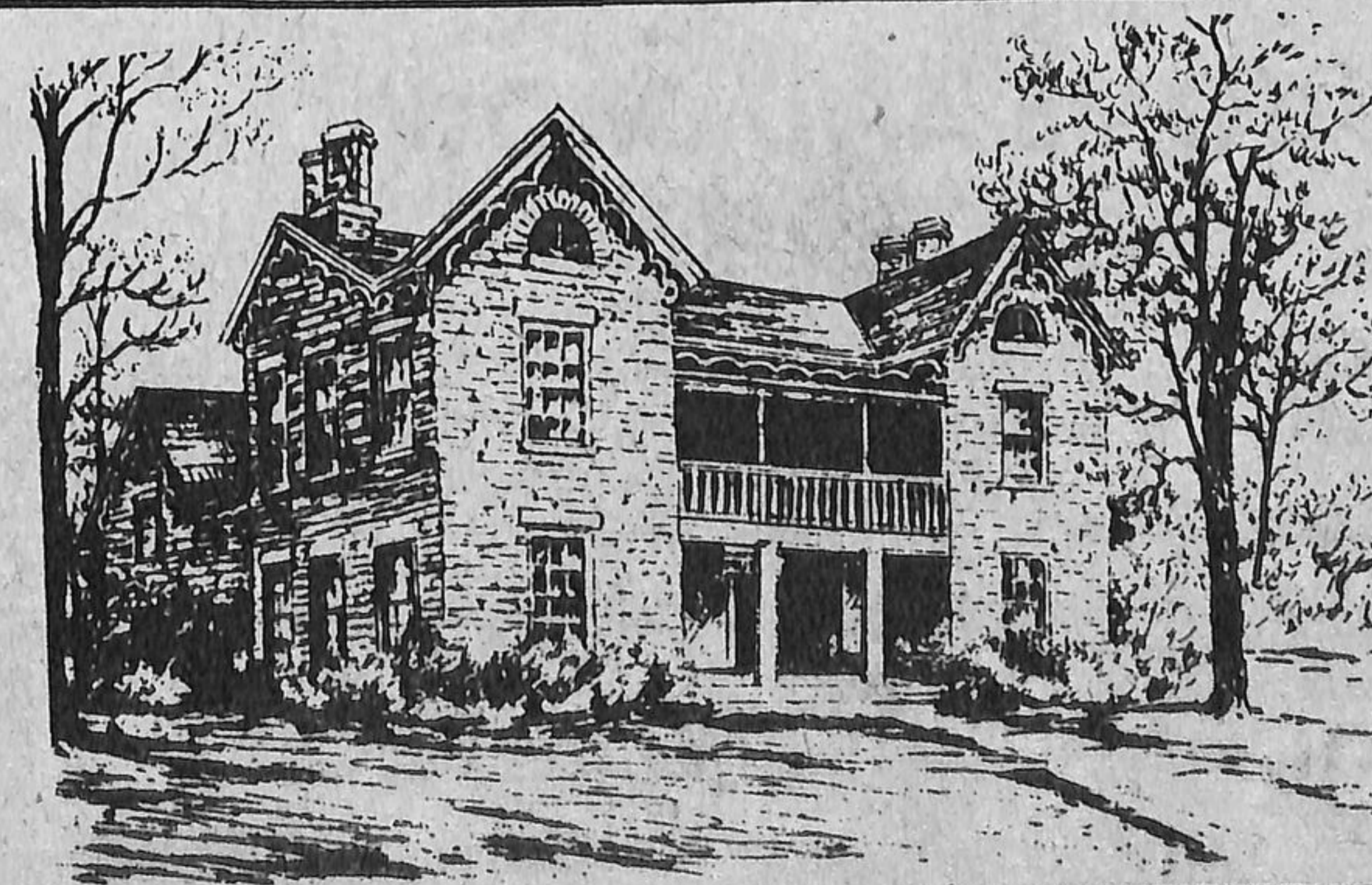
The building was erected in 1879 by James Elliott with stone from his quarry and lime from his kiln. Originally there were stores on the ground floor, a theatre on the second, and the Oddfellows' quarters on the third. The style chosen was Gothic Revival and, although the central gable was razed in 1920 when the building was converted to a flour mill, the Opera House and the two Hutton Blocks (1860's) which flank it, form what is undoubtedly the finest stone row in Ontario.

(12) Across the street is another stone row. The smooth faced stone of Jorna's Radio Shack built in 1968 stands in contrast to the rough-faced (even rock faced) stone of Sir Joe's Restaurant, the former Post Office, built in 1907.

These two buildings are an example of succeeding architectural fashions — the smooth faced facade being popular from 1855 to 1880 and the rough-faced to the beginning of World War 1.

Come back to Queen Street now and turn back up the hill to the east.

By Larry Pfaff



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During May and after Labour Day daily 2-5 - or by appointment.

During June, July, August Mon.-Sat. 10-12 and 1-5, Sundays 1-5.