

# Niagara-on-the-Lake a pretty town

**By KATHRYN HORLER**  
Niagara-on-the-Lake has the deserved reputation of being the prettiest town in North America.

A visit there should be extended so none of the historic sites, the 19th century homes, the Market Square nor the Shaw Festival Theatres are missed.

**A WALKING START**  
You can park just off King Street across from The Prince of Wales Hotel. This red and gold hotel was built in 1860 as Long's Hotel with 16 rooms. It now has expanded to 58 rooms with an elegant dining room, a bar and recreational facilities.

Its new wing is considered a masterpiece of design as its duplication of the original gingerbread facade is so meticulously copied that it is impossible to tell where the old wing stops and the new one begins. This hotel's glass Garden Room is a favorite for breakfast and lunch.

**CLOCK TOWER**  
The first thing that will strike you as you begin your stroll down Queen Street is the Clock Tower — right in the middle of the road! It is a War Memorial dedicated in 1922. The battery-operated clock inside is looked after with tender loving care by the town's electrician, Jim Henry. Walking on the south side of the street you'll find a selection of shops to browse through before you come across a vine-covered grey stone building.

**THE COURT HOUSE**  
Now the home of the tiny Court House Theatre, it was designed in 1847 by William Thomas, who also designed the St. Lawrence Hall in Toronto.

**THE ANGEL INN**  
Past the Court House just a left turn away on Regent Street is a bright yellow building, purportedly the oldest one in Ontario, having been built in 1779. Lunch, dinner and after-theatre fare is served in the same room with its hand-hewn beams that was visited by Coach Travellers and British Regulars from Fort George.

The Inn boasts a ghost — that of Captain Colin

**Travelchat**  
By **Anne Wanstall**  
Travel Editor

You may not know it, but your travel agent probably deserves a medal. Anyone who can keep up with the ever-changing airfare structures is likely to have nails bitten down to the quick and bald patches from tearing out his hair.

They're faced with the fact that air fares will have to go up to meet escalating fuel costs (aircraft are reported to be flying out of Athens, Greece, with only enough fuel to get them to their first landing because of the cost), and they're faced with the fact that other fares have almost been slashed in half as a competitive manoeuvre.

Told they had to collect more airport tax from passengers using Canadian airports after April 1, they're now having to arrange to return the money because the order paper didn't get through our now dissolved Parliament.

Swaze, a British officer tortured to death there during the war of 1812. A number of guests have told eery tales of his "appearances."

**NIAGARA HOME BAKERY**

When I was there all was in readiness for Easter with the multitude of chocolate eggs and animals. Tucked away for next year, lining the top shelves are the moulds that shaped the delights. **GREAVES JAMS AND JELLIES**

You'll cross the street now and follow your nose to this made-on-the-pickles store. This family-run business began in 1928 by William Greaves on his farm. He then moved his retail outlet to this 100-year-old building.

Vats bubble away at the back of the store while friendly salesclerks assist with your purchases. Combination gift packages are available.

**HOWE'S ANTIQUES**  
At 61 Queen St., this blue and white curtained shop specializes in brass, copper, fine china, early Canadian furniture, utensils, lamps and prints.

**MCCRAE HALL**  
The McCraes purchased and restored this charming spot in 1966. Luncheons and teas are served at the back and in the summer in the little garden. Articles for sale range from jams to jumpers, perfumes to prints, soap to sweaters and chocolate to china.

**THE BUTTERY**  
By now a rest is in order and this is a delightful place to pause. First thing to do here is to put all thoughts of calories out of your head and just enjoy! The English Tea, for example, features two five-inch high tea biscuits to be smothered by the accompanying whipped cream and fresh strawberry jam. Also on the tea plate are an assortment of loaf cake slices, crustless sand-

wiches, cake squares and a puff pastry.

"Upstairs at the Buttery" has undergone dramatic change. No longer a cabaret theatre, it has become a festival of feasting!

**NIAGARA APOTHECARY**

This museum, which is open to the public from May to September, invited me to a preview visit. My guide, Jim Dunston, Deputy Registrar of the College of Pharmacists, outlined the history of the Apothecary and the wares it contains. All you'll want to know about it is in a brochure that you will receive when you visit there... and a visit there should head your list of "things to see". A brief quote:

"The Niagara Apothecary is remarkable for several reasons. It is the only surviving Confederation-period building in historically and architecturally famous Niagara-on-the-Lake, the first capital of Upper Canada. The restoration by noted restoration architect Peter J. Stokes is meticulous in detail inside and out, and is regarded as one of the finest and most authentic in North America."

Dunston explained that back in that era young men had virtually no schooling and to become pharmacists, apprenticed for at least six years.

"The doctors practising in those days seemed to restrict their diagnoses to just two — the digestive tract and nerves." As he pointed out the pill-making machine, he explained that to possess these hand-made pills made patients happy, as pills were considered very posh indeed. And doctors in those days did practise blood-letting, for there stands, for all to see, a container inscribed boldly with these words: **LEECHES JAR.**

**THE LORD MAYOR**  
How in the world did

Wilbert N. Dick become the one and only Lord Mayor in Canada?

"Because Niagara-on-the-Lake, when it was Newark, was the First Capital of Upper Canada we carried on the traditional title," he explained. The title became official in 1970 when on Jan. 1 the Town of Niagara and the Township of Niagara amalgamated and became Niagara-on-the-Lake.

I asked the Lord Mayor how he managed to keep his town free of franchise restaurants.

"People come here to enjoy dinner in one of our many fine Inns and aren't interested in rushing their meal. As ours is a seasonal town a franchise operation just wouldn't survive. Besides, we have a zoning bylaw that prohibits fast-food takeouts on our main street!"

**LAURA SECORD HOMESTEAD**

This attraction is open May through October with tours from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday and 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Take the scenic route past Fort George and look across the river to the lovely town of Youngstown, New York. Fort George is open to the public during the summer months and is a very real history lesson.

The Laura Secord Homestead is a tiny, four-room plan home of centre rooms. Each is filled with furniture, cooking utensils, candle-makers all authentically in the period of 1812.

There is a brochure available at the Homestead that tells the story of Laura Secord's famous walk. It is sad to read that Laura Secord died on Oct. 17, 1868, at the age of 93, just as her reputation of Canada's heroine was coming alive.

**SHAW FESTIVAL THEATRE**

The Shaw Festival officially opens May 30. For a list of the coming events at the Shaw Festival and Court House Theatre write to the Shaw Festival, Box 774, Niagara-on-the-Lake, L0S 1J0. At the same time ask for the brochure on the off-season attractions. The Festival Theatre

remains open all year.

**DINING ROOMS**

Besides the aforementioned Prince of Wales Inn, The Angel Inn and The Buttery two more excellent dining rooms in town are the Pillar and Post and the Oban Inn. The latter has a Sunday buffet luncheon which is outstanding. Try

to get a table in the sun porch from where you can enjoy the view of the golf course and the expanse of Lake Ontario.

**READ ON**

A booklet just off the press called "Circle Tours of Festival Country" contains 43 drive-it-yourself tours. I followed two of them —

"The Niagara-on-the-Lake Historic Homes Tour" and "The First Capital of Upper Canada Tour." Each was easy to follow and a sheer delight. Each stop tells the history of the site or home.

It's fascinating to see the homes at night, when you can from your

automobile, see in the windows and the 19th century furnishings.

For further information on this booklet write to Mrs. Margaret Sharkey, General Manager, Niagara and Mid-Western Ontario Travel Association, 370 Main St. East, Suite No. 107, Hamilton, L8N 1J6.

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