

## In The Beginning

### Stouffville Before Incorporation

Back when the 19th century was only four years old, Abram Stouffer made the journey from Pennsylvania to this part of Upper Canada. He took possession of six hundred acres of land lying between the 9th and 10th concessions, 400 north of what is now Main St. and two hundred on the south side.

These very early days might be termed the Stouffer years. Mr. Stouffer erected the first gristmill in this part of the country. Before there were even any carriages and a hundred years before motor cars appeared here, the carrying was done by ox-boat or on horse-back. The boy astride a horse with a sack of corn or wheat in front of him, bringing grist to the mill, soon became a familiar sight to the few residents of Stouffville. Mr. Stouffer erected two mills on the south side of Main St. near the creek in the downtown section - both were burned. He then erected one on the north side. The family home, built of cedar, was on the north side, on the site of the present Dr. Wm. Murphy residence.

The milling and other property came into the hands of Mr. Stouffer's son, Christian, who continued in business until 1847 when Mr. Ed. Wheeler acquired the business. With the coming of the mill, came the store, the blacksmith shop and the tavern. The first store here was built by Charles Sheldon. Mr. John Boyer who followed Mr. Stouffer

from Pennsylvania, built another store on the present postoffice site. Here one could buy anything from a broad axe to a yard of cloth. Mr. Boyer filled many roles. He was merchant, postmaster, justice of the peace and for a time, 'printer to the people'. His buildings were destroyed by fire and the land then divided into lots.

#### FIRST SMITHY

Mr. Hugh Casler was the first village blacksmith and he established himself on the south side of the road beyond the 10th concession.

History records that "before the village got out of its swaddling clothes there were three taverns, and the place was not noted for its orderliness."

The first building in the east end was a shoe shop built by John Yake. It stood on the southeast corner and was later converted into a tavern. Yake's corner became known by the dubious title of Brimstone Point. Cock-fighting and horse-racing were familiar village sports. Some of the accounts on such activities were usually settled before the Justice of the Peace on Monday morning.

#### THE WHEELER ERA

A new era in the life of the village by the coming of Edward Wheeler, the same year in which the Congregational Church was built at the east end, 1847. Mr. Wheeler opened his first store at the 10th concession corner. Matthew Flint conducted a store business in the brick building on the southwest corner for a time, but it

was later turned into a tavern.

The east end was a busy place in those days. It was the stopping place for all farmers from the north townships. By this time the village was known as Stouffville, and a new postoffice was opened in the Sanders Block, now the Hendricks' store.

History records that for a few years after the Riel Rebellion no mail was sent here as the postmaster, Mr. Boyer was too much 'agin the government'.

#### NEW ROAD

The first road that was constructed other than dirt trails, was a plank road from the east end to Ringwood. Not even gravel was in use up to this time. A company was formed to build the road, and the directors were Messrs. John Reesor, Jos. Tomlinson, Archie Barker, Abram Stouffer, Peter Ramer, Jonathon Gates and Edward Wheeler.

#### INDUSTRIES

The village even in these early days, was not without industry. The tannery was built by John Boyer, and Flint's factory for threshing peas. Then there were the Gibney plow works and Billy Rodick's wagon factory.

#### COMING OF THE RAILWAY

In the fall of 1871 the villagers gathered to witness the arrival of the first train on the Nipissing Narrow Gauge and proved better than the stage. The coming of the railway drew the village westward, and many new buildings sprung up near the station.



Last remaining building that served as a hotel at the east end of town. A hundred years ago there were four hotels at the corner of the Tenth. The Mansion House is the only downtown hotel building remaining.



Stouffville's First Fire Shed - 1912

Rowbotham's Bakery and General Store located on the present library site. Historically significant in this picture is the small shed on the left of the store. The shed housed Stouffville's first fire fighting equipment, which consisted of one hand-operated hose reel.

## A Message From The Reeve

To the Citizens of Stouffville:

In this our country's Centennial Year and our own Village's 90th birthday, we like to look back over the past and reminisce of years gone by.

We feel we have justifiable reasons to be proud of our Village. We are situated within twenty miles of Canada's second largest city, but we are recognized as a self-contained country village serving a rural community. This character has been retained because of our well planned growth and development over the years.

Stouffville is a fine community. Its citizens have always been known for their progressive policies. Public-spirited people have always come forward to help in serving the community. While reminiscing we should all express our deep appreciation to those who have toiled in the past so that we today are able to reap the benefits of their administration. To them we owe a debt of gratitude and hope that those who follow may be worthy of the example they have set.

In our Community Park this coming weekend, great activities have been planned by our Centennial Committee. The festivities will commence with a parade at 10 o'clock Saturday morning and end with a community church service on Sunday. I urge all citizens of Stouffville and surrounding communities to attend these events.

I particularly want to congratulate and thank the Centennial Committee, the Village Square Committee and all others who have in any way contributed to the success of our celebrations for this memorable milestone.

I am, therefore, happy to extend best wishes for a pleasant and successful centennial week, and many more years of growth and prosperity. To all people who make Stouffville the lively and progressive community which it is today, I extend my sincere wish that health, happiness and prosperity may continue to be yours.

Sincerely,  
Ken Laushway, Reeve



Reeve Ken Laushway

## Ratcliff Name Longest Connected With Stouffville Retailers

The name Ratcliff (Glenn Ratcliff), owner and operator of the giant new IGA Food Market on Main St., Stouffville, has been connected with the retail business here longer than any other. Mr. Glenn Ratcliff is a son of the founder, J. H. Ratcliff. Mr. Ratcliff established the grocery business in 1890 and continued until 1903 when he was joined in partnership by his brother John W. Ratcliff. Thirty years of this long term was passed in the Todd Block at the west end of town.

Ratcliff & Co. saw the passing of many competitors over these many years, but continued to grow and prosper, and at one time was known to

conduct the largest fruit business between Lindsay and Toronto. In the closing years of the First World War, the firm felt the necessity for larger quarters and erected the large block at the corner of Main and Market Streets. When the block was built and for some years after, it housed the spacious store and market area in the basement, and on the second floor the offices of the Bell Telephone Company and a concert hall.

The late J. H. Ratcliff served Stouffville for many years as councillor and reeve and it was during his term of office that the town's municipal water system was introduced.

## HOUSTON

Established 1955

There has been a drug store in this building for the

88 YEARS

Open Sat. & Mon. July 1

"Your Rexall Drug Store"

1 Main West

610-2222

## RATCLIFF



### FOODLINER

The name "Ratcliff" and Stores have been combined 1890 when Mr. James R. (father of the present owner, Glenn Ratcliff) first opened "Pantry" food store.

NEW FOODLINER STORE  
OPENING JULY 5th,  
Main West - Stouffville

## Centennial Green

FROM

## J. L. SMITH

JEWELLER

Established Feb. 1st, 1877

Watch and Clock Repair

Specializing In

Antique Clocks

95 Main West

610-2263

## HERB

## KRING

FURNITURE & APPLIANCES

Established March, 1912

The finest in home furnishings, electrical appliances and Stereo & Television

HERB KRING "The Man"

4145 Main West

610-2002

## FRETZ BROS.

and H

MEAT MARKET

Established 1904

Specializing In

Freezer Orders of quarters

BEEF and PORK

R. R. 3 - CLAREMONT