

# York's Historical Villages



Schomberg Main Street has maintained its old-world charm.

From the northern outskirts of Metro Toronto to the southern shore of Simcoe, York Region has grown up around a number of small historical hamlets. Still preserved to a large extent, these villages now attract tourists as well as residents to their picturesque settings with shops, special events, attrac-

tions, and restaurants, as well as places to browse amongst architecture from days gone by.

Now 202 years old, Unionville in the Town of Markham is perhaps the most notable and popular historic destination. Come here for a large variety of fashions, gifts, crafts, antiques, and some exquisite cafes and restaurants.

New this year is the Frederick Horsman Varley Art Gallery, Varley being of the Group of Seven. Open seven days a week, the historic Main Street is just north of Highway 7, between Warden Avenue and Kennedy Road. A self-guided walking tour booklet of the Main Street can be obtained locally.

Just east, Markham's other Main Street cuts through another historical section of town on what starts out as Markham Road at Hwy. 401 and continues as Highway 48 north to cottage country. Interesting shops, stores and restaurants dot this street. Saturdays in July and August, you can join their award-winning Town Crier for a one hour guided walk about the street. Meet at the Post Office gazebo, just north of Hwy 7 at 1 p.m. At the north end of the street is the Markham Museum featuring over 25 historic buildings uncommercially preserved.

Thornhill is also known for its rich history dating back to the development of Yonge Street. Check out the old buildings just east of Yonge Street on Colbourne and John streets, just north of Steeles Avenue.

Further northwest, just north of Major Mackenzie Drive on Islington Avenue, is the village of Kleinburg. Steeped in history and more country-looking than Markham, Kleinburg offers the world-renowned McMichael Canadian Art Collection Gallery and a host of quaint shops, restaurants, a tea room and a bed & breakfast. Their annual Binder Twine festival, the first Saturday after Labor Day, attracts visitors from across Ontario. Just west is Ontario's own Nashville, near the Humber River. Just south is Woodbridge with its historical main street, Woodbridge Avenue.

Into the central area of York Region are the villages of Schomberg, Newmarket and Stouffville. Schomberg, in King Township, today offers a quiet main street of local businesses and a tourist destination in the restored Old Schomberg Feed Mill. Country crafts and home-made cooking await you here. Schomberg's history is clearly tied to the advent of the Holland Marsh growing area, but a little further south is evidence of an old Indian portage route called "Carrying Place". This marks the canoe portage route from the Humber River up to the Holland River. The spring fair focuses on the still-thriving agricultural industry.

Main Street Newmarket has maintained its historical appeal. South of Davis Drive, many of the buildings date back to the mid-nineteenth century.

See Villages, page 33

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