



**Heritage Barrie
Walking Tours**

**Discovering
the Waterfront**



Discovering the Waterfront

Discovering the Waterfront (1996; revised 2005) is a self-guided tour sponsored by Heritage Barrie to highlight the heritage of the City of Barrie. This tour follows Lakeshore Drive between Memorial Square and the Southshore Community Centre. Other tours available include *Downtown East*, *Downtown West*, *Grand Homes*, *Allandale*, *Rodney and Blake Streets*, and *H-Block & Court House Hill*. Information and photographs on any of the buildings and sites featured in this tour or on other aspects of Barrie's architectural heritage are welcomed.

Discovering the Waterfront was researched, written, and produced for Heritage Barrie by Su Murdoch Historical Consulting in Barrie. Graphic design, modern photography, and electronic composition by Kurt Harding Schick.

What is Heritage Barrie?

Heritage Barrie was established in 1977 by a City of Barrie bylaw under Section 28 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Its role is to advise and assist Council in all matters relating to heritage conservation. Members are volunteers appointed by Council, plus a Council representative and a liaison from the Planning Services Department. Funds for Heritage Barrie are provided annually as part of the City's operating budget. The 2004-2006 members of Heritage Barrie are Councillor Steve Trotter, Chuck Harris, Brandi Clement, Joanne Raycraft, Hope Russell, Chris Ashford-Smith, Robert Campbell, Arnie Ivsins, and Eric Hodgins, Planning Services Department liaison.

Further information and copies of the Walking Tour brochures are available from Heritage Barrie, c/o Planning Services Department, 9th Floor, Barrie City Hall, 70 Collier Street, P.O. Box 400, Barrie, ON L4M 4T5, and from the Barrie Public Library.

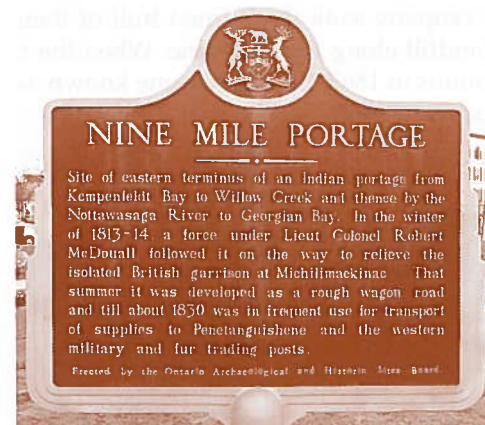
Discovering the Waterfront

Please see Centrefold for Map

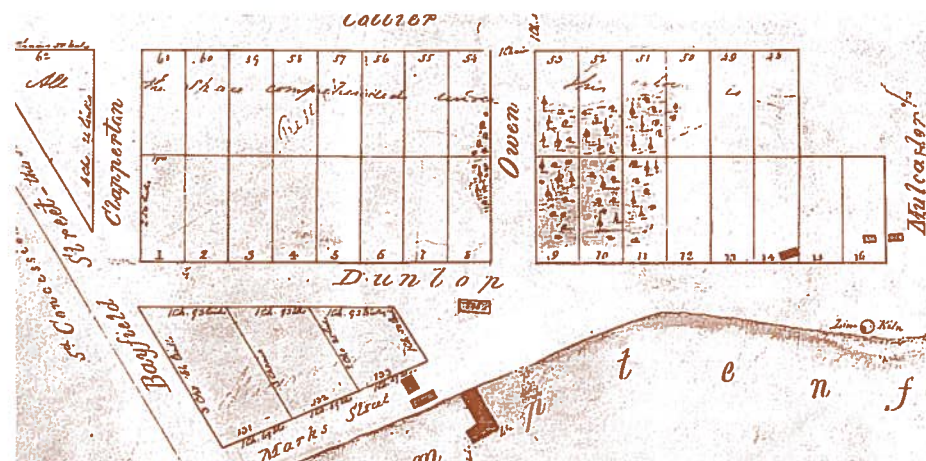
Memorial Square (at Owen and Dunlop Street East) was the terminus of a nine-mile portage between Kempenfelt Bay and the eastern branch of the Nottawasaga River (Willow Creek). Aboriginals, fur traders, explorers, and settlers used the portage until the 1830s to reach Georgian Bay and the Upper Great Lakes.

In October 1793, Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe named Kempenfelt Bay in recognition of his father's "friend and favourite," Admiral Richard Kempenfelt, and Lake Simcoe in honour of his father, Captain John Simcoe of the Royal Navy.

Barrie was first surveyed in 1833 by William Hawkins. At that time, the natural shoreline followed the route of present day Simcoe Street (Marks Street) between Bayfield and Owen. The south side of Dunlop Street, east from Owen, was the shoreline. John McCausland lived in a shanty near the water. There he laboured at constructing a perpetual motion machine, much to the annoyance of his neighbour, Francis Hewson.



Historic plaque for Nine Mile Portage at Memorial Square



Detail from 1833 Hawkins' survey of Barrie

David and Mary Edgar were the second settlers to arrive in Barrie (after Alexander Walker in 1825). The couple occupied one of two government warehouses built at the terminus of the portage.

The Ontario, Simcoe & Huron Union Railroad Company line reached Allandale in 1853. After a decade of dispute, its successor, the Northern Railway, extended the tracks around the bay to the portage terminus. The Company sank the burned hull of their steamer, *Beaver*, and other debris as landfill along the shoreline. When the railway station was erected at the terminus in 1865, the site became known as Station Gore. The station was demolished in 1963.



Barrie waterfront in 1909, showing post office on left and railway station in centre
Carley's Boatworks at far right

In 1884, a federal post office and customs building was built on the Dunlop Street frontage of Station Gore. The Town of Barrie and Townships of Innisfil and Vespra erected the war memorial west of the post office in 1922. The entire site was known as Post Office Square until 1957 when it was renamed Fred Grant Square. This was in honour of Barrie-born journalist and local historian, Fred Grant. The post office building was demolished in 1958. In 1993, Fred Grant Square was renamed Memorial Square and the short section of roadway from Dunlop to Simcoe was named Fred Grant Street.

In 1867, John Carley opened a boatworks east of Mulcaster Street, below Dunlop (present day Bayview Park). His second location was on the west side of Mulcaster. Carley had a large verandah on the waterside of his boathouse. As much as \$350 was paid to rent "Carley's Grand Stand" for viewing regattas and races on the bay.



West of the Square and bounded by Fred Grant, Simcoe, Bayfield, and Dunlop was land set aside in 1836 to generate income for the Church of England. On the site was a row of buildings that faced the water but severed from it in 1865 by the railway tracks. The buildings were destroyed by fire in 1871. The replacement buildings turned their backs to the waterfront and rebuilt facing Dunlop Street. The former glebe block became a parking lot.

In the 1980s, the shoreline between Mulcaster and Bayfield was filled to create Heritage Park with its popular bubble fountain, waterway, gazebo, and gardens.

A government dock at Bayfield Street has existed throughout most of Barrie's history. In 1939, Delaney Boat Lines opened just west of the dock and, in 1950, began manufacturing its line of Del Craft motorboats. Delaney also had a car wash, and was near Myers' boat repair shop. These businesses, with Carley Boatworks, had to close in the 1970s when land was expropriated to widen Lakeshore Drive.



Gazebo at Heritage Park

In 1943, the Lions Club and the Navy League of Canada, Barrie branch, established the Kempenfelt Sea Cadets (Royal Canadian Sea Cadets) for teenaged boys. The Navy League Cadet Corps Chambly was founded for younger boys, aged 10 to 12. Girls were admitted after 1975. In 1984, a boathouse was built on the former Delaney property. The cadets learn boat handling, navigation, swimming, and water safety.



Delaney Boat Lines west of government dock at Bayfield Street



Spirit Catcher

The bird-like sculpture near the Navy League boathouse is called Spirit Catcher. Artist Ron Baird was commissioned to create a large scale piece for Expo '86 in Vancouver, B.C. On June 13, 1987, the Peacock Foundation of Barrie had Spirit Catcher installed in memory of Helen McCrae Peacock. The sculpture symbolizes West Coast aboriginal culture. A "spiritual antenna," it catches spirituality and imagery as a form of communication.

On the west side of Maple Avenue just below Dunlop West stood a large flour mill. Wealthy lumberman Allan Gunn erected the first mill on the site in 1867. Mills were expensive to build and, unfortunately for Gunn, the lumber market went into an economic depression. He went bankrupt. James Wilkinson acquired the property and later added woollen and knitting mills to the flour operation. "On a Saturday it was not unusual a sight to see the street thronged with farmers and their rigs from early morning until late in the day awaiting their turn to unload." By 1900, the business was shipping coal,



Wilkinson Flour Mill on John Street (Maple Avenue) in 1897

wood, and flour by boxcar using the railway siding that ran into its yard. In March 1952, "stark, crumbling walls around still smouldering wheat" were all that remained of Barrie Mills. Fire destroyed it in an hour. It is the present day site of the bus terminal designed as a replica of the railway station at the (Memorial) Square.

West of the mill, at the end of Mary Street, is Barrie's first waterworks. Built in 1891 on the franchise plan, Messrs. Hinds and Bond of Watertown, New York, owned the works while the Town paid an annual hydrant rental fee. Beside the pumphouse was a 158-foot water tower. The tower is gone and a new building has replaced the original, but water is still pumped from the artesian well.



Barrie's first waterworks, 1897; Pearson house on left

The large Georgian style house facing the waterworks (16-18 Mary Street) is the former residence of builder John Pearson. Constructed about 1845, it is protected under the *Ontario Heritage Act* as a significant heritage property.

On the south side of the Pearson house, below Simcoe Street, is the former site of Robert Simpson's Simcoe Steam Brewery. Simpson started brewing about 1836 in the village of Kempenfeldt, east of Barrie. After his brewery burned, he built across the bay at Tollendal. Once again the "dread destroyer" struck and he moved to the Mary Street location in 1849. When Barrie became a Town in 1871, Simpson was the first mayor. About 1900, the brewery was bought by Messrs. Anderton and Company and soon boasted the "best known in Canada" champagne ale and celebrated XXX porter. The brewery and Simpson's house nearby are demolished.

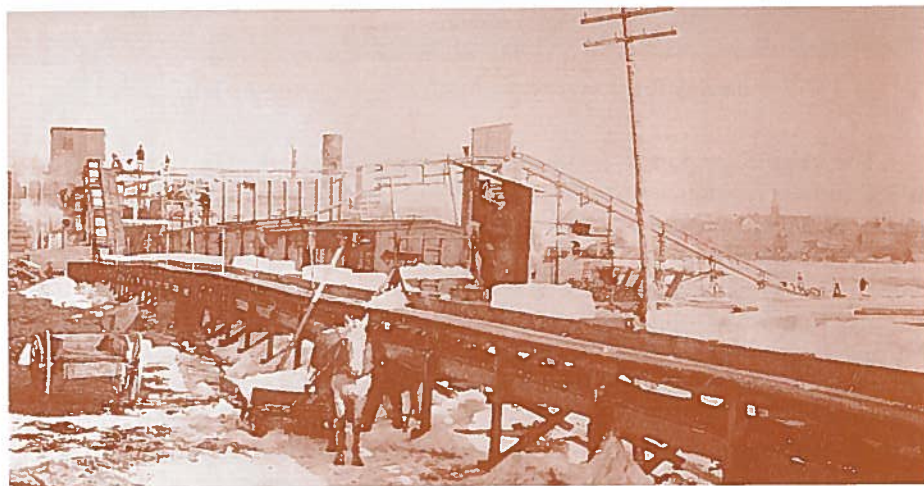


Robert Simpson Brewery

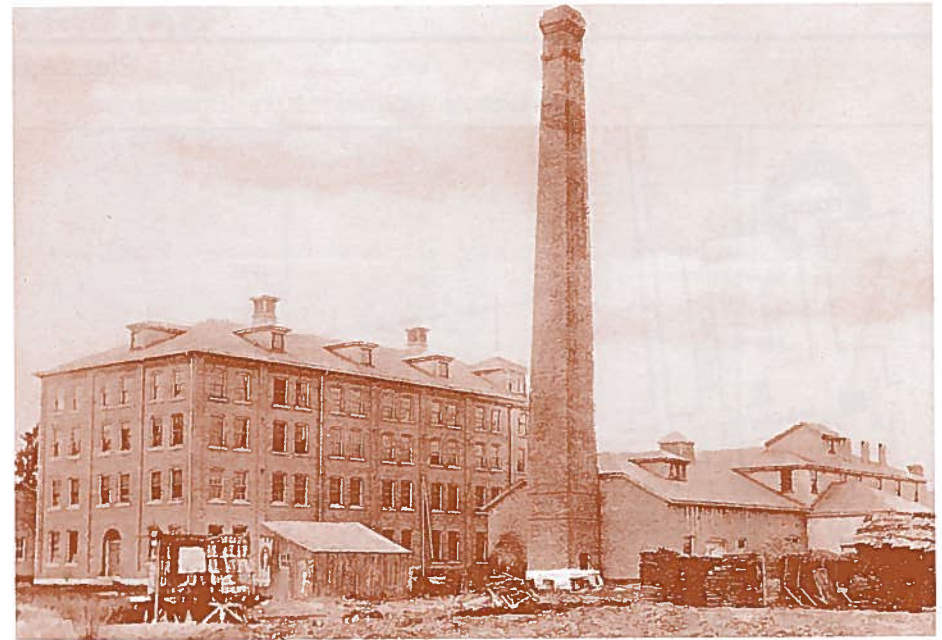
Ice harvesting began as a seasonal industry on Lake Simcoe in the 1870s. The spring fed water and cold winters combined to produce an excellent quality product. Once the ice reached up to 20 inches thick, companies such as the Lake Simcoe Ice and Fuel Company set up saws and conveyors on the lake. The

quantity of ice removed some winters was so great that the railways were unable to ship the supply in the winter season. Temporary icehouses covering several acres were built near the end of Mary Street and into Allandale to store blocks of ice packed in sawdust, ready for shipping to cities across North America. Although artificial ice was introduced in 1922, ice harvesting continued on Lake Simcoe until the 1950s.

After buying the Graham tannery on Dunlop East, in 1900 John and Alex Sinclair built a 5-storey main building and several outbuildings stretching from the south end of High Street, west to Bradford Street. Tan bark at their Barrie Tanning Company was piled an average of 13 feet high ready for the production of coloured leathers for suitcases, purses, shoe uppers, harnesses, and bookbinding materials. The tannery closed in 1979 and the buildings were demolished.



Ice harvesting on Kempenfelt Bay



Barrie Tannery

The Barrie marina, between the Navy League boathouse and Bunker's Creek, was established in the 1960s as part of the lakeshore development project.

On Bradford Street facing the tannery site and visible from the marina is Prince of Wales Public School. Built in 1876-1877 as West Ward School, it may be the longest operating school in the region.

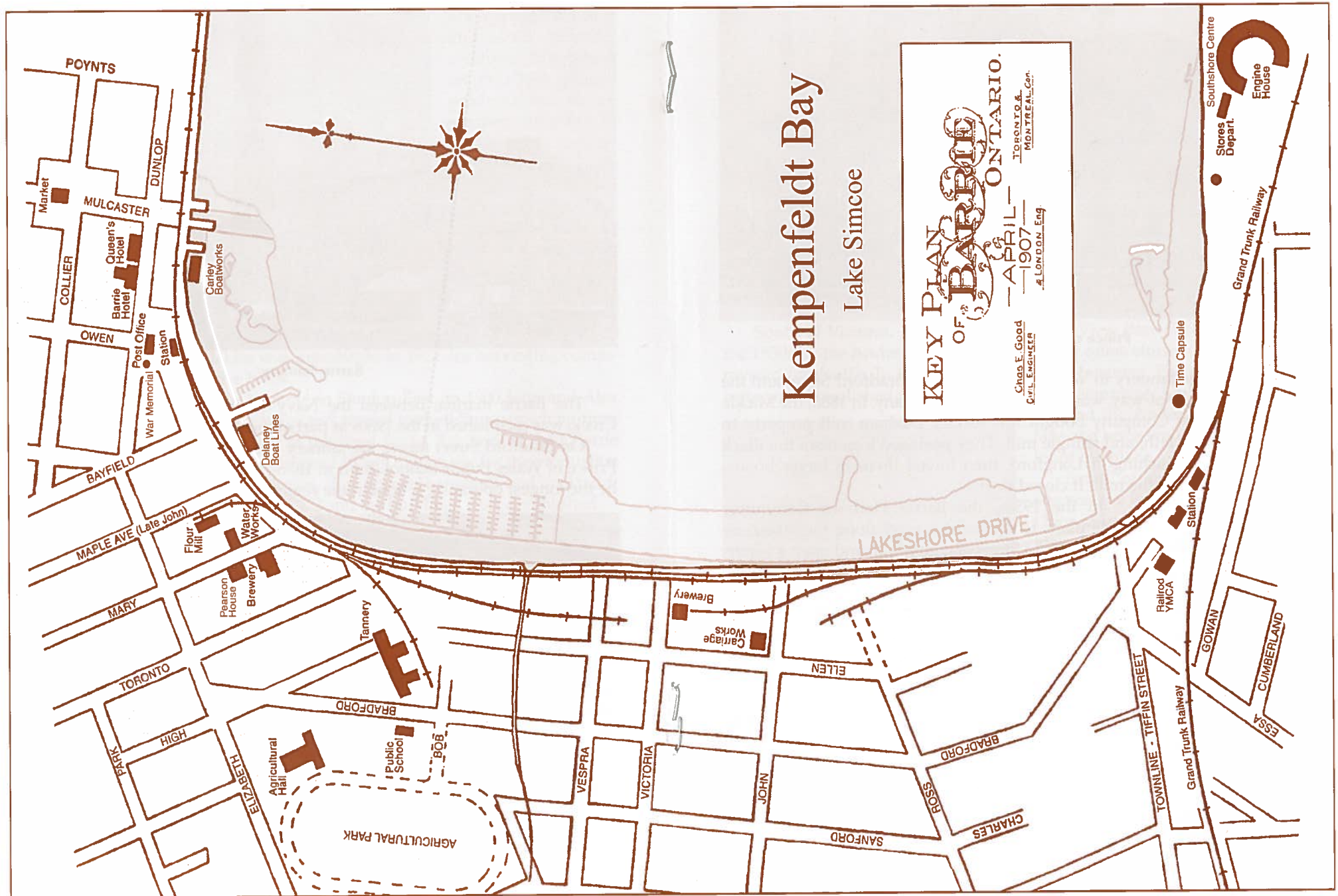


Barrie Marina, 2004

WATERFRONT TOUR MAP

Please Rotate for Viewing

Not to scale Modified in 2005 Ghosted outline of current waterfront overlaid on 1907 map Locations are approximate





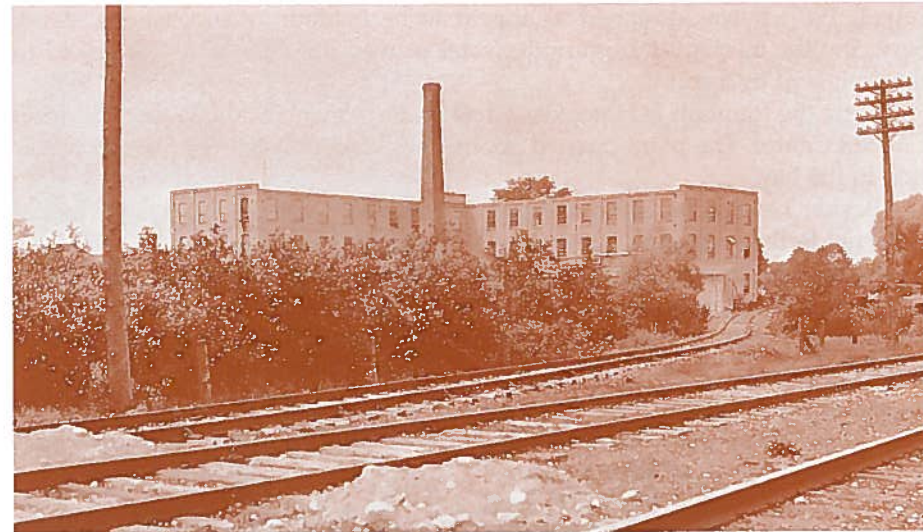
Prince of Wales Public School

South from the tannery to Vespra Street, between Bradford Street and the former railway right-of-way, was Barrie Lumber Company. In 1888, the Mickle & Dymont Lumber Company bought this former Durham mill property to construct a lumber, lath, and shingle mill. They portaged logs from the Black River to Lake Couchiching at Longford, then towed them in larger booms across Lake Simcoe to the mill. It closed in 1934.



In the 1950s, the Barrie Harbour Committee made plans to construct a road along the lakeshore between Tiffin Street and Bayfield, and open a waterfront park. The railway tracks severed access to the water and there was no road or right-of-way along the lakeshore. Swimmers had to cross the tracks and walk about 30 feet to reach the change houses and warm water beaches created by three large sand bars. This was no easy task in the summer when as many as 14 trains passed through Barrie each day.

Beginning about 1961, the shallow water was filled to create Lakeshore Drive from Bayfield to Tiffin, and Centennial Park from just north of Victoria Street to John Street. Mayor Leslie E. Cook officially opened Centennial Park in July 1967. Three flagstaves at Victoria Street mark the focal point of the park. The area contains several memorial plaques.



Former Barrie Carriage Company

South of Victoria, east of Ellen, was Fair View Brewery. Likely opened in the 1850s by the Andertons, the family history offers stories of absconding and mysterious deaths. In 1916, fire destroyed the business. Their residence on Victoria was demolished in 1986 for a retail development. A plaque to the brewery and the Andertons is on the east face of a brick wall in the east parking lot of the plaza.



Rotary fountain before linked to the shore by a spit

South of the Anderton brewery site was the Barrie Carriage Company. Opened in 1904, it manufactured buggies, carriages, and cutters that were shipped throughout Canada. About 1915, vice-president Simon Dymont negotiated with the Bell Motor Car Company of York, Pennsylvania, to assemble the Bell automobile in Barrie. Less than 40 automobiles were produced before 1926, when the Town had to take possession in default of loan payments. The site was sold to Clarke & Clarke Leathers of Toronto, which sold to Robson-Lang Leathers Ltd. in 1946. This landmark was demolished about 1986.

The Rotary Club of Barrie presented the fountain at Centennial Park on

July 1, 1967. It was designed to appear to be floating as an offshore island. Servicing the mechanics from underwater proved difficult, so it was linked to the mainland by a spit.

Near the fountain is Hotchkiss Creek, which encircles the Water Pollution Control Centre. The plant opened about 1940 in response to increasing pollution in the bay.

Beside Lakeshore Drive are two artifacts of railway history: Canadian National Railway Steam Locomotive 1531 (in service from 1910 to 1959), and a caboose. The locomotive is displayed "In memory of William Hockett No. 1 Engineer, John Harvie No. 1 Conductor, and all railwaymen who served the OS & LHRR and its successors, 1853-1967." [Ontario Simcoe & Lake Huron Rail Road]

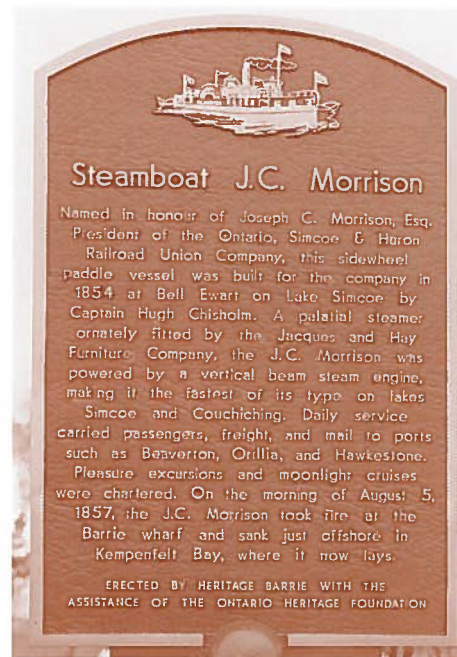


Canadian National Railway Steam Locomotive 1531

The section of park from John to Tiffin streets represents another phase of waterfront development. It also contains commemorative plaques.

For over a century, Barrie relied on the passenger and freight service of steamboats. Moonlight excursions or island picnics were offered by dozens of palatial steamers on the bay until the 1920s.

At the bottom of Kempenfelt Bay, about 30 feet down, is the wreck of the *J.C. Morrison*. Built for \$60,000, the *Morrison* was a sidewheel steamer launched in 1854 by the railway company. It was ornately finished with velvet plush coverings and carved wood detailing crafted by the New Lowell branch of the famous Jacques and Hay Furniture Company of Toronto. Its purpose was to meet the train and carry passengers, cargo, and mail around the lake. Three years later, the *Morrison* caught fire at the Barrie wharf and was cast adrift.



Steamer *J.C. Morrison* plaque

connecting link for five branch lines. The village was annexed into Barrie in 1897.

The intersection of Tiffin, Essa, and Bradford was Allandale's downtown. The 3-storey brick building near the intersection was built in 1907 as the Railroad YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association). It offered overnight accommodation for railway men who were "deadheaded" in Allandale awaiting their next run. Part of the building housed a branch of the Bank of Toronto. To the rear was a 50-foot water tank where children, trying to catch stray racing pigeons, often got wet in the attempt.

After an apprehensive moment when it drifted back to shore, the fire brigade again sent the blazing ship out into the water. It sank in the middle of the bay.

Also below the surface of the bay may be Barrie's sea serpent, known affectionately as Kempenfelt Kelly. "There are those who profess to disbelieve in all such things as sea serpents." With a "fish-shaped tail," "fan-like claws," the "head of a horse," but "eyes like a cow," and leaving wide trails in the sand as it returns to the deep, the existence of the serpent is hard to deny.

Tiffin Street is the boundary between the former village of Allandale and Barrie. For more than a century, Allandale was the hub of central Ontario's rail transportation as the divisional headquarters and



Steamer *Islay*, about 1905



Railroad YMCA, about 1910

The adjacent Allandale station was designed in 1905 by the Grand Trunk Railway (Canadian National Railways after 1918) to offer patrons modern day comforts. The architectural firm of Spier and Rohns integrated a new passenger depot and elegant restaurant, with an existing brick office building. Each



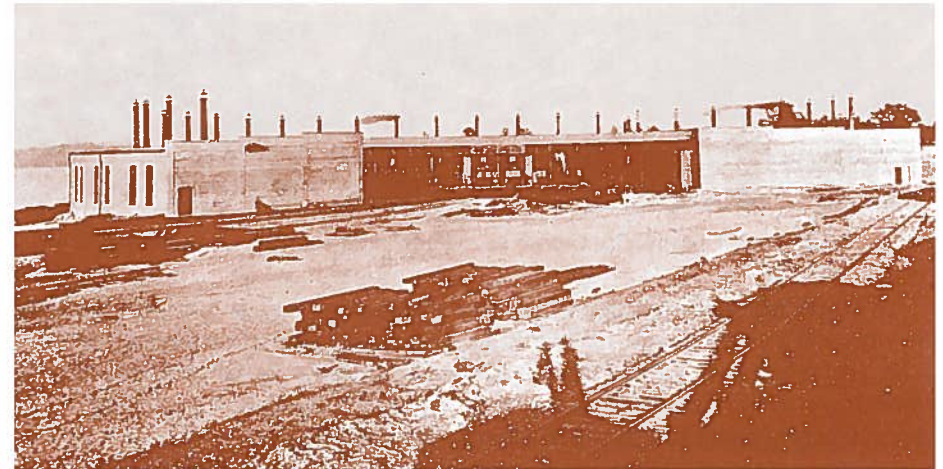
Grand Trunk Railway station, about 1910



Time Capsule monument in Allandale Station Park

was linked by an open breezeway. The station featured a tower and a waiting room with a commanding view of approaching trains. The tracks followed the curve of the shoreline. Although closed by the mid 1980s, this "flagship" station is considered unique in Canada for its style and quality.

At the waterfront across from the station is Allandale Station Park. The area is the former site of the railway crane shed and coal chutes (at Holgate Creek). It features a large sundial, below which is a time capsule vault containing memorabilia of Barrie citizens. It was assembled by the Barrie Historical Association to commemorate the New Millennium in 2000, and will be openend in 2053.



Grand Trunk Railway roundhouse



GTR Master Mechanic's Office and Stores building; roundhouse on right

Southshore Community Centre opened in 1993, and incorporates the 1903 Grand Trunk Railway Master Mechanic's Office and Stores building. To the east are the ruins of the massive roundhouse and machine shop where steam locomotives were repaired. The Offices and Stores building is protected by the *Ontario Heritage Act*.



Southshore Community Centre in 2003; roundhouse site on upper left

Swimming, boating, fishing, windsurfing, even winter horseracing held on a one-mile track cleared 60 feet wide, have been enjoyed on the bay. Skaters with umbrellas have glided across the "sheet of glass" as far as Hawkestone. Waterfront band concerts and dances held in decorated pavilions have delighted generations of Barrie residents. These pastimes as well as winter carnivals, cross-country skiing, cycling, walking, and annual festivals are a few of the pleasures to be discovered along Barrie's waterfront.

What is a Heritage Designation?

The protection of significant cultural heritage resources is an important mandate of Heritage Barrie as a Municipal Heritage Committee. The *Ontario Heritage Act* allows municipal councils to protect properties that have heritage value or interest to the community. This protection takes the form of a bylaw which identifies the significance and heritage attributes of the property. The bylaw does not prevent future alteration nor does it require the owner to restore the building. Its purpose is to ensure that any proposed changes to the property conserve its heritage significance. As of 2005, 15 Barrie properties are designated. The former Allandale railway station is protected by a heritage conservation easement with the Ontario Heritage Trust.

Photograph Credits

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