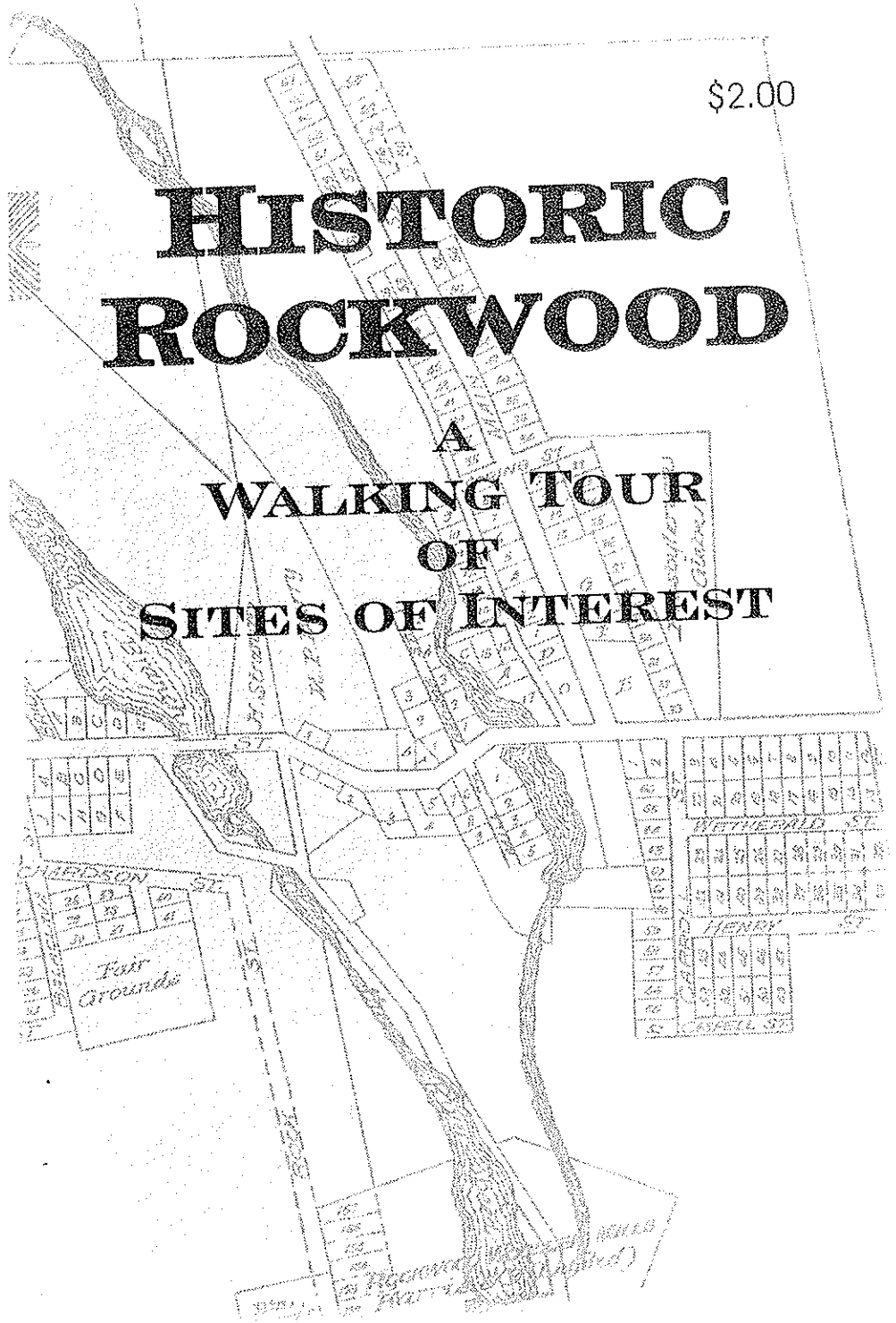


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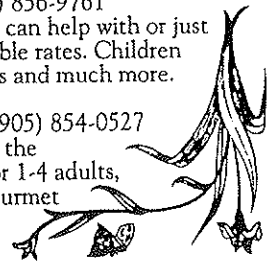
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Heritage Eramosa has been pleased to share archival material and contacts in order to assist in the preparation of this tour guide.

Walking gives one time to pause and appreciate the architectural features, the way the road turns and why, allowing an insight into the history and development of this beautiful village.

To our visitors and residents we express a keen welcome to enjoy Rockwood. Take a while to linger and look.

Copies of documents, memories, anecdotes are always welcome to add to the information that has been carefully collected for many years. Each one adds a little more to our understanding of the past. Help in collecting and collating is especially welcome.

Jean Martin

The Rockwood and Eramosa
Business Association

&

The Rockwood Information Centre

would like to thank the following for their contribution to this book

Bernice Bacon

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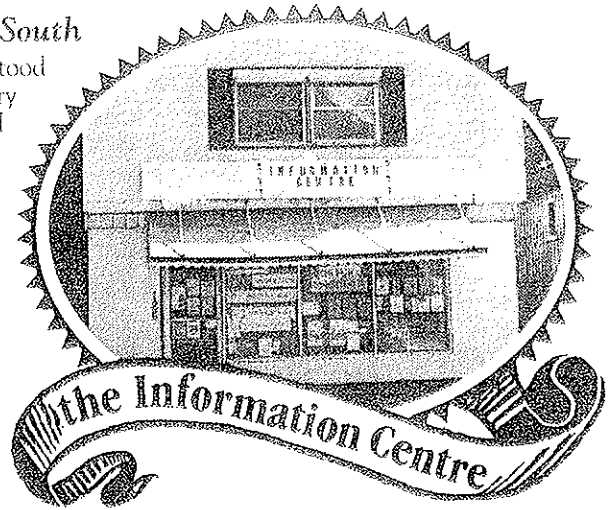
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The people of Rockwood and Eramosa

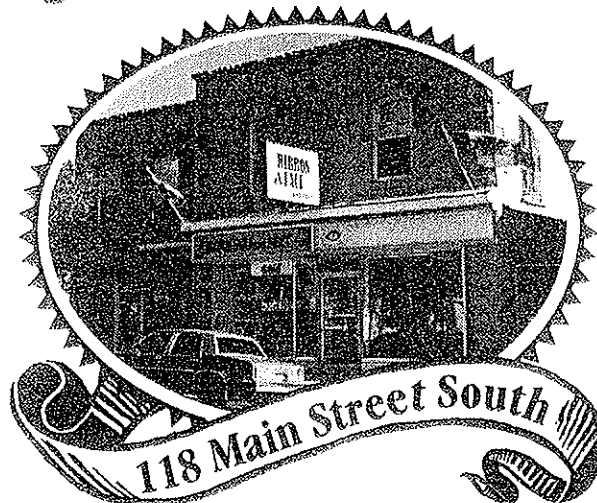
We could not have produced this book
without all their help.

1 126 Main Street South

Numerous buildings have stood on this site including a livery stable. During World War I the army recruiting office was on this site. The existing building, which was erected in the late 1950's, has been a store, a restaurant and now houses three non-profit organizations, including the Rockwood Information Centre. Information about the area and southern Ontario in general is available here. There are also public washrooms.



2 118 Main Street South

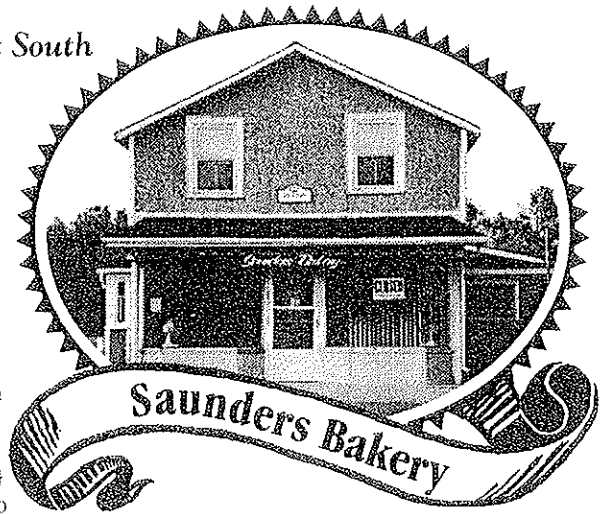


Date of construction of this lovely stone building is thought to be 1884, but tenant Doug Black wonders about the accuracy of this date. Stonemasons capable of this type of work were in Rockwood at an earlier date - during the 1860's. However, what is certain is that it was well crafted with walls over two feet thick and attractive wood flooring which has been restored and is a feature of the main floor of the building today.

Squire Henry Strange sold this parcel of land to Agnes McLeod in 1865 and she is listed as its owner until 1893. It was unusual for a woman to own property in those days and, interestingly, the assessment rolls show her husband as the owner despite the fact that the title is in her name. The building has been used for several purposes including a tailor, cooper, grocery and hardware. During the early 1900's, the store was "Grieve's Bakery and Confectionery" - possibly an outlet for baked goods manufactured at the bakery just a couple of doors up the street. Today the building is owned and has been restored by Hubert Biemann, owner of La Vieille Auberge and is used as a law office by Doug Black. Upstairs are two large apartments in the space which was for many years the Gladstone Hall - a meeting place for the Ancient Order of Foresters.

③ 104 Main Street South

Saunders Bakery is an institution in Rockwood. The building has always been tenanted by bakers, with records showing John William Wright, baker, as its owner in 1864. In the early 1900's, it was purchased by Simon Grieve who died prematurely in 1905. Pete and Nellie Saunders began operating the bakery in 1913. It remained in the Saunders family until 1994 - over 70 years - until Herb



Saunders and his sister Bernice Bacon, the children of Pete and Nellie, retired in 1994 and sold the bakery to two long-term employees. Bernice Saunders Bacon recalls the family living above the bakery with the family kitchen behind the bakery and the rest of the living quarters upstairs. The whole family was actively engaged in the business with the teenage Bernice sometimes driving the delivery wagon throughout the township if the regular driver was ill. "I used to know everybody in the whole township," says Bernice. Saunders bread, donuts and "French Ginger" cookies have become a legend throughout Ontario. Many famous people have stopped to enjoy these quality products, including John Diefenbaker, prime minister of Canada in the 1960's. Bernice Bacon remembers a well known Kitchener industrialist who arrived in a chauffeur driven car - but always came in to say hello to the owners and pick out his own bread. Today, under the new ownership of Brenda Pettitt and Paul Holman, the tradition of baking excellence continues in Rockwood.

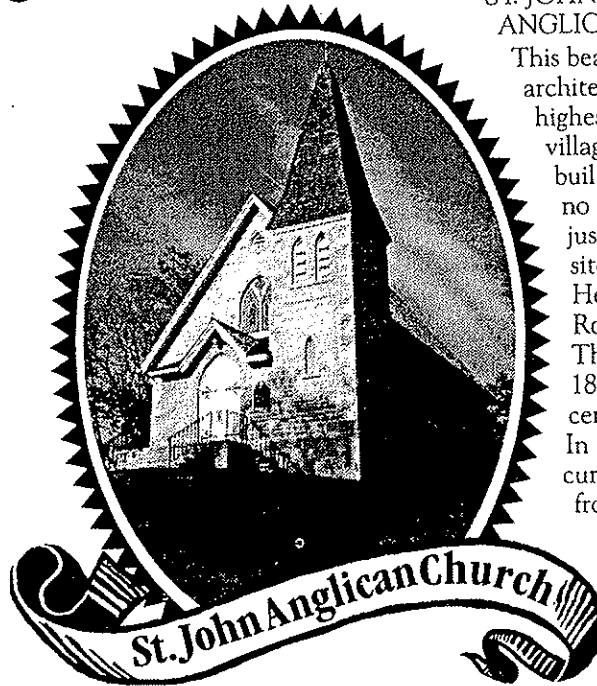
④ 142 Main Street North



Originally the Lawrence Building, erected in about 1905, housed the Traders Bank on one side of the building and a series of businesses, including clothing store, pool hall, several hardware stores and a general store on the other side. Half of the building burnt in the 1960's and the Rockwood Hotel was built. The side that

housed the Traders Bank later became a tin smith, drug store, grocery store, restaurant, apartments and now Jewel's. The original safe for the bank is where the washrooms are currently located.

5 112 Main Street South



**ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST
ANGLICAN CHURCH**

This beautiful little church is an architectural gem, built on the highest point of land in the village. It is truly a "church built on the rock" as there is no foundation or basement - just solid limestone. This site was donated by Squire Henry Strange, one of Rockwood's earliest settlers. The first church, built in 1852, was actually where the cenotaph is located today. In the early 1880's, the current church was built from quarried limestone.

Unfortunately it is not open for visits.

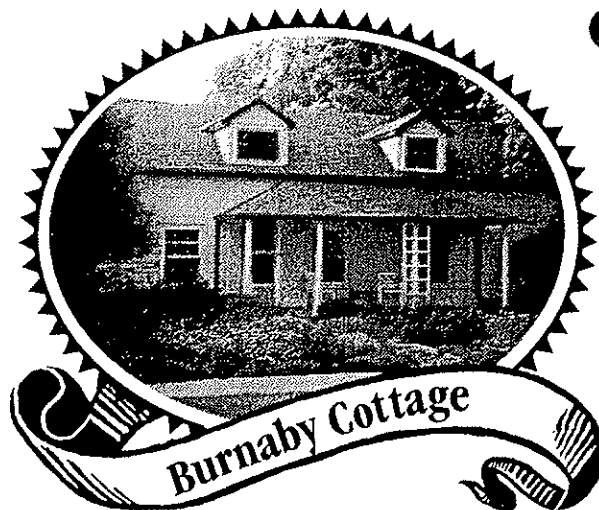
Sunday service is at 9:30 A.M. Over the years St. John's has been linked with

various other congregations and, in the early 1900's, the rector in Acton, having no other means of transportation, would walk from Acton to Rockwood to tend his charge.

According to current rector David Howells there is room for 110 "friendly people" in the church. In 1983, the cross and rooster on the steeple were donated by Josef Drenters, the well known sculptor who made his home at the Rockwood Academy until his death. The rooster is not really a weather vane as you might suppose. In keeping with European tradition, Josef fixed the rooster atop the cross facing west to broadcast the rising of the sun.



Many of the buildings in this booklet are private residences.
PLEASE RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY



6 136 Guelph Street

This private residence is believed to be the oldest building still standing in Rockwood. It was built by the original settler Richard Harris, likely in the 1820's. Typical of settlers' cottages, it is built of log with a main room downstairs and a loft above. Over the years it has been clad with a variety of materials - most recently vinyl siding.

This cottage would originally have been located a considerable distance south of where it currently stands - closer to the Rockwood Academy. The property deed states that the Bolton family purchased this lot from Squire Henry Strange in 1873. It is believed that the cottage was moved shortly after.

The cottage has had several additions. The most interesting is the section at the right which was added as a free-standing two room cottage for "mother". This part has now been joined inside and has a continuous roof outside.

The current residents have lived here since 1974, first using the house as a summer property and now as a fulltime residence. During the filming of the movie *Agnes of God* at the Rockwood Academy, Meg Tilley, her baby and a nanny stayed at the cottage.

7 Squire's Lodge

160 Guelph Street

This seniors' residence is a recent addition to the Rockwood landscape. It has 26 apartments for seniors and is managed by a volunteer board of directors. The interesting thing about this building is its exterior appearance. The design was created by an award-winning architect and, while the shape was found acceptable, people objected to the multi-coloured siding. It is said that opponents called Rockwood a "red brick community" and wanted something more in keeping. However, apparently the architect won out and the building was finished with the coloured siding which is still there today. Sarcastic individuals still maintain that the builder got a good deal on leftovers - and just used what he had! And that's the beginning of another local legend.

While on the walking tour why not check out the local shops and services listed in the back of this book?

8 J. J. Hill Plaque

178 Guelph Street

The student from the Rockwood Academy who became most famous was James Jerome Hill. He was born in 1838 near Rockwood and attended the Academy until having to leave school to help his mother after the death of his father. After working for some years in the Rockwood area, James went to the northern United States where, by a combination of hard work and innovative ideas, he was instrumental in the development of the railways and is, by some, credited with being the greatest railway builder of any age. Mr. Hill never forgot his roots in Rockwood and his old teacher, Mr. Wetherald. He invited Mr. Wetherald to his home in St. Paul, Minnesota and offered him a position as teacher to his own children. While Mr. Wetherald, by this time a Quaker minister, did not accept the offer, one of his sons went to St. Paul and became successful in the railway business.

9 Millicent Milroy's home

132 Richardson Street

One of Rockwood's interesting characters was Millicent Milroy who died in 1985 at over 90 years of age. Although the appearance of the home is greatly altered, she lived in this then poor house on Richardson Street and could be seen walking around the village poorly dressed. It is likely that she lived very frugally, though this is hard to confirm.

Millicent maintained that not only was she the daughter of King James of Scotland but that she was married to King Edward VIII of England the Duke of Windsor. Though it is difficult to confirm this information, there are local residents who say that letters, possibly cheques, used to arrive regularly from England.

Millicent's tombstone in a cemetery in Cambridge, Ont. reads: Millicent Mary Maureen Marguerite, Princess of the Royal House of Stuart, wife of Edward VIII, the Duke of Windsor. Millicent claims that she met Edward when he visited Cambridge (then Galt) in 1919 and they entered into a morganatic marriage - a legal arrangement but with the agreement that the wife and any offspring would have no claim on the husband's estate or title.

While Millicent's claim cannot be proven, her story remains a cherished part of Rockwood lore.

10 Retaining Wall on Main Street

This wall was built in 1933 according to the date stone. A Rockwood resident remembers her father telling of working on the wall and being advised by a passer-by that it "wouldn't last"! Here it stands over 60 years later.

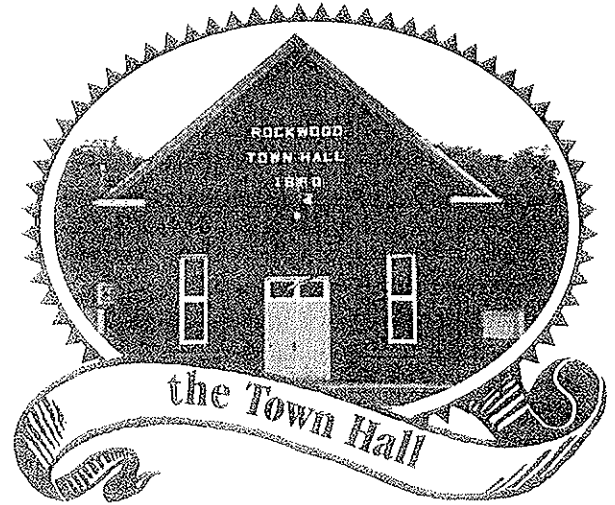
191 Main Street South.

The Town Hall was built in 1870. At that time, more than being the seat of local government, it was the locale for community activities. Over the years, the Town Hall has housed everything from community meetings to dances to daycares. It is still very much a community hall, constantly in demand for a multitude of activities.

The original building was made of board and batten construction as you see it today. This was a very practical method of building. Wood was cheap, plentiful and easy to work with. Wide boards formed the main cover. The thinner battens were then placed over the joints between the wide boards, sealing up cracks and keeping out cold winter winds.

Over the years, the Town Hall exterior suffered through various sheathing trends. By the 1980's it was in a state of disrepair both inside and out, and many residents thought it should be torn down. However, in the mid 1980's, a citizens' group undertook a restoration project. They pitched in to raise funds, study plans and, finally, brought their hammers, saws and nails and went to work.

An act of parliament dated 1941 decided the Town Hall to the police village of Rockwood. This was unusual because police villages are not customarily allowed to own property. However, with the removal of police village status in 1994, the title to the Town Hall has been transferred to the Township of Eramosa.



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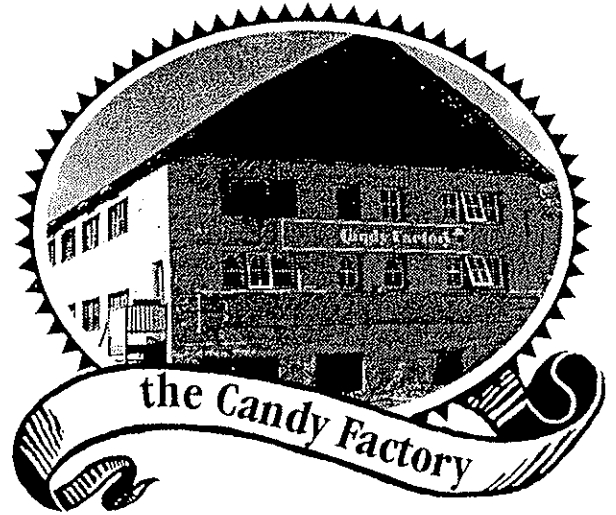
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12 197 Main Street South.

This building has played a role in Rockwood history since the late 1800's. It started out as an enclosed skating rink - complete with part of the stone walls you see today, but no roof. In the early 1900's the second storey was added and was the Terrace Gardens Dance Hall for a number of years. During the 1920's the Guaranteed Car Battery Factory occupied the building for a short time. In 1945 it became the home of Schneider's Reliable Sweets and thus gained the name "The Candy Factory". Schneider's has left Rockwood and the building is being refurbished to house smaller stores - but the memory of the Candy Factory lingers on.



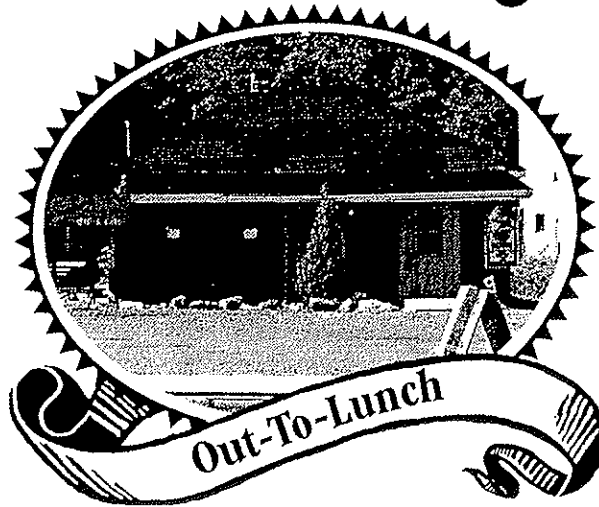
13 203 Main Street South.

The Out-to-Lunch Ghost

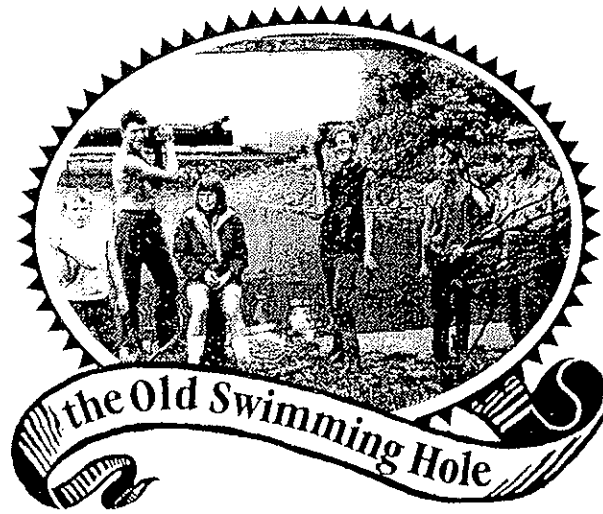
Nobody knows for sure, but there seems to be a presence in the building which houses the Out to Lunch restaurant. Is it a ghost - or just a draft?

Owner Donna Yurek says she has often felt this presence in the old part of the building. Patrons will occasionally ask if someone has been smoking a pipe in the restaurant. People also

vow that they have seen a reflection in a mirror or a window of a man in a grey suit. Of course, when they turn around, he is gone! Sometimes there is mysterious music and furniture which was in one spot and may be inexplicably found in another location. If you're sensitive to spirits, visit Out to Lunch and check it out for yourself.



14 The Old Swimming Hole



Generations of Rockwood children learned to swim in the "swimming hole" above the mill dam on the Eramosa River. After the swimming area was fenced off by the Rapps, owners of the old grist mill, a piece of Rockwood tradition passed into the realm of memories.

15 The Grist Mill 201 Main Street South

The Henry Strange grist mill was built about 1843. Since then it has had several owners: John R. Harris, C. W. Hortop and James Milne. In 1977 the mill was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Mort Rapp and was converted into a private residence. The interior retains much of the look of the old mill with the original floors and ceilings and stone walls but with the modern luxuries of electricity and heating added!

16 255 Main Street South

This church is plain by the standards of typical gothic church architecture. The reason for this is that the church was originally the meeting house of the Brethren, the plain folk or, as we may better know them, the Quakers. The Harris family, the first settlers, were Quakers and their religious beliefs had a strong influence on the emerging village. The meeting house was built about 1853 and remained a Quaker centre of worship until 1925. When the Presbyterian church on Harris St. became a United church after church union in 1925, the small congregation remaining Presbyterian needed a place of worship and bought the Quaker building. While plain on the outside, the church is well appointed inside.



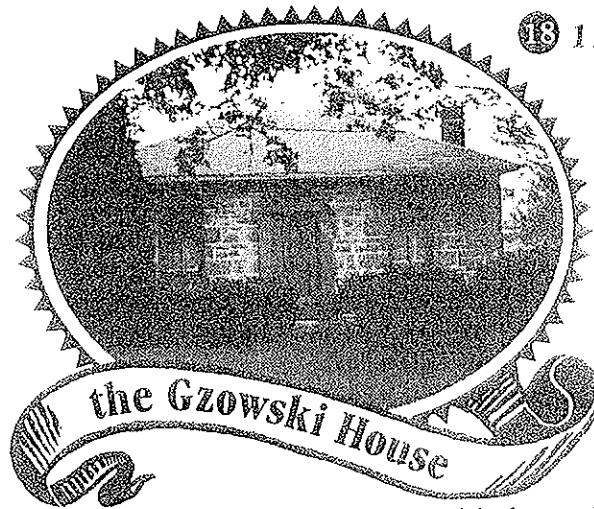
17 267 Main Street South

This beautiful building was built as the residence of the owner of the grist mill. It is another example of traditional architecture with its graceful lines and double doors. It is currently owned by the Drenters family. The house is of quarried limestone. The double front doors are an elegant touch on this Georgian style house.



18 112 Old Quarry Road

There are several interesting houses on Old Quarry Road including the lovely stone cottage which was once occupied by well known radio host Peter Gzowski, descendent of Sir Casimir Gzowski who played an important role in the early development of Rockwood. This cottage is interesting because the "functional" entrance is from the back and a level lower



than what appears to be the main part of the house. This back is where the kitchen is located. Everything else is on the upper level - living room, dining room, bedrooms, washrooms, etc. This is considered an awkward layout by modern standards but may have made more sense in the days when a serving girl would be responsible for what went on "below stairs".

19 The Diamond's House 363 Main Street

This house was built as a manse for the Methodist church and has such elegant features as dome ceilings in the bedrooms and gothic windows. The front door still has the original bell and key. As with several of Rockwood's oldest buildings, this house is built directly on the rock which is never far below the surface. Once a space was cleared on the rock, tree trunks were hewn into serviceable beams and the house was erected on this solid foundation. This house is of



"bubble" construction. This means that there are two separate walls - interior and exterior - with a space or "bubble" between. This was doubtless an early method of insulating. The house now has vinyl siding and insulation has been

20 The Groundskeeper's Cottage

110 Frederick Street

This stone home was originally built as the groundskeeper's cottage for the Rockwood Academy.

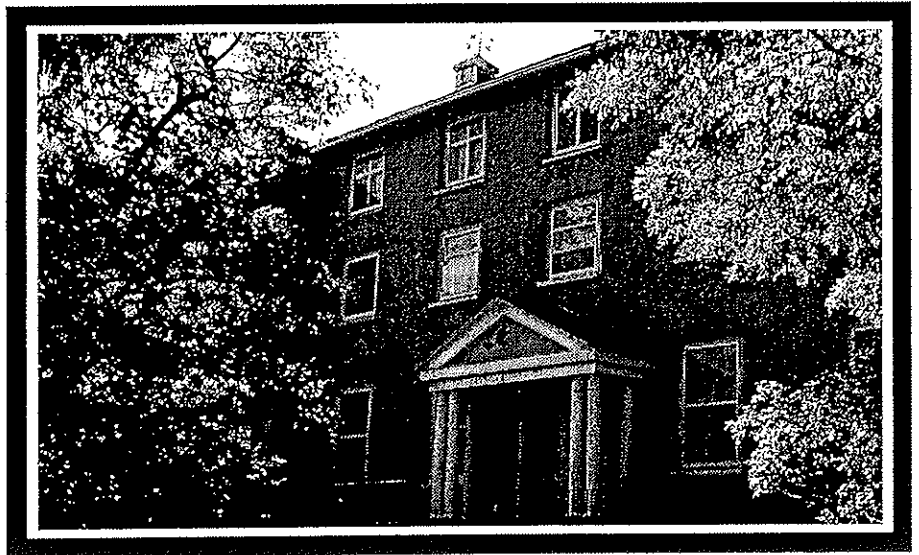
21 Rockwood Academy

This magnificent old structure was built in 1850 as a school for boys. It operated as a school until 1883. William Wetherald, a Quaker, was its first principal and railway magnate J. J. Hill, who is commemorated in a plaque on Guelph Street, was its most illustrious student. In keeping with the religious inclination of the Quakers, the Academy provided a simple but strict and thorough education. After its years as a school, the Academy passed through numerous hands and had fallen into sad disrepair when purchased by Josef Drenters in 1960. It became literally his life's work to restore the Academy and its outbuildings. Today, as well as the main building, a log barn is habitable and the chapel on the property has been beautifully restored. It is said that Josef greatly resembled old Principal Wetherald and believed, in his mystic way, that he might be a reincarnation of this man, sent to save the Academy from its derelict state. The restoration of this grand building has been called by some "Josef Drenter's Greatest Sculpture".

Josef Drenters bequeathed the property to the Ontario Heritage Foundation with an agreement that it still be available to the Drenters family as a residence.

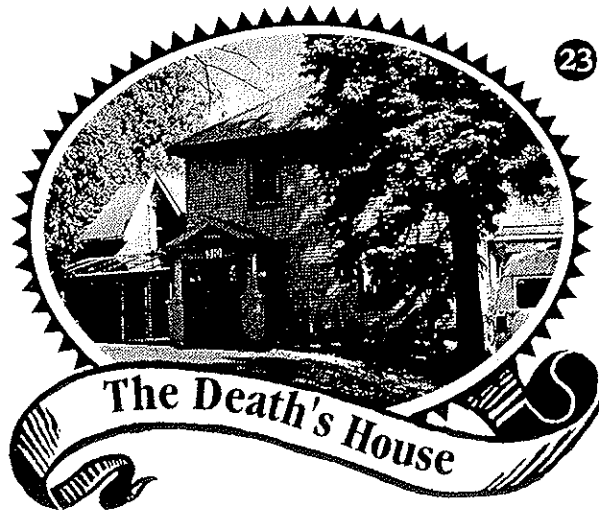
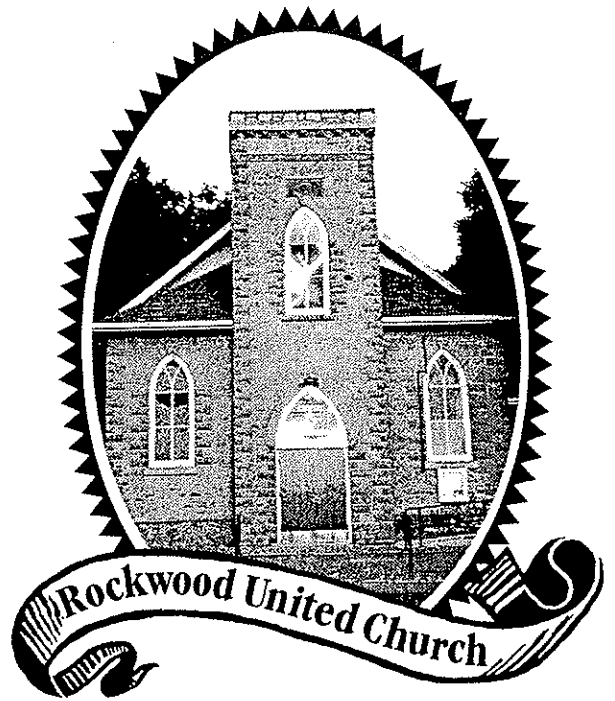
Andreas Drenters, a sculptor, and his family still live in the Academy. Because it is a private residence, it is not open for tours.

The movie *Agnes of God* was filmed at the Academy.



22 119 Harris Street

Built in 1867 as the Presbyterian Church at a cost of \$950. In 1925 the Presbyterian, Congregationalist and Methodist churches across Canada joined together and the United church was formed. Throughout the years there have been many additions, including the chimes in the tower which were put there in 1958. In early 1995 the stained glass windows to the left of the main doors were donated by the United Church Women and the Sunday School. The other stained glass windows have been donated in memory of family and former clergy.



23 310 Main Street

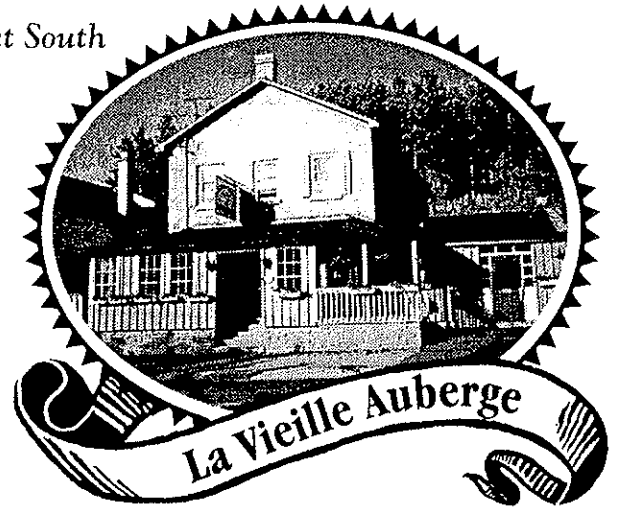
Although it is difficult to tell from its appearance today, this house is one of the older residences in Rockwood, having been built in the 1840's. Its current owners, Ray and Betty Death, know that the original settlers came from Ireland and built their home in the style with which they were familiar.

The settlers started by digging down into the earth until they came to

solid stone. They then excavated some more to create a sound foundation. The stone taken out of the "hole" was used to construct the walls of their dwelling. The house started out as a simple cottage - one room up and one room down. It

24 262 Main Street South

Built around 1895, this building has housed a chicken hatchery, an electrical appliance shop, a religious meeting hall and a tea room. In 1977 it became La Vieille Auberge, deemed one of the finest French restaurants in the Toronto area by food critics. It is owned and operated by Hubert and Suzanne Biemann.



25 238 Main Street South

One of Rockwood's most elegant and historical homes is Strange House - residence of Squire Henry Strange, one of the earliest settlers to the area. The Strange family had already settled in Guelph and were obviously in favour with those in power. A family story claims that Henry was



offered property in Guelph by his father or the opportunity to take up 1500 acres of virgin land in Eramosa township. A surveyor by occupation, Henry opted for the tract of land and thus became one of the earliest settlers of Rockwood and its most prominent landowner.

The first part of Henry's house was built about 1838 and consisted of what is today the back section. This was a reasonably common practice - build a small but serviceable cottage of "two rooms up and two down" and then add on as time, money and materials allowed. In the case of the Stranges, the main part of the house was built in the 1860's and shows some of the best workmanship of the period. Limestone, taken from Strange's own quarries and worked by the finest of skilled Scots masons, forms the walls. Interior walls and ceilings show the fine craft of Italian plasterers. The skills of Italian masons were in demand when the



railway bridges were being built, but in the winter they were laid off. Colonel Strange offered them lodging in return for their work on his house.

An old stone barn behind the house designed by the Colonel's friend Sir Casimir Gzowski, was long a village landmark but it was demolished some years ago. The new development behind Strange House is named Stone Barn Estates in recognition of a unique piece of Rockwood architecture.

These days Strange House has been refurbished and is available for conferences, meetings, weddings, bed & breakfast and other special events.

26 132 Main Street South



The original structure built on this spot in 1852 still forms a part of the current building. It was of post and beam construction, likely a private home of a storey and a half. The front part, of rubble stone construction with cut stone corners, was built in 1870 and became the New Dominion Hotel. Later, in the 1900's, when the temperance movement was strong, the owner refused to

sell liquor and his establishment became known as the Temperance Hotel - a refuge for sober travellers who were loath to enter establishments where there was drinking!

In the 1920's this location became a boarding house. It is told that a number of men who lived here walked eight miles to Acton every day for work - a round trip of 16 miles in addition to a long day of work. Since those days, the building has housed a number of antique shops and the village library. It is currently home to a number of unique businesses.



The Rockwood Conservation Area is operated by the Grand River Conservation Authority. It is open from May 1 to October 15. Besides being a lovely place to camp, swim and picnic, the park contains sites of interests to residents and visitors alike. The Woollen Mill was started in 1867 by Richard Harris, with the stone structure being built in 1884. The mill operated from 1867 until 1919, then reopened for a short time in the 1930's. The mill and the surrounding property were sold to the Conservation Authority in 1959. Much of the structure was destroyed by fire in 1965. Careful inspection along the river might turn up remnants of the foundations of workers' cottages. The preserved ruin of the old Harris Woollen Mill, the dam and millpond, Old Valley Road and the caves and pot holes are all of historical, architectural and geological interest and go a long way to explaining why Rockwood exists today.

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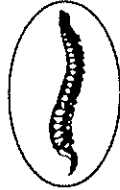
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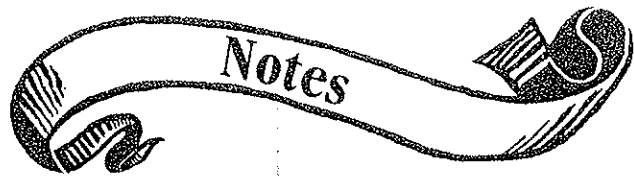
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