

## OXFORD MILLS:

At its height, Oxford Mills was the main centre of Oxford-on-Rideau Township and boasted a population of over 500. There were hotels, stores, grist and saw mills, a cheese factory, and an active social and educational life. After amalgamation in 1998, Oxford Mills became one hamlet in the new Municipality of North Grenville. But it remains one of most scenic places in the Municipality, with a living history and memories of a great past.

### 1 Anglican Church 103 Maplewood Avenue



The cornerstone was laid for St. John's the Evangelist Anglican Church in 1869. Before that, services were held in Magee's Hall on Water Street. It was the first church built in the Anglican Parish of Oxford-on-Rideau. The stone was quarried at the Harris quarry, and the church was built in

the English Style. It was deconsecrated in January, 2007 and was subsequently renovated as a private residence.

### 2 Township Hall 100 Maplewood Avenue



The Oxford-On-Rideau Council bought 2 acres of land from John Lindsay in 1874 in order to build a Town Hall. The property was also used for Village Fairs. The Town Hall was designed by John Steacey and built by Ambrose Cloth-

ier in 1875 using stone from the Harris Quarry nearby. The ground floor had a 12' ceiling and was composed of one large room supported by three pillars, and a rear room used by Council. It has since been subdivided into smaller rooms. The upstairs room was a single hall used over the years for concerts, dinners, and a variety of other community events. After amalgamation in 1998, Council meetings were moved to Kemptville. The Library branch moved into the building, where it remains, and the upstairs is now used for storage. It was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act in 1991.

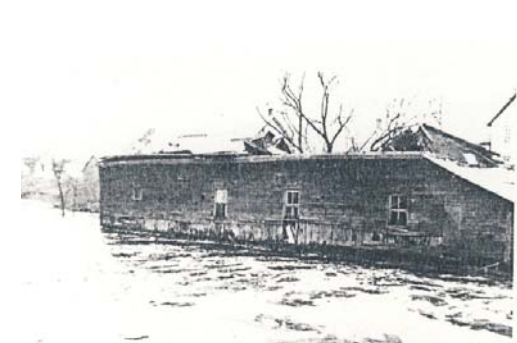
### 3 S. S. No. 8, Oxford 98 Maplewood Avenue



The school was built on land bought from John Lindsay in 1875. It was built by A. Willoughby with broken course limestone from the Harris

Quarry on Bedell Road. The building is rectangular and the front porch gable roof is highlighted by a decorative belfry. The school opened in August, 1875 and continued in use until June, 1964, when it closed. It was bought by the Township and became a school for the mentally challenged in 1968, a role it continued to play until 1983, when it finally closed. In that year, the local Library moved into the north end of the building, while the south end was used for local meetings. The building was completely renovated in 2001 and has served as the community hall ever since. In 2008, administration of the hall was transferred to the local Community Association. This building has seen so many of the great and small events of Oxford Mills since 1875, and remains an important part of the village's life and history. It was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act in 1991.

### 4. Cheese Factory East Bank, North Side



A cheese factory had been established here some time after 1871 by Lyman Beach before being bought by Murdock Gair in 1882.

The factory continued in operation under numerous owners until 1947. The cheese factory operated 6 days a week from spring to fall and closed for the winter. The factory was quite successful over the years. J. W. Fretwell, who bought the factory in 1909, built the residence at 10 Water Street. At peak periods, 35 90-pound cheeses were produced daily. The Oxford Mills Cheese Factory Association was formed in 1946, but snow loads caused the roof to collapse in 1947. The factory was not rebuilt. The picture shows the factory after the roof collapse.

### 5. Clothier Hotel 9 Water Street

This building was constructed c 1835 of timber frame and served as a hotel until 1914. It had a 2nd storey balcony and 1st storey veranda both of which ran the length of the front fa-



cade. It was built by Asa Clothier and was owned by numerous individuals, many of whom also used the property for other businesses, such as shoemaking, over the years. The last hotel keeper was Thomas Warren, who left here and moved to Kemptville, where he ran the White House for many years. It was sold to the Loyal Orange Lodge No. 72 in 1915. The Lodge and Regalia rooms were on the 2nd floor with a large hall on the 1st floor that saw many community dances, masquerades and dinners. The Hall had its own Band, which played here regularly. There were horse sheds and stables between the Hall and the river. It took 5 wood stoves to keep the interior warm. The Lodge had as many as seventy members at one time. The Lodge 'went into darkness' in the 1970s and the library operated from the first floor.

### 6. Blacksmith Shop Water Street



This is all that remains of the four blacksmiths that once operated in Oxford Mills. Joseph Lefaver first rented the property in 1854 from Rickey Waugh and opened his blacksmith shop across the street from his home. Alonzo Hurd took over the blacksmith shop in 1861 and bought the property the following year. It remained a blacksmith shop into the twentieth century. The building is of timber frame construction.

### 7. Magee Hall, 13 Water Street

Archibald Magee was an early arrival in Oxford Mills, and carried on a number of different professions. He was Innkeeper, the Coroner, a shopkeeper and Tavern owner. Magee opened a tavern in a building across the street (See No. 13) in 1855, and the following year built a large wooden structure here at No. 13 which served as a hotel and local meeting place for many years. The Township Council met here between 1857 and 1875, when the new Town hall was built, and the local Anglican congregation met here until their church was erected in 1869. In 1900, Ormand Barnard bought the prop-



erty and used it as his workshop, and it was here he invented his curd cutting machine, patented in 1907. Charles Beckett bought the building as a residence in 1934 and ran the Post Office from here. However, in November, 1939 it burned to the ground. It was never rebuilt.

### 8. Anderson's Shoe Store 23 Water Street



Thomas Anderson opened his shoemakers shop here in 1855 and it remained in the family until 1945. Miss Mary Anne Anderson operated a lending library from the

south side of the building through the 1930s. Bill, her brother, drew mail from Swan Station twice a day. His teams were kept in a large log stable behind the house.

### 9. Oxford Mills Bakery 27 Water Street



John Rutherford opened a shoemaker's shop here in 1855 It was later converted into a hotel and run by George "Yankee" Davis for many years. It was renovated and turned into a

bakery in 1914 by Henry Crowder, who owned the grist mill. He sold it in 1925 to the baker, Billy Francis, who delivered bread to the surrounding communities. It continued operating as a bakery for many years under different owners. The north side of the 1st and the entire 2nd floor was the family residence, the bakery on the lower left. There was a gas engine in the basement with a belt that ran through the floor to power the mixer.

**10. Presbyterian Church** 61 Water Street



The cornerstone for St Andrews was laid on May 20, 1882. The limestone was quarried from Robert Patton's farm. Joseph Wilson was the mason and William Acton the Carpenter. It is built in the Gothic

Revival Style. A burial ground was once located north of the church, most remains were re interred in the union cemetery on Main Street. The old headstones were incorporated into a cairn.

**11 Methodist Church** 42 Water Street



The first church on this site was built in 1858 and was replaced in 1881. But this later church proved unsound and was replaced in turn by the present edifice in 1897. It is constructed of com-

mon bond red brick with a corner bell tower topped with 4 turrets. The interior features an intricate pattern of tongue and groove panelling on the walls and ceiling designed and installed by Ormond Barnard. In 1889 the congregation bought the lot south of the church. This was the site of the first school building in Oxford Mills. When the school was moved to Maplewood in 1875, the land was sold and a house built there. This house was used as the Parsonage until it was sold in 1913 and moved to its current location at 22 Water Street.

**12. Original Methodist Rectory** 22 Water Street



This house was originally located on the south side of the Methodist Church. It was built after the school there had closed and was bought by the church in 1889 to use as a

Parsonage. In 1913, when the new rectory was built north of the church, the house was bought by Freeman Brown and moved on rollers down Water Street to its present location. Brown built a stable and carriage sheds on the land behind the house.

**13. Magee Tavern and Kidd's Store,**  
14-16 Water St



Archibald Magee ran a tavern on lot 16 from 1853 and it was later bought by Murdoch Gair, along with lot 14, which had been a rented dwelling owned by Ambrose Clothier of Kemptville. Gair went bankrupt in 1887. The two lots were bought by Thomas A. Kidd, store-keeper, who replaced the wood frame buildings with a brick one. The store also served as the Post

Office, but burned down in 1939. Another store was built by Joseph Postlethwaite, but it too burned down in 1976. The land has since been used as a garage and storage shed.

**14. Waugh General Store** 9 Bridge Street



Rickey Waugh built this structure as a general store with living quarters above c. 1850. It served as the first Post Office in the

village, as well as a general store, for many years. A tin smith and antique dealer have also operated from the premises. It has been beautifully restored and is now an upscale restaurant, although it retains many of the original elements of the Waugh store, such as part of the timber flooring, counters and a fireproof vault. It was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act in 1997.

**15. Waugh Residence** 12 Bridge Street



This home was built by Rickey Waugh as his family home in the 1860's. Waugh was responsible for two fine stone buildings in the village and was the first developer in Oxford Mills,

selling the lots on Water Street to the first settlers. The house was purchased as the parsonage for the Anglican Parish of

Oxford-on-Rideau in 1879 and served as such until 1946. Deanery meetings were held here, dozens of priests gathered on the steps on the then open veranda on the west side for photographs. It remained a family home until it was renovated into a Nursing Home in the 1950's, a function it still serves today.

**16. Grist Mill** East Bank, South of the bridge



This was the site of the stone grist mill, started by Asa Clothier and completed by Rickey Waugh. The building was constructed of locally quarried limestone.

Originally two-storey's over a basement, a wooden top floor was added to accommodate new technology. The basement housed two large water wheels connected by pulleys and shafts to operate the mill. Water to power the wheels came through two large doors. The mill was demolished in 1961. The steam boilers were unearthed in 2001 when the retaining wall was being rebuilt and were once again covered over.

*Researched and written by Dr. David Shanahan*

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