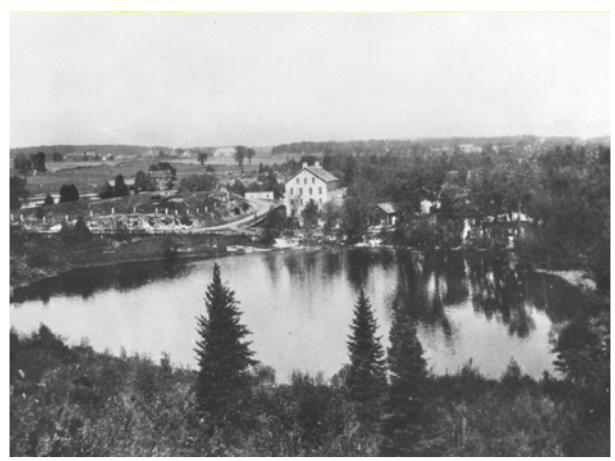


Walking Tour

VILLAGE OF BLAKENEY



When the first European settlers arrived in this area in 1821, they quickly recognized the potential water power here in the "Bay" area of the Mississippi River. They built a sawmill, a gristmill, and a timber slide. Other industries soon followed, and by the late 1800s, Blakeney was a prosperous village.



#1 Snedden Inn (4396 County Rd. 29)
Built by Alexander Snedden in the late 1820s, Snedden's Stopping Place became well known as a place for a meal, a sleep and rest for your horses. The Inn took advantage of Snedden's location at the intersection of a rough track leading north to the logging camps and the Bytown Rd. (Blakeney Rd.) leading east to what is now Ottawa. The original frame building burned in 1853 and was replaced by the current white frame building.

#2 Abial Marshall's Hotel (4370 County Rd. 29)
In 1868, sawmill owner Abial Marshall built this red brick house on the opposite corner to serve as a hotel. He was manager of the Snedden Inn at that time. But extension of the railway from Almonte to Arnprior in 1865 spoiled his plans.



#3 First Snedden House (106 Blakeney Rd.)
Alexander Snedden built his first dwelling on this rise on the Mississippi. It was later the site of a cheese factory.

#4 Cooper Shop – John Glover operated a cooper shop here during the 1860s, making barrels and firkins.

#5 Fenlon's Hotel – John Fenlon operated a hotel at the north end of the bridge from 1876 until it burned down in the 1920s. James Cox then moved a building from Pakenham onto the site. It housed the Rosebank Cheese and Butter Company, operated by area farmers from 1944 to 1952. Harry Nontell bought the building and operated it as a dance hall until it was destroyed by fire in 1959.



#6 Coxford's Cobblers
In 1877 James Coxford built a small red brick house along the river where he produced shoes and boots and raised 16 children!

#7 Sawmill – Abial Marshall moved to Rosebank from Kitley Township in the 1850s. He built a sawmill on the north shore of the river beside a channel formed by a small island. The 1871 Census notes that the mill employed 10 men and produced 1,500,000 board feet of lumber, valued at \$15,000.

#8 Storage building – A stone storage building for the woolen mill stood here until the 1980s when it was destroyed due to safety concerns.

#9 Brewery – Located northwest of the woolen mill, it was operated for a short time by Robert Gomersall. The Directory of 1863 lists Gomersall & Littlewood as brewers, but by 1871 the frame building had burned down.

#10 McDougall Woolen Mill
In 1873, Peter McDougall relocated his woolen mill from 1.5 km up the Mississippi at the mouth of the Indian River to a narrow channel of the river beside Pine Isle. The large three-storey stone structure straddled the channel, with the water wheel underneath the building powered by the rushing rapids. In 1880 it employed 25 people and produced 91,440 meters of tweed annually.



Peter Campbell bought the mill from McDougall's widow, Isabella, in 1906. He and his family lived in a white frame house on the island until 1919, when he moved the business to Almonte.

#11 Tannery – Robert Gomersall built a tannery on the same channel as the woolen mill. Both the Directory of 1863 and the 1871 Census list him as a Tanner. William Reilly later became the tanner.

#12 Bridge to Pine Isle
The village's original road followed the edge of the bay, and there was a bridge across the channel to the island. It had to be replaced in 1870 after high water washed it away



MISSISSIPPI MILLS

KNOWN variously as Norway Pine Falls, Snedden's Mills, and Rosebank, the village was named Blakeney in 1874. By then it was a thriving community, based around its many mills and factories. Only the stones of these early industries remain, but many new homes have been added to this charming hamlet. This tour takes you through Blakeney in its heyday.



1823-2023

Mississippi Mills



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LAYOUT

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#13 Livery Stable – James Kellough stabled his horses here. For many years he drove bags of flour from the mill to Snedden's Station.

#14 Frame House – This was home to the Merilees family from 1888 until the early 1900s. Peter Campbell moved his family into the house and lived there until he moved his textile business to Almonte. The house was torn down and rebuilt in Almonte by Isidore Scissons.

#15 Oatmeal Mill – By the 1950s this stone mill was the only building still visible on the island. It had a tall ventilator to let the steam lift off of the heated oats.



#16 Flour and Grist Mill – This mill was built and owned by Alexander and David Snedden. In 1863 the miller was Robert Henderson. In 1874 the mill was sold to John Usher, and in the late 1800s it was taken over by John Merilees who moved to the island with his family.

#17 Site of the First Grist Mill – An early grist mill was built here in the Bay. A tunnel was driven through the clay bank to provide water power with a head of 6.4 meters. It is mentioned in the diary of a mother who walked 9 kilometers to Snedden's Mill to glean some meal to feed her family in 1825.

#18 Timber Slide – Alexander Snedden was active in the timber trade by 1829. He soon saw the need for a slide to allow logs coming down the Mississippi to bypass the damaging rapids at

Snedden's Mills. Covered by a plank bridge, the slide was built where the tunnel had been dug for the early grist mill, and it created a 9 meter drop from the river into the Bay. The logs then passed through another channel from the Bay to the calmer Mississippi and on to the Ottawa River. The slide provided a good income since a fee was paid for each log that went through.

#19 Peter McDougall's House (194 Blakeney Rd.) – In the 1870s, Peter McDougall built this large brick home half way up the hill leading into the village. After his death in 1904, his widow Isabella lived there with their daughter Kate.

#20 Granny Campbell's (212 Blakeney Rd.) Well known for weaving rolls of homespun for local customers, Granny lived in this white house at the top of the hill.



#21 Blakeney Store and Post Office (239 Blakeney Rd.) – In 1874, the village got its first post office, with James McDougall acting as Postmaster, as well as running the general store. The village's name had to change since there was already a Rosebank Post Office in Renfrew County. It was called Blakeney after Ontario Premier Edward Blake. The post office closed in 1957, but the store remained in business until the late 1960s.

#22 Blakeney Presbyterian Church A white frame church was built here in 1876 on land donated by William Snedden. Reverend Robert

Knowles was its minister until 1890. Under church union in 1925 its name changed to Blakeney United Church. In the 1950s it joined the Pakenham Pastoral Charge with Zion and St. Andrews United. It was closed in 1968, and the congregation moved to Pakenham. They decided to demolish the church in 1969 rather than see it fall into disrepair.

#23 Manse (112 St. Ives St.) – In 1878 the church purchased this brick house from Thaddeus Marshal to serve as a manse for the minister. It was sold in 1950 and is now a private residence.

#24 Usher House (102 St. Ives St.) Built c.1874 by John Usher who was the Miller for the Snedden flour mill on the Island.

#25 York's Store – On the corner of the Tenth Line (Martin St. N.) and the main road was a store operated by a Mr. York.

#26 Orange Lodge – The upper storey of this house on the south side of the road on the way to Snedden's Station was home to Orange Lodge #748. An outside staircase led up to the hall with a private residence underneath.

#27 Blacksmith – On the southwest corner of the Tenth line (Martin St.) and Rosebank St. Harry Jones operated a blacksmith shop. He and his family lived next door.



#28 Snedden's Station – When construction of the railway continued north from Almonte in the 1860s, a small station was built east of the village. It was called Snedden's Station because a major part of the village's trade was from Snedden's Flour and Grist Mill. The station was a flag stop and remained in operation until the 1970s.



#29 Blakeney School (6404 Martin St. N.) S.S. #15 "Greenbush" was originally a log building 1.5 km up the Tenth Line (Martin St. N.). In 1873 it was replaced by a red brick building closer to the village, and in 1939 a new brick school was built on the site. It closed in 1969, and the students were bused to new schools in Almonte. It is now a private residence.