



*A self-guided walking tour of the*

# **Historic Hamlet of Grafton**

*Compliments of  
Heritage/Alnwick/Haldimand*

## **A Brief History of the Settlement of Grafton...**

*“Sirs: The improved and flourishing state of the Township of Haldimand has led to the rapid formation of a village about the place which was formerly known as Grover’s Tavern, and in conformity to the usage, several gentlemen of the neighbourhood met by appointment at that place on Wednesday last for the purpose of giving it a name. After considerable discussion, that of Grafton was unanimously agreed upon, as will appear by the resolution herewith sent to you.”*

This resolution was also sent to the Governor General, Sir John Colborne in March, 1832 and was also posted in the Cobourg Star.

The first known settlers were just before the turn of the 19th century. These earliest settlers were all from the new United States of America. Most were looking for new land and opportunities, a few were second generation UEL (United Empire Loyalists) born in loyalist settlements further east. Contrary to popular belief, none were first generation UEL. New settlers from the British Isles didn’t start arriving in any number, for 20 years.

These early Grafton settlers, as well as clearing agricultural land from the forests, produced many fine political leaders. David Rogers for the first to propose anti-slavery legislation for Upper Canada, and Henry Ruttan was the Speaker of the Legislature.

Finally the question: “Why name the hamlet Grafton?”

The circumstantial evidence attributes it John Grover’s birth town of Grafton, Massachusetts. He initially arrived in Upper Canada in 1798 and was definitely in Grafton by 1804.

## 1 Alnwick/Haldimand Township Building (Ontario Heritage Building)



Our tour begins at the Alnwick/Haldimand Township building, built in 1858. Prior to 1858, Township Council meetings were held at local taverns and residences of council members. The lower storey of the building was originally designed to house businesses while the upper floor was used as council chambers and for a variety of social and cultural events. General stores occupied alternate sides of the building in the nineteenth century. In 1907, the Standard Bank took over the east portion of the main floor. The hand-painted stage curtain on the second floor is a designated feature of the building.

## 2 Township Hall Annex

Just east of the Township Building is a simple Neo-classical house, now owned by the Township and used as office space. This house was built in 1860 by Scottish master carpenter John Aird. Although this Neo-Classical building is clad in aluminum siding, the original clapboard remains intact beneath. Within the front porch is a fine Neo-classical doorway with delicate sidelights and transom fitted with original hardware. The walls of the house are plank construction. (See #18) The township has designated the building as historically and architecturally significant.



### 3 Frame Gothic Revival



As you head east on Highway #2, you will see a clapboard house, well set back from the road. The façade and gentle slope of the veranda roof of this familiar Gothic Revival style show the influence of Regency architecture. The reproduction picket fence is appropriate to the era and the exterior wood is the

original siding. Built in 1859, it consists of balloon framing and has no interior supporting walls (as in barn framing).

### 4 Wesleyan Methodist Meeting Hall

Travel north on Aird Street to the Methodist Meeting Hall. In 1856, the Wesleyan Methodist congregation of the township acquired half an acre of land on which the cemetery, Meeting House and house to the north were located.



The vernacular timber frame building has certain Neo-Classical elements and strong cornice returns. The last service was held in 1925. Since then, the Hall has been privately owned, but over time had deteriorated and became derelict. A new owner has restored it to its original state (2010). The earliest interment was 1831 and the last 1913.

### 5 Presbyterian Manse



Across the street stands the original Presbyterian Manse at the south east corner of Charlotte and Aird Streets. The steps leading to the property retain an early horse-hitching ring. The half acre on which the house stands was acquired in 1850 and the Gothic Revival home was built prior to 1859. Floor length windows have been altered. Remaining vergeboard, front door surround and veranda add to the character of this building.



## 6 Grafton Common School

Walk east on Charlotte Street to the south west corner of Lyle and Charlotte. Built in the 1860's this Gothic Revival house reflects the proportion and grace of the Regency period. Plaster over brick on the east side is a reminder that that the east side of early brick homes was the first to deteriorate.



This house was used as a school and on the south wall there is a stone inscribed "Grafton Common School, A.D. 1861".

## 7 Frame Gothic Revival



Now head south on Lyle Street and turn right onto Highway #2 to the white clapboard house. This Gothic Revival House built 1854-55 shows certain elements of Neo-classical influence including cornice returns and 12 over 12 windows on the west side. The

foundation is of cut stone and the vergeboard has a teardrop motif. The filled in area beneath the front windows may conceal original French windows. There is fine segmental glazing in the door surround.

## 8 Patterson House

Three doors to the west is the 1861 residence of Eleanor Patterson, the wife of William Patterson, whose family operated inns in Grafton from 1834 to 1890. Restrained vergeboard, finial and rounded gable entrance enhance the appearance of this home.



### 9 5 Bay Georgian

Cross the highway and walk south down the Old Danforth Road, which once let to the Grafton Harbour where tall ships docked, loading and unloading their cargo of lumber, flour, barley, hemp, mail and especially whisky and ale from the many distilleries in the area. The house on the east side of Danforth Road is one of the oldest in Grafton. The shallow roof line, 5 bay façade, small cornice returns, 12 over 12 window sash, Georgian doorway and transom date this building to the to the early 1830's.



### 10 A Lawless House



South along Old Danforth Road this is the first of the “Lawless” homes. It was built in 1887 by the Lawless family - from old pictures it was very much like the house further down the road (#12), with ornate gingerbread trim. These 2 properties, along with # 11 were all owned by members of the Lawless family for about 70 years.

### 11 Grover House

(Ontario Heritage Building)

This two storey (white with dark green shutters) symmetrical designed house with central front door typifies the Georgian style. It was built in c. 1822 by John Grover, an early (1798) settler from Grafton Massachusetts. The hamlet was named after his home town.

The original windows would have had 9 over 9, small glass panes. The replacement windows and white cedar clapboard are probably from around 1900. The clapboard still covers the original cedar shingle siding. John Grover gave the land, across from his house, to the Presbyterian Church, now United Church.



## 12 Reuben Lawless House

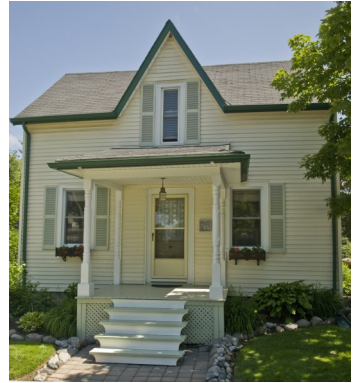


The house was built in 1870 and is mid-Victorian of the Italianate Vernacular, with “gingerbread”. It has a stone/ rubble foundation and cedar siding and is of a balloon structure. The back “extension” was a woodshed/ summer kitchen built over the original well. In 1897 Thomas Lawless became the property

owner and in 1900 Reuben Lawless Senior gained title. For years it was known as the Reuben Lawless House and stayed in the Lawless family until 1970. The board and batten barn was built c. 1840 and was a foundry.

## 13 Old Foundry House

This house was originally a cabin, build around the same time as the barn in #12 and was probably for the foundry manager. For a few years it was the rectory for St. Mary’s Church (#14) before the current rectory, on the hill above the church, was built.



## 14 St. Mary’s Catholic Church

Further down the street is St. Mary’s Roman Catholic church and rectory. The parish dates back to the 1850’s when the area served as a mission out of Cobourg. This simple Gothic Revival yellow brick church was built in 1875. In the tradition of rural life and community, it is recorded that the protestant churches of all denominations made significant donations to the building of their neighbour’s church. St. Mary’s cemetery, behind the church, is the resting place of many of Grafton’s early Irish settlers.



### 15 St. Andrew's United Church

Head back north on the Old Danforth Road to St. Andrew's United Church and cemetery. This church, originally Presbyterian, was built in 1844 on land donated by John Grover, an early settler, farmer, innkeeper and storekeeper. One of the requirements that went with the deed of land was that a family plot in the cemetery be reserved for his heirs and also that he have a pew in the church, numbered nine. In spite of the classical profile and symmetrical composition, the crenellations and pointed arches distinguish this early Gothic Revival church. The church is now sided in aluminum and has a new front entrance. To the left of the entrance is a stone memorial to John Grover.



### 16 Old Presbyterian Sunday School

Just in front of St. Andrew's is their Charity Shop. The building was built in 1884 as the then Presbyterian Sunday School. For many years it served as the Grafton Library. Architecturally it is notable for its patterned dichromatic brick work. There is a strong transom band, quoins and a foundation band topping a squared stone foundation, typically the work of Scottish masons.

### 17 1812 Heritage Building

(Ontario Heritage Building)

As you wander back up towards Highway #2 you will arrive at 1812 Heritage Shops. Built in the classic commercial architectural style, this early building has housed a barber shop, a post office and a general store at various times. The pleasing façade is of architectural note:



its simplicity, finely detailed windows and repetition of elements give it an unusual grace. The original four chimneys have been removed. It dates about 1820.



## 18 Lawless Store



At the corner of Highway #2 and Old Danforth Road is a commercial building - circa 1837. The walls are of stacked plank construction.

There is no framing; one inch boards are nailed on top of each other and are slightly staggered. The lumber for the shop probably came from the Eddy-stone Mill. All the original windows and circular columns have been replaced and the clapboard and stucco exterior and cornice returns are covered with vinyl siding. This Neo-Classical building stayed in the Lawless family for over a hundred years and even now it is not difficult to imagine a horse and buggy outside waiting to deliver groceries.

## 19 Dr. Ives House

Past the Post Office is a yellow house with brown shutters. Although substantially changed, this was once the house of Doctor Elam Ives (1789-1848). Doctor Ives could have been the first doctor between Kingston and Toronto. He traveled the primitive roads and paths on horseback to reach his patients.



## 20 Church of England Rectory



Continue your stroll west on Highway #2 until you reach the two storey white clapboard house. Imagine this building as a replica of Barnum House. Built in the early 1840's, the east side of this house originally faced the highway and was flanked by two wings. In 1849 it became the Church of

England Rectory and in 1892 it was turned on its site and the wings removed. The distinctive Victorian veranda was added at that time.

## 21 St. George's Anglican Church



Across the street is the Anglican Church - formerly the Church of England. The original 1844 church was the first church building in Grafton, although only a few months ahead of the Presbyterian. This early Church was dedicated by Reverend A.N. Bethune, an ancestor of Dr. Norman

Bethune. Tragedy struck in April 1908 when fire destroyed the building. The new church was built in just 10 months and, as so often happens in Grafton, a lot of help came from the other local churches. The style is English Ecclesiastic and note the tower battlement and Gothic buttresses and windows.

## 22 Grafton Inn

Walk east towards the centre of the hamlet to the Grafton Inn built in 1833 to replace a log building. The Neo-Classical building was restored in the early 1990's - bringing it back to the early appearance that greeted travellers approaching from Kingston, York or Grafton Harbour.



Its distinctive features include the front door surround with carved oak leaves and acorns, the second floor venetian window and the demi-lune windows at each gable end. The western wing was a later addition and at one time housed the telephone exchange.

*Continuing west of the walking tour, along Highway #2 . . .*

**John and Mary Steele (nee Spalding) House** (Ontario Heritage Building)



A handsome Georgian structure was built by Thomas Spalding for his daughter Mary and her husband John Steele of Colborne. They moved here in 1843. The front door surround has several Neo-Classical features. Sections of the original brick are laid in Flemish bond. Over the years, deteriorating brick has been

plastered over, painted and then stencilled to resemble brick. This house has been designated under the Ontario Heritage Act as being of architectural and historic value. Two of the finest nineteenth-century brick homes in Ontario are this one and the building immediately to the west.

**Thomas Spalding House (Spalding Inn)**

The home of Thomas Spalding was built in about 1835, probably of bricks made in his backyard on the property. Strong Georgian influence is evident in the transom door, balanced façade and inset chimneys atop this two-and-a-half storey dwelling. The mellow coloured bricks are laid in Flemish bond.



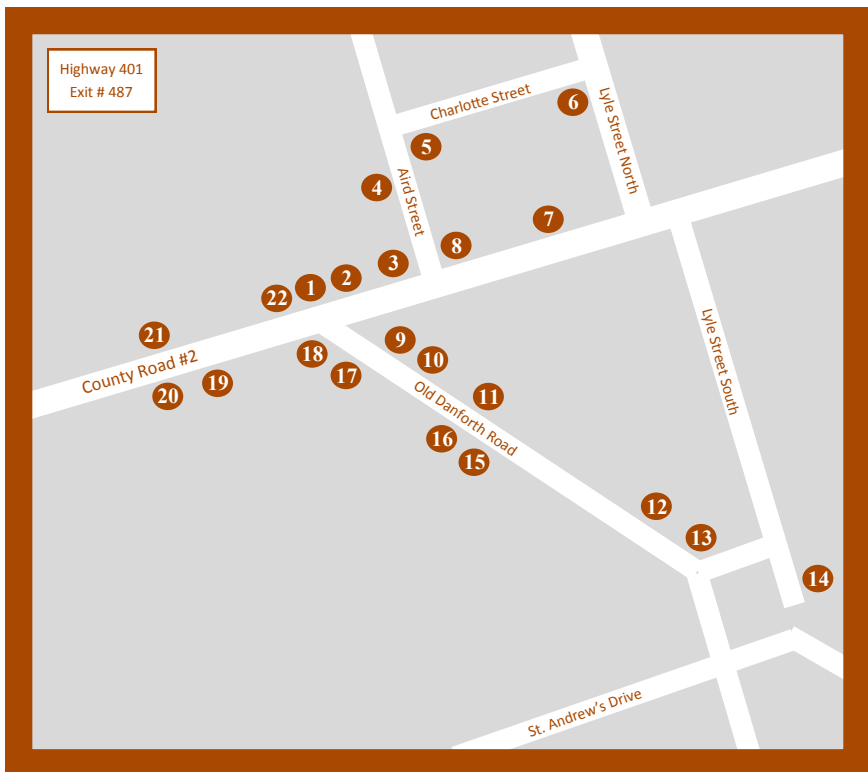
**Barnum House**

(National Heritage Site of Canada)



In designing his house, Eliakim Barnum was influenced by American Architecture, popular in New England states at the beginning of the 19th century. This Neo Classical style was intended to reproduce elements of classical Greek architecture. These include a central temple front with flanking wings, articulation of the façade with

pilaster linked by elliptical arches, and extensive use of delicately scaled details. The Neo-classical elements of the house's exterior are echoed in the ornate woodwork of several interior rooms. Barnum built the house in 1819, its significance was recognized by the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario. On the front of this building is a Provincial Historical Plaque commemorating the Barnum House. It is open for visitors during the summer months.



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|---|--------------------------------|
| <b>1.</b> Alnwick/Haldimand Township Building | <i>(10836 County Road #2)</i>  |
| <b>2.</b> Township Hall Annex                 | <i>(10836 County Road #2)</i>  |
| <b>3.</b> Frame Gothic Revival                | <i>(10846 County Road #2)</i>  |
| <b>4.</b> Wesleyan Methodist Meeting Hall     | <i>(118 Aird Street)</i>       |
| <b>5.</b> Presbyterian Manse                  | <i>(121 Aird Street)</i>       |
| <b>6.</b> Grafton Common School               | <i>(214 Lyle Street N.)</i>    |
| <b>7.</b> Frame Gothic Revival                | <i>(10862 County Road #2)</i>  |
| <b>8.</b> Patterson House                     | <i>(10856 County Road #2)</i>  |
| <b>9.</b> 5 Bay Georgian                      | <i>(116 Old Danforth Road)</i> |
| <b>10.</b> Lawless House                      | <i>(126 Old Danforth)</i>      |
| <b>11.</b> Grover House                       | <i>(136 Old Danforth Road)</i> |
| <b>12.</b> Reuban Lawless House               | <i>(154 Old Danforth Road)</i> |
| <b>13.</b> Old Foundry House                  | <i>(160 Old Danforth Road)</i> |
| <b>14.</b> St. Mary's Catholic Church         | <i>(103 Lyle Street South)</i> |
| <b>15.</b> St. Andrew's United Church         | <i>(137 Old Danforth Road)</i> |
| <b>16.</b> Old Presbyterian Sunday School     | <i>(135 Old Danforth Road)</i> |
| <b>17.</b> 1812 Heritage Building             | <i>(105 Old Danforth Road)</i> |
| <b>18.</b> Lawless Store                      | <i>(10831 County Road #2)</i>  |
| <b>19.</b> Dr. Ives House                     | <i>(10809 County Road #2)</i>  |
| <b>20.</b> Church of England Rectory          | <i>(10799 County Road #2)</i>  |
| <b>21.</b> St. George's Anglican Church       | <i>(10792 County Road #2)</i>  |
| <b>22.</b> Grafton Inn                        | <i>(10830 County Road #2)</i>  |