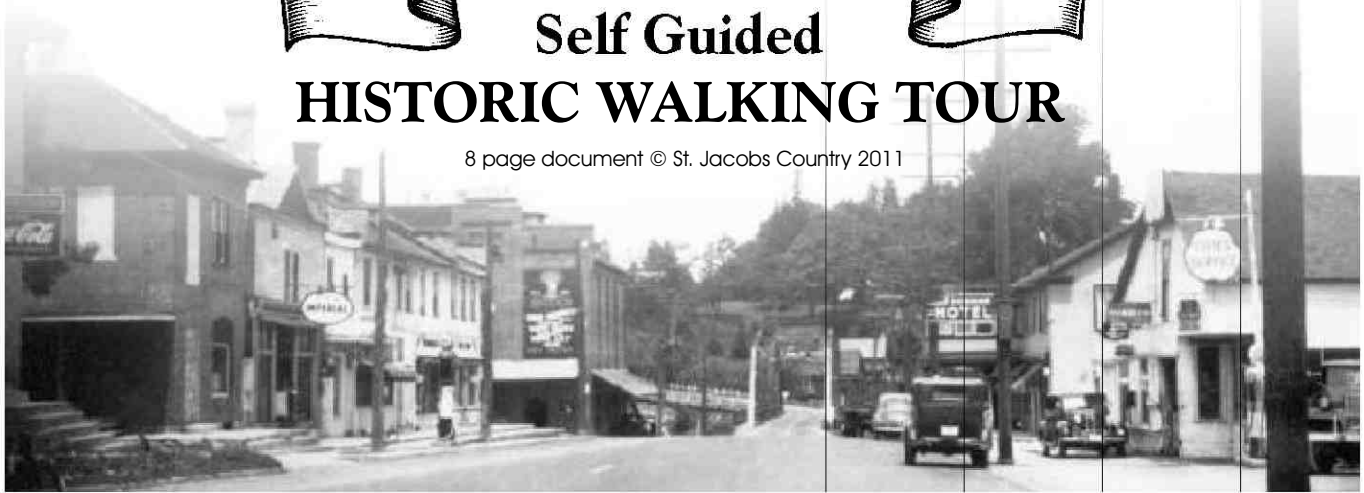


# ST. JACOBS

## Self Guided HISTORIC WALKING TOUR

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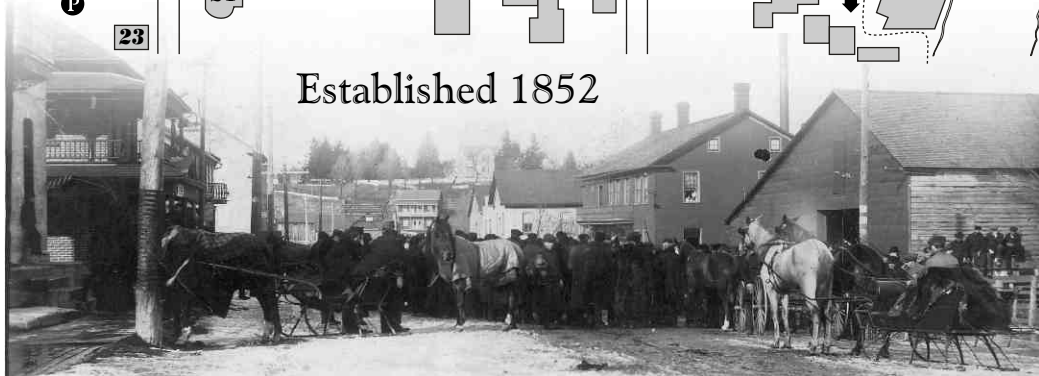
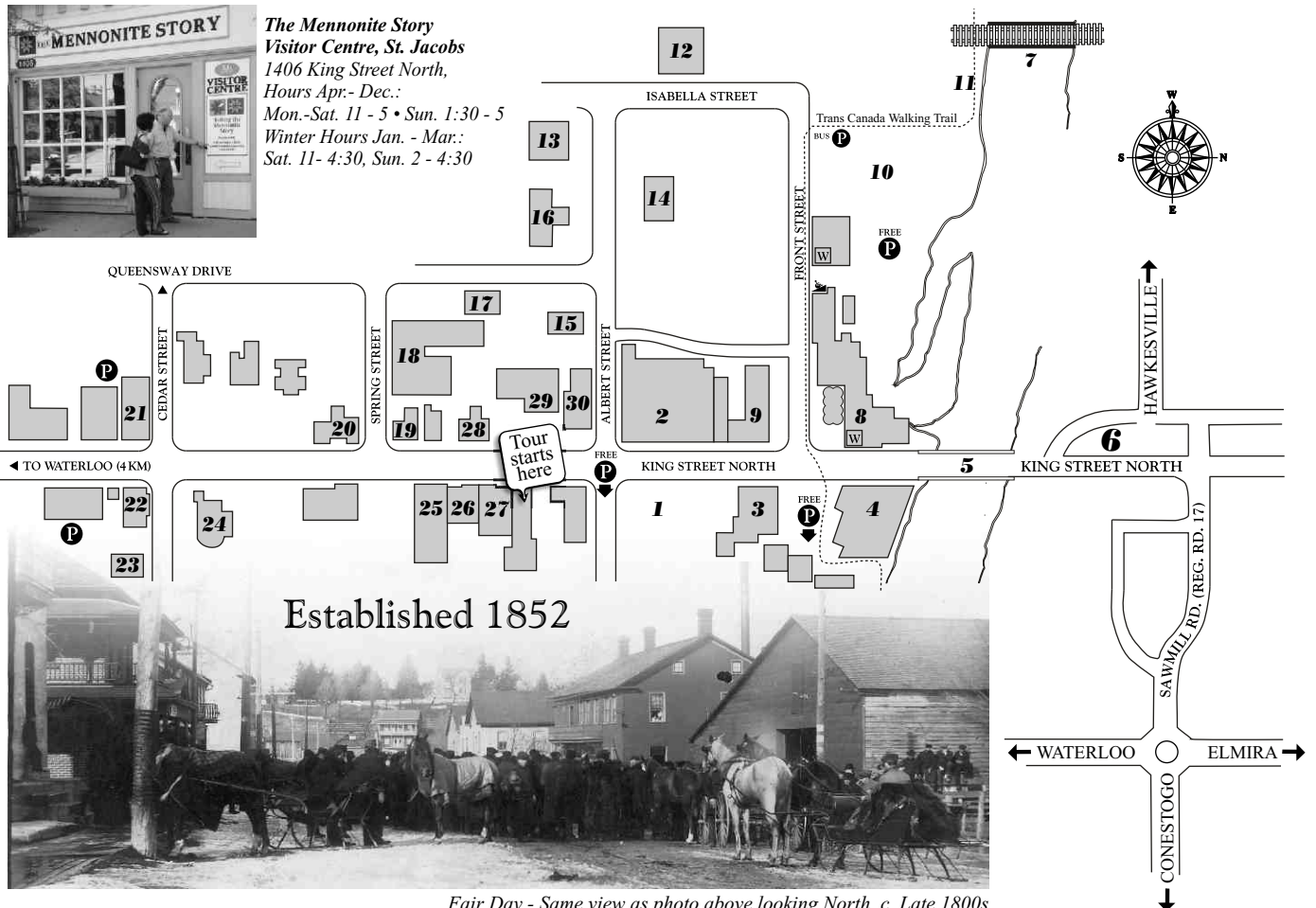
King Street St. Jacob looking North, c. 1940's St. Jacobs

**S**t. Jacobs' story began formally on February 6, 1852 with the opening of its first post office. Until then, the settlement had been known as Jakobstettel, Pennsylvania German for "Jacob's Town". The English version of the name became St. Jacobs. "Saint" was added because of its pleasant sound and implied importance. "Jacob" honours Jacob C. Snider, a Mennonite farmer and pioneer industrialist whose foresight lead to the development and establishment of the Village. This tour will give you an appreciation for what St. Jacobs is today and what preceded it. In this charming, peaceful Village, the past remains an important part of the present.

*Begin your tour with 'The Mennonite Story' at the Visitor Centre. Take some time to explore this world class multi-media exhibit that describes the history, culture and faith of the Mennonites in our area and around the world. Leaving the Visitor Centre, turn right on King Street and continue along the East side. You'll be walking North towards the bridge.*



**The Mennonite Story  
Visitor Centre, St. Jacobs**  
1406 King Street North,  
Hours Apr.- Dec.:  
Mon.-Sat. 11 - 5 • Sun. 1:30 - 5  
Winter Hours Jan. - Mar.:  
Sat. 11- 4:30, Sun. 2 - 4:30



Fair Day - Same view as photo above looking North, c. Late 1800s

# Self Guided Historic Walking Tour Of The Village

## 1 Livery Service

### (Empty Lot)

1420 King Street

A building used as a livery service was previously on this site. Guests at the adjacent Dominion Hotel were its biggest customers. When Jake Good bought the property in 1921, he worked out of the original structure until fire destroyed it in 1964. Good's Garage was relocated to Henry Street and the business is still in the family - their primary customer is now the truck fleet of Home Hardware Stores Ltd.

*Looking across King Street, you will see a block of buildings that are the site of the original "main street" of the Village.*



*Original "main street" of St. Jacobs*

## 2 Hollinger Hardware

### (Home Hardware)

1421 King Street

Henry Gillies opened the first hardware store at this location in 1893. Then in 1934, Gordon Hollinger bought the business. 1948 saw Henry Sittler and Walter J. Hachborn become part-owners in what was the very first store for Home Hardware Stores Ltd.. Sittler and Hachborn together developed a Canada-wide network of independently owned hardware dealerships starting here in St. Jacobs. Home Hardware's headquarters is located on Henry Street, about seven blocks south. *See Home Hardware's exhibit at The Mill.*

*Keep walking along the right (east) side of King Street.*

## 3 The Farmer's Inn

### (Benjamin's Restaurant & Inn)

1430 King Street

In 1852, Joseph Eby built the inn which served as a stage coach stop between Berlin (Kitchener) and Elmira. Renamed the Dominion Hotel in 1871, it became a focal point in the village for many years. Note the pump and trough once used for watering travellers' horses. The village scale was located next to the inn. It was later moved to the railway yard. Renovated and renamed in 1986, Benjamin's Restaurant & Inn carries on a long tradition of innkeeping at this location, offering gourmet dining & 9 guest rooms.



*Farmers' Inn & Livery Service*

## 4 Canada Felting Company

### (Quarry Integrated Communications Inc.)

1440 King Street

The Canada Felting Company, begun in 1933, was known across Canada for production of seamless felt boots and shoes. Later, it was the first factory for Olympia ice resurfacing equipment. In 1989 'Riverworks' was developed as a unique shopping venue featuring 20 retail shops. The building is now offices for Quarry Integrated Communications, an advertising and public relations firm.



*Bridge across the Conestoga River, looking south*

*Stay on the right as you cross the bridge.*

## 5 The Bridge Over the Conestoga River

The first wooden bridge at this location was washed away in 1889. It was replaced in 1901 with an iron version which was believed to be the first bridge given municipal sanction in Canada during the reign of Edward VII. The existing bridge is a recent construction completed in 1996. Along the banks of the Conestoga River, Mennonite pioneers started to arrive from Pennsylvania in Conestoga wagons drawn by four horse teams. First to settle in the area was the Simon Cress family in 1819. Like those who followed, they cleared the land, then used logs to build a 1 or 2 room shanty. Later, bricks were manufactured at several locations in the Conestoga River Valley and used to build permanent homes.

*At the North end of bridge, cross to the West side of King Street.*

## 6 Elias W. B Snider Monument

This monument recognizes E.W.B. Snider's leadership in creating hydro electricity as a public utility in Ontario along with Sir Adam Beck and Daniel Detweiler. St. Jacobs was the first small village in Ontario to have hydro electrical power - supplied by E.W.B. Snider's water powered turbine at the Pioneer Roller Flouring Mills. *See Electricity Exhibit at The Mill*



*Elias W. B Snider Monument*

# Self Guided Historic Walking Tour Of The Village

*Stay on the West side as you cross the bridge, and head South back into the Village. While on the bridge, look to your right.*

## **7 Railway Bridge** *Finished October 22, 1891*

The large black structure in the distance is a railway bridge built in 1890 for the Grand Trunk Railway (later to become the Canadian National Railway). "Many carloads of fine beef cattle, sheep and pigs were annually shipped from St. Jacobs for export. The Village was one of the leading shipping points on the Galt and Elmira Branch of the Grand Trunk Railway." (From "Historic St. Jacobs" Waterloo County Chronicle, Dec. 9, 1897. See *Railway Panorama, The Mill*.)



*Railway bridge across the Conestoga River, looking west*

## **8 Pioneer Roller Flouring Mills** *(The Mill & Village Silos)*

*Corner of King Street and Front Street*

The original mill was built in the late 1860's and purchased in 1870 by the aforementioned Elias W. B. Snider. He introduced major technical advances in the milling industry with the purchase of the first porcelain roller press in 1875, replacing the stone grinding method. Production was increased in 1884 with the introduction of a steam engine, followed by electricity in 1894. High quality "Seven Lilies Pastry Flour" and "Ocean Bread Flour" were the first in Canada to be exported to Glasgow, Liverpool and Belfast. The mill closed in 1975 and was redeveloped in 1981 into retail space featuring unique venues for craftspeople. The water powered turbine used to create electricity for the mill and village is still housed in the basement of The Mill. By 1917, St. Jacobs was the first police village in Ontario to have hydro electricity - lights on at dark and out at 11 p.m. Electricity rates were paid on a per light bulb basis.

*See all The Mill Exhibits: History of the Village, Home Hardware Retrospective, A Spark of Genius: The Electricity Exhibit, Maple Syrup Museum, St. Jacobs Quilt Gallery, Model Railway Panorama.*



*The Pioneer Roller Flouring Mills*

*Turn right on to Front Street*

## **9 W. & A. Snyder General Merchants** *(Snyder Merchant Buildings)*

*7 Front Street*

Merchants William W. and Alfred Snyder ran a thriving business selling everything from groceries to clothing and crockery in 1895. Behind the single window in the attic of the general store, the men gathered for a night out in the Village billiards room!



*Snyder Merchants*

## **10 The Early Industries in St. Jacobs** *(Thorn Glass Studio)*

*10 Front Street*

Where Front Street and Isabella Street meet, a sawmill and a woolen mill were located. Just a little further west, and shrouded in mystery to this day, was the St. Jacobs Distillery! Nothing more is known about this business other than its location and its owners - the Sniders. It is possible that the distillery would have manufactured 40 to 80 gallons of spirits a day - enough to keep the local watering holes well supplied!

*Go to the end of Front Street and head right to the wooden footbridge just beyond the parking lot.*

## **11 The Mill Race** *(Part of the Trans Canada Walking Trail)*

As you stand on the footbridge, look down at a favorite St. Jacobs scene - the mill race. This is a 2 kilometre man-made channel of water, running parallel to the Conestoga River - from the St. Jacobs dam to the mill. The mill race provided the necessary water power to drive the mill's turbine, thus producing electrical energy. Years ago, in winter, men cut the ice blocks with saws and packed blocks in sawdust to provide refrigeration during warm months. The trail leads to a dam and a buggy bridge upstream.

*Turn left on to Isabella Street.*



*This part of the original Mill Race shown here was in later years filled in. The rest of the Race can be viewed from the Mill Race Walking Trail that leads to a dam and buggy bridge upstream.*

# Self Guided Historic Walking Tour Of The Village

## **12 William W. Snider Home**

*(Privately Owned)*

*17 Isabella Street*

Built by William Snider, around 1898, the home and the Snider family were regarded with awe by many Village residents. This Queen Anne Revival house has undergone extensive additions and renovations over the years. Note the huge front porch built of rock face limestone ashlar. The front entrance door is original, containing 16 panes of glass with bevelled edges. Decorative inlaid wood floor patterns, stained glass, bead glass and decorative ionic and Doric wood columns are some of the notable interior details. A summer cottage, relocated from its original location, is situated in the rear yard. Converted from a private residence in the early 1980's, it is a guest house.

*Turn left on to Albert Street.*



## **13 Alfred Snyder Home**

*(Village Manor Retirement Home)*

*29 Albert Street*

Alfred Snyder who co-owned the W. & A. Snyder General Merchants store on the corner of Front and King Street built this home around 1900. It has undergone extensive additions and renovations serving as both a private and retirement home over the years. This 2 1/2 storey home with a 3 storey tower on its northwest corner, features a hipped roof with numerous gabled projections. The 2 storey wooden porch on the east side is the original.

## **14 Elias W. B. Snider Home**

*(Privately Owned)*

*28 Albert Street*

Built about 1860, a Revival influence can be noted in the exterior details of brick quoining. Note the cornice with dentils, eaves return and Roman arched windows with brick cap on the front elevation. Front and rear porches have columns with Egyptian Revival Capitals. The roof is covered in clay tiles and the iron framed greenhouse is a 1930 addition. A water storage tank in the attic was used to flush the water closets (toilets).



*E.W.B. Snider*

*28 Albert Street*

## **15 St. Jacobs Schoolhouse**

*(Schoolhouse Theatre)*

*11 Albert Street*

A log school building was first located immediately behind the present Scotiabank. In 1852, a brick structure was built to house 74 students. By 1867, village population growth necessitated another school be built on this site, a one-room schoolhouse typical of the period. This school was replaced by a larger one on Queensway Drive in 1929. In the 30's and 40's, the hardware store used this old schoolhouse for warehousing. In 1992 it was purchased for conversion into a year-round performance venue. Today, Drayton Entertainment is the principal tenant with professional theatre from September to December.



*Schoolhouse Theatre*

*Go back and turn left on to Queensway Drive.*

## **16 John B. Snider Home**

*(Private residence)*

*24 Queensway*

Built in 1879, the house is characteristic of the Italianate style with the 1 1/2 storey wing on the right in Gothic Revival design. The foundation is granite rubble and the outbuilding at the rear once served as a summer kitchen/wood shed/smoke house.

## **17 Public Library**

*29 Queensway*

This library was built in 1933 on a portion of school land with funds donated by Miss Lola Snider, daughter of Elias W.B. Snider. (The maple trees are original to the school property.) Minerva Schiefele, the first librarian, earned 25 cents an hour. Still well-used, the library exudes the charm and warmth of St. Jacobs.



*Public Library*

# Self Guided Historic Walking Tour Of The Village

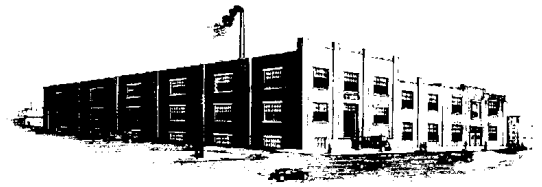
*Turn left on to Spring Street.*

## **18 Oscar J. Smith Shoe Co. Ltd.**

*(The Antique Market)*

*8 Spring Street*

This building was a shoe factory, owned and operated by Oscar J. Smith. Made at the rate of up to 1500 a day, shoes were sold to major stores like Eatons and Simpsons. In the good times, Smith Shoe employed about 100 and treated them to an annual Christmas dinner at the nearby schoolhouse. Early on, young men often worked a sixty-six hour week at 8¢ an hour. The factory closed for good in the early 1950's as Smith Shoe was unwilling to sacrifice their quality product to please consumers' interests in changing styles.



*O.J. Smith Shoe Factory*

## **19 O. J. Smith Shoe Store/Home**

*(A Gift To Remember)*

*1395 King Street*

Built by John Smith in 1860, this building served as a post office and a general store before it was purchased by Oscar J. Smith in 1900. Occupied by a shoemaker's shop on the left and a tailor shop on the right, the Smith family resided upstairs. Note the mural on the Spring Street wall painted by artists Kay Drawehn and Henry Tewinkel ~ a recent creation for "A Gift To Remember" that provides many visitors with a memorable photo opportunity.



*O.J. Smith Shoe Store*

*Turn right on to King Street.*

## **20 Hoeflin Harness Shop**

*(Angel Treasures)*

*1389 King Street*

The only full three storey building in St. Jacobs. A wayward Halloween firecracker in the 1930's changed all that by starting a fire that destroyed the top floor forever.



*Inside the O.J. Smith Shoe Store*

## **21 Typical Shopkeepers' Dwelling**

*(It's Artistic)*

*Corner of King Street and Cedar Street*

*Cross over to the South East corner of King and Cedar Street*

## **22 Village Police Headquarters**

*(Tribeca)*

*1374 King Street*

The first building on this site was a woodworking shop owned by the Schaeffer family. In later years, St. Jacobs police headquarters was located here, as well as the studio of artist Roger Witmer.



*Example of typical shopkeeper's dwelling*

## **23 St. Jacobs Creamery**

*(Privately Owned)*

*15 Cedar Street*

This is the location of Ontario's first (Canada's third) commercial creamery established in 1874. In business for 98 years, it won awards and wide acclaim for its butter. Milk was picked up in cans from farmers in the surrounding area and after processing, the milk and cream were delivered to village residents by "milkmen" driving horse and wagon teams. Jake Sittler, grandfather of former Toronto Maple Leaf hockey team captain Darryl Sittler, was one of the last milkmen to work here. Local lore has it that Darryl's hard and accurate slapshot was attributed to time working with his grandfather heaving manure out of stables!



*St. Jacobs Creamery*

*Cross over to the North side of Cedar Street*

# Self Guided Historic Walking Tour Of The Village

## **24 Calvary Evangelical Church**

*(Toy Soup)*

*1376 King Street*

The red brick structure built in 1914 on the corner of Cedar and King was, until recently, the home of the Calvary United Church congregation. Now it is the home of Toy Soup, a long time favorite shopping destination for kids! Note the buttresses at the sides of the building and the decorative stone work at the peak of the bell tower. Note also the original stained glass windows.



*Calvary Evangelical Church*

*Turn right on to King Street.*

## **25 John Sauder's Wagon Works**

*(Stone Crock Restaurant)*

*1396 King Street*

The site of an early wagon works and later a Zehr's grocery store, the Stone Crock Restaurant opened in 1975, offering Waterloo County-style family dining and the Village's first gift shop.



*East side of King Street: Post Office, Bakery, Jacobs Grill, Stone Crock*

## **26 Brubacher's Blacksmith Shop**

*(Jacob's Grill)*

*1398 King Street*

A blacksmith shop and later, headquarters for the St. Jacobs Fire Department, the award winning St. Jacobs Brass Band was often heard rehearsing on the flat roof of the firehall.

## **27 Stone Crock Bakery**

*1402 King Street*

This modern bakery moved from a corner of the Stone Crock Restaurant with just one oven and a small prep table in 1975 to another location in the Farm Pantry in 1977, to its present location in 1993. Each year, the Bakery bakes almost 12,000 loaves of white bread, 14,000 muffins, and over 50,000 pies. The most popular pie is Dutch Apple, originating from a local Mennonite recipe.



*Steiner House*

## **28 The Steiner House**

*(Head 2 Toe)*

*1401 King Street*

One of the oldest buildings in the village, this house was probably built around 1857 predating the earliest industries which mark the beginning of the Village. It's an excellent

example of vernacular Georgian architecture - rectangular form, 2½ storeys, with a chimney at each end of the house. The entranceway is centered between windows on the first floor level containing 2 sashes of 8 panes in each and symmetrical windows on the second level. Some local residents still refer to it as the "Steiner House" recognizing a family who once lived there. On display inside is an old child's shoe discovered in the wall - left there as a good luck charm when the house was built.

## **29 St. James Lutheran Church**

*1407 King Street*

The original church on the same site was built in 1866 and replaced in 1961 with the current church which features a clock tower with bells. Twice daily, at 12:00 noon and at 6:00, the carillon in the clock tower plays hymns, providing a musical interlude that is an extraordinary treat for visitors.



*St. James Lutheran Church*

## Self Guided Historic Walking Tour Of The Village

### **30 Jon B. Martin**

#### **Blacksmith Shop**

*(Robert Brown Glass & Metal Studio, Hamel Brooms)*

*1411 King Street*

From the late 1880's to the 1960's, Mennonites travelling by horse and buggy brought their horses in to be shod by blacksmiths like Mr. Martin who worked here until 1987. The shop was a favorite destination for the village children who were fascinated by the “red hot” work of the men outfitted in heavy leather aprons, gloves and boots. Today's resident craftsmen continue to make traditional crafts onsite.

**Enhance your walking tour by visiting the exhibits in The Mill. Please drop by the Visitor Centre beside the Post Office if you want to ask questions or share comments about your visit to St. Jacobs.**



*Jon B. Martin Blacksmith Shop*

## Looking Further...

### **A. St. Jacobs Weavery**

*1340 King Street*

It was at various times owned by John Thoms, Abe Brubacher and Amos Bowman. Presently operated as a quilting shop.

### **B. 101 Water Street**

*(Privately Owned)*

This two storey, Georgian farmhouse is reputed to be the first brick house built in St. Jacobs. The exterior walls are constructed of brick, handmade with clay from the property. The lack of symmetry in window placement, is characteristic of Waterloo County Georgian style which isn't as precise as its British counterpart. Note the iron anchors for the second and attic floor beams. The farm house was situated on a portion of land owned by Simon Cress (the first settler in this area, pictured below), which took in all the land on the east side of the highway stretching from the Conestoga River to close to the present St. Jacobs Farmers' Market.

### **C. 37 Northside Drive - “Darryl Sittler Court”**

*(Privately Owned)*

In your vehicle, you might consider travelling up Northside Drive, the road to the left of the E. W. B. Snider Monument. Turn immediately right at the top of the hill and you'll enter a street with only one house (by Martin's Garage). This white painted brick house is the boyhood home of Darryl Sittler, National Hockey League star, former Captain of the Toronto Maple Leafs and Member of the Hockey Hall of Fame.

Take Sawmill Road (Regional Road #17) toward Hawkesville and you enter a picturesque, peaceful countryside. Here, Old Order Mennonite farming families work, socialize, attend their own 1 or 2 room schools and travel faithfully by horse & buggy to their meetinghouses for Sunday morning worship. The property that constitutes the Village of St. Jacobs was originally owned by Mennonites and the denomination had significant influence on the early development of St. Jacobs. Most of the leading citizens throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century had at least close Mennonite relatives, however, St. Jacobs has never really been a “Mennonite” community. That description for the most part has been more appropriately applied to the farming community in the countryside surrounding the Village.



*Boyhood home of Darryl Sittler*

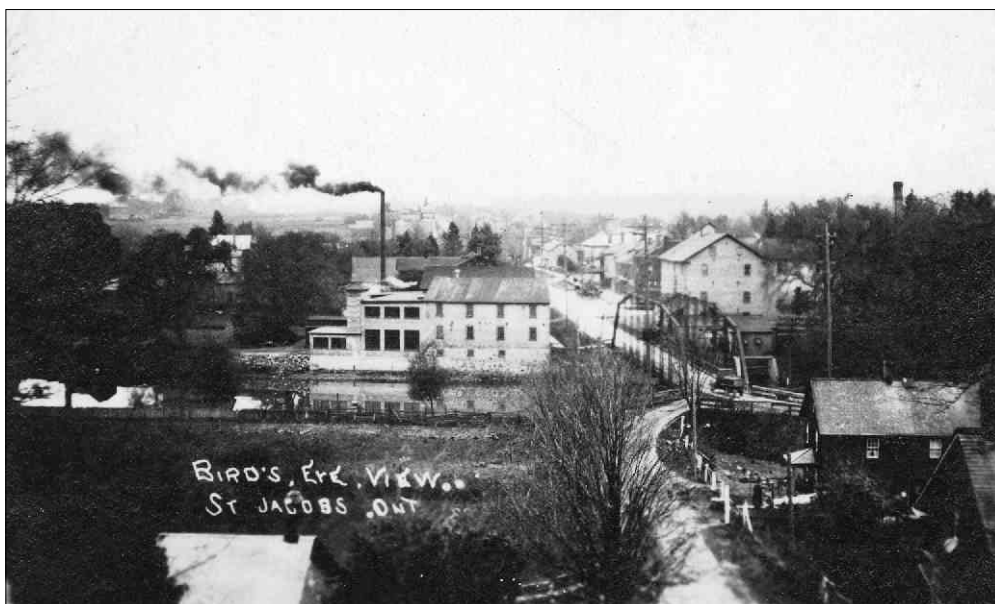


*Farm just East of Hawkesville*

# Self Guided Historic Walking Tour Of The Village

## **Sources Of Information For The Historic Walking Tour:**

- *St. Jacobs Library archives*
- ***The Early History Of Jakobstettel*** by Virgil E. Martin
- ***Memories of St. Jacobs 1852-2002*** by Delores L. Martin
- *Elmer Sauder and Mel Horst - lifelong residents Of the Village of St. Jacobs*
- *Woolwich Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee*
- *Del Gingrich, Manager of the Visitor Centre and The Mennonite Story*



*An early bird's eye view of St. Jacobs from the hilltop on the north side of the Village looking South*



*Overlooking the Village from the South (Cress property). The steeple is the Luthern Church.*