

The development of the village has continued into the 21st century, with the addition of increased commercial activity, new industrial enterprises, and an expanded residential base. Mount Brydges remains a commercial centre and offers a variety of shopping opportunities for residents and visitors alike. With its friendly merchants, quaint tree-lined streets, charming architecture and tranquil park settings, the village of Mount Brydges has gained a reputation for its charm and hospitality.

By 1857 the population of Mount Brydges reached 180 residents. In the village could be found a general store, a steam sawmill, a cabinet maker, a harness maker, a blacksmith, a carpenter and lumberman, and two hotels. Each hotel offered accommodations, entertainment, liquor, and even exhibition rooms for travelling salesmen who frequented the village by train. It was in these local taverns that the Township Council also held their regular meetings, until a large wood-frame township hall was constructed in 1870. The village experienced steady growth in the decades to follow, as it emerged as a central location for exporting goods such as cattle, logs, potatoes, grain and fruit by rail. By 1906 Mount Brydges was declared a police village, and the commercial centre continued to expand in its offerings to residents.

different types of shops, and many dwellings built. A school was held in part of a private dwelling on Bowan Street, and a Methodist Church was built on the property currently occupied by the cemetery grounds.



Mount Brydges United Church, 22522 Adelaide Road
42° 54' 33.92" N / 81° 29' 42.90" W
As the Methodist congregation flourished, the need arose for a substanital church building. Dedicated in 1898, this brick structure with an impressive bell tower is a landmark in the community.



Edward Tuck Residence, 22508 Adelaide Road
42° 54' 33.46" N / 81° 29' 41.50" W
This grand home was built by village merchant Edward Tuck, who puchased the property in 1882. Tuck operated a store below the IOOF Hall (See #4).



Grain and Feed Store, 22486 Adelaide Road
42° 54' 31.10" N / 81° 29' 37.19" W
Formerly a feed store and later a drug store, this building on the corner of Adelaide Road & Bowan Street has retained much of its original features.

In 1854 John Emmerson was granted a plot of land north of the railway line on Adelaide Road, the site of the current Royal Bank parking lot. On it he built a general store, and in 1855 Emmerson commissioned a plan and survey of part of the village, as laid out on the south half of lot 18 in the second concession. The surveyor for this plan reported that the village was quickly becoming a center for the surrounding area. At the time of the survey there were six stores,

As with most small railway villages in Upper Canada, the railway emerged as the commercial nucleus of the community. The station became a major shipping point for surrounding farms, and many commercial enterprises established close to the railway line to take advantage of the activity.

With its new ties to the railway the village was renamed 'Mount Brydges,' but the origins of this name are uncertain. It is said that the word 'Mount' was used because the village sat on the highest point on the railway line between Glencoe and Komoka. This name may also honour one of the earliest settlers and a surveyor of Caradoc Township, Col. Roswell Mount. It is without dispute, however, that the word 'Brydges' was included to honour the work of Charles J. Brydges, the general manager of the Great Western Railway Company. Brydges was responsible for selecting the site of the village for the path of the railway line, a decision which surely gained him the appreciation of its inhabitants.

About the artist...



HUGHES HOUSE STUDIO

Blake Hughes was born in London, Ontario in 1938. He attended Teacher's College at the University of Western Ontario, and obtained an Arts Specialist Certificate in Teaching from the Ontario College of Art.

Hughes taught for 35 years, and served as head of the Art Department at the Strathroy District Collegiate Institute.

Now retired, Hughes operates an art studio out of his home in Mount Brydges, Ontario.

For more information about the pieces reproduced in this publication or to order a print, please contact Blake Hughes at Hughes House Studio, 519-264-1245.



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Drawings provided by artist Blake Hughes.

With the development of the Great Western Railway in 1853, the community experienced dramatic changes and unprecedented growth. It was during this period that the village spread northward toward the third concession along the Adelaide Road. Mount Brydges developed at the crossroads of the railway line and this early settlement trail, resulting in the core of the historic village forming along the Adelaide Road.

The initial settlement of this area took shape in a district referred to as the 'Plains,' located at the corner of the second concession and the Adelaide Road. John Getty built a log home here in 1829; Getty was accompanied by a number of other settlers from the British Isles who established a small pioneer community. This first settlement, located south of the present village, was given the name 'Hartford.' The only commercial activity in the early days was the production of potash from the cinders of burned tree stumps, which were left behind in the clearing of land for farm land and roads.



The Story of Early Mount Brydges

Discover Historic



Commercial Hotel

Featuring the work of local artist
Blake Hughes

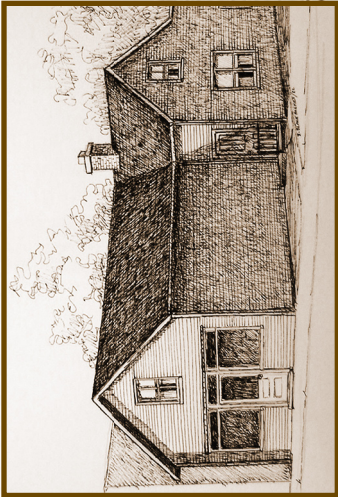
Mount Brydges

From the Historical Atlas of
Middlesex County, 1878

Featuring a walking tour of twelve existing heritage buildings

Drug Store and Harness Shop, 22447 Adelaide Road
42° 54' 26.75" N / 81° 29' 29.37" W

This simple wood frame building features two separate structures that have been joined together and modified many times to accommodate a variety of commercial uses. The south part of the building was at one time a drug store, while the other half (closer to the railway tracks) initially served a shoemaker, and later a harness shop, a printing office, and barber shops. A residence at the rear once served the harness-maker's family.



Masonic Lodge, 22477 Adelaide Road
42° 54' 30.27" N / 81° 29' 35.18" W

Constructed in 1875, this building housed a general store. Meeting space on the upper floor served St. John's Masonic Lodge No. 81. A prominent circular window bears the Masonic insignia.



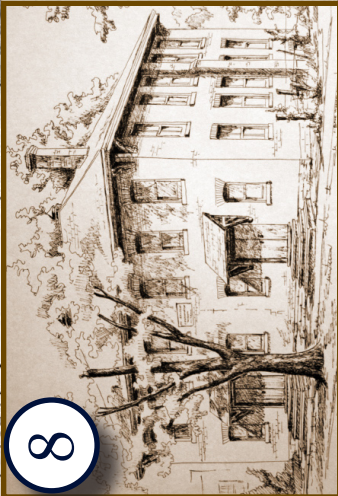
Anglican Church, 639 Bowan Street
42° 54' 28.77" N / 81° 29' 39.40" W

Vigorous fundraising brought this church building to fruition in 1886. The tower was completed in 1909 and at 50 feet tall, could be seen from any point in the village. The Parish Hall was added in 1955.



Township Community Hall
22501 Adelaide Road
42° 54' 31.63" N / 81° 29' 39.13" W

Hosting dances, church suppers, medical clinics, a public library, and even the village jail, this hall was the centre of social and political life in Mount Brydges. Constructed in 1870, it was torn down in 1991.



American Hotel, 22439 Adelaide Road
42° 54' 26.59" N / 81° 29' 29.07" W

Formerly known as the American Hotel, this building was adapted and expanded to twice the original size in 1919 to accommodate the Mount Brydges Continuation (High) School.



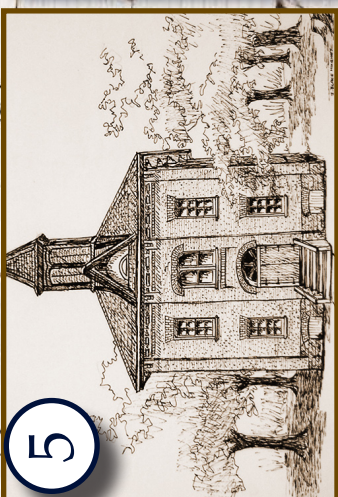
Steer Residence, 22417 Adelaide Road
42° 54' 24.99" N / 81° 29' 25.08" W

This beautiful craftsman-style residence was constructed in 1916 as the private home of Clarence Steer and his family, who operated a general store in the village (see #4).



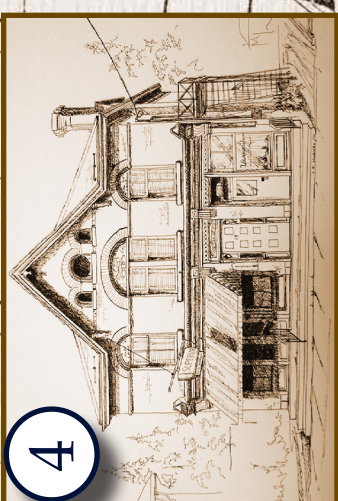
Baptist Church, 22397 Adelaide Road
42° 54' 23.02" N / 81° 29' 22.07" W

Opened and dedicated in 1867, the Baptist Church has seen a number of changes over the years, including brick (1899) and an entrance tower (1930) that was later modified to bring the doors closer to street level.



S.S. No. 15, 673 Wesleyan Street
42° 54' 19.91" N / 81° 29' 20.70" W

Formerly home to Mount Brydges Public School, this building was opened in 1890 at a cost of \$3438.46. It continued to serve as a school house until Caradoc Central was opened in 1960.



General Store, 22474 Adelaide Road
42° 54' 29.49" N / 81° 29' 34.31" W

Constructed in 1880, this building housed the village post office, a general store and the Oddfellows Hall on the second floor. The I.O.O.F. name remains visible on the stained glass windows.

