



Part I: The Main Street

From the mid-1800s, Pakenham's main street was a blend of commercial establishments, trades, public buildings, homes and churches. The route, called Graham Street in earlier days and now County Road 29, has always been a main thoroughfare. Much of the early architectural flavor of Graham Street remains today.

We begin the tour at the south end of the main street, at the cenotaph and Horticultural Park. The village's Agricultural Hall, later known as the Community Hall, was located here from 1896 until 1978. The large, frame structure had been the original Catholic Church before being relocated to this spot. The elementary and continuation (high) school, built in 1886, was next to this site. The stone wall in the parking lot is all that remains of the school, which was torn down in 1969.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The main street looking south from corner of Renfrew St., circa 1910; school, 1886-1969; the main street looking north past Jessie St., circa 1910.

Crossing Jeanie St., take note of the attractive house at #2582. Robert Graham—a blacksmith, and wagon, carriage and sleigh maker—built it in 1865. It is still known as the Graham House. The building reflects Classic Revival architecture, a prominent style along the rest of the street. Across the road is St. Andrew's United Church. Built in 1898 as a Presbyterian church, it blends Gothic and Romanesque Revival details with the Akron church style.

Continuing up the main street, three buildings on the west side are noteworthy, each of which exhibits a different architectural style of the period. "Ye Olde Hotel Apartment," built in the 1860s in the Gothic Revival style, was originally a hotel and continued to serve as such for many decades. Four doors down is a building in the Classic Revival style with a double verandah. Built in the 1870s it housed the village's hardware store from the early 1900s until 2006. The third building of the trio was another hotel. This Regency style building (originally stone) from the mid-1800s was William Dickson's "Commercial Hotel". Over the years it has housed a variety of businesses from blacksmith shop to hair salon.

The street front opposite these buildings displays an entirely different period vernacular. Why? Several original buildings in the block were destroyed by fire in 1940. The year prior, fire also consumed several buildings on the west side of the next block along which McCann's service station is located. This has been owned and operated by their family since 1922. Prior to that, a blacksmith shop was situated here.

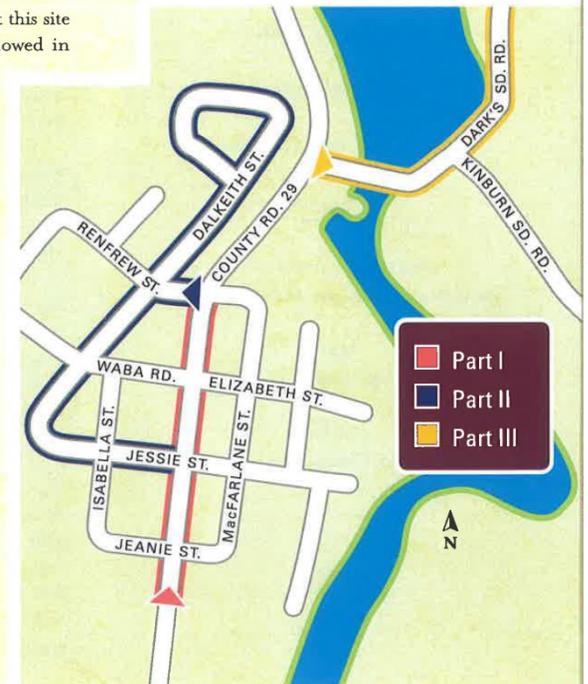
The east side of the main street between Elizabeth St. and Renfrew St. has a rich commercial history. The building currently housing the Centennial Restaurant was built for H.H. Dickson in the late 1800s. Over the years a store, post office and restaurant have been located here. Next to this is the village's bank. Union Bank opened at this site in the early 1900s; the Royal Bank followed in 1925, expanding in 1976 into what had previously been an adjoining drugstore, then barbershop. A new building has replaced the original un-sound structure. The Pakenham General Store is an institution unto itself. Established in the early 1840s by Archibald McArthur and Robert Brown, it is considered to be one of the oldest continually operated general stores in North America. The Scott family owned and operated the store from 1876 to 1981 (see plaques). Robert Brown had the attached residence built in 1858. It features both Regency and Classic Revival architectural styles. The last building on this block dates from the 1860s, and is another example of the Classic Revival style. Early on, it was a drugstore, then a millinery shop. The Township Office was located here between 1910 and 1988, followed by the library, which has since moved.

Part II: Piety Hill

Proceeding west on Renfrew St. from County Road 29 takes you up a hill known by some local residents as "Piety Hill" because of the churches and cemetery located here.

At the north end of Dalkeith St. is Union Cemetery. The village's earliest Presbyterian—the first church in the village, dating from 1838—and Methodist churches were located on these grounds, together with their adjoining graveyards. Following union in 1925, when these two congregations began worshipping together in the already-existing St. Andrew's, the two cemeteries became the Union Cemetery.

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It is the resting place of many of the area's earliest settlers, such as Andrew Dickson, the main founder of the village.

Leaving the cemetery and walking down Dalkeith St., one comes upon **two noteworthy homes** at the corner of Pine St. The first, built in the 1860s, served as the Orange Lodge until being converted into a residence in 1967. The next home was the Presbyterian manse, dating from 1884.

The empty lot at the corner of Dalkeith and Renfrew Streets was the site of the large, stone Methodist church. Built in 1891, a successor to the original frame building from 1841-42, it was torn down in the 1930s subsequent to church union. The brick house (circa 1884) next door served as the manse for Methodist and United Church ministers until 2008.



On the other side of Renfrew St. stands the grand **St. Peter Celestine Roman Catholic Church and rectory**, completed in 1893. One of the Seven Wonders of Lanark County, the church was built in the Romanesque Revival style with Italianate features such as the square bell

tower and rounded arches. Note the pointed rather than traditional flat façade of the main tower. The architecture, unusual for the area, is similar in style to churches in Quebec and southern Europe.

Before continuing down Dalkeith, stop and admire the house just opposite St. Peter Celestine. Known as **the Lindsay House**, it is a lovely example of the Ontario "cottage style" that one sees throughout the area. Thomas Ellis, the founder of the Pakenham Agricultural Society, had the house built in the 1860s. Farther down Dalkeith, at the corner with Waba Road, you will see **the Auld Schule ("old school") Apartments**. The name of the apartment block reflects the building's original purpose as a grammar school, from about 1854 until 1886.

Rounding the corner from Dalkeith onto Jessie St. takes you to **St. Mark's Anglican Church**. Built in 1876, the structure displays the Gothic Revival style typical of Anglican churches. The brick rectory beside the church was built in 1917. From this point on Jessie St., make your way to County Road 29 and go north through the village for about ½ km. until you reach the bridge crossing the Mississippi River.

Part III: The Mississippi River & the Andrew Dickson Legacy

The **five-span stone bridge** at the "little falls" is the only one of its kind in North America. Built in 1901 as a sturdy replacement for the wooden bridges that were sometimes washed away in spring floods, this preeminent landmark of the village is another one of the Seven Wonders of Lanark County. An explanatory plaque at each end of the bridge provides more information. (Be cautious of the traffic when walking across the bridge.)

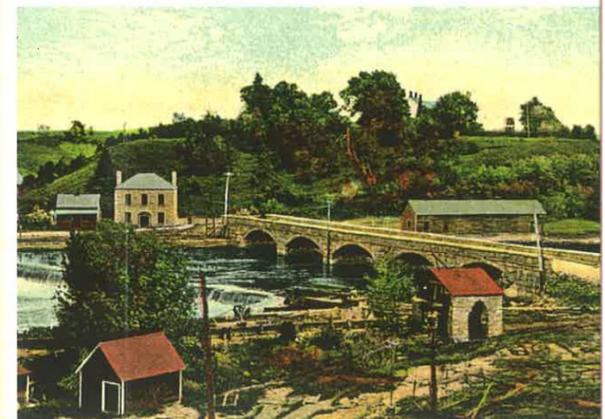
Andrew Dickson (1797-1868) was the primary driving force behind the creation of the village of Pakenham during the 1830s and 40s. His numerous property acquisitions in the 1830s included most of the area on both sides of the Mississippi River that would become the village. Water power and water rights were the keys to Dickson's business success. They drove his mills (lumber, flour and carding) and brought in income through the use of his timber slide. Dickson also was prominent in the area's commerce, owning a store which had a licence to sell liquor, and a post office. Although none of the Dickson mills, located on the east side of the river, stand today, most of his homes do.

At the far end of the bridge stands a sturdy and rather majestic **two-storey stone building**, a combination of Neo-classic and Regency styles. It was built in 1840 as Andrew Dickson's second home. It later housed the office and store of Hilliard and Dickson, a partnership of Andrew's son William and son-in-law Daniel Hilliard, the continuation of the Dickson commercial "dynasty."



A short walk along Dark's Side Road leads you to **Andrew's third home**, a Gothic revival style building from the 1860s. In the same decade he had the house known as "Breezy Heights" built. Located on the hill above the bridge, it was more like a summer home. In 1868, the year of Dickson's death, the house went to William. Once the location of a silver fox, then mink, fur-farming business, from 1985 to 2011 it was operated as the Stonebridge Bed and Breakfast. It is now a private residence and is not visible from the road.

This ends the three-part walking tour of Pakenham, a glimpse into the history and built heritage of a small but vibrant village along the Mississippi River. *



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: View of village from school bell tower, circa 1925; Andrew Dickson's third home, built 1860s; view near bridge from west side of river, circa 1905; Methodist church, 1891-1930s.