KINMOUNT

Historical Walking Tour

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In Sawmill

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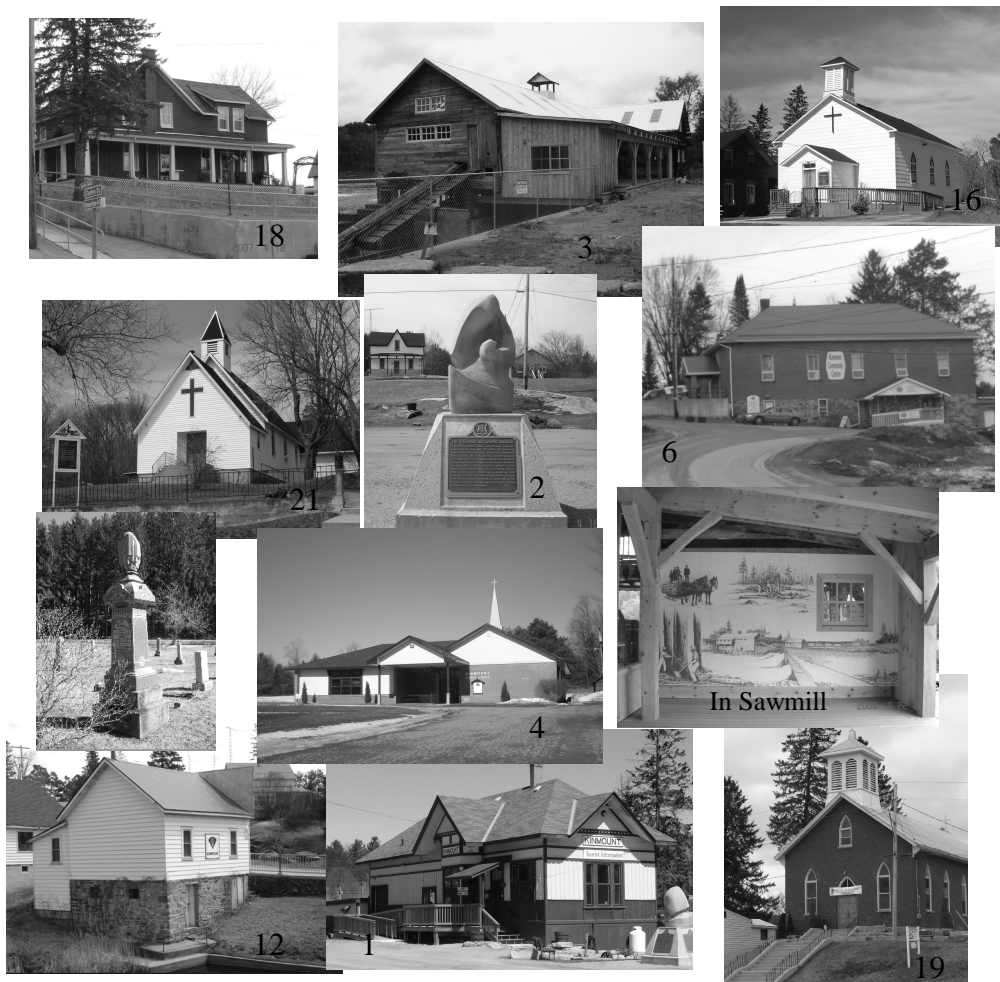## *Explore Our Heritage...Experience Our Charm*

A Brief History of the Town

Prior to the arrival of European settlers, the area around Kinmount was inhabited by the first nations people belonging to the Iroquoian, Algonquin and Huron nations. In the 1850ø's, with settlements pushing ever northward, the Bobcaygeon Road reached the present site of Kinmount and with it, brought prospectors in lumber and other natural resources as well as settlers. Although growth was slow in the beginning, with the coming of the railroad in 1876, Kinmount began to truly blossom.

By the end of the 19th Century, the town of Kinmount boasted over 50 businesses and professionals and enjoyed particular prosperity. The biggest industry was lumber and it grew fat upon the abundant white pine in the great forests of the area. At one time, as many as seven sawmills operated in and around the town, producing thousands of board feet of lumber annually. Yet, despite the significant economic prosperity enjoyed by the town in the decades flanking the turn of the 20th Century, it seemed that the town was fated to slide into decline.

Various socio-economic factors played a role in the evolution of the town and its citizens, but perhaps most significantly, it was the numerous natural disasters which shaped the physical form of the town most appreciably. Several fires claimed more than one business in the span of just a few decades; in 1942 a conflagration appropriately termed the õGreat Fireö destroyed the entire business section of the town, with the notable exception of the train station, forever changing the façade of Kinmount. Floods, both minor and major, have wreaked havoc upon the town as water overflowed the banks of the Burnt River. In 1928, a spring log jam resulted in a dramatic flood which saw locals taking to canoes as a means of transportation on the Main street. However, in spite of the many hardships faced by the town and its people, Kinmount has retained its gallant spirit and today has redirected its energies to meet with the challenges of the present and the future while never forgetting the valuable contributions of its past.

Featured Sites

1. *Kinmount Railway Station,* No. 5 Station St.

     The southern half of this venerable old building was constructed in 1876 to coincide with the arrival of the railroad in Kinmount. A baggage room was later added on the north side of the building in response to the need for greater space. The station itself was built according to a common blueprint used for many stations in the area, such as Haliburton. The building was a hub of the community as the railroad provided an important means of transportation, both of persons and freight, and communication, as mail could be delivered with greater ease and regularity by train.

     In the early 1980øs the rail lines were abandoned and the station was purchased by the township of Somerville. It has since been home to the Kinmount LionsøClub and the Senior Citizens New Horizons group. Today, the building houses a historical model rail-line (circa 1920) between Kinmount and Haliburton, as well as a Tourist Information Centre. In the northern end of the building, the village Blacksmith plies his trade, carrying on a tradition that has deep roots in this community.

2. *Icelandic Memorial Sculpture,* Austin Sawmill Heritage Park

     Dedicated in 2000, this sculpture, executed by Gudrun Sigursteinsdottir Girgis, was created to commemorate the ill-fatted settlement of a group of Icelandic immigrants at Kinmount in 1874. Plaques in English, French and Icelandic on the base of the sculpture explain the tragic circumstances of the settlers and list the names of those who were among the unfortunate group.

3. *Austin Sawmill*

     The present building was constructed in 1942 on the foundations of a previous sawmill which was destroyed by fire. The first mill established on this site was built in the 1890øs and owned by William T. Craig and John Austin. In 1908, the original building burned to the ground and was replaced by the structure which succumbed to fire in the conflagration of 1942 which destroyed most of the town. The lands formerly belonging to the Austin Sawmill now constitute the Austin Sawmill Heritage Park, opened in 1995.

4. *New and 5. Old Baptist Churches,* No. 4937 Cty. Rd. 45 & No. 4 Dickson St., respectively

The first services of Baptist worship at Kinmount were held in 1877. One year later, with a congregation of 48 members, a church was built at the corner of Crego and Dickson Streets. In 1912, the congregation had dwindled so greatly they could no longer maintain a minister. In 1919, the congregation was dissolved and the church sold to the Masonic Order.

In 1933, Rev. Gillian of Bobcaygeon began holding services again in Kinmount and members of the local congregation reorganized to purchase a lot and built a new church which officially opened June 22, 1936. This building still stands, located on Dickson St., north of the present Community Centre. It is now a private home. In 1993, the Baptist congregation purchased the former Kinmount Public School which was renovated and reopened to hold services by September of 1993.

6. *Kinmount Community Centre,* No. 2 Dickson St.

The present building was constructed in 1922 on the site of the old Forrester's Hall, following its destruction by fire. In 1950, the Township of Somerville purchased the building and in 1962, added the fire hall (little more than a garage) on its eastern side. The little fire hall continued in use until 1979, when the new fire hall was built on the south side of town, next to the new cemetery. Until 1999, the main building housed the public library in its basement. The library is now located in the former Township of Somerville Office building south of town. In its stead, the Kinmount and Area Artisans' Guild has established a market place. The main floor of the Community Centre continues to be used for various community events.

7. *Watson-Hopkins House,* No. 5 Dickson St.

This stately Victorian-style home was constructed in the 1880's by local businessman Alexander Watson. Another local businessman, A. Y. Hopkins, owner of a block of stores on the main street in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, later purchased the home. The multi-story red-brick structure continues in use today as a private home, now fronted by towering majestic pines and surrounded by lush and beautiful gardens. The original wrought iron and concrete fencing which surrounded the property in the late 19th century is still visible today.

8. *Somerville Lodge #451, AF & A.M.* No. 5 Crego St.

  The first Masonic Lodge in Kinmount was formed in 1901. Meetings were initially held in the upstairs of the Hopkins block of buildings on the west side of Main Street. Sometime around 1910, the lodge moved to a room in the Bowie Hotel, also located on Main Street. In 1919, the lodge moved to its present location at the corner of Crego and Dickson streets, having purchased the building, a former church, from the Baptist congregation.

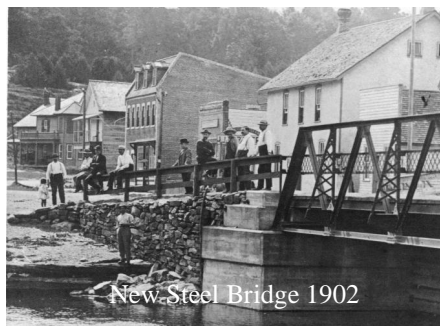**9. *Cenotaph,*** Main Street

  The cenotaph rests on the site of the house and store of Samuel Henry which burnt in 1922 in one of the many fires which have plagued the town. The vacant land was later donated to the town for the erection of a cenotaph to memorialize those brave citizens of Kinmount who perished in the First and Second World Wars, as well as the Korean War.

10. *Highlands Cinemas,* Cty. Rd. 121 just north of town

  A unique treasure nestled on the edge of town, the Highlands Cinemas began in 1979 with a single, 50 seat theatre. It has since grown to become a 5 theatre complex seating 550 people showing first -run movies. In addition, the complex boasts a museum which houses the largest collection of movie memorabilia in Canada. The theatres themselves form a special part of this collection, containing elements salvaged from historical theatres from across North America.

11. *Bridge,* Main Street

  The first bridge at this location was built in 1858. At least four other bridges of timber and later iron were built to span the Burnt River at this site before the present bridge of concrete and steel was built in 1956-1957. The bridge was later refurbished in 1994.

New Steel Bridge 1902

12. *Old Courthouse, Jail, Museum*   No. 5023 Cty. Rd. 45

　　　This unimposing clapboard structure was first built in the 1890øs as a gaol to house the criminals of Kinmount and area, though the crimes of those held there were certainly mild and usually of the petty kind, such as small theft or drunk and disorderly conduct. The jail was located in the stone basement of the building and the iron bars over the windows are still visible today. In 1962, the building came to be used as the offices for the Township of Somerville. Township administration continued here until 1990, when the offices were relocated to a new building south of town constructed specifically to house the township offices. At this time, the building was taken over by the Kinmount Community Police committee and became a satellite office for the Lindsay O. P.P. (now the City of Kawartha Lakes   detachment. The O.P.P. have a brand new facility in Minden so the little building is not being utilized at the moment.

13. *Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 441,* Cty. Rd. 45 East

　　　Although the population of Kinmount was relatively small, a large number of brave young men and women volunteered their services in the First and Second World Wars. Because of this, Kinmount was a likely location for a Legion Branch. The charter for the Kinmount Legion, John McGrath Branch 441, was granted in   November of 1946. Members purchased property from Walter Butts and the standing building on the lot was remodeled by volunteers; one year later it was officially opened for serving the Legionnaires and community. In 1957, a new building was completed on the site; this later building still stands and continues in use today.

14. *Kinmount Fair Grounds,* Cty. Rd. 45 East

　　　The first Somerville Agricultural Fair was held in the nearby village of Coboconk in 1872. Ten years later, the Galway Agricultural Society was formed in Kinmount. In 1907, the two Agricultural societies of Somerville and Galway merged and fairs were then held at Kinmount. About this time, the fair moved to its present location, east of town; formerly, it was held on the site of the õnewö Kinmount cemetery, on the south side of town. Today the fair has grown to enjoy a reputation as one of the best fairs in Ontario, with something to offer everyone from midway rides to livestock shows,   demolition   derbies   and   home   craft   exhibits,   vendors, demonstrations, a pioneer exhibit, talent shows, live entertainment and   on -site camping among the majestic pines.

15. *Junction of the Monck and Bobcaygeon Roads*

The Bobcaygeon Road was an important artery of transportation for the early pioneer population and speculators.

The Monck Road (Now Cty. Rd. 45), built in 1966, was created primarily as a military route between Lake Couchiching and Ottawa to provide alternative transportation to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence system should Canada come under attack by the Americans.

The junction of these two important early roads at Kinmount helped propel the small community to growth and prosperity as they provided important means of transportation and communication.

16. *Kinmount United Church,* No. 15 Cluxton St.

This building, initially housing the Presbyterian congregation of the town and also playing host to other denominations who lacked facilities in the early years of settlement, was first built in 1876. However, no bell was to chime in its tower until almost 40 years later when a bell was donated by W. T. Craig, then co-owner of the Craig and Austin Sawmill. When the United Church of Canada was formed in 1925, the Presbyterians joined the United Church of Canada, the building consequently became the home of the newly formed United Church congregation in Kinmount.

The adjacent Manse was built in 1898 and occupied henceforth by a minister until 1950. The Church building was renovated in 1944 and 1978. Interestingly, a manual pump organ purchased many years ago is still used on occasion to provide music for worship services.

In 1958, Kinmount became included in the Coboconk pastoral charge. In 2005 Kinmount United Church became a single pastoral charge.

17. *Orange Lodge,* No. 11 Cluxton St.

The first Lodge of the orange Order at Kinmount was opened in 1886, on the site of the present Kinvale Restaurant, on Main Street. When this building was destroyed by fire in 1890, it was decided to rebuild at the present location, next to the Presbyterian Church. A religious organization with strong political affiliations, the Orange Order flourished in Kinmount in the years prior to the First World War.

18. *Kinmount House Bed and Breakfast,* No. 6 Cluxton St.

This home is recognized as one of the oldest buildings in Kinmount, although the date of its construction is not known. It was initially occupied by John Hunter, accredited as one of the founders of Kinmount. By 1900, it had been added on to and was owned by Fred Dettman, a prominent local businessman. In 1942 it was sold to Harry Butts who used it as a motel and boarding house. In 1986, it was purchased by its present owner, Patrick Healey, who now operates a charming Bed and Breakfast.

19. *St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church,* No. 4030 KL 121

The Catholic community of the Kinmount area was first served by visiting priests from outlying communities such as Downeyville and later Fenelon Falls. Prior to the construction of a church, masses were held in the old log school house, S. S. No. 4, in Galway, just south of town. The first church, õThe Immaculate Conception,ö was built in 1882 by the men of the congregation and located in Galway. In 1901, a house was built across the road from this church by Father M. J. OøLeary, who moved the parish headquarters from Fenelon Falls to Galway, where he took up residence.

In 1910, the red brick church on the hill was built under the new priest, Fr. Galvin, to service the growing Catholic community in Kinmount. Two years later, a rectory was completed next to the church. Galwayøs congregation joined that of Kinmount when the Immaculate Conception church burnt on Easter Sunday, 1930.

20. *Cemeteries*, County Rd. 121, south end of town

The old Kinmount cemetery was first organized in 1862 when a one (1) acre lot was purchased by John Hunter. Here, many of the pioneers of the community were laid to rest. When this cemetery had been filled, a new cemetery was begun directly across the road.

The Catholic cemetery of Kinmount came into use in 1934. Prior to this, a cemetery located beside the Immaculate Conception Church in Galway was used for interments.

21. *St. James Anglican Church* **2** Bend St.

The congregational story began in 1882 with the missionary travels of The Rev. Edward Soward, who traveled on foot through this lumbering territory, holding services in schoolhouses, lumber camps and homes. In 1883 this attractive timber-frame building was built of local timber, lumbered by local men who gave generously of their time and money to establish their church. The women of the community furnished the interior, provided the communion vessels and made liturgical hangings. On August 31, 1884, Archbishop Sweatman consecrated the new church. A rectory was purchased for $800.00 in 1906. Both the church and the rectory escaped the severe flooding of Kinmount in April 1928. However, during the disastrous fire of April 1942, much of the town, including the rectory was destroyed. Many valuable church records were destroyed.

22. *Mural* South side of Post Office Building on Main Street

This Mural was created to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Kinmount. The scene depicts Main Street circa 1900ø s.