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Tannery

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Shaw family owned and operated a tannery in the large facility across the street. The tannery, a hub of employment for the village, provided the sole leather for 1/3 of the boots made for the Canadian Army during the Second World War. After the war, the proprietor, Charles Shaw, came into possession of a surplus Supermarine Spitfire aircraft which he kept chained down to the cement lot outside of his tannery (on most days!). Hear more about the legend of the spitfire and the evolution of the tannery in the full story on the audio walking tour.

PHOTO FROM CANADA. DEPT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE / LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA



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End of Tour, Continue Your Adventure!

We hope that you have enjoyed your walk through Omemee's streets and its heritage. Though small, this village is home to many stories and mysteries that soak into both the surrounding buildings and the people themselves. From a small milling hamlet, to the growing community it is today, Omemee's rich story continues on into the future. Will you take part and see where it goes?

LEGENDS & LORE

These tours present both visitors and residents with the opportunity to walk through the past in unique communities within Kawartha Lakes and to experience the area's heritage firsthand.



LEGENDS & LORE



An Audio Walking Tour of Historic Downtown Omemee

How to Access the Full Audio Tour

The stories and the map for the Downtown Omemee Audio Walking Tour can be accessed at artsandheritagetrail.com. Click on the Downtown Omemee Legends & Lore icon on the opening page to the left of the map.

It is also available on the TOUREKA! app available for both Android and Apple through the App store.

Follow the Walking Tour map on the artsandheritagetrail.com website or TOUREKA! app. click on the Audio Story button for each story when you reach the destination and are ready to listen.

Travel to the next Legends & Lore location and follow the above instructions to hear the next story as you move along the street.

An accessible version of the Downtown Omemee Legends & Lore brochure is available on request.

For further information please contact:

The Economic Development Division
at the City of Kawartha Lakes

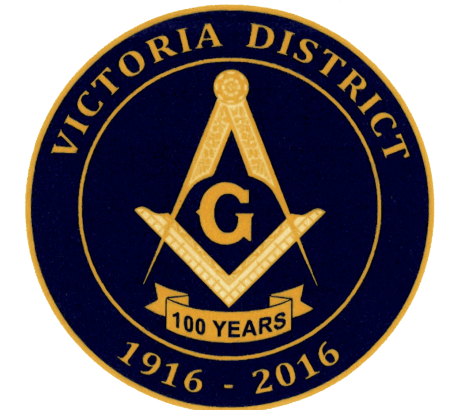
Tourism@kawarthalakes.ca | Phone: 705-324-9411 x1498



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Start of Tour - Naming of the Village

Welcome to Omemee! The name "Omemee" is unique and often solicits questions about its origin. The name "Omemee" comes from the Anishanaabe word for "pigeon", however other versions about the source of Omemee's name have arisen over the years. Listen to the full story on the audio walking tour to hear a humorous alternative about the origin of the Omemee name.



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Fraternal Orders

Looking across the street, the unassuming white building is the meeting house of the Freemasons, one of a number of different fraternal orders located in the area. The Orangemen, a worldwide order of Protestants, were also active in the area. The Protestant area of Omemee and the Roman Catholic area of Downeyville were unofficially divided by the Orange Line. Many a scuffle was caused by locals straying past the Orange Line, however as time went by and Protestant-Catholic tensions declined, Orange Line was renamed Peace Road. Hear more about the fraternal orders of the area in the full story on the audio walking tour.

PHOTO FROM VICTORIA DISTRICT MASONS



Scott Young

Each town has characters from its past that rise to great glory or to fabulous fame, both locally and abroad. In Omeme, one family of recent memory stands out among the rest – the Young family. Scott Young, author and journalist, and father of world-famous singer/songwriter Neil Young, bought the brick house at 33 King Street in 1949. Scott would spend his days in the attic of the house working on his writing. His first novel, *The Flood*, was published in 1956 while the Scott family still lived in this house. Listen to the full story on the audio walking tour to learn more about Scott and the Young family.

PHOTO FROM NEIL AND ME BY SCOTT YOUNG; TAKEN BY MURRAY BRAY



Neil Young

Omeme is proud to boast the famed singer, songwriter, and environmental activist Neil Young as one of its most prestigious and internationally-celebrated citizens. Neil moved to Omeme as a small boy with his family in 1949, and was involved in the local Boy Scout Troup while attending the now-gone Omeme Public School. Listen to the full story on the audio walking tour to hear more about Neil... who knows, if you really look at his life, he may be a lot like you!

PHOTO FROM NEIL YOUNG: HOME TOWN - CTV/BELL MEDIA



Lady Eaton

If you look north down James Street, you'll see Lady Eaton Public School. Lady Eaton is a name that you will see in several places throughout the community, including in the United Church, at the Emily Cemetery and even at Trent University. Originally from the area, Lady Eaton was born Flora McCre. A successful business woman and philanthropist, Lady Eaton became the Director of the Eaton Company after her husband John Eaton passed away, serving the company for 21 years, 7 of which she was Vice-President. Hear more about the matriarch of Canada's "unofficial royal family" in the full story on the audio walking tour.

PHOTO FROM CITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES, FONDS 1244, ITEM 1641



Coronation Hall

Directly ahead of you, Coronation Hall is one of Omeme's most iconic buildings. Here, one can find the City of Kawartha Lakes' Omeme Service Centre. But beyond this important institution, the building itself has an important place in Omeme's story not just as a place, but as a community. Find out how Lady Eaton and Neil Young can both be tied to the hall in the full story on the audio walking tour.



Harry Brown, VC

Harry Brown is a man who is little known around this area, but to whom much honour is given. For his courage and devotion to duty in the First World War, Harry was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross. Today, he is commemorated here at the cenotaph, in the village where his next-of-kin resided. Hear more about Harry's life and service in the full story on the audio walking tour.

PHOTO FROM CANADA. DEPT. OF NATIONAL DEFENCE / LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA



TD Bank

The TD Bank before you has served the same function for many years. However, the quiet, community feeling within the bank today didn't always persist. Several decades ago, the bank was privy to an attempted bank heist! While the bank's usual day-to-day operations are not as high-stakes as they might have once been, it remains an important institution at the heart of the village. Listen to the full story of the attempted heist on the audio walking tour.



Commercial Corridor

This commercial block presents a beautiful historical façade from the early twentieth century. Along this corridor, businesses as diverse as insurance brokers to a meat locker serviced the village of Omeme with all of the essential services it required. This historical architecture is noticed time and again by visitors to Omeme who are taken in by the village's simple charm. Learn about some of the notable enterprises that have served Omeme over the years in the full story on the audio walking tour.



Royal Canadian Legion

The impressive white building across the street is now the community's branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, however when it was first built it operated as Evans & Ridpath's Foundry & Machine Factory. The foundry operated until such work was taken over by large and increasingly mechanized companies. After the Second World War, local veterans banded together and received a charter for Branch 497 of the Royal Canadian Legion. Listen to the full story on the audio walking tour to learn more about the history of the legion and the important role it continues to play in community life today.



Neil Young – Youth in the Village

During his time in Omeme, Neil Young spent much time around the river before you. Neil and his pals would come down to explore the river and spent time looking for frogs, bullrushes, fish, insects, and turtles. Neil was also part of the Omeme Scout Troop where he would have taken part in weekly meetings, training sessions and camping excursions. Listen to one of Neil's tales about his time in Omeme in the full story on the audio walking tour.



Railway Bridge

Looking north along the river you can see Omeme's railway bridge. Now a picturesque addition to the village, the bridge was once an indispensable mode of travel and shipping for the bustling community. The rail-line was critical for shipping products to and from local businesses, and was also the main form of long distance travel. Another bridge, Doube's Trestle Bridge, is also found several kilometres east of Omeme, and is a highly sought out hiking and biking destination. Hear more about the railway bridge in the full story on the audio walking tour.



Founding of the Village at the Pigeon River

Looking back towards town, take in the views of the river on both sides of the road. This watercourse was attractive for early pioneer settlers, as it provided the power to operate their mills. The Cottinghams, Omeme's first European settlers, constructed homes and mills in this area, and the surrounding community grew outwards from here. Listen to the full story on the audio walking tour to hear more about the founding of Omeme.

PHOTO FROM VIRTUAL MUSEUM OF CANADA



Mary Jane Morton

Few realize that Omeme once had a homespun poet in our midst. Miss Mary Jane Morton was a local dressmaker and seamstress in the late 1800s. Among many poems that she wrote about the village, one simply entitled "Omeme" gives us a glimpse of what the town must have been like in her time. Her poem highlights the many churches in the town, such as the Anglican Christ Church across the road from you. Listen to the story on the audio walking tour to hear the full poem.

PHOTO FROM ONTARIO GENEALOGY