

**(12) 88 Main Street South**

This two storey home was constructed c.1850 by Mr. Carson as a wooden frame building. The building is now covered with blue-grey siding and sports a coral front door.

**(13) Sealey Park**

The tiny stone building situated on this property is all that remains of the large two-storey, eight room Waterdown Public High School that was open from 1873 to 1918. The first Entrance Exams taken in Ontario were written in this building. When it became too overcrowded, a new school was erected on Mill Street North and this property was purchased by W. O. Sealey, Reeve of East Flamborough, who deeded it to the village as a park. Today, the building is used by many community groups.

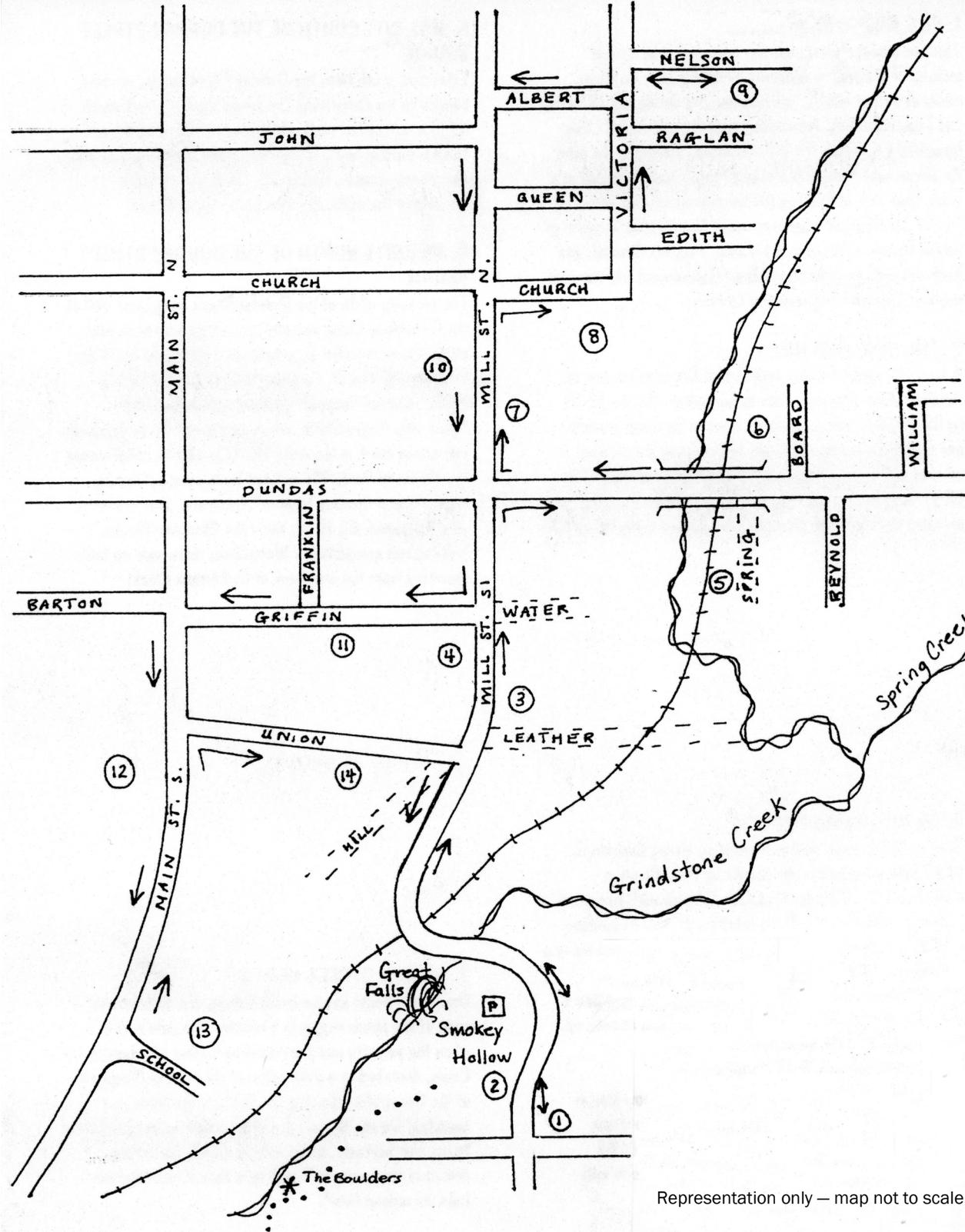


WWI Drill Shed — now the location of the tennis court

**(14) Union Street**

Union Street is lined with homes built in a variety of styles and materials. The street was part of Ebenezer Griffin's holdings which were subdivided into individual parcels and allotted to the heirs of the estate in 1856. The frame houses on the street dating from the 1840s, include numbers 2, 3, 14, 17, 20, 24, and 36. The most unusual house is number 20, built of stone during the Edwardian period. Hill Street, which no longer exists, used to run from the corner of Union and Mill Street towards the City of Hamilton.

*That was the last stop of our Smokey Hollow Walk. To get back to the parking lot, take a right at the end of Union Street (where you are now) and follow Mill Street back down the way you came. Walk safely!*



Representation only — map not to scale

# The Grindstone Creek Walk

WALKING  
in  
WATERDOWN



The 'Great Falls' - Waterdown, c. 1900

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### The Village of Waterdown: the Beginnings

The Village of Waterdown was developed upon land that was originally granted to Alexander McDonnell in 1796. In 1805, ownership was transferred to Alexander Brown who built a sawmill at the falls of Grindstone Creek. This creek provided power for the endeavours of the early pioneers and thus the Village of Waterdown was born. The enterprises of Brown, and later Ebenezer Griffin, accounted for substantial industrial growth in the Grindstone Creek valley. This valley was fuelled by dams and raceways, becoming the site of saw, grist and flour mills, a woollen mill, brass foundry, tanneries, rake, snaith (the handle of a scythe), cradle, and basket factories.

### Smokey Hollow



Smokey Hollow— c. 1900

Today, few clues remain to suggest that Grindstone Creek was once so large and powerful that it supplied numerous mills with the power needed to operate heavy machinery. As late as 1890, Smokey Hollow was the site of 2 large mills, 14 buildings, 3 houses, and 9 out-buildings. In the late 1880s the water level in the Grindstone Creek decreased and the use of steam power in the mills became more popular because it used much less water. Unfortunately, it was far more hazardous and the explosion of steam boilers often resulted in disastrous fires. By 1912, all of the mills in the area had ceased production. In 1994, a large scale transformation of Smokey Hollow was completed. An area once the heartland of Waterdown's industry is now a public park where people may enjoy both the beauty and the history of the area.

### (1) 265 Mill Street S. (on the corner of Mountain Brow Rd.)

This two storey stone house has been owned by several prominent Waterdown residents including John Cummer, owner of a flour mill and an iron foundry during the 1850's and Francis Farwell, Administrator of Canada Coach Lines from 1931-1961. Oliver Aiken Howland also owned this house. He was the son of Sir William Pearce Howland, the only American born "Father of Confederation", and proprietor of a stone flour mill in Smokey Hollow.

### (2) The Howland Mill

From this area of Mill Street, a lane went past the Waterdown Flouring Mill and continued along the creek to the Applegarth mill. Build c. 1860 by Sir William Pearce Howland, these mills could produce 150, 300-pound barrels of flour a day, most of which was shipped to the Maritime provinces. By 1897, the property had been sold to Alexander Robertson who operated the mill until it burnt to the ground in February 1910.



Howland (Robertson) Mill  
c. 1905

### (3) 63 Mill Street S. "Maplebank"

Built c. 1850 upon land purchased by Henry Graham in 1837, this stone house was bought by Peter Creen, a lumberman, for \$5000 in 1875. It remained in the possession of the Creen family until 1974. Leather Street once passed by the south side of the house and led to a sawmill and a tannery built by Graham in 1831. The tannery, sold to Reid Baker in 1856, was converted into a rake factory. By 1890 the tannery site had been abandoned.

### (4) 40-42 Mill Street S.

Lockman A. Cummer constructed these row houses in the late 1850's. In 1871, the property was acquired by W.P. Howland, who rented the houses to Mill workers.



Row houses, 1977

### (5) Mill Site South of the Dundas Street Bridge

Extending south from the Dundas Street bridge, running parallel to the Grindstone Creek was Spring Street which led to a mill owned by D. Cummings between 1841 and 1860. Further south on the street was a turning mill and dam constructed by Levi Hawk. There are no visible remains of the mills, the dam or of Spring Street.

### (6) Mill Site North of the Dundas Street Bridge

The property north of the Dundas Street bridge and east of the Grindstone Creek was once populated with numerous mills. These included an ashery to make potash c. 1825, a sawmill built by D. Cummings that operated 1840-1880, and the Cooper-Reid dam and turning mill. Apparently Henry Slater, who owned a mill on the opposite side of the creek in the early 1900's, used to shout across the stream at Reid, "my mill will be turning out lumber when yours is housing pigeons." Ironically, that is exactly what happened. By 1912, the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed in Waterdown and there were no mills operating from the east bank of Grindstone Creek.

### (7) 50 Mill Street North

One of the finest houses in the village, the architectural style suggests a construction date c.1865 when the property was purchased by lumber merchant John Creen. He was described in a publication of the time as a 'proprietor of the Upper Mill'. During the 1870's the house was owned by George Washington Rymal who succeeded Creen in the mill business. When sold in 1883, the listing described the house as "boasting a view of Lake Ontario from its second floor".



50 Mill Street N, 1996



Undated photo of Slater's Lumber Yard

### (8) Slater's Lumber Yard

The area surrounding Slater's Lumber Yard was once referred to as the Upper Mill Site. From 1832-1901 this stretch of Grindstone Creek was lined with a cloth and carpet factory, an iron foundry, flour mills and sawmills. Slater's Mill, the last of all mills once powered by Grindstone Creek, was built by John Forstner in 1875. It was owned and operated by the Slaters from 1901-1939. In 1926, employees of the Mill worked a 10 hour day for 20 cents an hour, 6 days a week. It was located on the bank of Grindstone Creek where the Grindstone Mill Condominiums are now located.

### (9) Nelson Street

Though it might not look it now, there were once many tiny cottages along Nelson Street which were often occupied by Mill Workers. There is no evidence of the sawmill that was situated on the creek directly below the east end of the street that operated from 1832-1905. Known locally as 'Dutchtown', it likely got the name from 'Deutschtown' because many early families of German origin found work in the mills.

### (10) 43 Mill Street North

The small, milk chocolate coloured, one storey cottage is built of stone with a painted cement rendering. Built during the 1850's, it was associated with mills along the Grindstone Creek, notably as the office for Forstner's saw mill c. 1875-1901.

### (11) 24 Griffin Street

The Regency Stone Cottage, known locally as the Griffin Cottage, is regarded as one of the oldest buildings in the village. It is believed to have been built c. 1840-1849 for Ebenezer C. Griffin's son James Kent Griffin. E.C. Griffin, the "Father of Waterdown", established an industrial empire along the Grindstone Creek consisting of a flour mill, ashery, carding mill, sawmill and general store.