

STEWARTVILLE
STRUGGLEVILLE
BALMER ISLAND

These three names bring you to the same place.

Today it is at the junction of Stewartville Rd. and Flat Rapids Rd., just at the top of the hill looking down at the beautiful Madawaska River. Stewartville is almost located in the middle of McNab/Braeside Township which is on Watts Line not too far away.

Before the Stewartville Generating Station was built, this area was not the easiest for the men to portage to. The Arnprior Museum has a picture called "At Landon's Chute", which shows an island and the banks of the Madawaska River. Showing the geographical difficulties the loggers had sending logs downstream to the mills in Arnprior. The name Struggleville became appropriate for the loggers!

Back in the logging days at any given time you could see 25 to 50 teams of horses with loads of pork, flour, groceries, oats, etc., on their way to the shanties and various other places outside one of the three Hotels in Stewartville. Yes, three Hotels in Stewartville! On one of the older original maps of this area you can see the name J. Hills Hotel, another Hotel operated by Mr. Cook and the first Hotel, built mainly for the lumber trade, by Mr. George McLean, a Blacksmith near Balmer Island. They were not big, but they were needed by the men portaging with their logs in winter, and for food and rest for the horses.

The name Stewartville originated from Mr. Allan Stewart who donated land for a Township Hall back in 1850, the hall being built in 1859.

In front of the original Township Hall was a triangular piece of property, Stewartville Rd., Flat Rapids Rd. and Dan St., which held the local Township Fair until the Fair title was transferred to Arnprior. It drew people for miles, school children exhibiting penmanship, ladies bringing their handy work, and men competing in various games. The Hall was the center of the Township social life for over a century. Council meetings were held here until 1970. After the roof gave way from snow overload, the next Township Hall was built across the Street from our present Township Hall on Russett Drive.

The original Schoolhouse SS#5 built in 1854 by David Mackie is still standing in Stewartville, welcoming its first students in 1854. Mary Sutherland (later Mrs. Andrew Murphy) taught at this school. Before this, school was taught in a shanty belonging to Danny McIntyre on lot 14 Concession 7 by Mary Sutherland who came to Canada from Scotland in 1853 with her half brother Archibald and her aunts. The school later closed in 1910 and then reopened in 1946 until 1967 when McNab Public School was opened on Stewartville Rd. Just behind the School on Dan St. a row of White Spruce Trees was planted in celebration of Queen Elizabeth's Coronation in 1953. The last one fell approx. a few years ago.

Duff's General Store and Stables was also in Stewartville across the street from Church. At this store, in the upper rooms, many women came here to learn how to sew. Long dresses, collars, cuffs, and hoops, no easy task!

Next to Duff's store was a small Post Office established in 1865, only part of the foundation is under the front lawn of the home located there now. The small post office was moved into the General Store.

The Presbyterian Church was built in 1889 located across the street from Duff's General Store then in 1984 the Church was hit with lightening destroying it completely. Some of the items from inside the church are located at the Waba Gardens & Museum in the small Church in White Lake.

Stewartville was brought back to life when the Stewartville Generating Station was built in 1945 after World War 2. Many men returned home from the war, no jobs, no money, building the dam drew approximately 8,000 men thru the years while it was being built. The Hydro Colony homes were also built at this time for the men, 8 homes are still located in Stewartville privately owed.

Up above the Dam past the Colony houses, is the Hydro Storage Yard where three offices were built in 1950. When they were no longer needed they were sold and moved to various locations. One is located on the Burnstown Rd. and the other across the street from SS#5 School House in Stewartville, the Schubrink residence.

Just behind the Presbyterian Church, which is now only a monument is a small home. I always thought it was originally the Parsonage but only a few years ago found out it was the Dynamite Shack for the building of the dam. Stewart and Vivian Melanson purchased it in 1962, added roof trusses and made this their home where they raised their three children. 62 years later it is still the Melanson residence in 2025.

There is so much history in Stewartville and more being made every day. The Mighty Madawaska River has many tales.

by Anita Schubrink
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