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Would you want this guy walking you to the gallows?



An amateur archaeologist, a Lieutenant in the Perth Regiment and one heck of an imposing figure, Hugh Nichol was Stratford's jailer from 1877 to 1921. He is but one of the colourful personalities found in **Stratford's Saints and Sinners** heritage tour.



A wolf in sheep's clothing, the Stratford Jail, with its shutters and modest facade, was built to blend seamlessly with the community. The Highland Grim Reaper led two of the three men hanged in Stratford's history to the gallows. But can good and evil always be so easily decided? Was Andrew Carnegie a generous philanthropist funding five libraries across the county or a tight fisted employer whose beliefs in labour movements caused Stratford's library to open without fanfare? What of Jim Anderson? A man whose passion for the preservation of the county's heritage drove him to a rooftop sit-in atop the County Courthouse. Was he merely Stratford's first archivist or an outspoken heritage activist? R. Thomas Orr, the founder of the Stratford's parks board was known to take a more melodious approach to getting his jobs done. Were they **Saints or Sinners?** You be the judge.

START YOUR TOUR AT THE PERTH COUNTY COURTHOUSE ON HURON STREET, STRATFORD.



Archivist or Activist? Perth County's Man With A Mission.

It was in 1981 that the outspoken archivist for Stratford and Perth County, Jim Anderson drew province-wide attention with a roof "sit out" atop the Perth County Courthouse, protesting the decision to disband the county's historical board. After studying the blueprints he crawled through the tower window and out through a trap door to begin a fast, drinking nothing but orange juice for the next 36 days.



Associated buildings: The Perth County Courthouse, The Stratford Library, 24 St. Andrews St.



1 The Perth County Court House 1 Huron Street. Built in 1885-87 in the most commanding position in Stratford, this masterpiece of the Queen Anne Revival Style was designed by London architect, George F. Durrand who also designed the Stratford Jail. Known to have the best display of terracotta in Canada, it opened in 1887 on Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. That was also the year that electricity came to Stratford, and by way of celebration, electric lights were first turned on in the Perth County Court House .



2 24 St. Andrews Street Originally built as the County Land Registry Office, this building was completed in 1910. It was designed by local architect, T.J. Hepburn who was instructed to match the Perth County Court House and jail. It housed the main office of the Stratford-Perth Archives - the joint city and county department for the preservation of both public and private archival records (including documents, photographs, plans, etc.) collected from Perth County until 2015 when a new state-of-the-art facility was built next to The Stratford Perth Museum, 4773 Line 34, R.R.5, Stratford.

ADDITIONAL BUILDINGS ASSOCIATED WITH JIM ANDERSON YOU MAY WISH TO VISIT.

The Last Remaining "Greek" in Stratford 77 Brunswick Street. Erected in the 1860s, this house is the last remaining example of the Greek Revival style in Stratford. Doing most of the work himself, archivist Jim Anderson took what was originally a ramshackle cottage slated for destruction and fully restored it selling it a couple of years later at a loss. He considered his restoration project his "contribution to charity and the city". The house was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act by Mr. Anderson in 1985.



A Labour of Love 87 Nile Street. In a similar state of dilapidation, archivist Anderson purchased the Jennie Forbes Cottage in 1969 spending much of the next decade restoring it. The history of the cottage dates back to the time of the Grand Trunk Railway when in 1857 hotelier John Forbes and his wife Elizabeth had this cottage built. The cottage was given to daughter Jennie in 1872 from her widowed mother as a wedding gift.



Brocksdon School Museum 2719 Perth Line 37. Dating back to 1853, the Brocksdon Country School Museum, formerly SS#1 North Easthope, is the oldest standing school house in Perth County. The Easthope Historical group operates the museum and welcomes school classes to day-long living history programs. Although not generally open to the public, it is well worth a drive by. Perhaps with a picnic lunch?



Andrew Carnegie. Philanthropist or Tight-Fisted Employer?

Some people thought Andrew Carnegie, "the Steel Magnate," made his money on the backs of the poor so they called it blood money. His strongest philanthropic initiative was the creation of 2,509 free public libraries around the world. Of the 125 Canadian libraries Carnegie funded, 111 were built in Ontario – five of which are in Perth County.

Associated Buildings:

A. Built with Blood Money: Canada's Oldest Carnegie Library

19 St. Andrew Street. As Stratford residents were opposed to using "blood money" donated by philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, Stratford's Public Library opened on September 19, 1903 without the donor's name over the door or ceremony of any kind. Designed by James Russell of Stratford, the building was constructed with Neo-Classical features and the original front door was located on the St. Andrew Street side.



B. St. Marys Public Library 126 Church St., St. Marys Built: 1904-05 Architect: J.A. Humphries,

C. North Perth Public Library 260 Main St. W., Listowel Built: 1907 Architect: W.E. Binning

D. Perth East Public Library (no longer in use as a library) Milverton Branch 27 Main St. S., Milverton Built: 1910 Architect: James Russel

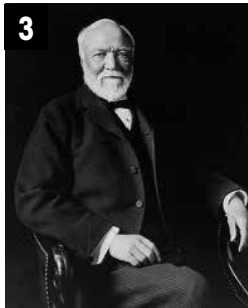
E. West Perth Public Library Mitchell, 105 St. Andrew St., Mitchell Built: 1910 Architect: W.E. Binning



The Highland Grim Reaper.

Hugh Nichol, was a well known figure in Stratford often seen strolling through town wearing his highland kilt and cap. He was the turnkey at the original Stratford jail located across the river on Elizabeth Street, next to the original Court House. When the new jail was built on St. Andrew Street in 1886, he became the Jailer living with his family at the jail on St. Andrew Street until his death in 1921.

Associated buildings: The Stratford Gaol (Jail), The Perth County Courthouse.



A Wolf In Sheep's Clothing

30 St. Andrew Street. The Stratford Gaol, designed by George F. Durrand, architect of the Perth County Court House, was completed in 1886. It was designed to look like a home (complete with shutters at the windows) as citizens did not want to give it any special importance. The jail has seen three public hangings in its courtyard.

AN ADDITIONAL BUILDING ASSOCIATED WITH HUGH NICHOL YOU MAY WISH TO VISIT.



Mastodon Tusks Found In County Archaeological Dig.

4725 Huron Road West. Hugh Nichol's archaeological collection of native artifacts including mastodon tusks, is one of numerous exhibits on display at the Stratford Perth Museum. The building constructed in 1870 in the Italianate style is located at The Stratford Perth History campus on seven acres of groomed and natural property on Huron Road just beyond Stratford.

Gaol or Jail?

They both mean exactly the same thing – Prison. They are also pronounced in exactly the same way. Likewise with jailer and gaoler, which both mean prison guard.

Jack the Ripper Strikes in Perth County.

The first man hanged at Stratford Jail in 1895, Almede Chattelle's crime, was referred to by a newspaper of the time as "the most diabolical crime ever recorded in this country". The murder was so gruesome investigators wondered if Jack the Ripper was its perpetrator.

You may be interested in driving to Fairview Cemetery in Listowel, 875 Davidson Ave. North to view the monument of Chattelle's 13-year-old victim, Jessie Keith.



Girl's Grisly Murder Shocks Stratford.

Jessie Keith, a pretty thirteen year old red-haired girl was attacked and murdered on October 19, 1894 while returning with groceries to her family farm east of Listowel. After spotting signs of a struggle railway workers set out to get Keith's father and together following a trail of blood, found the girl's body.

A county-wide search began for the strange "hairy man" Almede Chatelle.





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“Mrs. Peake of Stratford Victim of Brutal Lust.”*

Convicted for a murder that shocked the province, Frank Roughmond was hanged at Stratford Jail in 1909. Much to everyone’s surprise when found at the scene, Mr. Roughmond did not try to flee, but rather surrendered without struggle. He maintained his innocence throughout his trial, stating that he had been framed by three other men.

* Globe and Mail headline, September 30, 1908.

It’s Not Easy Going Green.

R. Thomas Orr was the driving force behind this city’s parks system, including the Shakespearean Gardens. He led the controversial, but successful crusade to save the Avon riverfront and millpond from railway development, overseeing the transformation of the industrial area into parkland. His legacy is maintained in the present day gardens which are routinely finalists in Canada’s Communities in Bloom.



Associated Buildings:
Stratford Public Library



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Stratford’s Shakespearean Gardens.

Opened in the 1930s, these gardens contain a sculpture of Shakespeare designed by Canadian, Cleve Horne. Interestingly, this bust arrived in 1949, prior to the Stratford Festival. The gardens rest on the site of Dufton’s Woollen Mill. All that remains of the building is the chimney, which is now a bird tower. The original roses were a gift from Queen Mary, who had also donated roses to the garden in Stratford Upon Avon in England.

Right Versus Might - Stratford War Memorial. Designed by Canada’s most famous sculptor, W.S. Allward, the cenotaph is of national importance. The dramatic style was the precursor to the famed Vimy Ridge Memorial to World War I Canadian soldiers in France. His other works grace the Supreme Court in Ottawa. This work was completed in 1922 and features the classical theme of right versus might. The two cannons date from the 19th century. One, a captured Russian cannon from the Crimean War, the other from the War of 1812.



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One of Stratford’s First Designated Properties, 50 Cobourg Street.

Erected by house-builder Thomas Orr in 1873, and designated as a heritage property in 1982, this building of the Ontario Cottage style, is still owned by the Orr family. The barge board along the edge of the gables still remains, featuring quatrefoils and leaves. The chimneys have double flue bases with the present stacks set diagonally in the Elizabethan style.

Read All About It. R. Thomas Orr is commemorated on an Ontario Heritage Foundation plaque on the south shore of the Avon River, west of Waterloo Street, near the band shell.



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Images courtesy of:

The Stratford-Perth Archives, 4773 Line 34, R.R.5, Stratford, 519-271-0531 ext 259
www.perthcounty.ca/stratford_perth_archives

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