

## Unionville Heritage Tour

### **Stiver Mill**

Around 1900, grain elevators and other storage buildings were constructed next to the Unionville Train Station. The Stiver grain elevator was located between the buildings of the Matthew Grain Company and the Maynard grain elevator, and in 1916, Charles and Francis Stiver purchased the Matthew Grain Company's structure. The Stiver Mill is a historic landmark symbolizing Unionville's important role in the agricultural economy that once characterized the town of Markham. The Stiver family operated the mill until 1968, and during the period in which it operated, the mill was the primary area in which the chopping work required for the Stiver Brother's production of feed was done. The location of this mill facilitated convenient shipping and receiving, which was typical for these businesses at the time. In 1993, the Town of Markham purchased the property from Canadian National Railways, and in 2009, a farmers' market on the Stiver Mill grounds was initiated. Currently, the market runs every Sunday, 10 to 3, from late June until Thanksgiving.



**#1**

### **Unionville Train Station**

The Unionville Train Station is one of Canada's oldest remaining railway stations and one of few 19<sup>th</sup>-century stations that remain in its original trackside location. The station was constructed in 1870 by A.T. Button of Uxbridge for the Toronto & Nipissing Railway. The station served the Grand Trunk Railway from 1884 to 1923, when it became a part of the Canadian National Railways. In the late 1970s, the station was considered for demolition, however, local residents opposed the demolition and campaigned to save the station. The municipality restored the building as a community centre in 1989, and in 1993, the Town of Markham purchased the land.



**#2**

### **Unionville Planing Mill**

The Unionville Planing Mill is the most visited building in Unionville, however, the original building no longer remains. In 1840, William Eaking built the original Planing Mill on the site. In 1872, it was leased and eventually sold to Robert Harrington in 1881. It was a working mill for 140 years, and it was significant to the development of the area as it supplied doors, flooring, lumber, and other local milled material used for many buildings. The original mill was damaged in 1978 and destroyed by a fire in 1983. The site was redeveloped in May 1987, and today the property is owned by Unionville Village Holdings.



**#3**

#4

### Millennium Bandstand

The Millennium Bandstand, built in the year 2000, is a focal point on Main Street. Originally the old pumping station site, it is now a community-gathering place, built with the funds gathered from a community fundraiser to celebrate the new millennium. It is a unique site for summer concerts, Christmas tree lights, and It hosts many community events including "Thursday Nights at the Bandstand," a popular free music series event that runs on consecutive evenings throughout June through August. It is a central part of the Unionville area and plays a pivotal part in creating the sense of community.



#5

### McKay Art Centre

The Salem Eckardt House was built in 1845 by Andrew and Salem Eckardt, who were sons of Philip Eckardt, one of the original "Berczy Settlers" who founded Markham in 1794. In 1957, Kathy McKay, a descendant of the Eckardt's, and her husband Donald McKay, bought the house and worked to restore and retain its historic value. Furthermore, Frederick Horsman Varley, one of the founding members of the Group of Seven, moved in with them and used the basement as his studio. Frederick Varley was a member of the Group of Seven who were a group of Canadian landscape painters from 1920 to 1933 who initiated the first major Canadian national art movement. He resided in this house for 12 years until his death in 1969. Kathy McKay recognized that the art of Frederick Varley played a significant role in Canada's cultural history, and she donated her personal art collection of works by Varley, David Milne, J.E.H. MacDonald and other major Canadian painters, and more than one million dollars to help build a legacy that would honour Fred Varley. Recognizing the house's historical value to the community, in the early 1990s, The Town of Markham purchased the Salem Eckardt-McKay House. Since then, the Kathleen McKay Art Centre at the Salem Eckardt House has hosted hundreds of exhibitions by local artists.



### Community Collaboration

I primarily chose the sites I used either because they were fundamental to the development of the area, or they were significant in creating the sense of community. Four out of five of these sites are plagued by the Unionville Historical Society, and throughout the making of this assignment, I primarily used these plaques as my source of information. I also visited the sites in which I researched, and when I visited these sites, I gathered all the information I could through the use of plaques located throughout the community, as well as information that I could gather from simply visiting the site. This allowed me to develop my own information to use in this project as well as use credible information that discusses the significance of these landmarks to the community.

## Works Cited

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- "Our History." *Central United Church*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 May 2016.
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- "Unionville Planing Mill." *Historic Unionville Planing Mill, Unionville Ontario*. N.p., n.d.  
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