During the American Revolution pro-British refugees gathered in New York. The wealthier classes went to England while others sought refuge in Nova Scotia. In 1783, four hundred such families associated to found the Town of Port Roseway. The first Governor, Governor Parr renamed Shelburne after then English Prime Minister, Lord Shelburne. Within a year, the Town mushroomed to a population of 10,000. The region, however, could not support so large a settlement, and most of the refugees moved back to England or on to other parts of the province or to New Brunswick while others returned to the United States.

1

The above words may be found on the historic monument at the foot of King Street next to the Visitor Information Centre, where the Tour begins. As you walk, consider the variety of domestic architecture, the materials used, and the shapes of the buildings. Look at the structures of the Church and State. Observe the evidence of trade and industry from the Georgian period through to the Victorian. From the earliest days of its history, Shelburne has been a center for shipbuilding. The first vessel launched in Shelburne was the 181-ton Roseway built for Maclean and Bogle in 1786.

2

To the right is a peninsula that was once the Commissary Island. It was here that the "King's Bounty", supplies of flour, pork, and salt, were dispensed to the first Loyalist settlers by Mr. Brinley, the Commissary Officer. During the mid 19th Century this area served as the launch site for some of the largest square rigged vessels set afloat in Shelburne County and later became the aclaimed shipyard of Joseph McGill. A half model of the Osprey (1896) and a picture of the Canadia (1921) which were built in the McGill shipyard are on display in the Shelburne County Museum. (#13)

3

From this same vantage point, directly across the harbour is the Islands Provincial Park. A little further, and to the left, beside the only modern house on the far hillside of Hartz Point, was the site of the Army barracks. On the shore, in front, can be found one of the granite quarries, complete with granite loading dock, for which the area was widely known. This can be reached by the former railway right-of-way, now a walking trail. Beyond this point of land is situated another arm of the Shelburne Harbour known as Birchtown Bay. It was here, in 1783, that Black Loyalists would establish Birchtown, the largest settlement of Freed Blacks in North America.

4

Walk south along Dock St. towards Mason Lane. The first house on your left has a shingled exterior with a hip roof. Note the windows with six small panes in the upper and six in the lower sash. This is referred to as "six-over-six". The "side lights" on each side of the front door and the "transom" light over the door provide much needed light for the interior central hallway.

This Georgian house was the residence of the Reverend Matthew Dripps, who came from Scotland as a missionary to Nova Scotia and served as the first Presbyterian minister in Shelburne from 1803 until his death in 1828. He is buried in the old Kirk Graveyard (see note C). He lived here with his wife Margaret of Sable River and their seven children. Among the many marriage ceremonies, Reverend Dripps performed, was that of Hugh McKay and Ann McPherson on October 15, 1808. Their son, the internationally renowned clipper ship designer Donald McKay, was born in the nearby community of Jordan Falls on September 4, 1810. This home is now a private residence.

5

Further on your right, is perhaps the last remaining commercial barrel factory in Canada. While the business was established on this site in 1917, the original building was demolished in favour of the present structure in 1994. Architecturally styled to the 17th Century, it served briefly as a set for the filming of Nathaniels Hawthorne's classic "A: The Scarlet Letter". The Cooper's barrels were in great demand in the early days for the storage and transport of fish, food, and other items. Barrel staves and hoops were exported in large quantities. Today, the barrels are used to store salt bait for the lobster industry and for the storage of trawl lines.

6

The Cooper's Inn, a Provincially Registered building, directly across the street from the barrel factory has a truncated hip roof. Note the "eyebrows" over the windows to keep off the rain. The dormers and the "widows-walk" were recently restored to the Victorian-Style with an Italianate-influenced design. The original owner was George Gracie (see note C), a blind Loyalist, who started the first whaling company in Shelburne and became a Provincial legislator.

7

On your left, at the corner of John and Dock Streets, is a Provincially Registered, Greek Revival building which was once the office of the Joseph McGill Shipbuilding and Transportation Company Ltd. The three dormers facing the harbour were added in 2003. As you proceed along Dock Street picture in your mind the many wharves that once projected into the harbour.

8

On the other side of John Street stands a house that during the 1780s was the residence and tavern of Patrick McDonough, a Loyalist tide waiter, or customs officer. William McLean, a Master Mariner, later made structural modifications to the house, changing the style from Georgian to Victorian. It was restored to the original Georgian design in the late 1970s. Next door, is a Georgian-style home built by the merchant, Peter Guyon. Both homes are private residences.

9

Across Charlotte Lane is the Coyle House, a Loyalist home built in 1784 and now owned by the Shelburne Historical Society. It is the retail outlet of Tottie's Crafts, a group of volunteer crafters whose revenues have been applied to projects that have transformed the waterfront over the last thirty years.

10

The John C. Williams Dory Shop is a working museum, owned by the Province and operated by the Historical Society. It demonstrates the craft of dory building and explains the importance of the dory to the fishing industry during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Dories are built to order on the site.

11

Charlotte Lane, named for the wife of King George III was one of the most important commercial streets of early Shelburne. It is the best surviving example of the appearance of an early 19th Century street or lane given that it retains the high density of buildings that lack the "set back" from the roadway that was so common in early days. (See note # 22)

12

On the right, surrounded by a high board fence — to keep out roaming livestock — is the restored Ross-Thomson House and Store. The Ross brothers came from Aberdeen, Scotland, by way of Florida. The architecture of the building differs from the New England influence that typifies those buildings that surround it. Operated by the Shelburne Historical Society for the Nova Scotia Museum, it is open to the public during the summer. It has been a store, warehouse, and residence, and is now the only original remaining store in the Town. Note the gambrel roof over the store and the gable roof over the house. It has an entrance on Charlotte Lane but can also be reached through the Museum Complex lawn from Dock Street. Guides will acquaint you with the life of Shelburne merchants in the early days.

13

On the left is the entrance to the recently expanded Nairn House, which is home to the Shelburne County Museum. With its low gable roof, symmetrically placed six-over-six windows and transom light over the door, this Loyalist residence was built about 1787. The museum, now owned by the Historical Society, is open year-round. Upstairs are permanent displays commemorating the settlers and the builders of the area: White and Black Loyalists, the Welsh settlers, and the renowned shipbuilders. Downstairs hosts temporary exhibits.

14

Continue along Dock Street. This area was once the centre of commercial activity. The large building on your left was the store and warehouse of George A. Cox, a prominent merchant who constructed his own vessels and carried on an extensive world trade. Built in 1902, the structure was modified with the addition of a steeple and open north end in 1994.

15

Proceed up Ann Street and note the Well in the center of the street. This well is typical of the communal wells used until fairly recent times. Located on the north side of Ann Street next to the store of George A Cox is a small building, which was once used as a mercantile outlet during the 1830's by Loyalist descendents John and Jane Tottie. Today this restored structure serves as the headquarters for military enthusiasts styled as the Prince of Wales re-enactment Regiment. Return to Dock Street.

16

The 1 ½ story vernacular home opposite the small Town Wharf has had some recent upgrades, but is one of the original residences of an early merchant. It reputedly served as the Town jail in days past and at one time may have housed a tavern.

17

Beyond the wharf, at the corner of George Street, begins the Muir-Cox Shipyard, now owned by the Town. In almost continuous operation from the 1820's until 1984, it is reminiscent of the many shipyards that occupied the Shelburne waterfront from the time of the Loyalists' arrival. The property served as a launch site for everything from stately square riggers and schooners to motorized rum runners, minesweepers and luxury yachts. A belt driven shipyard sawmill containing a moulding loft for laying off vessels stands as the next building on George Street. It was constructed in 1903. The large building further from the road with the double deck overlooking the harbour, another shipyard structure, has been renovated to accommodate the Osprey Arts Centre and the Shelburne Harbour Yacht Club and Marina.

18

Walk up George Street one block. At the corner of Water Street on your right is the house built for Stephen Shakespeare, a Loyalist from New York and a mill-owner. In 1784, Benjamin Marston, the original surveyor of Shelburne, describes buildings such as this as "log houses built of pieces of timber framed together at the ends; and these sometimes clapboarded over; they may be made permanent buildings to endure many years." This Provincially Registered house has a "salt-box" roof. The beaded shiplap clapboard on the front is original to 1783.

19

This corner is unique in North America with its four pre- 1785 wooden houses. Across Water Street is the Humphrey's House, originally owned by the publisher of one of three newspapers in the Town in 1785. This Georgian-style home, with its symmetrically placed windows, two large chimneys, and notched molding under the slightly projecting eaves, is typical of the clapboard covered buildings of its period. On the northeast corner is a New England Colonial home, the Courtney House. Richard Courtney was a merchant tailor. The original Georgian home can be imagined by eliminating 12 feet from the north end, the shed dormer on the roof and the modern windows. On the northwest corner is the Gothic Revival (a Victorian renovation) Lowe-Pell House. Both Richard Courtney and Joshua Pell were among the Port Roseway Associates, the group formed in New York in 1782 to seek land grants in what is now Shelburne.

20

Walk north on Water Street, past Rodney Lane. On the left you will pass the house built by Samuel Marshall and successively owned by the Whitworth, White, and Irwin families. The last-named became Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia. Gideon White (subject of a book "Gideon White: Loyalist", by Mary Archibald of the Shelburne Historical Society) was a Mayflower descendent and a sea captain from Plymouth, Massachusetts. He became a farmer, legislator, and a militia commander. Note the dormer window projecting from the roof just to the right of the front door. This five-sided, or "bayed dormer" was a common feature of Scottish buildings from the early 19th Century.

> At this point, you may wish to detour up Ann Street two blocks and start the Graveyard tour listed at the end of this brochure.

21

Another of the original Georgian or New England Colonial homes can be seen as 136 Water Street. While the shed dormer and Greek Revival columns are not originally part of the design, much of what is characteristic of early Shelburne buildings can be seen here. The hand split granite foundation, the balance of the five windows over four windows with the door below the center window and the clapboard siding all typify early heritage homes. Of interest is the old style in which the new clapboard has been applied. It tapers at the bottom to protect the sills from water damage. Reproduction "rose head" nails have also been used for this restoration.

22

The Second Empire Victorian house located at 140 Water Street is of interest because of its ornate roof line, hooded dormers, and decorative window surrounds. Constructed by shipbuilder and merchant John A. McGowan Jr., it commands an impressive view down Charlotte Lane to the harbour. The original "widows-walk" has been removed.

23

The large Romanesque Revival building of local granite, on the opposite corner, was the Post Office and Customs House. It was designed and built for the Canadian Government in 1908 by contractor Arthur Hood with builder Andrew Bower.

24

Continue north to the intersection with King Street. Early as 1784 – papers such as the General Advertiser, the Port Roseway Gazeteer, the Shelburne Advertiser and the Royal American Gazette were published in Shelburne.

25

Next to the Town Hall, is an original Dutch Colonial, gambrel-roof house. The beams for these roofs are much shorter than those used on gable houses, making them easier to transport. A private residence.

Shelburne's Graveyard Tour

If you wish to take only the Graveyard Tour, you may walk or drive along the waterfront to Ann Street (one block south of the County Museum). Proceed three blocks up Ann Street to the Christ Church graveyard.

A

In the Christ Church graveyard you will see a number of fine 18th Century slate gravestones. Notable is the Isabella Bruce Sinclair stone, beside the English-style tomb of Hannah Booth, to the left of the church door. The Sinclair stone depicts a neo-classical willow and urn. Behind the church stands a massive gravestone, surmounted by an urn, which recounts the sad events of the life of Ann MacLean, who died in 1791 at the age of 32. Take a moment to notice the tiny skull and angel in the top corners of this stone, symbolizing death and resurrection. You will also notice the names of many of the early settlers, including Holden, VanBuskirk, Bell, Harding, Murphy, Ryer and Purney. The present church is on the site of the original, which was completed in 1789 and consecrated by Bishop Charles Inglis in 1790, but destroyed by fire in 1971. At the rear of the graveyard, notice the Monument, placed there to recognize the ancestral Black Loyalists, who were buried on the site in unmarked graves.

B

Continue north on Hammond Street and you will pass the Shelburne County Court House and the early Methodist Cemetery where names such as Swansburg, Grovestine, Deinstadt, Wesley and Irwin will be found on the tombstones.
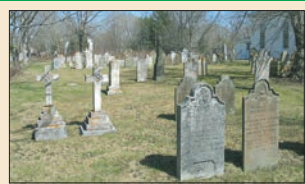
C

Further north is the Provincially Registered Trinity United Church, behind which you will find the oldest gravestones in Town in the Provincially Registered old Kirk Graveyard. Stones with names such as Cameron, Hogg, Johnson, and Muir can be seen here. Reverend Matthew Dripps is buried here at the southeast corner of the graveyard. George Gracie is also buried in this graveyard under a large flat stone.
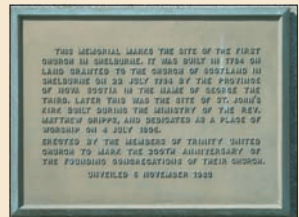
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