

## **A Walking Tour Through Glen Tay**

Historic Hamlet on Glen Tay Road in Tay Valley Township  
(formerly, Bathurst Township)

### **Introduction**

Welcome to the historic hamlet of Glen Tay. This walking tour, and the accompanying map, will introduce you to the heritage buildings and the interesting history of our hamlet. Originally called Adamsville, after its founder, Glen Tay is one of the best examples of the area communities that were part of a local industrial revolution, which began in the early 1800s and continued through to the turn of the century.

This particular hamlet began in 1821, only five years after the founding of the area's military settlement, when Joshua and Elizabeth Adams arrived with their family from Perth, and built the first mills. This was one of the first mill complexes to be built on the Tay River - leading to what became over 40 water-powered mills, in 20 locations in this watershed alone. Several of the mill complexes grew into hamlets that remain today – including Glen Tay, Maberly, Bolingbroke, Playfairville and Fallbrook.

### **Glen Tay Station**

Our tour begins at the north side of the hamlet, where Glen Tay Road meets Highway 7, and will continue south, through the hamlet on Glen Tay Road, towards the Scotch Line.

At the top of the attached map is the site of the early **Glen Tay Train Station** – which was located a short distance east of the Glen Tay Road, along the present siding. The station operated from about 1915 to 1977. Once a busy centre, serving communities between Perth and the Christie Lake station, it now just provides temporary, side-track storage for rail cars and used ties.

It is also known as the site of a train wreck in 1925, when an eastbound train with boxcars full of paper and fish, ran through an open switch and collided head-on with a freight train in the Station. Five Perth doctors and several nurses drove to the scene of the accident to give first aid to the injured, some of whom were members of an Ottawa hockey team returning home from a game in Hamilton. Four seriously injured men were brought to the hospital in Perth, and the Engineer (David Bourne of Toronto) in the east bound train died four days later from his injuries.

### **Manion Corner**

From Highway 7, we travel south along Glen Tay Road to Christie Lake Road, and what was called Manion Corner, after an early post office and store.

This corner became the centre of hamlet activity in the late 1800s, since Christie Lake Road was the primary route to Perth, before Highway 7 was built, and Manion Corner was the hamlet's main entrance. The post office was moved here in the 1860s, from the mill area, to the small Georgian home on the south side of the road. As it was owned by the Manion family, Adamsville and the post office took on that name, before settling on 'Glen Tay' by 1870.

A couple of hundred metres west along Christie Lake Road are two apartment buildings - the most western one was Glen Tay School #3, from the mid-1800s to 1960, when Glen Tay School was built.

### **Glen Tay Store**

The white house, across the road from the Manion home, on the north-east corner, became an important centre of community life beginning in the late 1800s, as its general store, and, later, post office. The store had several owners over the years, including the Mayberrys, Kearns, and then Chaplins, and operated well into the 1900s.

The two story red barn beside the store obviously has character of its own and it played a number of roles in Glen Tay's history, including as a wallpaper and paint display room for the Chaplin store. According to one source, it was moved from across the road, where it would have commenced in 1860 as 'one of the leading carriage builders and largest in the Ottawa region' – employing up to 30 people – the **Glen Tay Carriage Factory**, owned by James Kearns, and, later, by David Young until 1903.

This corner – perhaps, more accurately, just the Glen Tay and Christie Lake Road intersection - was known at one time as 'Kearn's Corner'.

The red barn is also said to have been a theatre on the second floor, hosting traveling road shows – if so, it is quite possible that the shows included the Marks Brothers of Christie Lake – a famous local theatre group of this area – said to have been "the most remarkable theatrical group in Canadian history".

It was possibly the first home for Glen Tay's well-known Chaplin's Dairy, a business that became the economic centre for Glen Tay from the 1930s to the 1980s.

Turning south at this corner, on the left, south-east corner, was James Conlon's blacksmith shop, which operated into the 1900s.

### **Chaplin's Dairy**

The second building on our right, presently the Little Stream Bakery, housed the Chaplin Dairy, which operated from before 1935 to the 1980s. At least one other dairy operated in the hamlet immediately before Chaplin's; Miller's Dairy ran from the 1920's to 1935, the building for which we will pass shortly on Miller Lane.

Chaplin Dairy was owned and operated by brothers Delbert and Ed Chaplin in its early years; Delbert operated the dairy business and Edgar managed the distribution. Delbert's children eventually took over the business, bringing the local Trueman, Korry, and Gamble families into the business. The dairy provided employment for many people in our community.

By the 1970s, brothers Cameron and John Chaplin were running the dairy, and Don managed the farming. In 1977, they sold the dairy to William McConachie; in 1982, home deliveries were discontinued, and, not long after, the dairy discontinued. This was the end of an era for Glen Tay – the last of our large businesses.

Moving ahead, we pass one of the early Chaplin houses on the right.

### **Chaplin's Barn – aka Dodd's Cheese Factory**

Past the Chaplin house, is a barn that was moved here by the family for their farm dairy operation. It was originally located behind the stone house beside the river, known as the Adams home. The barn had other earlier roles in the community, as hinted at by the unusual windows. It is said to have been a six-apartment dormitory for Adams Mill employees. Housing mill employees was a challenge in all of the 1800s communities. The Adams family are said to have boarded some in their basement.

Later, after the home was obtained by Ralph Dodds, the barn housed the Dodds Cheese Factory, the name of which is stencilled on several interior boards. This was one of 10 cheese factories operating at various times in early Bathurst Township.

### **Tay Miniatures Farm**

Ahead, we will pass a more recent attraction in our hamlet - the Tay Miniatures farm, which now includes over 50 miniature animals owned by the McVeigh family, living in the home on its south side.

### **Buchanan Home**

On our left, across from McVeighs, at the top of the hill, is a two-story house dating from the late 1800s, built by the Buchanan family.

### **Methodist Church site**

On the south side of the Buchanan house, was the Methodist Church on the slope of the hill, and cemetery beside it, which operated from about 1866 to 1887. The property for this was provided by the Adams family. The building has gone, and the cemetery closed and the graves moved sometime after 1887. A gravestone was seen there as late as the 1940s.

The property along the east (left) side of this street lot was a Clergy Lot, originally set aside for use by a church. Methodist church camps were held in the pasture behind there – and it is said to have had its own 'preacher's hill' – now part of the Chaplin Heights development.

### **Adamsville Streets**

Further on, on the right, is a parking lot for the public beach at the river. It was originally North Street - one of Adamsville's first streets – and ran down to the river. Adamsville had been laid out as a town site, perhaps around 1860s. Its other streets were Mill Street and South Street. This main road was 'Perth Street', along which were surveyed lots.

### **The Adams Home**

Across the street, to our left, is the original Adams family home, a beautiful Georgian heritage building, probably built around 1850, which is said to have housed both the Adams family and mill workers in the basement. At its rear is the original location of the dormitory barn, later Dodds Cheese Factory.

After Elizabeth died in 1857 and Joshua in 1863, the youngest son Franklin inherited the house, but sold not long after. The home had several owners after the Adams, including Ralph Dodds, the Chaplin family, a local artist Garnet Hazzard, and now Janie Hickman and Allan Moncreif.

### **The Adams family, founders of Glen Tay**

Following the 1812 War, Joshua and Elizabeth Adams and their family were granted land, and arrived in Perth in 1817, becoming one of the first innkeepers in the town. In 1820/21, they acquired this property on the Tay River from the estate of another veteran and UEL, Abraham Parsall, and probably built the first two mills here in 1821.

As usual at the beginning of a settlement, the first mills were a sawmill, for building materials, and a grist mill, to process the new crops – expanding later into other mills. Here, the grist mill is the one that can be seen.

Under Adams and subsequent owners, this became a major industrial complex by the time it peaked in the late 1800s. It had a sawmill and tannery on the north side of the river, and grist mill, oatmeal mill, woolen mill, on the south side. It also had a blacksmith, wagon factory, and cheese factory, and supporting operations of timber harvesting and farming, as well the general store and post offices. Presumably, some whiskey was also prepared, at least in the backyard. And said to have employed 400 people. The woolen mill won international prizes for its tweeds.

Operating such a complex, with changing economic times, had more than its share of challenges – not least of which was a major fire that destroyed the woolen mill and several others in 1870. It was rebuilt, but the cost proved too heavy to carry, and it and the other mills changed hands several times. By the 1890s, mill production had largely ceased, except for producing power for the newly electrified Perth from 1895 (as did three other mills along the Tay River).

Joshua and Elizabeth raised a large family of 10 children, and had a major impact on the community in business, the church, and in civic affairs where he was a Justice of the Peace, Councillor and Warden. Their children and grandchildren continued this community involvement throughout this region and as far as western United States. The Adams family were devout Methodists, and instrumental in building the original Methodist Church in Perth and its Cemetery on Robinson Street, where Joshua and Elizabeth Adams are buried.

After the mill closed and it stopped producing electricity about 1918, the mill and dam were not maintained; In 1926, the dam broke, taking out the bridge, and creating one of Perth's worst floods, especially along Beckwith Street.

The property sat mainly empty until the Drennan family from Toronto bought it in the late 1980s, and beautifully renovated it.

## **Tay River Bridge**

After crossing the river, one can see, through the gates on the right, inside the yard, the three renovated mill buildings, including the grist mill and service buildings. Please note that this is private property.

## **Miller Corner, early South Street**

At the corner, on your right is a home that dates from 1860, built by another important local businessman, Ralph Dodds, co-owner of the cheese factory, with brother Alex, one-time owner of the Glen Tay Mills, and also part of the local innovative macadam road construction company. The home has been owned by the Miller family since 1909. At the far right is the Tayside Dairy shed, mentioned earlier, dating from the 1920s.

## **In Closing**

To put these mills in perspective - there were over 40 water-powered mills in this watershed, and Adams mill is one of only five still standing in this township. It is also one of the best preserved, with the Bowes Mill and Allans Mill, on their respective sideroads. There also remain two wood frame sawmills – Ritchie and Morrows.

Of the 35 other mills in the area, there remains little, often not even a foundation. An important part of Canada's industry on which our earliest communities were built has almost completely disappeared. (for more details on mills, see 'Mills of the Tay Watershed and Area' at [www.perthhs.org](http://www.perthhs.org))

One final comment - we are reminded that the coming of the Europeans was not the first arrival of people to this territory; it had been home for tens of thousands of years to the First Nations. It was their hunting area, and the Tay River their highway, along which, for example, they travelled annually down the Rideau and Ottawa Rivers, to a meeting at what we call Lake of Two Mountains. Some of the trails along the river and the likely camping spots were used by them before our arrival. They also provided help to the first Europeans as they struggled to survive in the early years without summer.

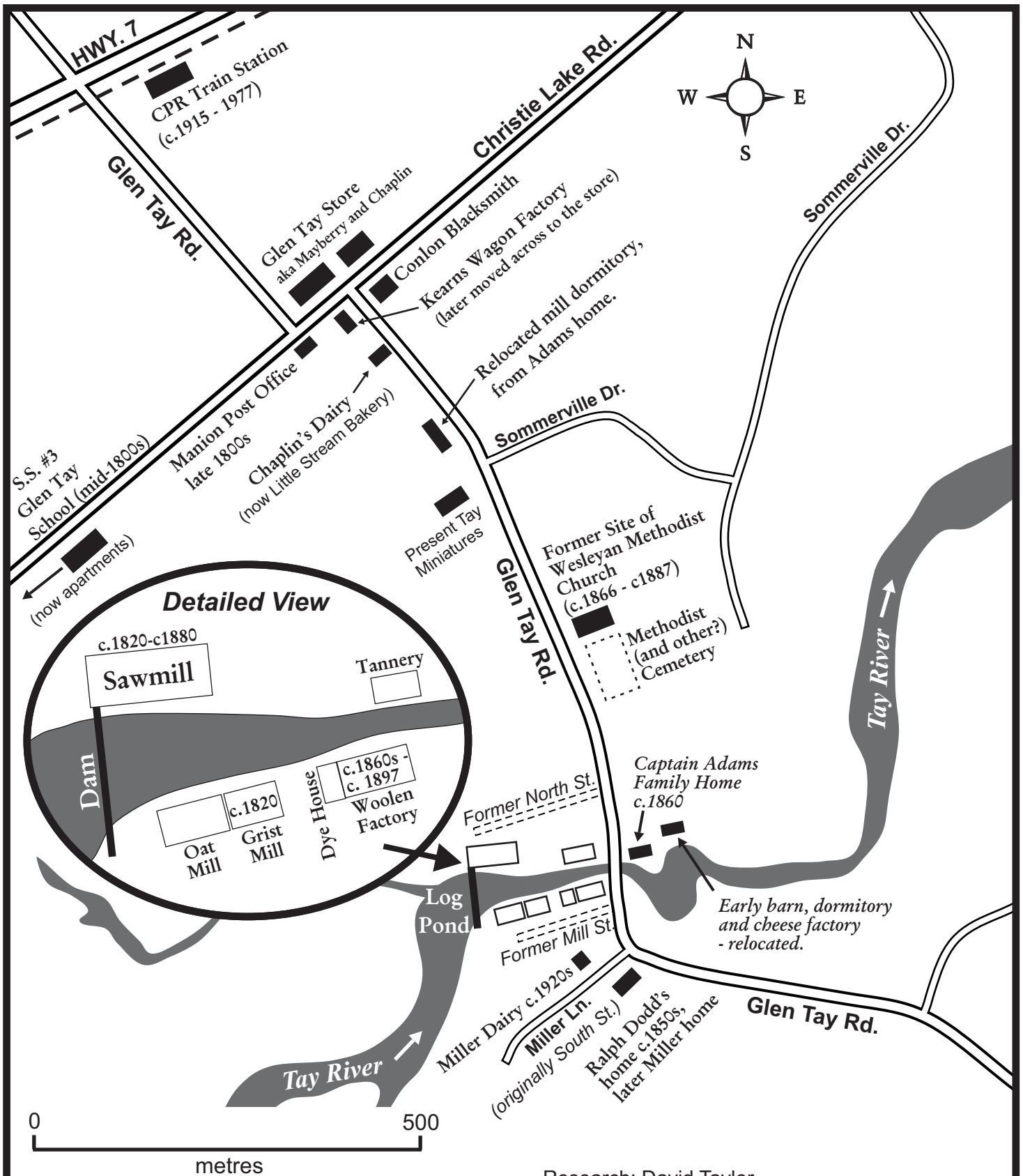
In many ways, we are guests on this river – hopefully we are caring for it appropriately.

Footnote: This is based on a number of sources including original research in local newspapers, archives and the land office, as well as books, including 'Glen Tay, Then and Now', by Barbara Jordan.

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# The Heritage Buildings of Glen Tay Hamlet

(formerly Adamsville and later Manion)

Research: David Taylor  
 Graphics: Ken W. Watson  
 Other Sources:  
*Glen Tay, Then and Now*, by Barbara Jordan, 1997  
*Mills of the Tay*, by David Taylor, 2015  
 ([www.perthhs.org/history/tay.html](http://www.perthhs.org/history/tay.html))