

Brussels Ward – Huron East



Brussels was originally known as Ainleyville after William Ainley who had laid out a town site on the Maitland River in 1855. When the village was officially incorporated in 1873 it underwent a name change to Brussels, as this was the name of the Great Western Railway station on the north edge of town. For a short while villagers disembarked from the train at Brussels, walked through

Ainleyville and picked up their mail at a post office designated as Dingle, without every leaving the village where they lived.

By 1880, the village had a population of about a 1,000, and this has remained stable to the present day. In its heyday, the village had mills of every sort powered by water and steam. The last of these did not close until the Logan Mill ceased production in 1967, leaving behind the town's millpond as a reminder of an industry that had once flourished.

Grandeur of the town's industrial era can still be seen in one of the most spectacular examples of residential architecture in southwestern Ontario. Dunedin House was built in 1887 by Dr. W. J. R. Holmes, reportedly, as a replica of Dunedin Castle in Scotland. It is an excellent example of the Queen Anne style and has survived without undergoing the adaptations that destroyed the character of many large older homes. Dunedin and its residential neighbours stand in tribute to the area's settlers and their strong entrepreneurial spirit.



The village no longer has a large industrial base but continues to provide a strong agricultural service sector for the surrounding area with an active and expanding industrial park.

This tour is almost an aerial view of the history of Huron East and we hope you will take the time to get a closer view by visiting the individual galleries that interest you. The people and the communities have stayed true to their rural and agricultural heritage while representing a modern response to the pressures that have caused this rural style of life to vanish from much of Ontario.