A self-guided walking tour, Sackville NB, Canada

This approximately 1.5 hour walking tour was developed by the Cultural Development Committee of Renaissance Sackville, a group of community volunteers interested in promoting the arts and cultural activity in Sackville. In the spirit of celebration, this contribution recognized Sackville’s 100th year of incorporation in 2001.

Begin at parking lot adjacent to Main and King Street. (see map below)

Note of interest: Mount Allison University

This tour will lead you through the central area of Sackville. The campus includes about 76 acres with 45 buildings. There are nearly 1,100 trees and shrubs giving the campus a park-like setting. The Swan Pond, a symbol of Mount Allison since its creation in 1961, has traditionally been the site of picnics, cultural events, orientation activities and wintertime skating.

In the late 1840s, local merchant Charles Frederick Allison suggested that a school be built in Sackville. The Mount Allison Academy for boys had its formal opening in 1843. In 1854, a branch institution for girls, known as the "Ladies College", opened to complement the Wesleyan Academy for boys. In July 1862, the degree-granting Mount Allison College was organized with the first two students graduating in May 1863.

1. Six Figures: a sculpture by Anne Kahane (Mt. Allison Student Centre Building). As you approach the building from the South, you see this sculpture placed high on the exterior wall on the left. In 1960, The Canada Council funded a sculpture competition at Mount Allison University. This work, by Montreal artist Anne Kahane was chosen. It represents a gathering of people and was intended to be viewed as part of the busy University campus, rather than as an isolated object. Unfortunately, after renovations to the University Centre, the sculpture was removed and later repositioned much higher on the wall than the artist intended. The piece is made of kiln-dried mahogany and measures 10 x 11 feet.

2. Mount Allison Chapel

Built in 1964, this chapel bears very interesting design qualities and details reminiscent of the rebuilt Coventry Cathedral in England. The building is named after the Rt. Rev. Dr. F. Bruce Brown of Toronto. The stained glass windows are the work of Ontario artist Gerald Toske. The three major windows are symbolic of Creation, Incarnation and Redemption. Images representing the four gospel stories are seen in the pillar windows.

The pillars themselves represent the founding churches of the United Church. The interior details at the top of each pillar illustrate: the burning bush (Presbyterian Church), the open bible (Congregational Church), the descending dove (Methodist Church), and also the sailing ship (ecclesiastical church). The theme of the chapel design symbolizes the fact that all religions are welcome here.

All the interior lines lead one’s eyes to the huge front cross outlined by 30 small stained glass windows. The granite of the altar step comes from a quarry in Wallace, Nova Scotia. The incredible Casavant organ has 1563 pipes. The chapel is open during the summer from 7 am to 7 pm weekdays.

3. Owens Art Gallery

The Owens Art Gallery is the oldest university art gallery in Canada. It was designed by Toronto architect Edmund Burke and built with regional olive sandstone in 1895. The terracotta frieze which decorates the upper exterior of three walls of the Owens was also designed by Burke and manufactured by the Tallman & Son’s, a brick and terracotta company in Brantford, Ontario. The terracotta castings were likely carved one image (following the drawings of the architect), then produced a plaster mould of the carvings and reproduced the design twelve times to form the entire length of the frieze with names of twelve individual artists inserted into the pattern later. In the 19th century, terracotta was popular in North America as material for architectural ornamentation, particularly in the United States. Existing examples in the Atlantic region in Canada are rare.

Salt/Marsh: Sculpture by John McEwen (entrance steps at York Street Entrance). Completed and installed in 1995, this is the first major outdoor sculpture by McEwen in the Mount Allison Community. Commissioned by Friends of the Owens Art Gallery in honour of the Gallery’s centenary celebrations, it flows the steps at the York Street entrance to the Gallery. The running wolf feeds the eye in the dusk….The viewer interprets.

Note of interest: Salt/Marsh is a playground for you to enjoy. You can lie down and stare at the stars or walk through the woods to the far wall to see this mural, originally titled The Circuit Rider. In 1947, just five years after graduation from Mount Allison, the Executive Committee of the University commissioned Alex Colville to decorate the end wall of Tweedie Hall with a large mural. The subject shows various scenes of Mr. Allison’s history, painted in a style developed by the Mexican muralist Diego Rivera and Jose Orozco. It was completed in the summer of 1948. The medium is egg tempera on canvas adhered to plaster. In 1995, Colville chose to destroy this work and start from scratch. In 2001, Colville gave 5"x5" preparatory drawings to the Owens Art Gallery (Due to campus renovations in 2001, this site may be inaccessible).

4. Corner of York Street and Salem Street

From this corner, one sees several properties of cultural importance to Sackville. York Street is the former home of Alex Colville where he lived from 1946 to 1973 with his family Alex and Rhoda Coyle who graduated from Mt. A in Fine Arts in 1942. In this house, he painted many of his most important works while working as a Fine Arts Professor. Many interior details were built by Colville himself. The Colvilles now reside in Wolfville, NS.

77 York was the home of painter Lawrence Harris who was head of the Department of Fine Arts from 1946-75.

82 York was the home of noted sculptor David Huson who is well known for his important painter and figure in the history of Fine Arts at Mount Allison at the turn of the century. It is a fine example of Queen Anne Revival Style architecture.


If the mood of the student residence Trueman House is open, you can go in and walk straight to a set of doors with glass windows. The doors are usually locked but you can look through the windows to the far wall to see this mural, originally titled The Circuit Rider. In 1947, just five years after graduation from Mount Allison, the Executive Committee of the University commissioned Alex Colville to decorate the end wall of Tweedie Hall with a large mural. The subject shows various scenes of Mr. Allison’s history, painted in a style developed by the Mexican muralist Diego Rivera and Jose Orozco. It was completed in the summer of 1948. The medium is egg tempera on canvas adhered to plaster. In 1995, Colville chose to destroy this work and start from scratch. In 2001, Colville gave 5"x5" preparatory drawings to the Owens Art Gallery (Due to campus renovations in 2001, this site may be inaccessible).

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6. Athletic Centre Triptych Mural by Alex Colville: The Athlete.

Walk up the front stairs, through the doors to the end of the hall. If the door is locked, you will still be able to see the lithe 1960-61 painting. Athletes commissioned by Mount Allison University for its new Athletic Centre. The painting was an important challenge for Colville in terms of the size of the work, the subject matter and prominent position in the main hall of the Athletic Centre. There are 88 preparatory sketches of this triptych in the Owens Art Gallery Permanent Collection which reveal the artist's meticulously thorough development of the composition. The medium is oil and synthetic resin on board. Colville's teenage children and their neighbourhood friends posed for the figures.

Now head back out toward York Street. As you come down the front steps of the Athletic Center, turn right and go down York Street. Turn right on Lordelouise Street. Take the stubble footpath between the soccer field and the Curling Club to Main Street (by the Fire Hall). Turn right and walk towards the Sackville Harness Shop.
7. Sackville Harness Shop 39 Main Street. A cultural icon of Sackville, this is a wonderful old place to visit! The smell of the leather, sound of the ancient sewing machines, the shine of the brass and the natural atmosphere all combine to create a special place. To get a jump on your Christmas list, choose a handmade leather belt with solid brass buckle for every member of your family and a hand-made loaf for Rover! One stop shopping! Open Monday to Friday from 8 am until 5 pm and Saturday from 8 am until noon. Call 506-536-0642.

8. Sackville Bandstand & Public Library Here is another of our cultural icons. The Bandstand is a long-time center for community activities. Local musicians give free concerts here on Thursday evenings during the summer. Please note monument in front of Library

Note of interest: The Canadian Flag was designed in 113 Main Street.

9. Rob Lyon Graphics 86 Main Street. Behind the Post Office, you see the small, tucked-away studio/gallery of Robert and Katherine Lyon. Original artwork and reproduction prints by Robert and Katherine are complemented by Celtic, nature and kids T-shirts, notepaper, note cards and many other uniquely crafted products. Rob Lyon Graphics has a large selection of items depicting the sandstone streets where the stage curtains were lifted to during a performance. For more information call 506-536-2094 or visit www.roblyongraphics.ca

10. Live Bait Theatre 87 Main Street. Live Bait is really “Where Everyone Comes to Play” This professional theatre company is known for its high energy and entertaining shows. This is now a permanent theatre space for co-artistic directors Charles and Karen Valanne. Visit Live Bait to satisfy your appetite for fun. For more information call 506-536-2248 or check out: www.livebaittheatre.com

11. Alex Colville painting of Ford Block 96 Main. Here is the exact site of the historic painting Milk Truck by Alex Colville done in 1959. This photo was taken on September 30th, 2000 on Alex Colville Day in Sackville. Alex Colville with a repro. of his painting Milk Truck 1959, and the building as it stands today. Photo courtesy of Moncton Times & Transcript

12. Struts Gallery and Faucet Media Arts Centre: 7 to 9 Bridge Street. Established in 1982, the center is dedicated to the presentation of local, national and international contemporary artist-initiated activities including exhibitions, performances, workshops, screenings, residencies, and symposia. Struts also maintains a Media Centre for members to produce digital video works. The Centre is open Tuesday to Friday from 12 to 5 pm and on Saturday from 12 until 4 pm. Admission is free and for more information call 506-536-1211 or check out: www.strutsgallery.ca

13. Original William Morris Wallpaper At The Marshlands Inn: 55 Bridge Street. Take a quick peek at wallpaper designed and printed by the English designer William Morris (1834-1896), famed member of the Arts and Crafts movement. The Inn has one carefully preserved section left in the dining room. While you are there, visit Eliza Wintour Antiques, noted especially for their antique glassware. For more information call 506-536-0170 or check out: www.marshlands.nb.ca

14. Sanderling Carving at The Sanderling Bed and Breakfast and Art Gallery: 59 Bridge Street. This unique carving of the sanderling seabird was carved by Edmundston, New Brunswick artist Albert Deveau from an elm tree. One of the older trees in town, it took Deveau twenty hours and three chains saw to complete the project. Donna Shaprio, the proprietor of the bed and breakfast and an artist herself, painted the sculpture. Her work includes college paintings with an important role in the development of the town. Built of sandstone, the monument’s bench-like design provides an area where people can sit and reflect on the town’s past.

Note of interest: The Sackville Centennial Monument was designed to commemorate the incorporation of Sackville in 1903 and to remember its founding groups: the England Planters, the Mi’kmaq, the Acadians, the Yorkshire Settlers, the New England Planters and the Loyalists. When the site was purchased by Peter Manchester designed the monument to fit in with the surrounding landscape. Unveiled at the 2004 Fall Fair Opening Ceremonies, the monument recognizes the links between the founding groups and their important role in the development of the town. Built of sandstone, the monument’s bench-like design provides an area where people can sit and reflect on the town’s past.

15. Fog Forest Gallery: 14 Bridge Street. Since 1984, this gallery has been dedicated to the exhibition and sale of original artworks by professional artists and crafts people of Eastern Canada. The gallery is operated by Atlantic Canada’s finest printers, printmakers, sculptors, photographers and artisans. Fog Forest also offers full-service custom picture framing. Open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 am until 5 pm or by appointment. Call 506-536-9000 or check out: www.fogforest.com

16. Old Imperial Theatre, Wood Block. In 1883, the Sackville Eastman Hall was burned to the ground completely to the ground in 1914. A year later, the large impressive Wood Block was built and housed, on the third floor, was the 600 seat Imperial Theatre. If you look up to the roof above the Fog Forest Gallery and to the left, the large beige-like structure is the “fly” gallery of the old Imperial Theatre where the stage curtains were lifted to during a performance. The Imperial was used as a movie theatre, for plays and for lectures until the late 1940s.

17. Mel’s Tea Room: 17 Bridge Street. With its classic 1950’s soda fountain, Mel’s is a cultural experience that speaks for itself! Stuart Maclean has featured Mel’s on his CBC program The Vinyl Cafe and it is also featured in his book Welcome Home.

18. Tidewater Books: 4 Bridge Street. Here you will find an amazing selection of works by our local artists including Thaddeus Holownia’s photography and Douglas Lochhead’s poetry, both of which have been inspired by the Fog Forest Gallery and to the left, the large beige-like structure is the “fly” gallery of the old Imperial Theatre where the stage curtains were lifted to during a performance. The Imperial was used as a movie theatre, for plays and for lectures until the late 1940s.

19. Harold Geddes Memorial by sculptor Kim Jones. A number of local citizens and businesses owners have rallied together to organize a fundraising campaign in order to realize a fitting memorial recognizing Harold Geddes’ contributions to the town of Sackville. Harold was enshrined in 1917 after the Halifax Explosion and was adopted by Charles and Alice Geddes. After retiring from his job as a custodian at Mount Allison University, he became the community’s volunteer caretaker as he kept the downtown centre litter-free for more than twenty years. Harold was a quiet and kind man. For his efforts he earned Sackville’s Good Neighbour Award, and in 2000 the Mayor’s Award. Harold passed away on September 8, 2004. The streets of downtown Sackville will never feel quite the same.

20. Cranewood: 113 Main Street. Here is the site of another well-loved Alex Colville painting, “Mr. Wood in April” (1966). This stately home was built in the 1830’s by William Crane. He arrived in Sackville as a young man in 1804 and soon became one of the more successful and respected businessmen in the Chignecto area. The house was purchased in 1975 by Mount Allison as the official residence of the President.

21. Gravestones of Charles Frederick Allsop: Old Lower Sackville Methodist Cemetery. Please take a short walk through this otherwise unvisited, but fascinating, historic cemetery. Here you will find graves of many of the families who have long been connected to the community, including that of the man who was responsible for the incorporation of Sackville in 1903.

22. The Swan Pond: Ladies College Park. This is perhaps the most picturesque and romantic spot in Sackville, with the number of wedding photos, graduations, family portraits that have had this scene as a backdrop. The story goes that the fountain was designed from a sketch by artist John Hammond in the early 1900’s. It is the focal center of the pond and a superb picnic spot.

23. The Marjorie Young Bell Conservatory of Music. Otherwise known as the Flora, the Flora can hear music being played or sung as you pass the conservatory. Many of the exceptionally talented students who study here go on to be some of Canada’s finest musicians and composers. The Brunton Auditorium hosts many performances of all descriptions: visiting artists from The Performing Arts Series, The Sackville Music Festival, student festivals, faculty recitals, and Mount Allison President’s Leadership Speaker Series. With the generous help of the Marjorie Young Bell Foundation, many cultural aspects of the University continue to exist.

“Song in the Wind” sculpture in exterior back courtyard area. This cast bronze sculpture on a stone plinth is the 1968 work of Frances Marie Gage, a well-known Canadian sculptor who attended the Art Student’s League in New York. The sculpture was donated to Mount Allison in 1969 in memory of her maternal grandfather, the family’s friend and family at Mount Allison and across Canada.

24. Lawren P. Harris Tile Mural: Award-Dixon Building, 144 Main Street door. This tile work was almost destroyed when the building was re-faced with red sandstone in 1994. Fortunately, Virginia Deveau (herself a past recipient of the Fine Arts Department) was walking by as workers were demolishing the entrance area. What you see here is less than half of the tile mural created by Harris in 1970.

25. Tree Carving at The United Church Home For Seniors (Drew Nursing Home) 34 Mallard Drive, to find out more about Sackville. To mark the fiftieth anniversary in 2005 of The United Church Home For Seniors Incorporated, the Board of Trustees created a Carved Oak Plaque to recognize Harold Geddes, a long-time member of the United Church Home: “In memory of Harold Geddes, a long-time member of the United Church Home.” To mark the fiftieth anniversary in 2005 of The United Church Home For Seniors Incorporated, the Board of Trustees created a Carved Oak Plaque to recognize Harold Geddes, a long-time member of the United Church Home.

Special Events

1. Festival by the Marsh Art Festival: the Marshlands Inn: 55 Bridge Street. This is an annual drama, music and poetry festival of the arts. Festival by the Marsh is a celebration of the arts in the Chignecto area. The festival is sure to have something to suit everyone’s tastes. For more information contact the Marshlands Inn: 506-364-2229 or at www.festivalbythemarsh.ca

2. Art Across the Marsh: www.festivalbythemarsh.ca Annual Studio Tour, call (506) 536-1904

Sackville Fall Fair: www.sackville.com Other sites of interest nearby:

- Campbell Carriage Factory Museum, Middle Sackville
- Sir Charles G.D. Roberts Monument, Westcock
- Avard-Dixon Sid Charles G.D. Roberts Monument, Westcock
- Avard-Dixon

Information about these and many more interesting places in the area can be found at the Visitor Information Centre, 34 Mallard Drive (East of Tintamore, off of Route 113). Sackville NB Municipality of the Arts 2003

Sackville, One of the best places to live in Canada Canadian Association of Retired Persons 2005.