

**The Alexander Mayberry House**  
**223 Main Street, Barriefield Village, Ontario**



The Alexander Mayberry House is part of a unique 19th century village streetscape. Like other similar Barriefield houses, it is a simply built one-and-a-half storey stone dwelling with close eaves and unembellished openings. It reflects the remote farm cottages of Scotland or Ireland, but with the massiveness found in local early military buildings.

The original house was built in the 1830's by Alexander Mayberry, a local blacksmith, who purchased two subdivision lots fronting the King's Highway in 1834 for £50. Over the years extensions to the house were added and drive sheds built that are visible along Main

Street today. In 1862, Mayberry sold the property to Alexander Finley, "canteen keeper" at Fort Henry in Kingston (now a National Historic Site), who opened the premises to the public as the "Pittsburgh Inn". Financial reverses, however, forced the sale of his business in 1873.

Miles Byrnes, a piano-case carpenter (most likely with the Weber Piano Co.) in Kingston, purchased Finley's business and opened "Byrnes Hotel and Grocery" which operated successfully for many years. Beginning in 1903 the Village post office was housed there for several years. Miles and his wife Jean died only a month apart in 1912, so their daughter Theresa "Dovey" Werdine continued to run the grocery business until 1921 when it was sold to William McKinnon. The McKinnon's grocery business thrived through the 1920's and 1930's until it closed on William's death in 1940. The Mayberry House saw nearly seventy continuous years operating as an inn or grocery business in Barriefield.

**Alexander Rickey House**  
**404 Regent Street, Barriefield Village, Ontario**

In the early 1880's several members of the Rickey family moved to Barriefield Village from Millhaven in Ernestown Township. From Millhaven they brought with them three generations of experience as skilled carpenters and cabinetmakers. One of them, Alexander, excelled as a wagon-maker and blacksmith. He purchased a vacant lot on the north-east corner of Regent Street and Sharmans Lane in 1886 where he began to build an eclectic Victorian one-and-a-half storey frame dwelling for his family. Its irregular plan resulted in an



interesting multi-gable roof with many shuttered windows. His craftsmanship even extended to building the furniture that graced his home.

At one time Alexander's wheelwright, woodworking and blacksmith shop faced Main Street beside the Mayberry house. From this establishment, it was reported in 1928, "some of Kingston's finest coal wagons and other utility types of wagons were turned out in the past forty-five years". He was also credited as being "one of the most interesting characters that one would wish to meet".

Alexander's brother George assisted in the

shop, and his cousin Archibald, a boatbuilder, had a combined home with boat building loft next door on Sharmans Lane, sadly now gone. The Rickets were respected craftsmen in Barriefield over many years. Alexander died in 1930, but his white painted house is maintained largely as it was built, still bearing the stamp of his craftsmanship.

**The Pittsburgh Inn / Dominion House c.1838  
236 James Street, Barriefield Village, Ontario**

In 1831 William Walker, a Storrington Township farmer and investor, purchased the property at the corner of James Street and the King's Highway, (now Main Street), in Barriefield Village from a widow, Ann Gray, complete with frame house for £ 130. Within a few years Walker replaced it with a two storey stone tavern, which is still there today. Ordnance Department maps show the building in place before 1840. Walker probably began construction about 1838. A series of tenants operated the tavern until William's son, David J. Walker, sold the property in December of 1867 to a local Pittsburgh Township farmer,



William Hutton. Hutton's occupation then became that of innkeeper, and as the new owner, he chose to change its name to "Dominion House," most likely to recognize the newly created Dominion of Canada. Perhaps William thought that a tavern was not the right place to raise his family, or that it was a problem of enough space, for whatever reason, in April, 1874, for \$180 he purchased the adjacent vacant property fronting the Queen's Highway and Regent Street. Here he built a new limestone home where for the following 100 years members of the Hutton family lived.

The effect of the withdrawal of the British garrison from Fort Henry in 1870 also withdrew many of the patrons that had kept Barriefield's inns and taverns busy. By the mid 1870s, most had closed or converted to grocery shops. By the 1890s the tavern held William Clapham's dairy business. More recently, from the late 1920's through the 1960's Robert Gray and his son Gordon ran their well known grocery business from the building. Following the Grays, the store remained open into the 1970's as a small convenience outlet, the last business to occupy what was once a busy tavern. Recently, it was converted to a family home as part of an extensive renovation.

**The William Michael House**  
**249 Main Street, Barriefield Village, Ontario**



Built around 1820, the William Michael House has the distinction of being one of the earliest brick houses remaining in the Kingston area. It is of modest size with Flemish bond brickwork and traditional Georgian proportions. The interior layout is notable for the four principal rooms on the main floor, each with a large fireplace. The basement, of usable height, has its own cooking hearth. Both the exterior and interior of the house have been carefully maintained over the years and except for the early 20th-century addition of a front verandah, it remains little altered.

William Michael “Master Armourer of His Majesty’s Ordnance Dept. at Fort Henry” purchased a half acre lot from

John Grant in 1819. He paid £25 for the empty lot that fronted on the King’s Highway at the Northern edge of Barriefield, a price consistent with the current rate. Like many other skilled tradesmen retiring from Fort Henry and the Naval Dockyard in Kingston, William saw Barriefield as a convenient place to purchase a lot. William died about 1830 and willed his wife Ann lifetime possession of the house and she continued to reside there until 1874 when she sold it to Edward Leader. The Leaders reared their family in the house from 1874 to 1900.

When Herbert Murray purchased the Michael House from the Leaders in 1900, he and his wife Emma Toner had only two young children, leaving ample space for her parents as well. William Toner had been a Pittsburgh Township farmer, so he and his wife Charlotte lived with the Murrays until 1909 when they moved to the Frontenac County Court House as resident caretakers. After Emma and Herbert died, Olive, their unmarried daughter, continued to live in the house until her death in 1980. The Murrays had been custodians of the Michael House for over eighty years.



**The John Marks House**  
**275 Main Street, Barriefield Village, Ontario**

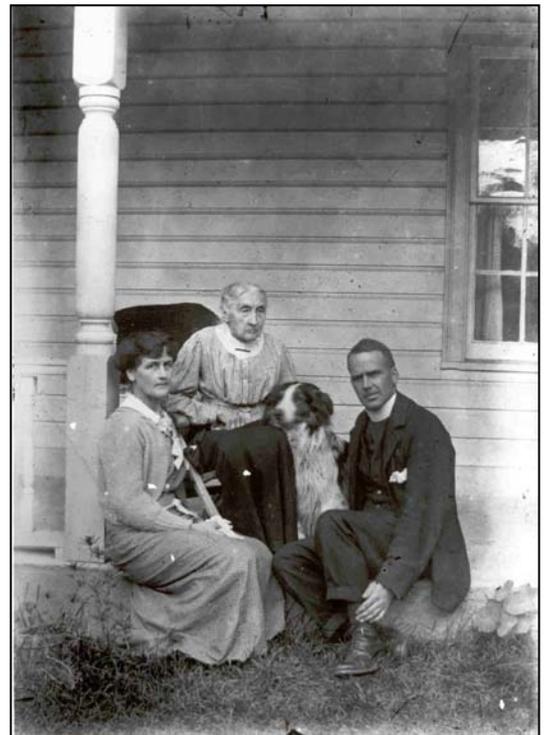


The John Marks House is considered by many to be the most important building in Barriefield Village. After an impressive naval and civil career, John Marks became a prominent figure in both municipal and provincial government and was active in many business, commercial and social enterprises. In 1824, while still employed as custodian of the Royal Naval Dockyard on Point Frederick, he purchased a 200 acre farm (lot 19 EGCR) on the northern edge of Barriefield Village. The property

included a log house dating back to the late 1790s which Marks incorporated into the design of a new home for his family. Notes on the progress of construction (from 1824 to 1828) and prices paid for materials and labour are inserted among farm management records, and weather and social observations he entered in his farm diary. What emerged was a simple but elegant two-storey house with reserved classical details at the entrance and in the gables.

Marks sold his house in 1855 to Henry Sadlier, who sold it five years later to Martin Strachan, owner of the Barriefield Steam Sawmill and several times a Pittsburgh Township Reeve. In 1913, St. Mark's Church purchased the Marks House for use as a manse and undertook renovations that included a new rear kitchen wing, new cove siding, a new verandah and some interior changes. The exterior appearance of the house was not substantially changed then, or for the next 74 years while maintained by the parish. When the Church decided to sell the property in 1977 for economic reasons, the Marks House fell into a 30 year period of disuse. After several failed attempts to negotiate a subdivision plan for the property, maintenance of the house ceased, and it was nearly lost to "demolition by neglect."

In a final effort to resolve the impasse, a plan for subdividing the property into three waterfront lots was submitted to the City of Kingston and upheld in an Ontario Municipal Board ruling on the condition (as stipulated in the Official Plan for allowing the three lots) that the Marks House would be "retained and restored" to a habitable condition. In 2006 Patrick Powers, a local building contractor interested in working with heritage buildings, purchased the property and undertook an extensive restoration that was completed in 2007. It is to Mr. Powers' credit that he sponsored a secondary school Heritage Restoration Building Construction Internship Program within the project.



During the restoration work, it was revealed precisely how John Marks had incorporated the original log structure into his new home. It turns out that the “logs” were actually traditional “*pièce-sur-pièce*” walls of robust six inch thick hewn timber planks with dovetailed corners. Any gaps on the inside had been chinked with oakum and painted without plastering. It had all been hidden by John Marks’ 1820s renovations. He had recycled the ceiling joists, originally dovetailed and pegged into the walls, had added a full second storey, and later, a small stone wing. Hidden by the later renovations were two small half-moon windows in the gables, now exposed and adapted for attic ventilation.

The survival of the Marks House—which few people believed would ever happen—can be attributed to the dedicated effort of the City of Kingston, its staff, the Municipal Heritage Committee and a contractor with vision.