Driving Tour of Mulmur Township

Mulmur has GEOGRAPHY… or rather topography.

The landscape in the northeastern township of Dufferin can be stunning or intimidating, but never disappointing. The township contains two of Dufferin County's most scenic river valleys – the Boyne and the Pine – as well as the steep slopes of the Niagara Escarpment, and the hills and dales of the Orangeville and Southampton moraines. Yet, there is some of the finest farmland in the county here as well taking advantage of the celebrated Honeywood loam to produce significant cash crops for the local farm economy.

What Mulmur lacks is a consistent system of through roads – the geography gets in the way, but for the casual, and patient traveller, the interruptions can be quite rewarding.

Our driving tour of the township starts almost in the centre of the township – at the Mulmur township municipal offices (see the map on the last page for location).

Enjoy the tour!

STARTING POINT—MULMUR MUNICIPAL OFFICES

Out the driveway, turn right. Proceed south to the stop sign.

Stop #1 Village of Terra Nova

In Latin the name means "new land" and in the 1880s this part of Mulmur was "discovered" by lumbermen and sawyers who cleared the area of pine and other native trees. The village was founded as a lumber camp, one of the last to open in Mulmur. A service village has survived to serve the community in the surrounding area. If you're feeling the need to fortify yourself for the tour, The Terra Nova Public House dispenses great food and welcoming hospitality in the former general store and post office.

Scriver's Sawmill, Terra Nova ca. 1900

At the Stop Sign, turn right, and follow the pavement. This is the River Road that winds along the Pine River valley. Pay attention to the speed limits and the warnings for curves and bends. Some of them are quite sharp. After about 6 km you come to the community of...

Stop #2 Kilgorie

A postal village where people called for the mail from 1881 until 1914 when rural mail delivery was available in the local farming community. The post office is one of a few houses remaining. As you round a sharp bend in the road, the school house of SS#15 Kilgorie and its old flag pole are on your right.

Continue about 2km

Stop #3 Pine River Fishing Area

Pine River Light and Power, under construction ca. 1915

There is roadside parking. If you are agile and sure-footed, you can climb down the trail to the dam and large lake. While the lake is no longer stocked with fish, the dam ruins are worth a look. This was the site of the Pine River Light and   Power Company from 1908 to 1914. Organized by Thompson R. "T. R." Huxtable, a miller from nearby Hornings Mills, it was one of the early private electricity generators in Ontario, serving Shelburne and Orangeville. The scheme was bankrupted by competition from Ontario Hydro.

There is a terrific view from the dam up the lake.

Continue west along River Road. Pass Pine River Institute, formerly Pine River Outdoor Education Centre.   You will also notice more than one road signed "No Exit:" Mulmur's geography at work!   We have to make a loop around the top end of the Pine River Valley.

Stop #4 Horning's Mills

As you climb the hill into Horning's Mills, notice the remnant of Lewis Horning's 1832 mill-site and the huge mill-pond behind it.

"Downtown" Hornings Mills, ca. 1910

Proceed to the stop sign, and turn right. Continue east along the north side of Horning's Mills, and then back into Mulmur township. After about 3 kms, the road swings to the left – so will you!

You are now on the Second Line WHS, Mulmur. This road provides some of the most diverse geography in the township as it heads north. The views speak for themselves. You will see 20 Sideroad heading east (**don't take it**) but take a gander at it. This was the road down to Beech Valley school, once the largest single school in the township – where did all the students come from?

Beech Valley School Students ca. 1900

Continue north, and the land opens up into the potato farms built on the famous Honeywood loam of the Dundalk till plain. Continue to the stop sign.

Stop #5 Honeywood

The oldest settlement in north Mulmur, it was called the "Yorkshire Settlement" because most of its early inhabitants came from that English county as a group in 1848. The community boasted all the usual service businesses, and in time, included some substantial stores and a bank, as well as churches and a continuation school.


Honeywood, 1909

Honeywood Band, 1916

Cross County Road 21 and continue north on 2nd Line.

Stop #6 Victoria Church

On the right is Honeywood Cemetery. The Victoria Church once stood in the vacant area. It was built by the Methodist congregation in 1901 and contained a stained glass window featuring a portrait her late Majesty, Queen Victoria, who died in January 1901. The church continued to serve the area as a congregation of the United Church of Canada until 2019 when it was closed, sold and subsequently demolished.

As you head north, the first few farms are among those first occupied by the Yorkshire settlers. As you continue north, the character of the land changes again. There are swamplands in the small hollows very typical of the expansive Dundalk till plain.   At the stop sign, turn right on the Mulmur – Nottawasaga Townline. This is the northern boundary of Dufferin county. There is farmland here interspersed with woodland as you approach Hurontario Street. At the stop sign, turn right.
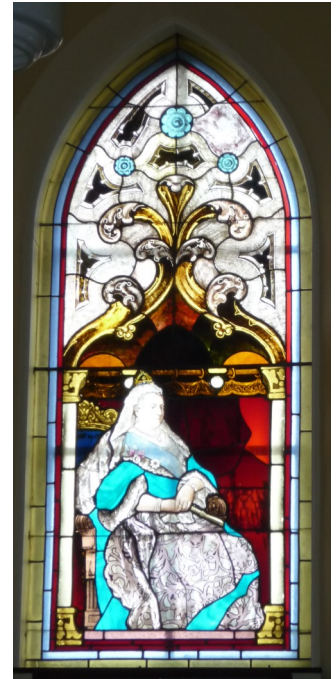
Queen Victoria Window

Stop #7 Lavender

A very old settlement, there was a hotel here as early as 1837, operated by Israel Masten. He took advantage of traffic on the "Centre Road" (aka Hurontario Street) as   settlers headed into Nottawasaga township. Masten was also the first post master of "Masten's Corners" but the name was changed to Lavender in 1860. The once thriving village was the victim or rural de-population in the late 19th century as folks left for the Canadian west.

Note, Lavender Falls is not open to the Public

Mabel Bates Brett at Lavender Falls, 1914

Proceed south on Hurontario Street, and start climbing up the hill.

Note the substantial buildings on many of the old farmsteads that are an indication of the former prosperity of the area. And note the other farmsteads where only some lilacs or old apple trees remain. As you reach the heights, take in the long views to the east.

Continue south, and the road swings to the west, a diversion as you again approach the Pine River Valley. Hold your breath – there's another great view at the corner. At the stop sign, turn left. Proceed down the hill.

Stop #8 Black Bank

Once a scenic hamlet and mill town, little remains today apart from a commemorative sign. In 1876, Mary Plewes built a flour mill on "Dufferin Creek." It burned down about 10 years later, and wasn't replaced. A thriving Presbyterian church existed here too for many years. It hosted a popular church supper that attracted hundreds each year from far and wide.

Continue east on County Road 21, uphill again. At the top, the long view opens up south and east across the Pine River Valley and on into Simcoe County. Pull over at the Second Line corner and enjoy the view.

Stop #9 Ruskview

SS#7 Ruskview, n.d.

This corner was originally "Black Bank" until the post office moved west to the mill community about 1875. In 1883 a new post office opened up here named "Ruskview"; obviously named for the Rusk family who farmed here, and the view. The building on the southwest corner was built in 1880 and housed a blacksmith, a store and a family home. There was also a school and an Orange hall. As the Mulmur historian says: "Thus was the corner built up and torn down, and the family after which it received its name all gone. Still the view remains, the grandeur unsurpassed."

Continue east on County Road 21 down past Jade Mountain Estates. Watch for the green road signs for the concession lines. You have an option here:

Adventurous Drivers (good weather):

Turn left, north, on 4th line EHS. This road climbs around and up along the shoulder of the Niagara Escarpment. The views to the east are terrific, and many newer homes in the area attest to the appeal of the view. Pass 30 Sideroad. At the Townline, turn right, down hill. And this is the really adventurous part. There are some short corners in the descent of the narrow road, and a blind curve as you head towards Banda.

Sane Drivers:

Turn left, north, on 5th line EHS. This road travels past some interesting farms and buildings on its way to the north Townline. As you approach the corner, you will see Banda School on the left. There has been a school here since 1860. The first frame building was replaced by a brick on in 1907. It burned down the same year, and the school house you seen now was built in 1908. Turn right toward Banda.

At the stop sign, turn right (south) on Airport Road.

Stop #10 Banda

A thriving village in the 1860s, it was named after one of the mysterious Spice Islands in the Java Sea. It served a thriving rural community and provided rest and refreshment for travellers and settlers heading into Notta-wasaga and Collingwood townships. It also had an agricultural fair, held "right on the street" every October. It featured cattle sales as well as horse shows and agricultural displays. Banda is now recognized as the place where Airport Road jogs into Simcoe county.

**SS#6 Banda
ca .1900**

**SS#6 Banda
1964**

Head south on Airport Road. Along the way you will see a few farms, then an increasing number of woods and wood related operations, and some Dufferin County Forest Plantations. At 25 Sideroad (County Road 21) you reach…

Stop #11 Randwick

The former school house and Foxy's restaurant mark the site of the old village. Randwick was a lumber camp, and for many years had been further south. The lumber operation of W.J. Parkhill was called Randwick and helped clear the Pine Plains of its timber. The camp kept moving north following the cutting line and settled finally here. Once the pines were gone, wind and water erosion started their work. By 1931, the County of Dufferin was buying abandoned land at tax sales and planting the tracts of the Dufferin County forest.

First tree planted County Forest, 1931

Continue south on Airport Road to 20 Sideroad (watch for the sign), and turn right (west). Continue to the first intersection, turn left (south) on Fifth Line. This used to be the travelled road around the hills on Airport Road. We also pick up the Pine River again on its way to join the Nottawasaga. As the road turns east, you get a good look at the hills of the Mansfield Skiways to the south of 17 Sideroad. At Airport Road, turn right, south and continue to Mansfield. At the stop light, turn right (west).

Stop #12 Mansfield

Mansfield General Store ca 1900

Named for the "manse in the field" the home of Rev. Alexander Colqhoun on the Presbyterian glebe farm just south of the village. The village was of enough consequence to have a post office in the 1850s. It too was a rural service community, but it had several craftsmen to support the local economy. And hence has always had at least one operating store. There have been many community organizations which have thrived here too, from the Orange Lodge and the WI to a Literary Society and a lending library.

Proceed west on County Road 17 about 3 kms. On the left is Bethel Methodist Cemetery, all that remains of the old settlement of Perm.   If you have a few minutes, park and walk to the back of the cemetery and take in the view over the Boyne River valley. Continue west and down the hill, turn left (south) on the Fourth Line.   You will cross the Boyne River and continue south to the first intersection. Turn left (east) on Five Sideroad. Continue to the stop sign at Airport Road.

Stop #13 Stanton

On your left once stood Win Hand's hotel, aka the Stanton Hotel. It was built in 1863, and operated as a hotel for about 15 years before it was turned into a wagon shop in the bottom with the family living upstairs. Beatty's Stanton Hotel was on your right and continued in business for more than 40 years. The building was removed in the early 20th century. Across the way, the Olde Stanton Store operates in the store and post office built by John A. Love.

Love family in front of Stanton Post Office, n.d.

Cross Airport Road (carefully!) and continue east on 5 Sidreroad.

Stanton school (SS#1) is on your right on the knoll. This was the first school section in the township.   Ahead on the left is the former Creary farm. The stone farmhouse once served as a bastion to protect the women and children of the community. In 1866, rumours were flying that the Fenians were coming – an Irish American army of invaders who were going to capture Canada and hold to ransom for Irish independence. The fiery Orange men of Mulmur deposited their families here, and adjourned to Rosemont to await the Fenians in the three hotels in the village, certain sure the Irish Catholics of nearby Adjala would rise in support of the Fenian brotherhood. The longer they stayed in the hotels, the more dire the threat became. In the middle of the night, the local doctor trotted his horse into the village, returning from a maternity call. He told them to go home, the people in Adjala were all sound asleep in their beds unaware of the near riot in Rosemont. Saner heads prevailed, and the "militia" dispersed.

At the intersection, turn right, and head south on the Seventh Line. As you head south and cross the creek, St. Luke's Cemetery is on your right.

The rubble pile in the middle is the remains of St. Luke's Anglican Church replaced in 1927 by the church in Rosemont. As the oldest burying ground in the township, the cemetery was used by families in the community whether Anglican or not. Some of the area's first settlers lie buried here.

The stone house across the road belonged to Edward Little. The house to the south, stone front and brick ell, belonged to his brother Captain John Little and his wife Mary Fletcher, regarded as the first settlers in Mulmur. They arrived in 1825 having exchanged a pair of boots for the 200 acres of land. A man of affairs, John Little was a captain in the militia, the postmaster, the local magistrate and clerk of the township council. His descendants still own the farm.

Stop #14 Mulmur Corners

Nothing really remains of the first settlement in Mulmur. Murphy's store stood on the east side of the road at the intersection. And a few other services clustered here, including the first post office in the

Murphy's Store, 1915

At the intersection turn right onto Highway 89, west, and proceed about 5 km to Violet Hill.

Stop #15 Violet Hill

Another "Mulmur" village that straddles the township boundary with neighboring Mono township. The well-known restaurant "Mrs. Mitchell's" occupies the school house of SS # 2, Mulmur. Across the street, "Granny Taught Us How" is located in the former Orange Hall in Mono. The main street of the village is actually the township boundary here, not Highway 89. Stand in front of either building and look along the street, You will quickly see how roads have moved to adapt to the topography.

LOL#354 Violet Hill Members in full regalia ca. 1910

Continue west on Highway 89 about 3 km. As the highway starts the climb up the long slope of "Braiden's Hill" watch for the signs for Mulmur Con. 1, EHS. Turn right, north, on Con. 1

Proceed north past some of the older farms in the township before you reach the Boyne River Conservation Area. The road winds down over the river, past the former Boyne Outdoor Education Centre, and then continues north back into farm land again.

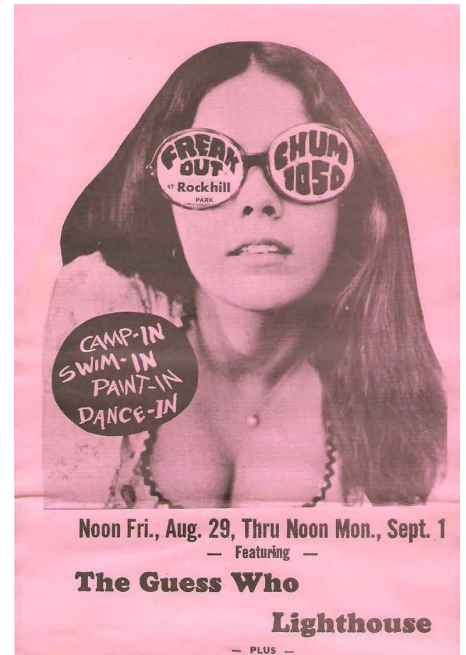*At the intersection, cross 5 Sideroad and continue north through more farmland.*

At the intersection, turn left (west) on 10 Sideroad (aka Country Road 17).

Stop #16 Rock Hill Park

On your left is the famous Rock Hill. Willie Nelson, Charlie Pride, The Guess Who, Chilliwack and many other rock, pop and country acts from across Canada and the world played here. Near the corner are the remnants of a wall of dressed stones. There was a blacksmith shop here operated by Cornelius Fox and a lime kiln run by his brother in law who took advantage of the limestone outcrops to do his work. The caves and fissures of the Rock Hill are well known locally, and formed the backdrop for Rock Hill Park, created as a recreation site, but famous for its monster rock and country and western concerts in the 1960s and 1970s.

"Freak Out at Rock Hill" 1969

Concert at Rock Hill Park

Proceed west on County Road 17. The next intersection is...

Stop #17 Whitfield

One of the earliest settlements in the western part of Mulmur, it was a point of entry for many of the early settlers heading further north in the township. It served a thriving farming community. Christ Church (Anglican) and its cemetery are the survivors of the village. If you look to the south, you can see a new building and near it some headstones. They mark the old Methodist Cemetery. The Orange Hall was across the road from it, but later the Lodge used the former Methodist church as its hall. The building has since been removed.

Whitfield Anglican Church, n.d.

Proceed west on County Road 17. At the next intersection turn left on County Road 19.

The former SS#4 Whitfield is at the corner, now a private home. Just to the west of it is the farm where it was rumoured Jesse James buried part of his loot. Treasure hunters and metal detectors have yet to find anything. But interestingly, the local blacksmith had the same name as a contemporary of James' gang. Maybe somebody should keep looking?

The odd looking construction on your left is the Primrose beacon, part of the air traffic approach system for Pearson International Airport.

Continue south. As you approach 5 Sideroad, look to the west.

The distant barn marks the McCutcheon farm. The log house from there was moved to Shelburne and became the home of the Dufferin County Historical Society's museum 1962-1988. We have recreated the "McCutcheon House" in the Mulmur site of the Museum of Dufferin.

Cross 5 Sideroad, past Cherry Grove school on your left, now a private home, and continue south.

Unidentified Group, Boyne River, n.d.

You re-enter the Boyne River Conservation Area, and road winds down again into the river valley. As it straightens out again is the place that the Ponton Mill occupied the river bank just on the side of the road. It was one of the busiest mills in the township.

At the abrupt bend in the road beside the bridge, there is some parking, and access to hiking trails and fishing areas. A short two minute walk will bring you to the Boyne River and the ruins of the old dam.

As you climb the hill, watch for the "shoe tree", a local landmark, on the right. The road climbs up past Primrose Elementary School, and continues to Primrose. The old village and its landmarks have been obliterated by Highway reconstruction and redevelopment. However, the various businesses of the community continue to offer a diverse range of hospitality and service to passing traffic – continuing an ages old township tradition.

Patterson's "White Rose" Service Station, ca. 1940

We hope you have enjoyed your "Mulmur Experience" and will come back to explore more of what this most geographic township has to offer.

At the stop light, you have reached the end of our tour. Straight ahead is Hwy 10 south to Orangeville. To the left, Hwy 89 takes you toward the MoD and on to Alliston. To the right, Hwy 10 / 89 takes you to Shelburne.

Mulmur Driving Tour Map

CLEARVIEW

BANDA ROAD

MULMUR-NOTTAWASAGA TOWNLINE

Lavender

Banda Creek

Mud

Walker's

Creek

River

30 SIDEROAD

30 SIDEROAD

Black Bank

LEENING TRACT

Jade Mtn. Estates

Ruskview

(25 SIDEROAD)

RANDWICK TRACT
Randwick

RANDWICK TRACT

SIMMONS TRACT

LITTLE TRACT

Honeywood

ckville

MAIN TRACT

MUNICIPAL OFFICE

Terra Nova

20 SIDEROAD

MAIN TRACT

Pine

BIG TREE CIRCLE

COOK CRES

River

17th SIDEROAD

MAIN TRACT

PINE RIVER CRES

ROAD River

Pine

LLOYD'S TRAVERSE CRES

River

ROAD

RIVER

MOUNTAINVIEW ROAD

MULMUR

15 SIDEROAD

Kilgorie

RIVER ROAD

Hornings Mills

Mansfield

ttom ates

Whitfield

9th SIDEROAD

HUNTER PKWY

DEAN RD
MCCUTCHEON ROAD

8th SIDEROAD

Stanton

5 SIDEROAD

Kingsland Estates

Boyne

MUSEUM

Primrose

Violet Hill

MONO-MULMUR TOWNLINE

MONO-MULMUR TOWNLINE

SIDEROAD

FFERIN

Concession West of Hurontario Street

Concession East of Hurontario Street

MULMUR - MELANCTHON TOWNLINE

MULMUR - TOSORONTIO TOWNLINE

MULMUR - MELANCTHON TOWNLINE

MULMUR - TOSORONTIO TOWNLINE

PRINCE OF WALES

CENTRE ROAD

CENTRE ROAD

2nd LINE WEST

2nd LINE WEST

(PRINCE OF WALES)

1st LINE EAST

1st LINE EAST

2nd LINE EAST

2nd LINE EAST

3rd LINE EAST

3rd LINE EAST

4th LINE EAST

4th LINE EAST

5th LINE EAST

5th LINE EAST

(AIRPORT ROAD)

7th LINE EAST

7th LINE EAST

WHITFIELD LN

EHS

Ros

I II III IV V VI VII VIII

I I II III

III II I

124 17 21 18 19 89