

Markham Village Street Names

The stories behind a few old street names

Church Street

Church Street is where the Markham Village Congregational Church was once located. It was on the north-west corner of Church and Franklin Streets. There is an archival photograph of the church in the Tweedsmuir History in the collection of the Markham Museum. The church was later converted to a workshop where shoes were made. The old church remained standing well into the 20th century. Townhouses stand on its site today. In 1910, Holiness Pentecostal Church was established on the south side of Church Street, east of Main Street.

Deer Park Lane

This was originally the lane to Peter Ramer's farm. Peter Ramer was an early Pennsylvania-German Mennonite settler that came this area in 1809. His son, John, was the later owner of the Ramer homestead. He named the farm "Deer Park," a reference to the tame deer that he kept in a corral on the property. Townhouses were built on the site of the old Ramer House in the 1970s.

Hawkridge Avenue

This modern street just west of old Markham Village and the Robinson Creek valley was not named after a type of bird as people might suppose. It turns out that Hawkridge was the maiden name of James Robinson's wife, Louise. Robinson was an important local business owner and politician (see Robinson Street).

Homestead Court

This court, just off Robinson Street after it crosses Robinson Creek and continues to the west, is where the *circa* 1876 home of James and Louise Robinson still stands. The house is positioned on the height of land overlooking creek and would have given James Robinson a good view of his tannery operation in the valley.

Joseph Street

Joseph Reesor was a Pennsylvania-German settler of the Mennonite faith that came to this area in the early 1800s. In 1814, he purchased the farm of his father-in-law Henry Lichte. He is considered to be the founder of Markham Village, which is noted on a provincial historical marker that stands in front of the Markham Museum. He laid out the village in 1826. Irish immigrant Sinclair Holden built the first house in the village, where the gas station now stands at the north-east corner of Main Street and Highway 7. In the early days, the community was called Reesorville, prior to the establishment of a post office here in 1828. The Joseph Reesor House was located to the east of the village, near the place where the Rouge River crosses Highway 7. The old house was demolished many years ago.

Main Street

There are no less than three "Main Streets" in today's City of Markham: Main Street North, Markham Village, Main Street South, Markham Village, and Main Street, Unionville. Markham Village Plan 18, 1850, labelled today's Main Street as the 8th Concession. The map of Markham

Village in the *Historical Atlas of York County, 1878*, is the oldest map with the name “Main Street” on it.

Mill Street

Mill Street, near the south part of old Markham Village, once ran on both the east and west sides of Main Street. Historically, Mill Street provided an easier route through the Rouge River valley than the surveyed road allowance. On the east side of Main Street, Mill Street led to the Glen Rouge Mill established about 1847 by Archibald Barker, post-master and general store owner. On the west side of Main Street, Mill Street led to the Milne farm and Markham Mills. Fisher Court is a remnant of the west part of old Mill Street. Many long-established towns and villages in Ontario have a “Mill Street,” but most of the mills that were once so important to these early communities have disappeared.

Peter Street

Peter Street, in the Mount Joy part of old Markham Village, was named for Peter Ramer by his son, Jonas when he established a subdivision of what were called “suburban lots,” in 1891. Jonas Ramer’s brick house, built in 1858 and presently clad in stucco, still stands at the western end of Springdale Avenue. The oldest portion of Peter Street, south of David Street, contains many late Victorian residences. The northern section of Peter Street was opened after the Second World War.

Robinson Street

Robinson Street, where the Markham Village Farmers’ Market is held from spring to fall each year, was originally named “Foundry Lane.” The lane led to a cluster of businesses at the south end of Tannery Pond in the shallow valley of Robinson Creek. In this 19th century “industrial park” there was the Robinson Tannery and also the Peer Foundry, where bells were manufactured. Later there was a large woolen mill known as “Maple Leaf Mills,” a shoe factory, and a bread baker. Only the broken fragments of an old dam remain of this once busy hub of industrial activity. The lane was re-named “Robinson Street” some time after 1878. Robinson Street led to the Robinson House on the valley’s western edge. James Robinson was a prominent citizen. He was the owner of a large tannery, where hides were processed into leather, and he served as Reeve of Markham Township and Markham Village.

Rouge Street

Rouge Street was established in the mid-1850s when Archibald Barker subdivided his property for village lots. Rouge Street provided access to the Glen Rouge Mill and the mill foreman’s residence. The mill was demolished in the 1920s, but the brick house once occupied by the later operators of the mill still stands at the east end of the street. St. Patrick’s Roman Catholic Church once stood on the south side of Rouge Street, where the cemetery may still be seen. There were also a number of modest homes of workers that were employed in the mills and other industries in the Rouge Valley along this street.

Springdale Avenue

Springdale Avenue began as the lane that led to the farmstead of Jonas Ramer. Several old maple trees line the old route of the lane today, and the Ramer farmhouse, 1858, remains standing as a three-unit residence. The farm was named for a fresh-water spring that still runs in Springdale

Park to the west of this location. For many years, the spring on the Ramer farm was the main water supply for Markham Village. In the early 20th century a health spa was located on the Ramer farm, with claims that the water of the spring had healing qualities and promoted long life.

Station Street

Station Street began as the lane to the farm of Jacob Reesor. Two Reesor farmhouses still stand at 26 and 28 Station Street, embedded within the Raymerville subdivision of the 1980s. When the Toronto and Nipissing Railway came through Markham Village in 1871, the lane was named Station Street as it was located adjacent to the station grounds. The former home of the Section Foreman, built by the railway in the 1870s, stands at 15 Station Street, west of the train tracks.