

SWEDETOWN

The settlers who built their first homes on Philip (now Phillip) Street East were largely Scandinavians. Perhaps their various accents all sounded similar, for the area was soon known to Gravenhurst residents as Swedetown.

In fact, these settlers came from Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Iceland between 1873 and 1910. Some came alone; some brought wives; others brought their whole families including grandparents, parents and children.

They all brought the skills that would make them invaluable to the development of Gravenhurst. They were carpenters, plasterers, stone masons, midwives and ships captains.

Together they would build a Lutheran Church and congregation.

Their sons and daughters would go to local schools, play in the town band and go to war.

They would marry initially among their own people, but then would marry among the other families of the town.

They would play on sports teams, work in lumber mills, and man the fire department.

They would leave a lasting legacy of lovely homes, iconic buildings – the Opera House, the Carnegie Library, Massey Hall – and of founding families – the Andrew Fergusons, the Olavesons and Olafsons, the Lawsons and Larsons, Johnsons and Andersons, Christensons, Willisons, Hansens and Husselstroms.



PHOTO: Lutheran Confirmation Class ca 1910. Standing from left to right is John Nelson, Tillie Jensen, Bertha Olaveson, and Angus Ferguson. Seated from left to right is Rev. Hovdah, Neil Christenson and Edna Larsen.



PHOTO: Lutheran Ladies Aid. Standing in the back row from left to right is Mrs. Neil Christenson, Mrs. Charles Hansen, Mrs. Peter Hansen, Mrs. Charles Anderson, Mrs. Adolph Olaveson and Mrs. Peter Larson. Standing in the front row from left to right is 'Grandma' Christenson, Mrs. Peter Anderson and Mrs. Peter Jensen.



Municipal Heritage Committee
"Preserving Gravenhurst's Past and Present for our Future"