

CARING FOR THE WEST CREDIT AND CHERISHING OUR HISTORY

The West Branch of the Credit River played a primary role in the establishment and growth of Erin Village and Hillsburgh in the 19th Century, powering mills that were essential to the economy.

The Town of Erin is proud of its history and is committed to protecting the valuable environment that the river provides.

Erin's natural features include forests, significant wetlands and dramatic terrain – such as the long, rounded drumlin hill across the river. It is a mix of limestone boulders, sand, silt and clay known as till, deposited by a lobe of glacier ice that flowed north-west from Lake Ontario and up the Niagara Escarpment, to just north of Hillsburgh, about 12,000 years ago. The ice and its meltwater formed hundreds of drumlins in the region.

The West Credit has 270 ponds and many streams, with 22 species of fish such as Brook Trout, Brown Trout, Atlantic Salmon, Banded Killifish and Slimy Sculpin. Rare for southern Ontario rivers, nearly two thirds of its shorelines are covered with trees and a wide variety of plants, with one third of the land in a natural state. This helps the watershed sustain healthy communities of wildlife, including Great Blue Heron, beaver, deer and fox. The river is home to more than 200 species of birds and an array of turtles, snakes, frogs and salamanders.

The Town of Erin is developing a network of trails, linking natural attractions with the downtown business area.

To your right is Hull's Dam, built with a sawmill in 1845. Next to it you can see the start of a long ditch called a millrace, built in 1849 to divert some of the water.

Riverside Park is dedicated to the memory of Steve Revell, 1947-2013, a dedicated trails advocate, history buff and Friend of the Credit.

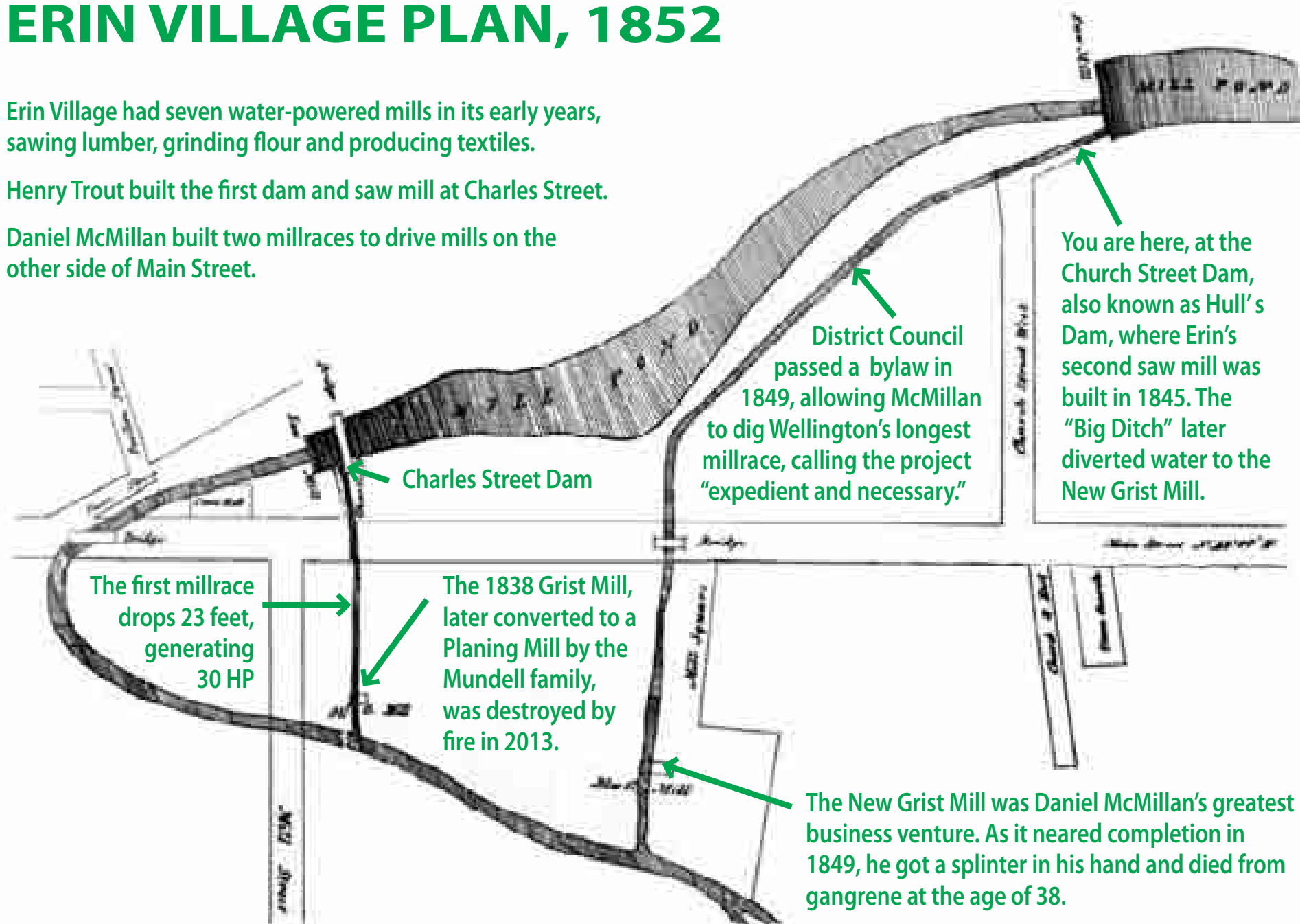


ERIN VILLAGE PLAN, 1852

Erin Village had seven water-powered mills in its early years, sawing lumber, grinding flour and producing textiles.

Henry Trout built the first dam and saw mill at Charles Street.

Daniel McMillan built two millraces to drive mills on the other side of Main Street.



Today it flows back into the river, but originally the millrace ran beside the river for 200 metres, then turned to cut across Main Street, powering the New Grist Mill. The water then rejoined the river, flowing toward Belfountain and the Forks of the Credit.

Mills declined in importance in the early 1900s, and while they were abandoned as business ventures, their history remains a testament to the ingenuity and hard work of Erin's early residents.

PANORAMA OF ERIN VILLAGE, LOOKING EAST, ABOUT 1905



Fair Grounds

Upper Pond

Mill race diverted water starting at Hull's Dam

You are here at Riverside Park, opened in 2014

Mill race flowed beside river, then across Main Street

Water from the Upper Pond powered the 1849 New Grist Mill

Main river flow continues into Lower Pond created by the Charles Street Dam

Photo reproduced from Main Street - A Pictorial History of Erin Village, by Jean Denison. Sign design by Phil Gravelle.