

# HISTORY LIVES IN WAWA STREET NAMES



By Donald E. Pugh

Wawa's street names are historically significant.

Names of streets in the oldest section of town, directly west of Wawa Lake, refer back to Wawa's booming gold rush of 1897. So great was the optimism for the town's expansion that Broadway was named in anticipation of another New York City. MacKay Street comes from J. J. MacKay, an early miner who operated the Mackey Point Prospect near William Teddy Park on Wawa Lake. Caverhill Street is named after MacKay's partner, J. L. Caverhill, a prosperous merchant. Ganley Street recalls the Ganley Brothers who operated steam ships on Lake Superior and ran the large general Wawa store. Some streets such as McKinley & Chicago Avenues gained their names from the influence of American miners. Arnott Street comes from Peter Arnott who arrived in Wawa from Scotland and raised his family in the 'dirty' thirties at a time when Wawa consisted of only seven families and a hotel. Peter acted as a self-taught lawyer, and was well known for his numerous letters to

the Sault Star. Ross Street honours Alex Ross, an early arrival to the Minto Mine, and later farmer and freighter. Alex Ross was one of the few settlers who remained in 'ghost town' Wawa, after the collapse of the gold boom. He lived long enough to see the second Wawa boom beginning in 1938 with the reopening of the Helen Mine. Boyer Street takes its name from Ben Boyer, the prospector who patented the Helen Mine Claim only to sell it to Francis Clergue for \$500. Nyman Street remembers Evelyn Nyman, a long time Wawa resident. Many of Wawa's street names come from important mines of the region. The Grace Darwin mine, on Surluga

Road produced 15,191 ounces of gold, while the Parkhill possessed a settlement of some 250 people and yielded 54,301 ounces of gold. Darwin Street refers to Mr. Darwin who took over the Grace Mine and operated it in the 1930's until its closure in 1944. Mission Road follows the original route from Wawa Lake to the Indian Mission.

Today the town continues to expand. New names are added after residents still living. Surluga Road, named after the well known resident Thomas Surluga, demonstrates that history continues to be made and remembered in Wawa's place names.

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