

2.6 Settlement Along the Ottawa River

In spite of the 360-metre drop of the Ottawa between its headwaters and its mouth, the river has been a highway for human habitation for thousands of years. First Nations Peoples have lived and traded along the Ottawa for over 8000 years. In the 1600s, the fur trade sowed the seeds for European settlement along the river with its trading posts stationed between Montreal and Lake Temiskaming.

Initially, French and British government policies discouraged settlement in the river valley and focused instead on the lucrative fur trade. As a result, settlement did not occur in earnest until the late 18th and 19th centuries. The arrival of Philemon Wright to the Chaudiere Falls and the new British trend of importing settlers from the British Isles marked the beginning of the settlement era. Farming, forestry and canal building complemented each other and drew thousands of immigrants with the promise of a living wage. During this period, Irish, French Canadians and Scots arrived in the greatest numbers and had the most significant impact on the identity of the Ottawa Valley, reflected in local dialects and folk music and dancing. Settlement of the river valley has always been more intensive in its lower stretches, with little or no settlement upstream of Lake Temiskaming.

As the fur trade gave way to farming, settlers cleared land and encroached on First Nations territory. To supplement meagre agricultural earnings, farmers turned to the lumber industry that fuelled the regional economy and attracted new waves of settlers. With forestry came a whole new breed of Ottawa River folk, rough, violent, and fodder for legend. Forestry eventually ceded to a more diversified economy, and recent immigration has followed patterns similar to the rest of Canada.

2.6.1 Earliest Settlement and the Fur Trade

Archaeological sites shed light on the Ottawa River Valley's earliest inhabitants. Chapters 2.1-2.3 outline this prehistoric settlement and use of the land and river that began around 8000 years ago.

Through exploration of the river and the fur trade, the French established the first European settlements in the river valley. Early fur trading posts generally consisted of a few buildings surrounded by stakes, and were staffed by an official, a clerk and perhaps a priest. A few fur trading posts eventually evolved into villages, such as Fort Coulonge (Gaffield 186).

As outlined earlier, the fur trade, the forts, alliances with rival First Nations communities and European settlement of the Ottawa Valley greatly impacted the First Nations Peoples of the area. The First Nations communities of the Ottawa River valley mainly lived a nomadic lifestyle. Fur-trade related conflict in the 17th century caused the Algonquin people to scatter, and only a small number remained. Those who found shelter near the French settlements were strongly encouraged to convert to the Christian faith, and these settlements took on the character of missions (Gaffield 87).

Figure 2.27 "The Great Kettle", Chaudiere Falls



Source: Archives of Ontario

Despite their departure and dispersal, the Algonquin people still firmly believed that they held the rights to their traditional territory: the Ottawa River watershed (Gaffield 87). In 1763, the British Conquest led to a Royal Proclamation defining the official status of these lands. A full discussion of the history of First Nations communities in the river valley can be found in Chapter 2.3: Algonquin History in the Ottawa River Watershed, including their presence and relationship with this land, and the impact of missions, reserves and land claims.

At the end of the 18th century, the Ottawa River valley was still virtually uninhabited by Europeans. This was both in spite of and because of the fur trade. Both the French and the British governments opposed settlement in the river valley, fearing that it would reduce their control over the colonial economy, thus interfering with the lucrative fur trade. Despite these policies, Joseph Mondion settled near Chats Falls in the late 18th century, ostensibly to begin farming. He soon turned his homestead into a trading post, confirming the fears of the two governments. Mondion left in 1800, perhaps because of the isolation (Legget 1975: 186).

However, the fur trade did contribute to a gradual settlement upriver, with trading posts eventually attracting pioneers and becoming villages; examples include Fort Temiskaming, L'Orignal and Oka. The oldest remaining buildings in the Ottawa Valley date from this era: seven shrines at Oka attest to the presence of the Catholic Church at the earliest fur trading posts and date from about 1739 to 1749 (Legget 1975: 177).

2.6.2 From Furs to Farming

In the late 17th and early 18th centuries, the King of France granted large land tracts to noblemen in New France in the form of seigneuries, giving them the right to hunt, fish, and trade with First Nations Peoples. The seigneurs conceded part of the land to colonists, which they subdivided into lots. Farming was the main activity and the colonists were responsible for clearing the land, building houses, farming, and paying taxes to the seigneurs.

Because of French laws governing inheritance, seigneuries had to be shared equally among heirs. Waterfront property gave access to the main means of transportation and ensured a ready source of water for farming. As a result, the seigneuries were divided into characteristic long narrow lots, each with access to the river (Grant 69).

The seigneuries were not intended to increase settlement, but rather to control the land and its natural resources. They only began to attract settlers toward the end of the 18th century. France discouraged immigration, which limited the French Canadian population (Gaffield 122). The seigneuries in the Ottawa River valley changed hands often, further delaying settlement.

There was a total of five river seigneuries along the Ottawa River, all within its lower section: Petite Nation, Argenteuil, Vaudreuil, Oka and Pointe à l'Orignal. In 1682, Count Frontenac granted the Argenteuil seignury, located at the mouth of the North River, to Charles Joseph d'Ailleboust. Settlement started after adjoining lands were surveyed in 1783, and was so slow that a subsequent owner tried to persuade immigrants in Montreal to settle in his area (Legget 1975: 176-180). The Seminary of Montreal first owned the seignury of Oka. A pioneer settlement followed earlier First Nations encampments, and was home to both Iroquois and Algonquins in the mid-19th century (Legget 1975: 178). The Vaudreuil

seigneurie was granted in 1702 and was surveyed for settlement as early as 1732. Voyageurs were among its first settlers.

L'Original is one of the three oldest villages on the Ottawa River and began as the only seigneurie granted in what later became Upper Canada (Legget 1975: 182). The seigneurie was originally given to the West Indies Company, which sold it to François Provost in 1674. It passed to the Soulange family and to Joseph de Longueuil in 1791. It was then sold to Nathaniel Treadwell from the United States in 1796, who divided it among his family and friends. Between 1835 and 1915, Caledonia Springs, located within the jurisdiction of the seigneurie, boasted Canada's most important thermal springs. Until the arrival of the railroad in 1896, visitors reached the springs via steamboat or ferry on the Ottawa River (see Chapter 5.7: *La rivière des Outaouais: une rivière d'histoire et de patrimoine pour les Comtés unis de Prescott et Russell*).

The Petite-Nation Seignery

The Petite-Nation seignery extended eight kilometres along the north shore of the Lower Ottawa River. Granted in 1674 by the West Indies Company to the Bishop of Laval, Joseph Papineau purchased the

Figure 2.28 Montebello – Home of Papineau



Source : Picturesque Canada

vast land tract in 1801. His son, Denis-Benjamin Papineau, encouraged French Canadians to settle in the seignery beginning in 1810 (Friends of the Macdonell-Williamson House 29). Eventually, these settlers established farms and businesses along the riverbank of the seignery, resulting in the contemporary Quebec towns of Papineauville, Plaisance and Montebello (Rivers Inc.: Ottawa River Culture).

In 1817, Joseph Papineau sold the seignery to his son Louis-Joseph, Lower Canadian politician and rebel (Gaffield 127). Louis-Joseph's involvement in politics kept him from attending to the land, and so he only settled there after his manor was built in 1850 in the style of the Loire Valley castles in France. The seignery was leased to New England families involved in the timber trade, and was divided among the heirs of Louis-Joseph after his death. The village of Montebello owes its first

school and initial street layout to Louis-Joseph, as well as its name: Papineau named his domain "Montebello" after a town in Italy or his friend, the Duke of Montebello.

Figure 2.29 Papineau's Castle, 1886



Figure 2.30 Papineau's Residence, Ottawa River, 1854



Source : Austin William Augustus Library and Archives Canada/C-000485

In 1929, the Papineau family sold the domain to a group of private investors who built the luxurious Château Montebello (the world's largest log structure) on the former Papineau domain not far from the manor house. With the establishment of the seigneurie Club (1929-1970) centred around the Château, the town of Montebello's economy revolved around tourism, attracting prominent figures such as William Lyon Mackenzie King, Bing Crosby, and Prince Ranier of Monaco (Friends of the Macdonell-Williamson House 31). In 1970, Canadian Pacific took over the Château Montebello and transformed it into a hotel. The palatial Manoir Papineau, with its chapel, granary and outbuildings, is now a National Historic Site commemorating Louis-Joseph Papineau (Parks Canada: "Manoir Papineau").

Philemon Wright – Farming Father

The British Crown also awarded land grants for farming, leading to a British pattern of layout farms in grids. This began with Philemon Wright's arrival from Massachusetts. Wright was an upper-class farmer from Woburn, Massachusetts. He came to Montreal in search of a better market for his farm produce, exploring the lower reaches of the Ottawa River in 1796. He was pleased to note that the land 130 kilometres upstream of Montreal was virtually unoccupied. During a subsequent visit in 1798, Wright went as far as the Chaudiere Falls, where the wealth of available arable land convinced him of the potential to establish a thriving community. Wright purchased a Warrant of Survey from the British Crown, entitling him to a large land grant in exchange for surveying the land, clearing it, and bringing in settlers (Cross 12).

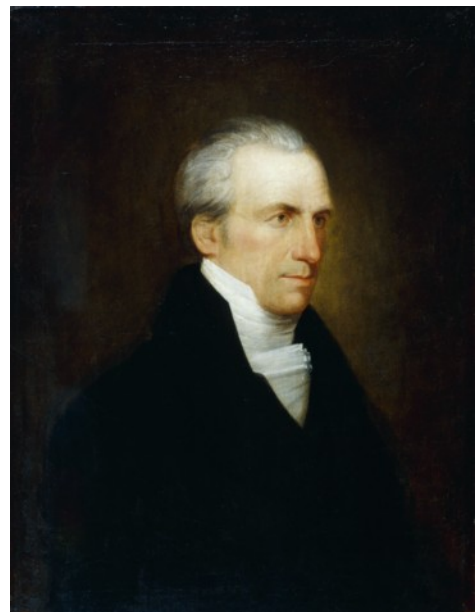
Early on, Wright faced many challenges. First, his contract fell through: Wright's business partner, John Fasset of Burlington, Vermont, was deemed by the Crown to be a Yankee rebel, and the warrant was revoked. Furthermore, the fur trading companies were lobbying forcefully to keep settlement out of their fur trading areas. Wright did not back down. He was able to convince the Crown of his own integrity, and eventually received a warrant in his own name. In dealing with the fur traders, Wright was insistent that agricultural settlement was both possible and advisable along the Ottawa River valley (Cross 12). In an address to prominent members of Montreal fur trading companies, who had reported a mere 500 acres of arable land along the entire Ottawa River, Philemon Wright insisted that "It may [be] to your interests to keep the Grand River from becoming settled, but you may bet your best beaver skin on

Figure 2.31 Chaudiere Falls



Source : Picturessque Canada

Figure 2.32 Philemon Wright



Source : John James Library and Archives Canada/C-011.056

this, that there is at least five hundred thousand acres of uncleared land fit for cultivation along the banks” (qtd. in Cross 11).

Based on positive reports from two “respectable men” from his community, whom Wright accompanied on a tour of the Chaudiere Falls region, he finally succeeded in convincing a small group of his neighbours and family to resettle. In the winter of 1800, Philemon Wright led 37 men, 5 women, and 21 children on an 800 kilometres journey to the Chaudiere Falls region from Woburn (Cross 14). With family, sleighs, oxen and horses in tow, Wright’s team bottlenecked at the foot of the Long Sault and proceeded single file across the ice.

Figure 2.33 Chaudiere Falls Seen From Hull, 1851



Source : James D. Duncan/Library and Archives Canada/C-040257

Thus Wright began an agricultural settlement on the north shore at Chaudiere Falls, laying out the farms in grids and organizing the villages such as Wrightsville (today’s Hull) around a central gathering area, like what he would have seen in Massachusetts (Gaffield 147). To meet the needs of a fast-growing community, he oversaw the construction of a gristmill and a sawmill, both harnessing the waterpower of the Chaudiere falls. Local Algonquin chiefs acted as generous hosts to these settlers until they began clearing the land, at which point the chiefs grew concerned that it would drive back their game and threaten their way of life (Gaffield 125).

2.6.3 The British Encourage Settlement

After the American Revolution and the War of 1812, the British sought control and ownership by occupying the land with settlers along the Ottawa River, hoping to curb a northern expansion by the United States (Gaffield 122). They proposed a settlement technique of *leaders and associates* whereby a

leader such as Philemon would receive large tracts of land to parcel out to his *associates*. The British government hoped that this would relieve them of much of the administration of these lands, but ultimately the concept failed. Leaders accumulated much of the land initially given to associates as compensation for financing their migration and settlement (Gaffield 127). Archibald McMillan and Philemon Wright were two such leaders, with Wright eventually acquiring over 21 145 acres of land. And yet, the growth of the Ottawa Valley remained slow. An 1825 census recorded a mere 1736 people living in the Outaouais region.

Among their many efforts to draw settlers, the British posted a proclamation in Scotland in 1815 offering free land and six months of supplies, attracting shiploads of emigrants that summer (Legget 1975: 188). Sites for permanent settlements were surveyed and considered in the Ottawa-St. Lawrence plain. In 1818, 400 men from the 99th Regiment of Foot disbanded at Quebec and took up land at the Jock River (today's Richmond), traveling up the Ottawa in Durham boats and batteaux¹¹ (Legget 1975: 188).

But the fervour of the British and later the Canadian governments to attract settlers did not prepare these immigrants for the severe challenges they would face farming the land in the Ottawa Valley. After a gruelling transatlantic voyage followed by several weeks travel upriver by batteaux or steamship, settlers often faced broken promises of months of free supplies, thick forest to clear, swarms of insects, extreme isolation and poor land for farming. Only the thinnest of soil covered the Canadian Shield on most land upstream of Chat's Falls (Legget 1975: 204). Some of the land within the Petite-Nation seigneurie was so poor that additional land was purchased on what is now the Ontario side of the river. Indeed, Ottawa River historian Robert Legget suggests that "some of this Shield country should never have been cleared at all" and ponders how so many stayed and established permanent settlement (1975: 204).

The reality of poor soil for farming meant that riverfront land, which tended to be better quality, was settled first (Gaffield 141). In general, the lower part of the Ottawa River valley was more suitable for farming with its fertile plains resulting from deep deposits of marine clay (Legget 1975: 204).

¹¹ Batteaux were flat-bottomed, V-shaped pointer boats used for transporting goods.

Figure 2.34 Ladysmith, Pontiac County, Quebec



Source : Peleg Franklin Brownell/Library and Archives Canada/C-010592

2.6.4 Forestry – A New and Attractive Prospect

The evolution of the timber trade directly influenced the development of the Ottawa Valley. The early farmers supplemented the meagre income from their unproductive farms by cutting timber in the winter. For the few crop surpluses of oats, hay, wheat, and pork that did occur from time to time, the growing timber trade provided a steady and profitable market. Because local suppliers could not meet all of the requirements of the timber camps, supply routes to Montreal and the United States were expanded and developed (Brennan).

In addition to square timber operations, lumbering was important to the Ottawa economy and provided valuable seasonal employment from autumn to early spring. Some farmers built lumber mills; settlements grew around these mills leading to the construction of inns, taverns and blacksmiths' forges. The growth of forestry encouraged landowners and seigneurs to take a renewed interest in their holdings, leading to the relatively late wave of settlement in the seigneuries (Gaffield 131). New villages developed from "stopping places" along forestry access routes out from the river, including Chelsea, Wakefield, Low, Kazabazua, Gracefield, Farrellton and Rivers Desert. Villages such as Quyon and Waltham grew where

tributaries met the Ottawa River. The forest economy required more than just food and stopping places, and led to other types of service centres. For instance, a flour and sawmill established in 1840 in Aylmer flourished while serving the forest industry (Gaffield 186).

Timber shipping firms benefited from the arrival of settlers. Rather than return to Canada with empty holds, some shipping firms provided cheap passage for emigrants, especially during the 1830s and the 1840s. The converted timber ships were very dangerous and immigrants were crammed aboard with little or no regard for comfort or sanitary arrangements. This enterprise ended with the age of steam in the 1860s.

Cramped sleeping quarters led to the spread of disease. In the summer of 1847, the arrival of over 3,000 Irish immigrants brought a typhus epidemic to Bytown. Canal traffic was curtailed in August, and a separate Emigrants Hospital was built in Ottawa. Of the 619 victims treated, 167 died (Brennan).

Changes in the timber trade influenced the population distribution of the valley. The labour force had consisted of French-Canadian farmers and woodsmen from neighbouring districts until the heavy Irish immigration of the 1820s brought new workers to the Ottawa Valley who were willing to work for low wages. When the Rideau Canal was finished in 1832, many more drifted to Bytown looking for work. Some were employed cutting oak in western Quebec and were dubbed "cheneurs" (oak-cutters) which became "Shiners" in English slang. Because the Shiners accepted lower wages than the French Canadians, conflicts arose between the two groups (Brennan).

The dangerous physical work of the farmers and lumbermen along with the predominance of male settlers in the river valley fostered a "culture of masculinity" (Gaffield 204). Fights could be seen as entertainment on a day off, with even prominent men indulging in duels. The most notorious symbol of this culture was French Canadian folk hero Joseph Montferrand, a rafting foreman for the Bowman and Gilmore Company on the Ottawa River. Known as "Joe Mufferaw" to the region's English speakers, Montferrand inspired legends and songs about his legendary strength, size and exploits were legendary. Montferrand was involved in the "Shiner's Wars" that took place in Bytown from 1837-45 between Irish and French Canadian lumbermen.

The Shiners were a disorganized bunch of Irish ruffians until Peter Aylen appeared in 1835. Aylen, an Irish Protestant who came to Canada at age sixteen in 1815, was a millionaire by the age of thirty. Aylen became interested in the Shiners in order to control the Bytown timber trade and the forwarding of pine cribs for export to Quebec. He promised the Shiners he would use his influence to get them jobs and drive the French Canadians out of the shanties and off the rivers in return for their loyalty. He was prepared to accomplish this by kidnapping, intimidation, and organized violence. Amidst high unemployment and a financial crisis, the Irish had nothing to lose by joining forces with Aylen (Brennan).

The resulting violence, known as the Shiners' War, began in 1828 and lasted until 1843. Between 1835 and 1837 at least fifty people were killed. For fifteen years, Bytown braced itself for the annual visit of the Irish shantymen and raftsmen in the spring.

Finally, Bytown and the French Canadian community took action to curb this intimidation and violence. Once the rafts left Ottawa, they were in French Canadian territory. The French Canadian and First Nations river pilots boarded rafts downstream at Carillon, and removed every Shiner. In addition, the Bytown

aristocracy joined together and formed organizations such as the *Bytown Association for the Preservation of the Peace* (Brennan).

As time passed, the square timber trade, with the rowdiness that accompanied its annual drive down river, gave way to the sawn-lumber trade. Men who had worked as woodsmen and rafters became mill hands. In addition, the centre of activity shifted from Hull to Bytown, or Ottawa. Related industries sprang up in towns all along the Rideau and Ottawa Rivers: axe and tool, furniture, sash and door, shingle, and match factories in the towns of Aylmer, Pembroke, Arnprior, Renfrew, Braeside and Hawkesbury provided employment for the inhabitants of the valley and encouraged new settlement. These related industries both stimulated the forest economy and helped to diversify the timber trade. But the shanty man, replaced though he was by millworkers and railwaymen, survived in song and legend as the true spirit of the Ottawa Valley (Brennan).

2.6.5 Transportation and Communication

The improvement of transportation by river facilitated the waves of settlers of the 19th century. This included the appearance of canals, timber slides, steamships and portage railways. Settlements arose at ferry landings and steamboat wharves, such as the 'stopping places' and hotels serving steamboat travelers between Pembroke and Mattawa (Kennedy 204), and the famous wharves of Prescott-Russell. The Ottawa Valley's first railroad, the horse-drawn Union Rail Road circumventing Chats Falls, led to the small community of Union Village at its up-river end (Kennedy 144).

In the short term, improvements in transportation also contributed to new settlements by fuelling local industry. For instance, building the Rideau Canal and later the Ottawa River canals created jobs for many skilled labourers, drawing new settlers to the region. Building the Rideau Canal required a constant supply of cement, provided by Hull (Gaffield 187). Expanding traffic on the Ottawa River led to barge and steamboat building in the region in the mid-19th century (Gaffield 187).

People traveled by river or by foot as building roads progressed slowly compared to canal construction, and the lack of roads isolated many of the settlers. Ottawa Valley lore tells us that Scottish settlers and friends James McArthur and John Anderson settled within a few miles of each other in 1818 in the Beckwith Township, living there for two years before they realized they were neighbours (Legget 1975: 198).

Local landowners Papineau and Wright worked together to build some of the early roads (Gaffield 144). In the 1850s, the newly formed Canadian government tried to encourage settlement of Upper Canada by building a system of roads and offering each settler 100 acres of land adjacent to the road. In 1853, work began on the Ottawa and Opeongo road, a colonization road beginning on Lac des Chats (Kennedy 16). Although the road never actually extended more than a few kilometres from the village of Madawaska, it did lead to some new settlement. By 1858, two hundred mostly Irish families had come up the Ottawa River and settled along the road. The next year, 14 families arrived from Poland (Kennedy 150). Today's town of Renfrew stands on the site of a 'stopping place' along the Opeongo road (Kennedy 186). The historic road has been indicated, and you can still see logs used to build the corduroy¹² road and ruins of log cabins (Legget 1975: 205 and Kennedy 149).

¹² A road made of tree-trunks laid across a swamp.

The construction of bridges on the tributaries of the Ottawa River and between Hull and Bytown improved land transportation and helped overcome the limits of river transport. The first bridge across the Ottawa River opened in 1828 at the Chaudiere Falls. By 1843, an iron suspension bridge over part of the Chaudiere Falls connected Ottawa and Hull (Gaffield 111-112). In 1931, the Perley Bridge connected Hawkesbury with Grenville and facilitated economic development in the region (Friends of the Macdonell-Williamson House 12).

The arrival of the railway in the 1880s greatly facilitated settlement, although by taking away from steamboat traffic it diminished the importance of wharf-based communities.

2.6.6 Ottawa – The Capital City

Gordon Cullingham
Historical Society of Ottawa

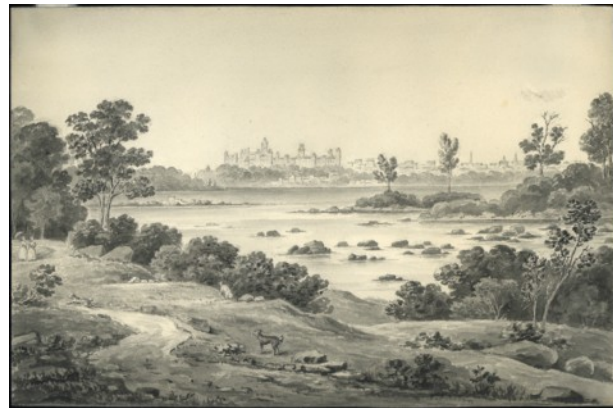
The City of Ottawa is the largest community on the Ottawa River, located at what famous historian Lucien Brault called “the most strategic and historical point on the Ottawa River” (Ottawa – Old and New 33). What began as a company town established to build the Rideau Canal was to become in 1858 the Capital of Canada. In 1828 it was named Bytown by and after its founder, Lieutenant Colonel John By of the Royal Engineers. By had been sent to Canada by the British military

Figure 2.36 Under Dufferin Bridge



Source : Picturessque Canada

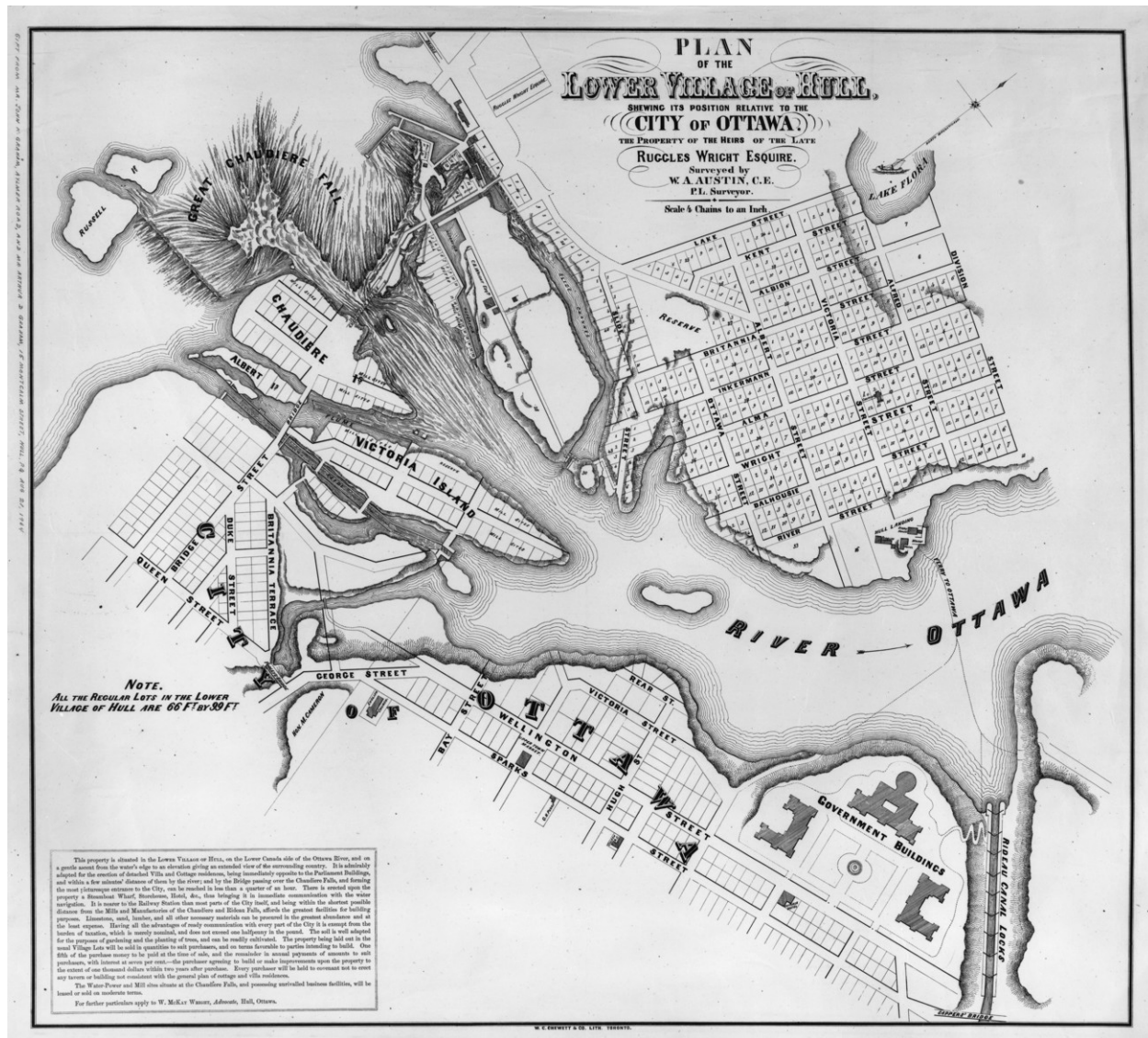
Figure 2.35 Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, From the Opposite Side of the Ottawa River



Source : Archives of Ontario. F 1077-9-1-253.
John Langton family fonds

to construct the Rideau Canal in 1826, seven years after the canalization of the Ottawa River between Montreal and Bytown had already begun. The Rideau Canal would link Bytown to Lake Ontario at Kingston. Together with the Ottawa River canals it would provide a safe route for shipping of all kinds between Montreal and Lake Ontario to avoid the International Rapids section of the Upper St. Lawrence, open to the Americans on the opposite shore.

Figure 2.37 Plan of the Lower Village of Hull, 1882



Source : W.A. Austin, W.C. Chewett and Co., Ruggles Wright Library and Archives Canada/NMC 20966

The capital region, comprised of the municipalities of Ottawa and Gatineau, is home to three rivers and a canal. The site brings together the mighty Ottawa and the romantic Gatineau with the now designated Canadian Heritage River, the Rideau, as well as with the Rideau Canal, poised to be declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

Until Colonel By arrived to put this strategic junction on the map, it had been developing as a vigorous agricultural community begun by Philemon Wright around 1800. Wright had settled on the north shore of the Ottawa River near the Chaudiere Falls. He soon found that he was surrounded by saleable trees - white and red pine - for which Napoleon's blockade of Scandinavian timber bound for Britain had created a huge demand. By 1808 Wright was floating rafts of squared logs down the Ottawa, into the St. Lawrence at Montreal, and then on to Quebec City. The timber trade had begun, and for the next century log rafts were a constant presence on the Ottawa. But around 1850 the traffic began to change. The

development of steel had made the circular saw capable of ripping those giant logs into lumber. As the demand for logs diminished and the demand for lumber increased, the market began to shift from Britain to the United States. Unlike logs, lumber couldn't be cribbed and floated, but had to be shipped dry, in those days either in boats or railway cars.

Across the river from the eponymous Wrightsville (later Hull, and still later Gatineau) there wasn't much. Braddish Billings arrived in 1812 and a few other scattered settlers struggled. That isolation changed with canal construction and the influx of Scottish masons, English engineers, Irish and Quebecois laborers and American navvies. The Ottawa and Rideau Canals opened in the early 1830s. Canalization of the St. Lawrence was complete in 1850. For the previous eighteen years Bytown had been the fulcrum in a thriving traffic rotation that saw ocean vessels offloaded (both freight and immigrant passengers) in Montreal, onto the smaller canal boats, then up the Ottawa River, into the Rideau system at Bytown, then down to the entrance to the Great Lakes at Kingston. There their cargo was transferred to larger lakers, and the boats were then reloaded with goods from the Great Lakes and sent downstream to shoot the (Long Sault) Rapids on the St. Lawrence back to Montreal to complete the triangle...and then to do it all over again. The Lachine and Welland Canals were already there to welcome them at both ends.

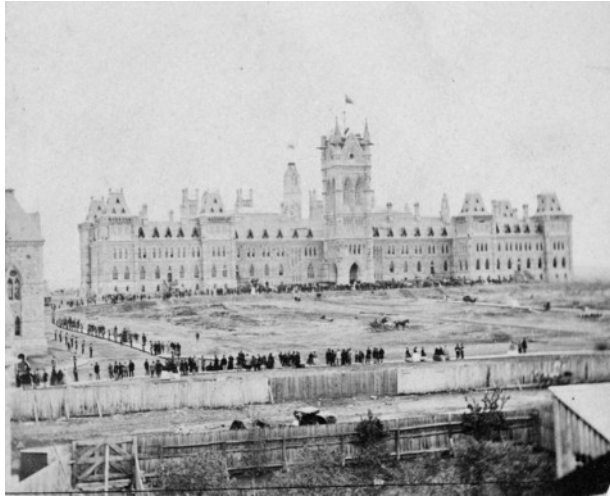
Figure 2.38 Ottawa City, Canada West (UpperTown), 1855



This shipping activity in Ottawa came to an abrupt end in 1850 when the St. Lawrence Canals were completed and ocean ships could go straight through to the Great Lakes. Ottawa was no longer on the route. At the same time, other developments resulted in an explosion of activity, as the islands of the Chaudiere were about to become the biggest sawn lumber location in the world. American entrepreneurs like Bronson and Eddy were moving in and setting up their sawmills. By 1855 the Bytown and Prescott

Railway was in place, moving their lumber to the St. Lawrence. Lumber was then taken by boat across that river to connect with U.S. lines, or by boat downstream to Sorel, where it entered the Richelieu River via the Chambly Canal and continued on to Lake Champlain and so into the Erie Canal system. The very

Figure 2.39 Opening of the Parliament Buildings, June 8, 1866



Source : Library and Archives Canada/PA-120586

first railroad in Canada had been built in 1836 in order to vastly shorten this distance. It ran from Laprairie, on the south shore of the St. Lawrence at Montreal, to Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu.

These developments meant increased activity and population for Bytown — no longer a village but a town — but chafing now under its undignified and belittling appellation. So humble Bytown became ambitious Ottawa in 1855. This era saw the arrival of railroads, a navigable Ottawa River, a seemingly inexhaustible hinterland of wealth-producing forest, a free-trade treaty with the United States, the adoption of the dollar as the official currency, and the arrival of standardized time. Soon, on December 31, 1857, Ottawa was declared the

Figure 2.40 Bird's Eye View of the City of Ottawa, 1876



Source : Herman Shober Brosius, Library and Archives Canada/NMC 21082

capital of the United Province of Canada– the greatest political garland of all.

That promotion over Toronto, Kingston, Montreal and Quebec was the start of a new influx of people who were highly educated with standards of architecture, dress, consumption and behavior unknown to the raftsmen, Shiners and unassuming tradesmen and merchants of rowdy Bytown. Barrack Hill, that had once housed Colonel By's military units and a hospital, became the site of the new Parliament Buildings. Government penury stalled the construction of the Parliament Buildings for a few years, but they opened in all their glory for the last session of the parliament of the Province of Canada in 1866.

Depression came and went during the rest of the century, but the forest products trade flourished. J.R. Booth arrived from the Eastern Townships to become the world's leading sawyer. He built a railway to move his logs from Georgian Bay to Ottawa, to be ripped and moved on as lumber to Coteau Landing on the St. Lawrence, where there were many entries to the United States market.

This sawing took place at the Chaudiere, central to the economy of the whole region. The logs passed through a series of chutes. The might of the falls was converted into electricity on both sides of the river by the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario. Mills were built, the lumber piles grew, and matches were made. One of those matches probably started the fire - the "Great" one - that destroyed most of Hull in 1900, where it began, and much of Ottawa, by jumping from lumber pile to lumber pile across the islands of the Chaudiere. That was the first demolition of Lebreton Flats. Over ten years, J.R. Booth was the victim of three vicious fires, but he still ended up leaving millions when he died in 1925 at age ninety-eight.

The excitement of Ottawa's first century of intense self-discovery cannot be matched by the one that followed. Still, a lot happened. There were two world wars, the formation by the federal government of a series of commissions (Ottawa Improvement Commission, Federal District Commission and National Capital Commission) designed to make Canadians feel proud of their capital, and the arrival of the electronic revolution, giving Ottawa another surge of energy and activity. Finally, in 2001, the amalgamation of the surrounding area created a new City of Ottawa, about ten times the size of the 60,000 it contained a century earlier.

The Grand River had delivered its richest prize.

2.6.7 Settlement of the Upper Ottawa River Valley

The majority of settlers remained on the lower sections of the river. This tendency is reflected in present demographics, with smaller populations along the Upper Ottawa Valley. The source of the Ottawa is located in a wilderness area that remains sparsely settled even today, with only a few small villages, fishing cabins and former logging camps.

The earliest settler on the Upper Ottawa was Joseph Mondion who established a farm in 1786 on Pontiac Bay. In 1818, Charles Shirreff and his sons settled on a land grant at "The Chats", later Fitzroy Harbour (Kennedy 14). In the decades that followed, Shirreff and his sons undertook some early surveying and exploration to promote the idea of a ship canal to Lake Huron. In 1837, renowned land geographer David Thompson took up the cause and surveyed the Muskrat Lake region (Kennedy 24, 130).

Other than widely separated individual frontier farms supplying lumber camps, in the 1820s the settlers furthest up the river included a few settlers in Horton Township, and a very isolated group of settlers on

the north side of Lac des Chats in Clarendon Township. Pembroke began in 1828 when Peter White set up his lumbering headquarters at the mouth of the Muskrat River (Kennedy 25). During his trip along the Ottawa River in 1837, provincial surveyor William Hawkins observed some “scattered settlements along the Ottawa as far north as the Deep River” (Finnegan 219). In 1847, surveyors arrived in the Fort William area, noting “extensive Canadian, Irish and Scotch Settlements” (qtd. in Kennedy 96). In 1857, Robert Hamilton’s surveys of the Rolph and Buchanan townships showed that the population was still sparse, with only fourteen households along the shore of the Ottawa River in Buchanan Township (Kennedy 220).

Chief Trader Robert Hamilton found settlers already on Lake Temiskaming in 1865 (Mitchell 220). Most had initially come for the lumber trade and had turned their attentions to farming and trading furs when their lumber efforts failed (Mitchell 221). Transport of supplies up from Mattawa was challenging. Organized settlement of the lake came about through the Oblates’ ‘Old Mission’ (1863) and small farms. Later, they expanded their farming operations on the Quebec side of the lake at Baie des Pères. The extension of the Canadian Pacific Railway to Mattawa after 1880 attracted more settlers. Oblate Father Paradis in 1882 made an assessment of the lake for its farming potential and dreamt of flooding the rapids below the lake to improve access (Mitchell 225). The Bishops of Ottawa and Pontiac formed the *Colonization Society of Timiskaming* to settle the lake’s northern stretches, promoting a series of roads with horse-drawn tramways linked with steam service to facilitate access to the area (Mitchell 226).

Mining led to the development of some towns near Lake Temiskaming. Cobalt’s silver mining sites drew 12,000 people to serve 100 mines in the early 1900s; an opera house and stock exchange were built to serve the population. The communities of New Liskeard and Haileybury at the northern tip of Lake Temiskaming serve a pocket of rich agricultural land known as the “Little Claybelt”. The beef and dairy farms of northern Temiskaming are exceptional in this region dominated by mining and forestry (Great Canadian Rivers website). Indeed, during the Depression, some settlers from the Outaouais moved to the Témiscamingue and Abitibi regions of Quebec to farm or mine (Gaffield 337).

2.6.8 The Culture and Diversity of the Settlers

Three main cultural groups were drawn to the Ottawa Valley in the early 1800s – the Scots, French Canadians and the Irish. Other groups settled later in the Ottawa Valley, including French Presbyterians, Belgians, Swiss, Italians, Germans, Poles, and United Empire Loyalists. Most of these smaller groups remained relatively distinct, settling together, retaining their own language, and often establishing their own churches.

The Irish were the single largest European group in Upper Canada for most of the 19th century (Akeson 9). Waves of immigration to Upper Canada in the early 1800s brought Irish Protestant farmers and landless tenants from the counties of Cork, Tipperary, Wicklow, Tyrone, Cavan and Fermanagh. The first Irish families in the Ottawa Valley were attracted by opportunities of canal building, agriculture and lumbering, and included names such as Ryan, Murphy, Muldoon, O’Brien, O’Grady, O’Hara, Boyle, Fitzgerald and Callaghan. After participating in the backbreaking work of building the Rideau Canal, many stayed on as farmers.

By the mid-19th century, more than half of the settlers on the Ontario side were of Irish origin. Waves of immigration continued to bring mostly Catholic Irish. In Carleton County, Ontario and Pontiac County on the Quebec side, seventy-five per cent of residents were of Irish origin. The Ottawa Valley’s patterns of

Irish immigration shaped the history of communities such as Carp, Renfrew and Fitzroy Harbour (Ontario), and Shawville, Bristol and Quyon (Quebec).

A British government plan to alleviate Irish poverty led to the immigration of almost 500 Irish to the Bathurst District of the Ottawa Valley. Known as the Peter Robinson settlers after the member of the Upper Canada Assembly who organized their immigration, the immigrants came across in 1823 in the *Hebe* and the *Stakesby*, settling on farms in Lanark and Carleton County. Most hailed from Cork County in Ireland. A government grant including the transatlantic fare, land, shelter, tools and food for the first several months helped them establish themselves. Names such as Phelan, Quinn, Sweeny, Barry, Hennessy, Keefe and Noonan date from this wave of immigration (Great Canadian Rivers). With the help of Chief Archibald McNab in 1823, a group of Scottish Highlanders arrived to the Upper Ottawa Valley, and were granted land near Arnprior, McNab Township, and around the Madawaska River (Kennedy 109-110).

Figure 2.41 Lumbermen Enjoying Making Music With a Fiddle and Sticks in a Logging Camp, ca. 1943, Gatineau, Quebec



Source: e000762887/National Film Board of Canada. Phototheque Collection/Library and Archives Canada.

When Irish immigration ceased around the 1880s, Ottawa Valley Irish culture started to become distinctive. With no more contact with Ireland, it merged somewhat with French Canadian and other settler cultures. This led to a distinctive Ottawa Valley style of step-dancing, fiddling and song (Rivers Inc.: Ottawa River Culture). Various distinct dialects have been identified in the Ottawa Valley.

In the Outaouais, Irish immigration predominated for the first half of the 19th century. The second half of the 19th century saw fewer Irish and the growth of the existing French Canadian population. A majority of Irish populated the west part of the Outaouais, whereas the east Outaouais was mostly French Canadian (Gaffield 113). Difficulty acquiring land in the Outaouais meant that a significant number of French-Canadian labourers crossed the river to pursue their ambition in developing townships of eastern Ontario. By 1871, French Canadians were in the majority in places

like Prescott (Gaffield 199). Today's town of Hawkesbury is considered the most bilingual in North America with 90% of its population speaking both French and English (Friends of the Macdonell-Williamson House 12).

Through the leader and associates system, hundreds of Scottish immigrants arrived and took up land in eastern Upper Canada. Some resettled to a rural settlement east of Hull in Templeton, Lochaber and Grenville townships, where Gaelic and bagpipes were soon heard (Gaffield 127). Scottish immigrants named and settled Arnprior (Kennedy 164), and settled the Lower Bonnechere, a tributary of the Ottawa (Kennedy 190). Skilled Scottish weavers formed the community of Lachute in 1803-1805 (Legget 1975: 180).

In the mid-19th century, two distinct German settlements were established near Shawville and in the lower Lièvre River valley. German Lutheran pioneers first settled near Petawawa around the same time (Kennedy 201). By the 1880s, at Namur and Angers, a francophone Protestant group of European origin was established (Gaffield 114). Polish and German immigrants came up the Ottawa and settled around Wilno along the Opeongo Road in the mid to late 19th century (Legget 1975: 207).

A small group of American settlers hailed from New England, the best known of whom was Philemon Wright. Leaving behind congested land, they were hopeful about the potential of the frontier (Gaffield 124). Tiny pockets of Ottawa Valley residents can trace their origins to United Empire Loyalists arriving to the Petite-Nation seigneurie and Prescott-Russell, including Hawkesbury.

Settlers shared some common attributes. Family was the strongest unit, and parents often worked with their grown children on farms and in lumber shanties. The Ottawa Valley culture was primarily made up of labouring men, since many came as single settlers hoping to make enough money to marry and raise a family, leading to the “culture of masculinity” mentioned previously. The settlers imported the *shivaree* from Europe, a rough justice to punish socially unacceptable behaviour. For instance, an older man marrying one of the few eligible young women merited the public humiliation of the *shivaree*. Offenders could be covered with oil and feathers and taken for a rough ride on a pole.

Despite the predominant “culture of masculinity”, women played an active role in the settlement of the Ottawa River valley. During the fur trade era, a few women were reported at some of the forts (Gaffield 100-101). Philemon Wright’s wife Abigail kept her husband informed about his enterprises while he was in Quebec City on business trips. Letters written from Abigail to Philemon Wright survived and became a source of information about life in the area. Other women sometimes took over businesses when their husbands died, occasionally running or working in a tavern (Gaffield 134). Women helped on the family farms and they and their older children often worked in sawmills. By 1865, the majority of teachers in the Outaouais region were women (Gaffield 236).

The Church played a role in the settlement of the Ottawa Valley with many priests and ministers reaching their communities by snowshoe or canoe. It was hoped that schools would also help to civilize the population, and the first teachers arrived in the 1820s. For many years, attendance was sparse since children were often needed on the family farm and sometimes had to travel long distances to school.

2.6.9 Recent Settlement Along the Ottawa River

Later economic diversification led to a more contemporary phase of settlement. By the 1870s, places such as Buckingham and Hull were mining phosphates and mica (Gaffield 189). As settlers in the Upper Ottawa Valley observed the lumber activities moving further away from their homesteads, eliminating the possibility of selling their crops to the camps, they turned to mining as a source of additional income from the 1880s to around 1920 (Kennedy 174).

In 1944, construction began east of Chalk River on a secret atomic energy research project (Kennedy 209). The project led to the creation of Deep River in the late 1940s and 1950s, the Ottawa River valley’s most recently established town. Deep River mostly consists of scientists serving the nuclear reactor and is said to have ‘more PhD’s per acre than anywhere else in Canada’ (Finnegan 218).

By the 1930s, active settlement of rural areas along the Ottawa River came to an end, and urbanization had begun (Gaffield 245-7). In the Outaouais region, most of the urban population concentrated near the Ottawa River between Aylmer and Thurso, to municipalities where major industries such as the chemical and forest industries had been established (Gaffield 249).

The initial cultural make-up of the settlers shifted somewhat during the first part of the 20th century. In the Outaouais region, the French Canadian population continued to grow, and areas like Papineau County became progressively more French speaking. Other regions retained their initial origins; for example, Pontiac County with its ties to Pembroke in Ontario continued to be mostly English speaking. German settlers continued to predominate in certain towns such as Derry-Mulgrave (Gaffield 342-344). Overall, Catholics were in the majority, although a significant Protestant population and a small but active Baptist Church also existed (Gaffield 344).

Petawawa Canadian Forces Base Turns 100 in 2005

Initially settled to serve lumbermen and a German farming settlement, Petawawa saw its population increase with the establishment of the military camp beginning in 1905 (Kennedy 205). The base took its name from the Petawawa River, a tributary of the Ottawa River, and an early French explorers' trail passed through this area. In 1904 the Department of Militia and Defence purchase properties from these settlers totalling 22,430 acres.

Figure 2.42 Petawawa Point – Early Settlement



Source : Ottawa River Legacy Landmark Network

The first military aircraft flight in Canada took place at Camp Petawawa in 1909 with the aircraft named the "Silver Dart". Petawawa was used as an internment camp for European prisoners during World War I and II, and World War II saw tens of thousands of troops training on the Base. The Base became a permanent camp in 1951, bringing more regular units, married quarters and schools. In the 1970s, the Special Service Force was established, serving operations in Canada and overseas. Currently, around 5000 people live and work at CFB Petawawa (National Defence: History of CFB Petawawa).

In the second half of the 20th century, old centres such as Hull grew dramatically as the Outaouais region became more urbanized (Gaffield 441-442). As elsewhere in Canada, new patterns of immigration emerged during the late 1980s. Portuguese immigrants arrived first and settled in Hull. They were followed by Lebanese and Vietnamese immigrants who settled in the Outaouais, reinforcing its francophone character (Gaffield 443).

Highways and bridge improvements are still being tabled in the Ottawa-Hull region (Gaffield 445). In 1969, Hull became part of the nation's capital (Gaffield 459). Today's Outaouais region is highly urbanized, with government and service as major industries. Pulp and paper and other wood processing remain important. The high tech sector expanded in Aylmer in the 1970s and 1980s (Gaffield 503).

2.6.10 Sites Related to Settlement

Please refer to Chapter 4: Recreational Values for a list of historic sites, museums and heritage houses relating to settlement along the river.

Summary

The Ottawa Waterway attracted thousands of European immigrants. Developments in river-based transportation determined the pace of settlement and brought settlers further upriver. Descendents of Irish, French Canadian, Scottish and other nationalities produced a unique Ottawa Valley culture that is expressed in the region's language, music and dance.

The settlement of the Ottawa River valley brought great changes and upheavals to its cultural and natural landscape. Trade, industry, conflict and external politics have shaped this settlement, leaving indelible marks on the river and valley environment. Clearing land for farms and cutting forest for lumber radically transformed the landscape of the valley, sustaining European settlers, displacing Algonquin communities, and fuelling regional development.