

4.8 Human Heritage Appreciation

The extraordinary history and human heritage of the Ottawa River is a source of pride for numerous communities along its shores. These are reflected in the many special events, festivals, museums, plaques and other interpretive structures that exist along the length of the river. The Ottawa River flows through the Nation's Capital, right by the Parliament Buildings, with sites and museums of national importance. Along the entire stretch of the river there are opportunities for human heritage appreciation related to the main heritage themes of the river. This section highlights a number of popular human heritage sites, focusing on museums and events along the river.

Cultural heritage tourism is growing worldwide, and is seen by the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation as a significant opportunity for Ontario's rural and northern communities to increase their economic vitality (Professional Edge 3). The Outaouais region is Quebec's third most popular tourism destination, although marketing of this region places a greater emphasis on natural heritage. Ottawa draws more than 5 million visitors annually, of which currently only 20 to 25% cross the Ottawa River to visit the Canadian Museum of Civilization and Gatineau Park (Ville de Gatineau: "Planification").

Figure 4.16 Looking Up the Ottawa From the Parliament Grounds



Source: Picturessque Canada

4.8.1 Cultural Heritage Routes

Cultural heritage routes have been developed on both sides of the river. Thematic visits and driving loops have been developed by tourism associations such as Tourisme Outaouais and the Ottawa Valley Tourism Association. Examples of cultural heritage routes with accompanying interpretation include the following:

- **Ottawa River Living Legacy Kiosks:** A series of 12 interpretive kiosks have been placed along the length of the Ottawa River to recognize its history and unique ecology, as part of *Ontario's Living Legacy* Landmarks program. The kiosks describe the historic and natural heritage values of the Ottawa River and point out opportunities for recreation. The program was designed to protect and promote the unique heritage of the Ottawa River while enhancing opportunities for tourism and recreation. The Ottawa River kiosks are located in Voyageur Provincial Park at Chute-a-Blondeau, Hawkesbury, Atocas Bay, Westboro Beach, Fitzroy Provincial Park at Fitzroy Harbour, Arnprior, Pembroke, Petawawa, Deep River, Mattawa, Haileybury, and New Liskeard (OMNR: "Eves Government").
- **Quebec Heritage Trails:** Bilingual interpretive driving tours with pamphlets and web-based information have been developed by the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network. The Outaouais Pontiac Heritage Trail takes visitors from Deschênes Rapids to Fort Coulonge, noting the history

and significant heritage sites at each. The Vaudreuil Hudson Heritage Trail takes visitors by the Ottawa River, beginning at the Lake of Two Mountains and following the south shore of the Ottawa River until Choisy, west of Altonvale. The Abitibi-Témiscamingue Heritage Trail follows the Ottawa River from the town of Témiscaming up through Ville-Marie; it then explores Rouyn-Noranda and Val d'Or. Finally, the Bas Gatineau Heritage Trail covers this important tributary to where it joins the Ottawa River (QAHN).

- **Talking Up the Ottawa Driving Tour:** A heritage tour by car of the Lower Ottawa River called "Talking Up the Ottawa" was developed by *Rideau Watch*, an organization that no longer exists. The tapes accompany drivers on a loop through the Quebec and Ontario sides of the Lower Ottawa River between Montreal and Ottawa, and make use of the ferry crossings. The layered history of riverside landmarks is explored in detail, and visible traces in the landscape are indicated. The tapes now have limited availability but can be found in public libraries.
- **Circuit Champlain en Nouvelle-France:** This driving tour follows Samuel de Champlain's extensive travels in Ontario and Quebec, taking visitors to important francophone sites and landscapes. The Ottawa River is part of this driving tour.

4.8.2 Museums and Cultural Centres

There are numerous museums and cultural centres of note along the Ottawa Valley, many of which focus on the history and cultural heritage of the river valley. This section will describe a few outstanding examples in detail. Several of Canada's national museums are concentrated in the National Capital region. The Ottawa River is home to at least 8 national historic sites linked to the exceptional history of the river. Numerous pioneer villages, community museums, and historic houses offer opportunities for visitors and residents for local heritage appreciation.

National Museums and Historic Sites

- The **Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site** links Lake Saint-Louis and the Lake of Two Mountains, at the mouth of the Ottawa River. The canal, built in 1843 for commercial purposes, was an integral part of the Montreal-Ottawa-Kingston shipping route.
- **Carillon Canal National Historic Site** is located between the Carillon generating station and the Dollard-des-Ormeaux Park. It gives access to the current Carillon canal and the remains previous canals.
- The **Carillon Barracks National Historic Site** houses the Museum of the Argenteuil County Historical Society in the original buildings of the canal superintendant and the toll collector, as well as the historic British military barracks. An interpretation centre at the Carillon hydroelectric generating station is open to the public. In 1995, there were 45,000 visitors to the site (Hydro Québec: Bassin inférieur 5-1).
- Located on the shores of the Ottawa River in Gatineau, the **Canadian Museum of Civilization** tells the story of Canada's past, as well as housing several exhibitions related to the heritage of Canada's Aboriginal Peoples.

- Located across the river in Ottawa, the **Laurier House National Historic Site** was the home of two Canadian Prime Ministers, Sir Wilfred Laurier and William Lyon Mackenzie King.
- The **Billings Estate Museum and National Historic Site** is a local Ottawa history museum built in 1829 by Braddish Billings. It is Ottawa's oldest wood-framed house. The museum interprets Ottawa's history and heritage (City of Ottawa: "Billings Estate Museum").
- The **Rideau Canal National Historic Site** enters the Ottawa River at Ottawa. The Rideau Waterway is also a Canadian Heritage River, and the Rideau Canal is included on Parks Canada's list of the top 11 sites that will be nominated for UNESCO World Heritage Status (Friends of the Rideau).
- The **Manoir Papineau National Historic Site** is located in Montebello and commemorates Louis-Joseph Papineau, his manor house and the domain of Montebello.
- **Fort Témiscamingue National Historic Site** commemorates the role played by this trading post over nearly 200 years. Built between 1679 and 1685, this was the largest trading post on the Ottawa built under the French. Run by Parks Canada, the Historic Site interprets the long First Nations presence in the region, and the fur trade merchants and monopolies (Tourisme Québec: "Fort Témiscamingue").

Figure 4.17 Manoir Papineau National Historic Site



Source: Parks Canada

In addition, numerous historic plaques commemorating national historic sites, events and people can be visited along the Ottawa River, with many more in Ottawa itself (see Appendix C for a list of federal plaques). The Ontario Heritage Foundation has placed a number of provincial plaques along the river that directly relate to the human heritage themes identified in this Background Study (see Appendix D for a list of provincial plaques).

Regional Museums and Interpretation Centres

There are several community museums along the river, with displays that relate to one or more of the major themes of Ottawa River history, including fur-trading, logging, hydroelectricity development and settlement. The following is not an exhaustive list of museums along the river.

- Chez l'Ancien Agricultural Museum located in Casselman, Ontario, features 19th century agricultural equipment.
- The Centre d'interprétation du Patrimoine de Plaisance presents Plaisance in three different historical periods, and explores the forestry industry in the Outaouais region.
- Musée des Pionniers, Saint-André-Avellin, Quebec, houses artefacts linked to 19th century pioneers of the area.
- The Bytown Museum, located on the Rideau Canal in downtown Ottawa in a historic building, focuses on the history of Ottawa, including the logging industry.

- The Musée de l'Auberge Symmes, a regional history museum in Aylmer, Quebec, is located at the site of a former Ottawa River wharf and steamboat stopover.
- The Arnprior and District Museum houses items from Scottish Laird Archibald McNab, as well as the lumbering era.
- McDougall Mill Museum, Renfrew.
- The Waba Cottage Museum, at White Lake along the Madawaska River, tells the story of infamous Scottish settler Archibald McNab.
- Madonna House Pioneer Museum, Combermere.
- The Ross Township Museum, Foresters Falls, is a former pioneer home from the Muskrat Lake area that depicts life in the mid to late 1800s.
- The Bonnechere Museum, Eganville, interprets local history along this tributary as well as the forestry industry.
- The Coulonge Chutes nature and heritage site offers outdoor interpretation of the logging era.
- Polish Kashub Heritage Museum and Wilno Heritage Park, Wilno, Ontario.
- The Murray L. Moore Hydro Museum, Pembroke, is housed in the original diesel room of the Pembroke Electric Light Co. Ltd.
- The Pembroke Heritage Murals form an outdoor art gallery illustrating scenes from Pembroke's past, many of which relate directly to the Ottawa River, including the Timber Raft, the Steamboat, and the Pointer Boats.
- Canadian Forces Base Petawawa Military Museums.
- The Canadian Clock Museum, Deep River.
- The School House Museum in Rolphton explores the development of hydroelectric and nuclear power.
- The Voyageur Heritage Centre/Musée du Voyageur, Mattawa, Ontario, displays the fur-trading and voyageur era, complete with a fur-trader's birchbark canoe.
- The Algonquin Trading Post, Deacon, Golden Lake, is a craft store with interpretation of traditional objects.
- The Algonquin Culture and Heritage Centre, Pikwàkanagàn, Golden Lake, displays Algonquin traditions and history including birch bark canoes.
- The Northern Ontario Mining Museum, Cobalt.
- The Musée du Patrimoine de Haileybury explores local heritage and events.
- The Little Claybelt Homesteader's Museum commemorates the settlement of the northwest shore of Lake Temiskaming, including pioneer life and commerce.
- Latchford Logging Museum.

Figure 4.18 Pembroke Heritage Murals: The Timber Raft



Source: Adrienne Blattel

Heritage Houses

The Ottawa River's exceptional heritage houses are open to visitors and include the following:

- The **Macdonell-Williamson House** in East Hawkesbury is the historic home of 19th century fur trader John Macdonell. The house was used for milling, warehousing and freight-forwarding. Guided tours are available upon request (Maison Macdonell-Williamson House).
- **Pinhey's Point Historic Site**, located on the shores of the Ottawa River, is the former "Horaceville" estate of Hamnett Kirkes Pinhey, a British settler who became a leader in Upper Canadian Society. The 19th century stone house serves as a museum today (City of Ottawa: Pinhey's Point).
- **Maplelawn Estate and Gardens** is a classified national site and the second oldest stone building in Ottawa. Established in 1831 by a Scottish immigrant, it is one of the few known surviving early 19th century walled gardens in Canada.
- The **George Bryson Cultural House** is located near Fort Coulonge-Davidson in the Pontiac Region. Scottish farmer, lumber merchant and early pioneer, George Bryson Sr. built the house, which contains typical features of 19th century Scottish merchant houses in both Lower and Upper Canada. Buildings associated with the house are also open to the public, including a blacksmith's shop, ice room, stables, barns and depots. Exhibition rooms display key themes linked with the Ottawa River, including forestry, timber driving and fur trapping. In 1980, the Bryson House was declared a Historical Monument.
- La **Maison du Colon** is Ville-Marie's oldest house, and interprets the history of the settlement of the Quebec Témiscamingue region as well as the role of the Oblates in colonizing the area (Société de développement du Témiscamingue: "Maison du Colon").

Figure 4.19 Maplelawn Estate and Gardens



Source: Ottawa River Legacy Landmark Network

Re-Created Villages

Pioneer and demonstration villages along the Ottawa River include the following:

- The **Cumberland Heritage Village Museum** explores village and rural life in the Lower Ottawa Valley between 1890 and 1930, focusing on the changes brought about by industrialization. This pioneer village includes 27 buildings and a functioning sawmill (Destination Ontario: "Cumberland Heritage Village Museum").
- The **Champlain Trail Museum and Pioneer Village**, located in Pembroke, Ontario, showcases Ottawa Valley history with interpretive displays, a 19th century log home, a schoolhouse, church and other heritage buildings. The museum is noted for its collection of lumber-related artefacts (Ottawa Valley Guide: "Pembroke Museum").
- The **Village of Douglas**, Ontario, is an entirely Irish-themed village.
- The **T.E. Draper**, the biggest steamtug on the Lac des Quinze, can be visited in Angliers, Quebec. Just next-door is the **Chantier Gédéon**, a re-created logging camp from the 1930s and 40s.

4.8.3 Festivals and Events

Along the Ottawa River, many festivals and events highlight local culture and heritage. Others centre around sporting events and outdoor activities. The National Capital Region hosts several large-scale annual festivals, including the **Canadian Tulip Festival** in May and the **Ottawa International Jazz Festival**. The riverside MRCs on the Quebec side of the Lower Ottawa River are home to over 40 events – for the most part, local festivals (Hydro Québec: Bassin inférieur 5-1). The region of Abitibi-Témiscamingue hosts over 30 cultural and sporting events.

Festivals highlighting local culture revolve around regional food, craft, trades and traditions. Along the Lower Ottawa River, events include the **River Fest** (Festival de la rive), in Hawkesbury in late July, featuring fairgrounds, kayak demonstrations, regional and ethnic food sampling, and an outdoor craft exhibition (PRTA 43). **Agri-Tour** takes place in September in Prescott-Russell, during which non-traditional agribusinesses open their doors to the public for tastings and tours. **The Curd Festival**, in St-Albert, Prescott-Russell, is a popular wine and cheese tasting event hosted by the local St-Albert Cheese Factory cooperative in mid-August. The Cheese Factory produces the famous St-Albert cheddar using century-old traditions. **L'écho d'un peuple** – an annual, large-scale production covering four centuries of francophone history in North America and Ontario – is held in Casselman in the summer.

In the Ottawa Valley, waterfront festivals such as the **Pembroke Waterfront Festival** highlight local culture in the summertime. The **Canadian Polish/Kashub Festival** in Wilno in May focuses on the unique Polish community of Wilno. Barry's Bay hosts **Timberfest**, an event celebrating timbering heritage each February.

Along the river's upper stretches, the **Minopijawok-Wigwamada Festival** in Abitibi-Témiscamingue highlights Algonquin culture. The **Pikwakanagan Traditional Pow Wow** is held each August at Golden Lake. A **Lumberman Competition** takes place in mid-July in Ville-Marie, and in August the **Foire Gourmande de l'Abitibi** in Ville-Marie features regional products, tastings, meals, cooking, and workshops.

Canada Day Celebrations on the 1st of July take place in communities all along the river and are another opportunity to experience the flavour of each region. Many communities in Quebec celebrate the **Fête nationale du Québec** on June 24th. In winter, many communities on both sides of the river hold carnivals or winter festivals, the most popular of which is **Winterlude – Bal des neiges** – North America's biggest winter festival on the frozen Rideau Canal in Ottawa in February, featuring ice sculptures, skating, fireworks and other events. Various other winter carnivals take place in communities including Aylmer, Arnprior, Quadeville, Pembroke, Chalk River, Rankin, and Deep River.

Figure 4.20 Canadian Tulip Festival



Source: Ryan Pfeiffer

The Ottawa River is the site of several large music festivals, the best known of which is Fiddle Week, including the **Fiddling and Step-Dancing Championships** in Pembroke on Labour Day Weekend.

Figure 4.21 Gatineau's Hot-Air Balloon Festival



Source: René Binet

Additional music festivals include the **Franco-Ontarian Festival** in Ottawa in June, **Voyageur Days**, an annual summer music festival in Mattawa, the **Valley Bluegrass Festival** held in Renfrew in July, and the **Alfred Country Music Festival**, Ontario.

Festivals featuring the arts are also popular: an **International Film Festival** is the best-known event in Abitibi-Témiscamingue. The annual **Wilno Film and Video Festival** takes place in September. An **Annual Pontiac Artists' Studio Tour** takes place each June.

Numerous sporting and outdoor events offer additional opportunities for recreation. River and paddling festivals include the **Ottawa River Festival** (formerly the Ottawa River Rodeo) and **River Palooza** on the Rocher Fendu section. The **Festival d'eau vive de la Haute-Gatineau** takes place in Maniwaki each August. Fishing events are popular, such as the **Ontario Family Fishing Weekend** each July. The return of Canada Geese in spring is celebrated through **Le retour des Bernaches** in Plaisance Provincial Park each May.

Winter sporting events include the **Silver Spoon Ski-Fest** in Deep River, a cross-country ski event, Mount Pakenham's **Snowfest**, an amateur snowboarding competition, the **Keskinada Loppet** in Gatineau, a cross-country ski race, and an **Ice Fishing Derby** on the Ottawa River, Pembroke. All of these events occur in February.

Finally, the Upper Ottawa River is home to cycling events including **Rando-vélo**, **Le Tour de l'Abitibi**, **Vélo-Tour 48e Nord** and the **Raid des Conquérants** (Hydro Québec: Bassin supérieur 5-1).