

THE OTTAWA

Sheldon K. Rowe

The Ottawa's been a highway.
Five thousand years or more;
From Capi michi gama,
To the St. Lawrence river shore.

Natives from Lake Huron,
Traded along the way;
And paddles as far as Pembroke,
With copper in ancient days.

Many kingdoms rose and fell,
Before the first white man;
Landed here to seek and trade,
The bounties of this land.

The North-West Co; and the Bay;
Traded with Indian bands;
And fur was a commodity,
In very heavy demand.

They build their trading posts,
Along the river way;
From down in the lower valley,
And west of Hudson's Bay.

Hardy crew, with freighter canoes,
Followed the river road;
The natives and, the voyageurs,
Paddled and packed the loads.

On the other side of the ocean,
More ships were needed for war;
And the pine along the Ottawa,
Was what they were looking for.

The timber rafts, became the crafts,
To take it down the river;
All the way to Montreal,
There was no way, no better.

The steamboats plied the Ottawa,
In that same romantic age;
Till the automobile and railroad,
Took over the centre stage.

The ferry boats, refused to die,
A part of what used to be;
I hope they keep on trucking,
They're part of our history.

The great demand for hydro,
Some of the river has changed;
Thank God for one exciting part,
That still is much the same.

Where rafting down the rapids,
Has gained it world wide fame;
Where they ride the Rocher Fendu
A part that never was tamed!

Thank God for the Ottawa River,
Our heritage to claim;
A life line of the ages,
Praise and honour her name!