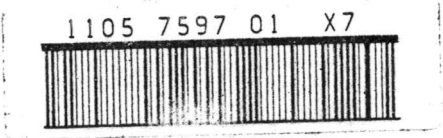




Hudson's Bay Company traders bringing furs and rolls of birchbark out to the Ottawa River from Lake Kipawa in 1902. (Photo by Charles Macnamara)



The Upper OTTAWA VALLEY

by
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"It is not so much a river in the English sense of the word, as a chain of lakes, or long sheets of quiet water, twenty, thirty and sixty miles in length each, connected by narrows and rapids, by which the river forces its way through high and rocky lands in a series of cascades and foaming currents," Bigsby observed.

After his descent of the Upper Ottawa in 1828, Joseph Bouchette, Surveyor General of Lower Canada, described the scenery below the Chaudiere Falls at Bytown (Ottawa from 1855) as "indeed tame, yet always pleasing." But he noted the fast water between the Chaudiere and the St. Lawrence: "The impetuous Long Sault, which commences at Grenville, is stemmed or descended but by voyageurs and raftsmen of experienced energy and skill. The river below it still continues, at intervals, rapid and unnavigable as far as Point Fortune, where it expands into the lake of the Two Mountains, and finally forms a junction with the St. Lawrence, below the cascades."

In its lower reaches the Ottawa flows through the St. Lawrence Lowland, a limestone plain which in the Valley area is extensively covered with clay laid down by the Champlain Sea. The dam for Hydro-Quebec's Carillon power station, which went into service in 1962, drowned the Long Sault rapids west of Pointe-Fortune (on the Ontario shore) and Carillon (on the Quebec shore). By these rapids 25-year-old Adam Dollard des Ormeaux was killed, along with most of his 16 young French companions and some Hurons and Algonquins in a heroic attempt to defend their fort against the Iroquois in May 1660.

The Algonquins of the Upper Ottawa Valley had long had contacts with European traders on the St. Lawrence River by the time Champlain came in 1608 to build a habitation at Quebec. But it was Champlain who ensured French influence over the Hurons, Algonquins and Montagnais; laid the foundations of an organized fur trade in Canada; and began permanent settlement that, after his death in 1635, was to eventually grow into a French colony rather than tiny outposts precariously struggling for existence in the face of growing Iroquois attacks as the French, Dutch and English disrupted the Indian balance of power with the fur trade.

From Georgian Bay the Huron canoe flotillas travelled north to the mouth of the French River, ascended the river to Lake Nipissing, crossed

Glass trade beads excavated at an Indian campsite in Renfrew County. Here they are grouped according to their horizontal position and their depth in a systematically conducted excavation. A flourishing industry for manufacturing glass trade beads was established in Venice in the early part of the fourteenth century. In his book ("Glass", London, 1907) Edward Dillon describes the manufacture of glass tubular beads in Venice as follows: "We start from a 'gathering' at the end of the blowing iron: this gathering is slightly inflated to form a hollow pear shaped vesicle, and a rod of iron is attached to the further extremity. This rod is seized by a boy who runs with it at full speed so as to elongate the glass as much as possible before it has time to cool; the thin tube, thus formed, may, it is said, be as much as 150 feet in length. This tube, broken into sections of convenient length are now sorted as to size by women and then cut into shorter lengths forming bugles or tubular beads."

