

L'Outaouais, before 1890

by

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LES PAYS DU QUEBEC

L'Outaouais, des origines à 1900

1. Le territoire

The physical geography of the Outaouais has two key characteristics: 1) an extensive system of rivers; 2) and land with generally poor soil (the Canadian Shield) covered by a vast and rich forest. Each of these characteristics has played important roles in the region's social and economic evolution.

i) Rivers: The main artery of the river system is the Ottawa River which is as important to the region as the St. Lawrence River is to the Montreal/Quebec City axis. The Outaouais is penetrated by a series of tributaries including the Lievre River, the Gatineau River, and the Dumoine River. The tributaries not only connect almost all corners of the region to the Ottawa River but they also lead to other parts of Quebec. For example, the Dumoine River connects the region to James Bay while the Gatineau River leads (by way of the St. Maurice river system) to Lac St-Jean. From the time of first human activity in the Outaouais until the twentieth century, these rivers provided the main means of transportation. One result was a north/south orientation of activity and perspective within the Outaouais; communication from east to west across the interior of the region has historically been problematic. At the same time, the east/west flow of the Ottawa River connects the Outaouais to the St. Lawrence Valley, and thus to the world beyond the Ottawa Valley. The Ottawa River-St. Lawrence link has meant that the region has never been

isolated; since the seventeenth century, its history has been closely related to international developments.

ii) Land: The Canadian Shield covers the region except for a strip of land extending approximately eight to ten kilometers north of the Ottawa River. The vast forest was composed of many varieties of soft and hard wood but was most known for red and especially white pine. The many animals of the forest were hunted from the time of first human occupation but the density of the woods contained most activity to the shores of the rivers or to the islands sprinkled along them. The generally poor quality soil of the Outaouais permitted only limited agricultural development. The most arable land is the lower-lying strip along the Ottawa River; this strip is widest in the Pontiac where agriculture has become well-developed. The physical geography of the Outaouais explains why non-agricultural activities have always been generally predominant, ranging from hunting and trading activities from at least 4,000 B.C. to the fur trade and forest economy established after the arrival of European-origin peoples.

The region's location and river system have meant that its territorial limits have never been well-defined other than in a purely official way. In fact, the name "Outaouais" has only been associated with the north shore of the Ottawa River in recent decades. Until the nineteenth-century, the Ottawa River connected the two sides of the Ottawa Valley; the north shore had no

distinct identity but rather was viewed in terms of the complete basin of the River. During the course of the nineteenth century, the Ottawa River took on the ambivalent role of both bridge and barrier. Social, economic, and political forces combined both to integrate and separate the two sides of the Ottawa Valley. The result was a changing variety of formal and informal definitions of the "region" as both part of and distinct from the neighboring territory to the south. At the same time, the east/west cohesion and boundaries of the Outaouais also changed dynamically in response to the changing historic forces. For example, the importance in the forest economy of the Chaudiere Falls at Hull led to the expressions "Upper Ottawa" (both sides of the Ottawa Valley above the Falls) and "Lower Ottawa" (both sides below the Falls) by the early decades of the nineteenth century.

Moreover, four sub-regions emerged within the Outaouais: the eastern corner associated with the seigneurie of Petite-Nation; the northern corner associated with Maniwaki; the western corner associated with Pontiac; and the central territory linked to the Gatineau-Hull-Aylmer axis. The geographic orientation of each of these sub-regions changed considerably over time. The eastern corner was pulled east by Montreal, and south by communities such as Hawkesbury and Kingston. The north has been pulled at various times not only toward the Ottawa River but also toward the St. Lawrence River by way of the Laurentian system. The western corner has at times been oriented south toward Pembroke as much

as east toward the rest of the Outaouais. Similarly, the central axis of Gatineau-Hull-Aylmer became intimately linked both to the developing society of Upper Canada/Ontario as well as to the growing St. Lawrence Valley. The relationships among these sub-regions thus became quite complex since their perspectives and priorities were at times quite different in keeping with their specific orientations.

The various components of the location and physical geography of the Outaouais are essential to understanding the history of the region. Over the years, historic forces have given a specific meaning to these components, and thereby have defined the Outaouais' identity as one of les pays du Québec.

2. La population et l'occupation du territoire

i. Prehistoric times:

The history of the Outaouais is usually recounted beginning with the early nineteenth-century arrival of Philemon Wright. However, the true origins of human activity in the region extend thousands of years back in time; in fact, archeological research has now uncovered evidence in the Outaouais of some of the earliest sites in Quebec of both settlement and passage.

Researchers have shown that the retreat of ice began to make human activity possible in the region no earlier than 10,000 B.C. They have found actual evidence of some activity before 4,000 B.C. and of a continuous human presence after this date. This

presence appears to have touched many parts of the Outaouais especially along the shores of the river system from the area near present-day Papineauville to major sites on Ile des Allumettes and Ile Morrison. By 2,000 B.C., the prehistoric human activity in the region was part of a far-reaching commercial network extending across the much of the northeastern North American continent. In these years, the society of prehistoric hunters and gatherers became increasingly complex and came to include considerable artisanal work such as pottery after 2,000 B.C.

Many of the patterns of trading and seasonal migration established in prehistoric times were still evident by the time Samuel de Champlain travelled up the Ottawa River in 1615. In the previous centuries, Algonquin tribes had established themselves throughout the region, and had even established some rudimentary farming activity on Ile Morrison. By the early seventeenth century, about 2,000-3,000 individuals were present in the Outaouais at various times during the year.

ii) From the "la grande rivière des Algonquins" to "la rivière des Outaouais":

An appreciation of the complex human activities from the time the region first became inhabitable provides the appropriate context for understanding the meaning of Champlain's famous trip. Once considered a "discoverer" (guided by scientific instruments such as astrolabes), Champlain is now understood to have been led

by Amerindians along rivers and through territory known to them for generations. Moreover, the interest of both the French and the Algonquins in establishing commercial ties is not surprising given the previous trading patterns of both societies.

With the development of the fur trade in the early seventeenth century, the Outaouais' use as a lieu de passage (connecting Quebec city to the interior of the continent) became crucial in the history of New France. Indeed, the region became the crossroads of French and Amerindian activity. The Outaouais evolved "entre deux mondes," at the intersection of two vastly different and often competing influences.

For several decades, the Algonquins were able to use the strategically-located Ile Morrison to their own advantage in the fur trade by controlling travel along what the French called "la grande riviere des Algonquins." During this period, the islands of Morrison and des Alumettes were the most important places in the Outaouais; the destiny of the rest of the region was dependent on them.

Beginning in the late 1630s, however, the Algonquins suffered a series of epidemics (resulting from contact with the French), and then they suffered military defeats at the hands of the Iroquois (armed with guns obtained from the Dutch). By 1650, the Algonquin presence in the region had been greatly reduced, and they had lost their key role in the fur trade. The Iroquois did not stay in the Outaouais after their victories although they continued to be involved in sporadic conflicts, most notably at

Long Sault in 1660 where Dollard des Ormeaux was massacred. After peace with the Iroquois was achieved in 1701, some Algonquins began returning to their ancestral lands in the Outaouais.¹

Almost immediately after the devastation of the Algonquins, their role in the fur economy was taken up by the Ottawas who traded with the French from their bases near Lake Huron and Manitoulin Island. In keeping with this transition, the French began using the name "la rivière des Outaouais." In these years, French colonial policy prohibited settlement beyond the St. Lawrence valley for military and economic reasons (the seigneurie of Petite-Nation was officially created in 1674 but was not settled until the early nineteenth century). The French presence in the Outaouais was limited to the construction of fur trade posts with the result that the human landscape of the region only changed slowly in the following years including the initial period after the Conquest. The Outaouais approached the nineteenth century much as it had entered the eighteenth century.

iii) The arrival of White settlers:

Townships were created throughout the Outaouais and government officials began encouraging settlement by facilitating access to the land. Similarly, settlement in the seigneurie of Petite-Nation followed its acquisition by Joseph Papineau who became aware of the seigneurie through his work as a notary in Quebec city.

The established pattern of limited occupation and fur trade activity was first broken in the Outaouais by the arrival of individuals and families from Massachusetts under the leadership of Philemon Wright. Viewed in the context of the region and the history of New France, this arrival seems quite astonishing especially since the Wright group were not part of the Loyalist and late-Loyalist migrations to the north. English-speaking Protestants with no background in either the fur trade or frontier conditions appear to be very unlikely immigrants to the Outaouais at the start of the nineteenth century. No wonder that those Amerindians still in the region witnessed the trek of the Wright group up the Ottawa River with a mixture of amazement, politeness, and apprehension.

Viewed in a larger North-American context, however, it is clear that the arrival of the Wright family and the others was simply part of the great east-to-west expansion of settlement across the continent. Pushed by economic and demographic pressures and pulled by the prospect of plentiful land, the Wrights were among the first of millions of migrants who established new communities west of the older settlements near the Atlantic coast. In the case of the Outaouais, these migrants first came from the United States but they were soon followed by those from overseas as well as from neighboring areas in British North America. By the mid-nineteenth century, settlers of English, Irish, Scottish, and French-origin were all well-established in the region.

The familiar image of nineteenth-century settlement in the Outaouais emphasizes the arrival of famous men such as Wright. However, recent research has shown that most individuals came as part of family and kinship groups. Wright, himself, arrived with his wife Abigail and six children as well as with the families of three other relatives. Such families and kinship groups provided a context within which the challenge of settlement could be met through the combined effort of men, women, and children. In this sense, for example, Abigail Wright merits as much historic attention as her husband.

The pattern of family and kin group settlement helps explain why certain areas of the Outaouais came to be associated with settlers from certain backgrounds. In addition to Wright's American settlement near the Chaudiere Falls, Scottish Highlanders migrated to the townships of Templeton, Lochaber, and Grenville in the opening years of the century while French Canadians began settling the seigneurie of Petite-Nation, now in the hands of the Papineau family. Other families and kinship groups continued to arrive in increasing numbers, and the emerging communities of the Outaouais soon became part of a regional mosaic of religious and linguistic groups. As the density of settlement increased, most communities became more heterogeneous although the dominant languages and religions of the four sub-regions reflected their somewhat distinct histories. The eastern part of the Outaouais was predominantly French Canadian, and the western townships were more Irish. This east-

west pattern of settlement was repeated within the Gatineau-Hull-Aylmer axis while the Amerindian presence in the region was strongest in the north (and confirmed by the creation of the Maniwaki reserve in the mid-nineteenth century).

In addition to the significant American, Irish, Scottish, English, and French-Canadian settlements in the region, the arrival of other groups added to the ethnic diversity of certain communities. Two distinct German settlements were established during the mid-nineteenth century near Shawville at Ladysmith-Schwartz and in the lower Lievre at Bowman and Mulgrave. By the 1880s, a European-origin francophone protestant group was established at Namur and Angers.

The major pattern in the evolution of settlement during the nineteenth century involved the increasing importance of French-Canadian settlement in the region. Particularly after mid-century, French Canadians became the majority in many of the previously British-origin communities. The process was characterized by movement from east to west across the region of French-Canadian numerical importance. While French Canadians were in the majority in the eastern sub-region of the Outaouais from the early decades of the nineteenth century, they became a majority in the central sub-region by the end of the century as they would by 1940 in Pontiac.

The increasing importance of French-Canadian settlement in the region resulted from two trends: the general lack of growth (and, in certain communities, the decline) of the British-origin

population as a result of very limited additional immigration; and a contrasting increase of French-Canadian immigration. After the mid-nineteenth century, the vast majority of new settlers in the Outaouais were French Canadian.

iv) Town and country in the emerging urban system:

During the course of the nineteenth century, settlement in the Outaouais slowly extended north of the Ottawa River and then back from the shores of the tributaries. The region became dotted with settlements, each connected to the larger communities near the Ottawa River including Montebello, Papineauville, Plaisance, and Thurso in the eastern sub-region; Buckingham, Masson, and Angers near the mouth of the Lievre River; Gatineau, Hull, and Aylmer at the opening of the Gatineau River; and Quyon, Shawville, Bryson, and Fort Coulonge in the Pontiac. In the north, Kazabazua led to Gracefield and then Maniawki.

The most dramatic growth occurred in Hull which became the third largest city in Quebec; the population tripled to 11,264 between 1871 and 1891. This developed ensured Hull's pre-eminence among the communities of the Outaouais but all the region's towns and villages were strongly influenced by metropolitan forces outside the Outaouais. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, Quebec City and Montreal were the most influential cities for the nascent Outaouais communities. In turn, the community established by the Wright group was initially the most important place for both sides of the Ottawa Valley; at this

time, the eastern corner of Upper Canada was in many ways an extension of Lower Canada. However, the construction of the Rideau Canal (in the later 1820s and early 1830s) and the emergence of Bytown (renamed Ottawa in 1854) led to new poles of influence in Upper Canada/Ontario. The result was that the Outaouais came to be situated once again "entre deux mondes"; the region was now evolving within the orbits of both the world of the St. Lawrence Valley and the world of south-central Ontario.

3. Le développement économique

i) Beyond the fur-trade/forest economy image:

The economic history of the Outaouais before 1900 is usually depicted in terms of two activities: the fur trade before 1800 and the forest economy thereafter. This depiction is understandable given the obvious importance of these two activities but it is also misleading for several reasons. First, the emphasis on the fur trade does not do justice to the many economic endeavours of the prehistoric and Amerindian groups who were present in the region for thousands of years before the appearance of French traders.

Similarly, the fur-trade/forest-economy emphasis does not adequately acknowledge other types of production which occurred simultaneously in the region at various times during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. Viewed from outside the Outaouais, such other production was often not noteworthy.

However, for those in the region, the economy was quite complex (especially during the mid-nineteenth century). The economic history of the Outaouais involves far more than the story of fur traders and shantymen.

ii) Before 1600:

The centuries before 1600 can be analysed in terms of four economic periods. The first period (approximately 4,000 B.C. to 2,000 B.C) is characterized not only by an economy of hunting and gathering but also of artisanal work with copper. The subsistence economy used tools made from polished stone to accomplish various tasks such as woodworking, weighing down fish nets, and killing animals in the forest. The copper (mined in the area of Lake Superior) was also fashioned into tools in camps on Ile Morrison and Ile des Allumettes. The copper products then became part of a vast commercial network extending both up and down the Ottawa River to far-reaching areas of North America. Long before the Ottawa River became an axis of the fur trade or the forest economy, it served as "la grande route du cuivre."

The second economic period (approximately 2,000 B.C. to 500 A.D.) is characterized by the appearance of pottery, notably at camps in the Pontiac on the Ottawa River opposite Deep River, and at Plaisance on the Petite-Nation River. This activity became more widespread and more technologically sophisticated during the third period (500 A.D. to 1,000 A.D.) of the region's economic history. In these centuries, the Outaouais continued to operate

within the larger North American context. The region was never isolated; indeed, the pottery-making of the Outaouais was clearly related to developments in other areas such as the Ohio Valley.

The fourth period (approximately 1000 to 1600) witnessed the emergence of the Algonquin tribes who further developed the technology of pottery-making and who developed an increasingly diversified economy (including rudimentary agriculture in the case of Ile des Allumettes). The Algonquins were nomads who seem to have enjoyed friendly relations with the Hurons to the west but they were the enemies of the increasingly sedentary Iroquois to the south. By the end of the sixteenth century, it appears that the Algonquins (with the support of other nomadic tribes) had driven the Iroquois away from not only the Outaouais but also the St. Lawrence Valley. Thus, when the French arrived, the Algonquins were well-positioned to begin trading with them.

iii) The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries:

The economic history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is composed of two periods during which the fur trade was pre-eminent: 1600-1650 and 1650-1800. The traditional image of this trade during the first period depicts the Algonquins as being exploited "victims" of the more knowledgeable but ruthless French traders. In fact, the Algonquins controlled the trade to a significant extent especially by using Ile des Allumettes and Ile Morrison to regulate further entry to the continent. The French traders were quite dependent on the collaboration of the

Algonquins during this period, and were in no position to impose their own terms of commerce.

It is true, however, that contact with the French did lead to the substantial weakening of Algonquin society. Not only did contact with the French bring disease but it also led to a less diverse Algonquin economy which became increasingly dependent on European-made products.

The disease and military defeat which destroyed the major role of the Algonquins in the fur trade by the mid-seventeenth century gave rise to the importance of the Ottawas as the key Amerindians for the French traders. Their name came to be used for the river, the region, and eventually the capital of Canada but their actual role within the Outaouais was quite limited as the fur trade moved increasingly west. During the 1650-1791 period, the region was predominantly a lieu de passage as canoes passed up and down the river system carrying goods between the St. Lawrence Valley and the interior of the continent. The construction of fur trade posts along the river shores facilitated this commerce as well as encouraging a small local trade.

iv) The Nineteenth Century

The forest economy became the engine of economic development in the Outaouais during the nineteenth century. This development occurred over three periods: 1791-1826; 1826-1854; and 1854-1886.

a) 1791-1826: The small groups of white settlers who arrived

during the first decades of the nineteenth century were primarily attracted by the availability of arable land along the Ottawa River. Families such as that of Wright, of Papineau, and of Archibald MacMillan (who led the initial Highland Scottish settlement) hoped to establish agriculturally-based settlements served by a quite diverse local economy. The timber trade was begun as a way to support this economy. The cutting of trees began on the Outaouais border of the Ottawa River and along its relatively calm tributaries in Upper Canada; only in the 1820s, was a concerted effort made to push the forest frontier north along the tributaries in the Outaouais. Economic development during this period was very slow. The region attracted few settlers, the extent of poor soil frustrated the pursuit of agrarian security, and the timber trade fluctuated unpredictably.

b) 1826-1854: During these years, the Outaouais began a period of considerable economic development that continued until the late nineteenth century. Expanding domestic and export markets made the Outaouais the most important region for the forest economy in all of British North America. The major factor was the increasing British market for timber and certain other wood products such as deals. In addition, a market for lumber emerged in the United States as well as domestically, and sawmills were increasingly established in the region. In contrast to the slow growth of earlier decades, the region attracted more and more investors, merchants, skilled and unskilled workers, and settlers seeking land. At the same time, the construction of the

Rideau River fueled the development of the south shore of the Ottawa River, and during these years Bytown came to rival and then surpass the importance of Hull as the predominant community in the Ottawa Valley.

c) 1854-1886: This period witnessed the "golden age" of both the timber trade and the lumber industry in the Outaouais. During these years, continued demand for timber paralleled a tremendous expansion of the lumber industry. The Outaouais actively responded to market opportunities in Britain and the United States as well as to the domestic demand for firewood and construction lumber in the growing towns and cities. At the same time, other activities developed such as agriculture (especially in the Pontiac) and mining (in areas north of the Gatineau-Hull-Aylmer axis). A new wave of American capitalists (such as Bronson) brought additional capital to the economy. One result was the building of enormous, technologically-sophisticated sawmills which helped maintain the Outaouais' pre-eminence in the Canadian forest economy. However, the trees of the Outaouais were limited in number, and reliance on external markets placed the region in a dependent position.

During these periods of the nineteenth century, five economic groups emerged: 1) regional leaders (best represented by those such as the Wright, Papineau, and McLaren families) who were distinguished by their extensive control of land, by the extent of their economic operations, and by their ability to secure credit in Montreal and Quebec city; 2) community leaders

(such as Baxter Bowman, for example) who were important at the local level in positions such as landholders, operators in the forest economy, or perhaps as general merchants in the emerging villages; 3) those who owned family farms; 4) skilled wage-earners; 5) general labourers. The groups of farmers, skilled workers and general labourers were not always distinct. "Farmers" would often work on a seasonal basis in the forest economy while skilled workers may also have owned some arable land. Similarly, general labourers characteristically hoped to develop the skills required for better wages, and eventually to accumulate capital to acquire land for farming. Given the conditions of labour in the region, this ambition was very difficult to fulfill; even the families of "farmers" might well depend primarily on wage-labour. Indeed, all the families of the Outaouais justifiably feared economic difficulty since the forest economy was inherently insecure. Bankruptcy was a familiar phenomenon throughout the century.

The economic activities of women and children in the Outaouais are not easily reconstructed from historical documents many of which reflect their creation by men. However, the available evidence does indicate that women and children played diverse and significant roles even in the families of the regional leaders. The case of Abigail Wright is particularly noteworthy. Since Philemon spent a great deal of time in Quebec city and Montreal, he relied on Abigail to oversee the Outaouais operations, and to provide him with progress reports. She clearly

knew the intricacies of the business and felt prepared not only to report on developments but also to give advice about how best to conduct business. Similarly, the wives and children of farmers and wage-labourers contributed outside and inside the home. Many teenage sons worked in the shanties and sawmills while their sisters and mothers carried out a wide range of domestic duties to contribute to their families' pursuit of survival and security.

4-5. La société et l'identité régionale

From the perspective of European-origin settlement, the transition from French control to British control first became meaningful for the Outaouais with passage of the Constitutional Act of 1791. This legislation set the stage for extensive settlement in the Outaouais by providing the framework for new policies of social and economic development. The legislation established the British system of landholding (outside the existing seigneuries) and made the Ottawa River the boundary between the new provinces of Upper Canada and Lower Canada. It is worth noting, however, that the Algonquins in the region did not necessarily acknowledge such developments. In fact, more than a century of French activity had not changed the Algonquin view that they controlled the Outaouais. For example, the Algonquin group at Lake of Two Mountains stated in 1761 that they controlled all the lands of the region as far as Lake Nipissingue.

As part of Lower Canada, the Outaouais was included in vast York County until the creation of Ottawa County in 1829. The western section was divided off to form Pontiac County in 1853. The creation of the Province of Canada in 1841 encouraged the integration of the two sides of the Ottawa Valley but then Confederation reversed this policy by separating Canada East and Canada West. Throughout these changes and until 1896, the Outaouais continued to be composed of the counties of Ottawa and Pontiac at both the provincial and federal level.

Political leadership in the region was usually a straightforward extension of economic leadership. The elected (and appointed) officials were usually members of the leading families in the forest economy. In Ottawa County, for example, Alonzo Wright was the federal parliamentarian from 1867 to 1891 while lumbermen John Poupore and then John Bryson sat for Pontiac between 1878 and 1891. Most of the regional politicians were only loosely connected to the emerging political party structures; they usually focused on local concerns and tried to avoid political involvement in the larger provincial and federal issues of the day. No regional leader became important politically outside the Outaouais. Despite his paramount importance in the early decades of the nineteenth century, Philemon Wright was never asked to join the Legislative Council.

Throughout the nineteenth century, two trends characterize social organization in the Outaouais: an informal structure within the region based on family and kinship ties; and a formal

structure controlled (and often situated) outside the region based on religious and government institutions. Families played dominant roles in religion, education, health, and welfare. Institutions such as churches and schools, and those such as priests, ministers, teachers, and physicians began to become important in the 1820s but it was only after mid-century that they played major roles for residents of the region. And even in the closing years of the nineteenth century, the formal institutional structure of the Outaouais was not well-developed.

Catholic missionaries were familiar in the Outaouais from the seventeenth century while both parish priests and Protestant ministers served residents after the early nineteenth century. The landscape of the Outaouais came to be dotted with Catholic churches as well as a considerable sprinkling of Protestant churches in the areas of heavier non-francophone settlement. The Catholic Church became increasingly important as Irish Catholic and then French-Canadian settlement occurred. By mid-century, the Catholic Church was the predominant religious institution in the region.

While churches became more numerous, religious leadership continued to come from outside the region for both Catholics and Protestants. The Outaouais was part of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Quebec until 1836 when it became part of the Diocese of Montreal. In 1847, the region was included in the newly-formed Diocese of Bytown (Ottawa). Anglicans in the region were members of the Diocese of Montreal.

Similarly, other formal institutions for residents of the Outaouais were often located outside the region. While some educational, health, and charity organisations were established soon after the arrival of the first settlers, residents were often forced to leave the region to fulfill needs beyond the basic level. In most cases, they crossed the Ottawa River to Ontario where greater prosperity was becoming increasingly evident as the century wore on. However, residents were also forced to go to institutions in Montreal; for example, the legal system obligated them to travel there except for quite minor cases.

The relations among the various social and ethnic groups varied from quite close (including intermarriage) to quite antagonistic (including serious brawls in taverns). As with other aspects of social life in the Outaouais, these relations generally evolved without formal structures. For example, no labour unions were established during the nineteenth century despite the considerable number of wage-earners in the region. The various francophone and anglophone religious groups sometimes established their own communal organisations (for example, the Orange Lodges in the Shawville area) but, for the most part, associations were less formal and more often based on the contexts of family and work.

The most well-known example of conflict is the Shiners War of the 1830s when Irish-origin shantymen (under leaders such as Peter Aylen) battled French Canadians (under Jos Montferrand) on

the streets and in the taverns. Such conflict is not representative of the region in the nineteenth century but rather was the result of a convergence of factors including the struggle among lumber merchants for access to the forest; a greater competition for jobs in the forest economy; and a quite accepting cultural attitude toward physical combat.

6. Conclusion

Three themes are central in the history of the Outaouais before 1900:

1) the ambiguity of the region's position "entre deux mondes;"

During the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the region evolved as the intersection of the French and Amerindian societies. During the nineteenth century, the Outaouais came to develop between the influences of Lower Canada/Canada East/Quebec and those of Upper Canada/Canada West/Ontario (representing the federal government as well as the province after 1867). Indeed, like the Roman god Janus, the Outaouais has looked in two directions since at least the seventeenth century. The region has turned from side to side in space as distinct external forces have competed for influence.

2) the complexity of the region's history in all its aspects;

Some of the elements of this diversity include:

- the absence of clearly-defined boundaries;

-the impact of diverse cultural traditions (the presence of both the seigneurial and township systems; the different backgrounds of the settlers leading to varied religious and social institutions; the distinct character of the sub-regions, most notably between Pontiac and Petite-Nation, etc.);

-the diversity of economic activity beyond the fur trade and the forest economy (including agriculture and mining);

-the constant political change resulting from the changing political meaning of the Ottawa River.

3) the dynamic change over time in the region's history from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries; Some of the elements of this dynamic change include:

-the changing "central place" of the region (the role of Ile Morrison and Ile des Allumettes in the seventeenth century, the importance of Hull for both sides of the Ottawa Valley in the early nineteenth century, the impact of the growth of Bytown/Ottawa by the 1850s, etc.);

-the transition from a lieu de passage to the internationally-significant heart of the forest economy in North America;

-the predominance of British-origin migration to the region during the first half of the nineteenth century and the predominance of francophone settlement in subsequent years.