

BURRITT'S RAPIDS

STEPHEN BURRITT WITH HIS WIFE MARTHA (STEVENS) AND BROTHERS DANIEL AND EDMUND CAME TO THIS AREA IN THE EARLY 1790'S. HE WAS GRANTED LAND IN THE HAMLET NOW KNOWN AS BURRITT'S RAPIDS AND WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CANAL IN 1826-1932 THE LAND WAS "SUB-DIVIDED" AND SUBSEQUENTLY THE "ISLAND" BECAME THE HEART OF A THRIVING COMMUNITY. BY THE MID-19TH CENTURY THE HAMLET BOASTED SEVERAL MILLS, A TAILOR SHOP, HAT SHOP, TWO SHOE STORES, A BANK, POST OFFICE, TWO HOTELS AND EVEN A RESIDENT DOCTOR. UNFORTUNATELY, ONCE RIVER TRAFFIC WAS SUPERCEDED BY THE RAILROAD, WHICH BY-PASSED THE COMMUNITY, COMMERCE DECLINED AND THE HAMLET WAS LEFT IN PEACE. OLD PHOTOS SHOW GRENVILLE STREET HAS NOT CHANGED MUCH IN 200 OR SO YEARS- THE SHOPS HAVE GONE, BUT THE STRUCTURES HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY RETAINED AS PRIVATE HOMES.



The Swing Bridge at Burritt's Rapids

Front Cover: Burritt's Rapids; ca. 1840s
John Burrows, Watercolour
Archives of Ontario

WALKING TOUR OF THE ISLAND

30 Minutes Approx. time at a leisurely stroll, an additional 60 minutes for the "Tip to Tip Trail" (2km nature walk)
*Denotes designated heritage building/site

1. French Store* 23 Grenville Street



The Community Hall was built in 1840 by John Strahan French as a general store with living quarters above. Typical neo-classical with gable end facing the road. In 1902, the building was bought by the trustees of the Methodist Church for Church functions. In 1935 it was purchased by a group of residents and is still today owned and operated by the residents of the village. In order to maintain the building, it is rented out for various organizations and for private functions. Note the plaque on the building and the Ontario Historic Sign beside the Community Hall Building. Looking across the street to.....

2. French Residence 24 Grenville Street



In 1841, J.S. French, his wife and 5 children lived here. The stone building on the north side was a blacksmith shop and was known as French's Forge. A sawmill was also located on the riverbank at one time and he operated a gristmill across the road.

3. Kidd Residence 22 Grenville Street



Built in 1895, to replace a frame building, by Thomas Kidd and called Riverview. Constructed of stretched bond brick with bracketed eaves, keystones on the exposed sides of the house decorated with terracotta heads. Also boasts an elaborate verandah.

4. Hurd Residence 16 Grenville Street



Build by Stephen Hurd, c. 1851, son of Ashael Hurd and Sarah (Burritt). Late neo-classical style, medium pitch roof, semi-circular headed window, large

panes and square transomed doorway. There was originally a verandah attached topped by a recessed balcony. Across the street.....

5. Harris Residence and Forge 17 Grenville Street



Bought by Erastus Harris, a blacksmith in the 1850's. A steeper roof line and segmental headed doors and windows leads one to believe it was probably re-built about 1873. Next to the house is the red pressed metal building which contains an intact forge last used in the 1940's. The forge was probably built around 1860.

6. Healey Residence 15 Grenville Street



John Healey bought this lot from Henry Burritt in 1852. In 1853, tax assessment rolls show J. Haley listed as owning a grocery business here which he sold to Hamlet Burritt in 1875. Like most of the commercial buildings it was converted to a private home. Continue west on Centre St...

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7. Burritt Residence 14 Centre Street



Typical 1 ½ storey mid-19th century building probably erected by George Burritt or his brother Edgar who was a carpenter. The elaborate treillage is a later addition. The house has been owned by the same family since 1922.

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8. Muir Residence 11 Centre Street



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9. Log Home 8 Centre Street



Original log house. Probably moved from another location circa 1861. The siding covered portion is a new addition. Continues East to re-join Oxford Street.

10. Orange Lodge 3 Oxford Street



Thomas Johnson, an Irishman of Loyalist persuasion donated this land in 1857 to build an Orange Hall, now the Masonic Lodge. Walk thru the opening at the south end of the building and go right, this is one of the entry points to the "Tip to Tip" trail. Include this in your walk OR return to Grenville St. to continue the historic home tour... (More information on the trail is at the end of this brochure)

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11. Bridge Master House & Swing Bridge* 1 Grenville St



Parks Canada Heritage Designated building c. 1920 housed the Bridgemaster, now the local branch of the North Grenville Public Library. Note the plaque on the building and the 1897 hand operated swing bridge. Historically, 3 blasts on a boat's whistle was the signal to open the bridge.

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12. McGowan House 3 Grenville Street



In 1857, Patrick McGowan, the Bridgemaster lived here. A 1 ½ storey brick building (Note: The two southern corners are not right angles). The roof's steeper pitch and segmental headed windows suggest a later style than most of the other house nearby.

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13. Shoe Shop 5 Grenville Street



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4. Conn House 7 Grenville Street



Neo-classical in design and a rather handsome barge board home. Probably built by Hugh Conn in the late 1800's. Attached

to it a stone building which over the years has operated a variety of commercial enterprises. In 1912 it housed the Union Bank. Go East on Centre St.

15. Methodist Church 25 Centre Street



The old Methodist Church, later a United Church was consecrated in 1855 and served as a place of worship for over 120 years.

The bell and tower were erected in 1899. It was closed in 1974 and turned into a private home.

16. Guest House 27 Centre Street

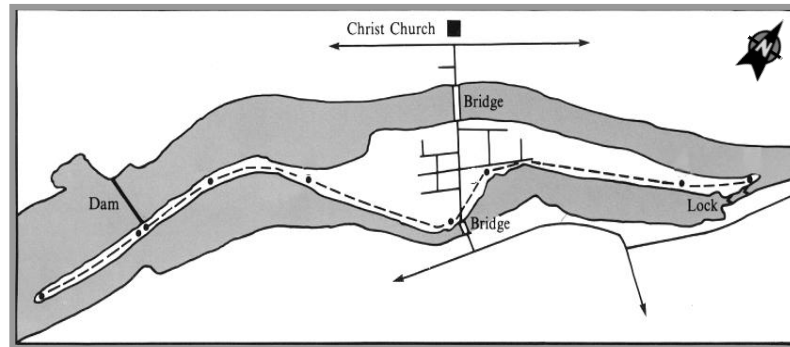


Built by Richard Guest in c. 1872 who owned a tannery and a cheese factory located on Henry Street,

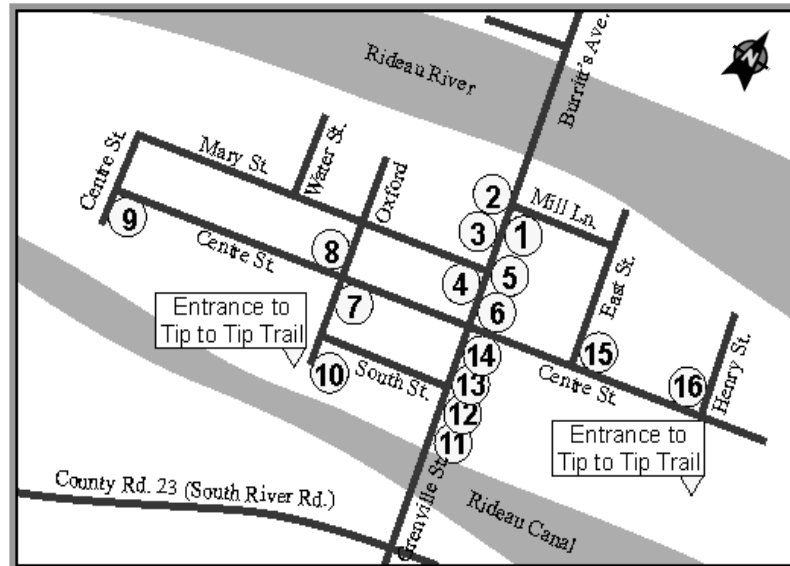
both have long since disappeared. Across the street is another access to the "Tip to Tip" Trail which takes you to the Rideau Canal Lock Station #17 along a pleasant path bordering the Rideau Canal. From the locks you can return via the same path or cross over the lock gates and walk back via the road (~1km). Refreshments and washrooms are available at the only restaurant in the area.

Tip to Tip Trail

The island was created by the construction of the Rideau Canal. A dam was built upstream to bypass rapids and a channel excavated around the rough water. The 2km trail leads past cool cedar forests, muskrat marshes, a beech nut grove to the pine covered upstream tip. You are walking on a soil ridge built by man 175 years ago. The embankment holds the canal channel water 15 feet above the river, just visible through the trees. The work involved in accomplishing such a task with shovels and wheelbarrows is difficult for a modern mind to grasp. The task was dangerous as well, with the twin hazards of malaria and gun powder claiming many lives.



Tip to Tip Trail



Burritt's Rapids Walking Tour



*Burritt's Rapids Dam

The timber and cut stone weir are all that remains of the dam that powered the cloth, grist, and saw and shingle mills. Daniel Burritt built the first saw mill on the Rideau. Terrance Smith, of Smith Falls, built the first grist mill and then sold it to J. S. French, and was used up to the end of World War II. It is a designated under the Ontario Heritage Act and is on the Canadian Register of Historic Places.



Lock Gates



Downriver view from bridge

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Olivia Mills for her personal help with this guide (2005) and acknowledge the reference material used: Burritt's Rapids 1793-1993 A Scrapbook, and the Parks Canada brochure (1979) Tip to Tip Trail. Sincerely, Pat Stroulger.

NORTH GRENVILLE WALKING TOURS

BURRITT'S RAPIDS

"ISLAND IN THE VALLEY"



NORTH GRENVILLE'S WINDOW TO THE RIDEAU CANAL UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

