

## HISTORIC BROWN SIGN TOUR – *Burritt's Rapids Continued*

While the age of the home is unknown, the neoclassical stylings including the roof line and corner stones, has led to the belief that it was built around 1853. The Hurd family had a long presence in Burritt's Rapids.

Stephen and his father are known for heading a group and raising funds towards building a bridge to span the Rideau River, the first one ever built across the Rideau River. Stephen famously fought in the Battle of the Windmill in November 1838 and was part of a coalition of Upper Canada forces and American troops, that defeated an invasion by US militants. These militants intended to use Windmill Point near Prescott, Ontario, as a base for further offensives into Canada.

Stephen lived until mid-1887, surviving all of his children, and is buried in the Christ Church Anglican Cemetery. By 1886 the home was occupied by the Percival family who went on to own it for 70 years.

### 13. John Haley House

John H(e)aley bought his land from Henry Burritt in 1852 and quickly established his business, appearing in the 1853 tax assessments as "John Haley, grocer". The date of the building is unknown but in 1861, Haley and his five children were on the map and in the census.



### 14. Oxford School: 1872 (11 Centre Street)

The first school in the former Oxford Township was a log house across the street from this location, built in 1855. In 1859, John Muir bought and built a house on the 11 Centre Street property, but by 1872, Muir had either donated or sold it for a second school. The two village schools served simultaneously for 23 years until they were amalgamated in 1895.

At this time, the Marlborough bell was added and the previously unused 2nd storey of the building was altered by Joseph Hyland to accommodate new students.

Each storey had one teacher, who were often young women who came from elsewhere and lodged with local families.

The school closed in 1964 when the new school in Oxford Mills was built and the school building returned to being a private residence.

### 15. Hugh Conn House (7 Grenville Street)

Assumed to be built by Hugh Conn in the late 1800s, this house is neo-classical barge board home. The stone building attached operated as a variety of businesses including the Union Bank in 1912.

### 16. Shoe Shop (5 Grenville Street)

Built using post and beam, this 1850 building was originally used as a shoe shop. During this time, Fred Dawe, a lock man for 35 years, occupied it with his family in the off season, before he was able to winterize the lockmaster's house.

After Harold Kidd sold his business in 1950, his assistants, Anna and Albert Grier, had their own store here for 12 years, after which it became the Moreland store, and then briefly a tea room. It is now restored as a private home.

### 17. 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 at right angles). The roof's steeper pitch and segmental headed windows suggests a later style than most of the other houses nearby.



### 18. Site of Johnson Hotel: 1850-1970 (2 Grenville Street)

The Johnson Hotel (ran by the namesake until his death in 1857, then named Reid's Hotel) had a unique ballroom where many meetings and dances were held.

In the 1920's Johnson's Hotel closed and was remodelled to make two private homes. The original building, occupied was Charlie White, was destroyed by a fire in 1970.

### 19. Bridgemaster's House (1 Grenville Street)

This building once housed the Bridgemaster, and until 2024 hosted the local branch of the North Grenville Public Library. A library has been operating in Burritt's Rapids since the early 1900's, originally lending out of the home of Mrs. Ferguson. Her collection was willed to the Women's Institute, who ran the library starting in 1966 out of the Community Hall. The building c. 1920 is heritage designated and owned by Parks Canada. Note the plaque on the building.

### 20. Orange Lodge: 1857 (3 Oxford Street)

In 1857 Thomas Johnson, owner of Johnson's Inn donated a 47' x 24' piece of land adjacent to his property to the Orange Association to build an Orange Hall, now the Masonic Lodge. The simple frame building was built by the same carpenters who constructed the Methodist Church on Centre Street. The Loyal Orange Association of British America was formed in 1830 and the members organized system of Lodges to: support the Protestant concept of Christian religion, maintain the Laws and Constitution of Canada and provide assistance to members in need.



Written and created by the Burritt's Rapids Community Association. Brought to you in collaboration with the Municipality of North Grenville.



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## HISTORIC BROWN SIGN TOUR

# Burritt's Rapids



# North Grenville

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# Welcome to the Historic Brown Sign Tour

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### 1. French's Store (23 Grenville Street)

The Community Hall was built in 1840 by John Strahan French as a general store with living quarters above. It was in operation until 1902, when it was bought by the trustees of the Methodist Church. In 1935 it was purchased by a group of residents for \$900 and has remained owned and operated by the residents of the village, making it one of few unmaintained by the municipality. In order to maintain the building, it is rented out to various organizations and for private functions.

Note the plaque on the building and the Ontario Historic Sign beside the Community Hall building. The hall is a typical neoclassical with gable end facing the road, and resembles the Niagara Apothecary.



### 2. Site of The Woollen Mill: 1850-1950 (7763 Burritts Avenue)

In 1850, Alexander Kerr built this water-run mill. During the World Wars, socks, scarves and mitts were sold to the Army as well as to passing travellers.

The wool was sheared and washed on the first floor then carded and spun on bobbins on the second, followed by machine knitting on the third floor. The mill employed thirty people but the industry was cut short when the building was destroyed by fire in 1950.

### 3. McCarney's Tea House: 1900 (7763 Burritts Avenue)

This tea house, situated beside the former woollen mill, no doubt counted on customers from the mill's workforce. While tea was a central feature for these houses, they often also served other beverages, food, and some even sold antiques and crafts. In decor, they were often more modest than restaurants, emphasizing a comfortable atmosphere, aiming to replicate the familiarity of a home dining room.

At the turn of the twentieth century, tea houses (or rooms) were small, often women-owned establishments, reflecting a growing sense of women's independence and entrepreneurship at the time. They became places where women could gather and socialize during a time when many faced restrictions in formal restaurants.

### 4. James Patterson Blacksmith (7761 Burritts Avenue)

In 1861, James Patterson was a blacksmith who shared this frame house with his wife and small son. It's assumed this house was erected in the late 1850's.



### 5. William Kidd House (4416 Donnelly Drive)

Some say that the Kidd family influenced the development of Burritt's Rapids as much as the Burritt family. William Kidd was a prominent figure in the village's history, known for his business ventures and contributions to the community. He moved to Burritt's Rapids in the 1840s and built this house in the early 1850s, which served as a general store for many years. He and his son Edward established a cheese factory in Burritt's Rapids that shipped products all the way to Europe and played a significant role in the local economy. The house was eventually turned into a double house and rented, then after 1918 into a single family home by his grandson Harold Kidd. The home was named Carlow Lodge by Harold's spouse Ray in honour of the county in Ireland where the Kidd family originated. The house became known for its stand out gardens and Irish detailing.

### 6. Burritt Farm (4390 Donnelly Drive)

Built in 1832, on land granted to Daniel Jr in 1802, the farm stayed part of the Burritt family until 1905 following Daniel Jr's death in 1859. The first home on this site was likely a log house and the stone house was completed by the stone masons hired by Colonel By for work on the construction of the canal, and who were looking for new work following the canal's completion in 1831. The current owners restored the property as close as possible to its original design in the 1960s. Additions were built in 1977, and in 1989 the house was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act.

### 7. Edwin Burritt House (4368 Donnelly Drive)

Edwin, a grandson of Daniel Burritt, Jr., built this house in the 1860s on land inherited from his father, Daniel Hamlet.

### 8. Depencier Inn: 1857 (4418 Donnelly Drive)

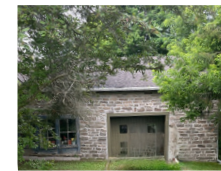
It is assumed that the Depencier Inn was built by innkeeper Uriah Depencier (1817-1866) around 1857. It had several owners, but at the turn of the century, the inn became the property of Ky Ricky and Dan O'Neil.

Business dwindled, leading O'Neil to leave and Ricky operated it as Ricky's Hotel until prohibition in 1916. Rumour has it that Ricky kept a brick wine cellar in the basement during this time.

After a brief term as a private residence, new owners, the Dexters, revived the inn and named it the White Swan. It operated as a restaurant and boarding house for workers at the woolen mill during the Second World War. A dance floor and nickelodeon were great attractions there. Two subsequent owners operated it as a restaurant then in the '60s it became a private home again and underwent extensive renovations.

### 9. Hebron Harris House: 1850 (7760 Burritts Avenue)

Hebron Harris was born in 1791 in the United States and emigrated to Canada, eventually landing here in 1812 after the start of the war. Hebron, Jr. died in 1900 and is buried in Christ Church Cemetery. Later owners of the home were William Armrod (bought for \$600 in 1906) and Albert Grier.



### 10. J.S. French House: 1841 and French's Forge: 1860 (24 Grenville Street)

John Strahan French purchased Lot #1, on the west side of Grenville Street in 1841 and built the oldest residence now remaining on the island. John came from a prominent loyalist family who had settled near Cornwall, Ontario, after the American Revolution. His brother Gershon, was the official who had explored the Rideau River and surrounding lands and identified the potential mill sites that would become Burritt's Rapids and Merrickville. French was a leading member of society and by 1847 J.S. was appointed a Magistrate. By 1851, a Directory of Businesses in Burritt's Rapids listed him as owning grist, oatmeal, saw and shingle mills. In 1858 John French died and his widow lived on the property until she died in 1867.

On the north side of this property was a blacksmith shop known as French's Forge. Early on J.S.' house was extended to accommodate two families. Mr. Davies Sr., a blacksmith, lived in part of the house and ran a smithy across from the school. Later he moved his business to the stone building attached to his home. John Davis and his wife lived in the main part of the house and John ran a garage from the stone building until his death in 1958.



### 11. TA Kidd House: 1895 (22 Grenville Street)

The oldest son of William Kidd (**Stop #5**), Thomas A. Kidd, was raised in Burritt's Rapids since his birth in 1845. He began his career in the militia, achieving the rank of captain in 1866. After his discharge, he became a clerk in John Meikle's general store, eventually buying the business and associated property in 1871. He served as Postmaster from 1866 to 1916 and Reeve of Oxford in 1878. He was a partner in French's Mills and also owned stores in Oxford Mills and Kemptville. His wealth and success made him able to replace Meikle's wooden house with a large brick home (named Riverview) for his wife, Ester and their nine children. On the south side of Riverview stood the stone store, built by John Meikle during the 1850's. It operated until damaged by fire in 1964 when it was transferred to the Kidd house.

Even after Thomas and his wife died by 1918, the family maintained their presence in the village. The store was then operated by Thomas' son, Harold, while the other siblings left Burritt's Rapids to pursue other careers. Since Harold occupied another home in the village, the T.A. Kidd house was rented until it was sold in the 1950's.

### 12. Hurd House: 1853 (16 Grenville Street)

Colonel Stephen Hurd, born in 1802, was the son of Captain Ashael Hurd (1768-1839), brother-in-law of Stephen Burritt and also a United Empire Loyalist from Vermont. Married to Lucretia Burritt, he purchased part of Lot 5 in the middle of the village.