

Walking Tours of Historic Burritts Rapids and the Tip to Tip Trail



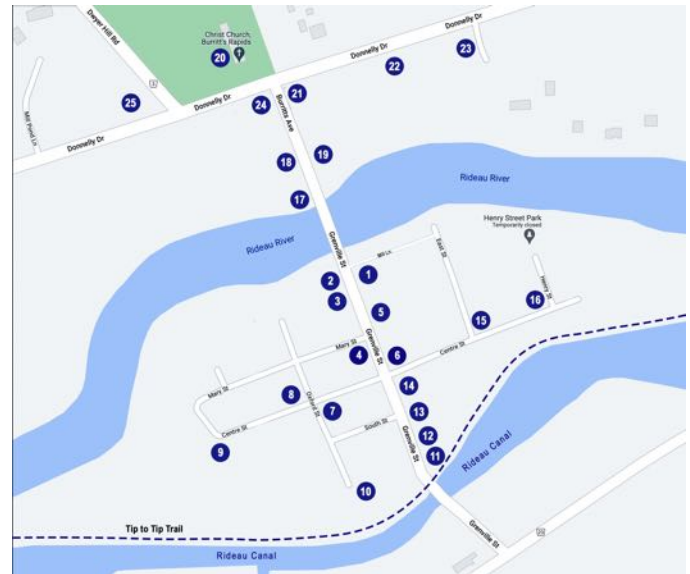
View down Burritts Ave./Grenville St.
from Donnelly Drive

“Island in the Valley”

Tour created by Pat Stoulger

Stephen Burritt, his wife Martha (Stephens) and brothers Daniel and Edmund came to this area in early 1793. Stephen was granted land in the hamlet now known as Burritts Rapids, and with the construction of the canal in 1827-1831 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 Unfortunately, once river traffic was superseded by the railroad, which by-passed the community, commerce declined and the hamlet was left in peace. Old photos show Grenville St. has not changed too much in 200 or so years - the shops have gone, but the structures have been carefully retained as private homes.

Walking Tour Stops



1. Community Hall
2. John S. French House
3. 'Riverview'
4. Stephen Hurd House
5. Erastus Harris House
6. John Healey Grocery
7. George/Edgar Burritt
8. John Muir House
9. Log House
10. Orange Masonic Hall
11. Original Bridgmaster House
12. Patrick McGowan House
13. Shoe Shop
14. Hugh Conn House
15. Old Methodist Church
16. Richard Guest House
17. Todd House
18. Harris House
19. Patterson House
20. Christ Church - Anglican
21. Carlow Lodge
22. Burritt Farm
23. Edwin Burritt House
24. Depencier Hotel
25. Marlborough Cottage

This Walking Tour will take approximately 45 minutes at a leisurely stroll. As stops 22 and 23 are more distant, driving might be preferred. The companion tour of the “Tip to Tip Trail” (2 km nature walk) takes an additional 60 minutes.

1. 23 Grenville St.*



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 to various organizations and for private functions. Note the plaque on the building and the Ontario Historic Sign beside the Community Hall building.

Note: * denotes designated heritage building/site.

2. 24 Grenville St.



In 1841, J.S. French, his wife and 5 children lived here. The stone building on 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. 22 Grenville St.



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 terra cotta heads. Also boasts an elaborate verandah.

**4. 1580 Old Wellington St.
*Martin/Graham/Daley house***



Built by Stephen Hurd, c. 1851, son of Ashael Hurd and Sarah (Burrill). 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.

5. 17 Grenville St.



Bought by Erastus Harris, a blacksmith, in the 1850s. 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 1940s. The forge was probably built around 1860.

6. 15 Grenville St.



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

7. 14 Centre St.



Typical 1 ½ storey mid-19th century building probably erected by George Burrirt 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.

8. 11 Centre St.



John Muir bought this property in 1859 and erected a home. Later he either sold or donated the building to replace the old log school house in the village. This school operated until 1964 and the building was sold and converted back to a private home.

9. 8 Centre St



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

10. 3 Oxford St.



Thomas Johnson, an Irishman of Loyalist persuasion donated this land in 1857 to build an Orange Masonic Lodge. Walk through 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)

11. 1 Grenville St. * and Swing Bridge



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 boats whistle was the signal to open the bridge.

12. 3 Grenville St.



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.

13. 5 Grenville St.



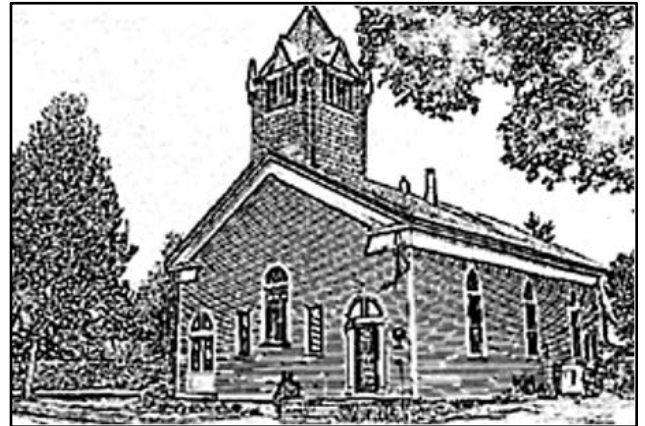
Built around 1850 and used as a shoe shop. The construction is post and beam. Over the years, it has housed various stores, a tea room, etc. It is now restored as a private home.

14. 7 Grenville St.



Neo-classical in design and a rather handsome barge board home. Probably built by Hugh Conn in the late 1800s. Attached to it is a stone building which over the years has operated a variety of commercial enterprises. In 1912 it housed the Union Bank Enjoy, have an ice cream cone or coffee.

15. 25 Centre St.



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. 27 Centre St.



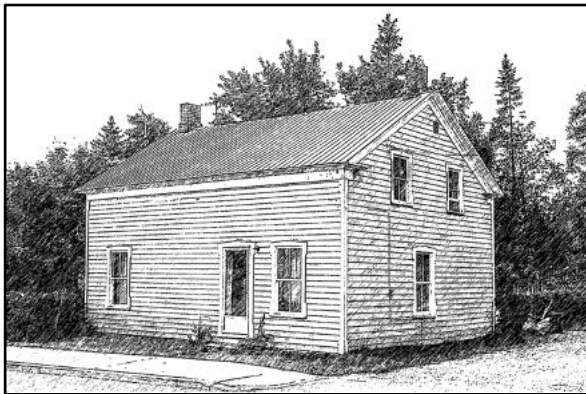
Built in c.1872 by Richard Guest, who owned a tannery and a cheese factory located on Henry Street. Both have long since disappeared. Across the street is another access to the the "Tip to Tip" trail which takes you to the Rideau Canal Lock Station #17 along a pleasant path bordering the Rideau Canal. From the locks you can return via the same path or cross over the lock gates and walk back via the road (~1 km). Refreshments and washrooms are available at the only restaurant in the area.

17. 7764 Burritts Ave. (the Todd House)



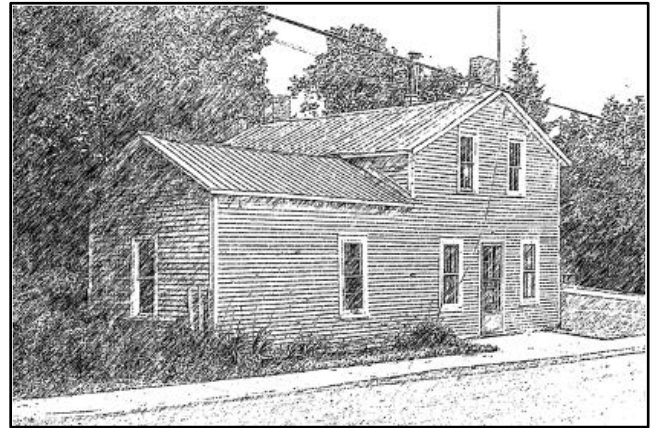
James Todd, the owner of the sawmill, bought this property in 1904 and built his house shortly afterward. Of a period later than the rest of the houses on Burritts Ave., it was built in the vernacular version of the Queen Anne Revival style.

18. 7760 Burritts Ave. (the Harris House)



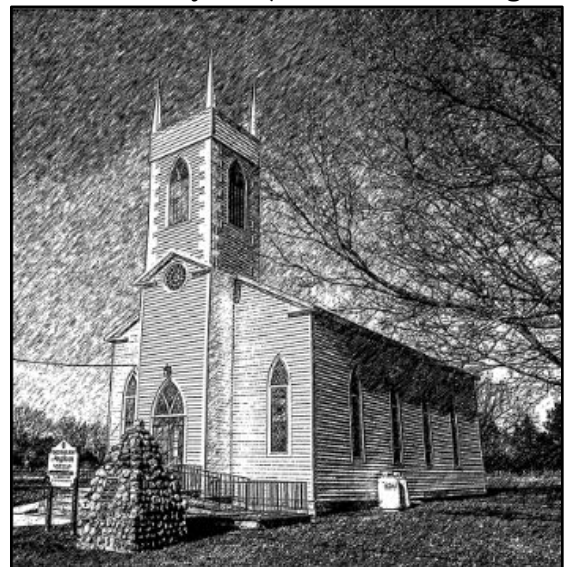
Built by Hebron Harris or his son in the early 1800's, this house is a combination of a heavy timber and balloon framing. The eared are an early neoclassical feature and the off-centre door suggests that the interior was divided into two parts at one time.

19. 7761 Burritts Ave. (the Patterson House)



James Patterson, blacksmith, lived in this house built in the 1850's. Narrow clapboard in 4 ft. lengths suggests that the L-shape and the main portion of the house were built at the same time.

20. 4419 Donnelly Dr. (Christ Church Anglican)



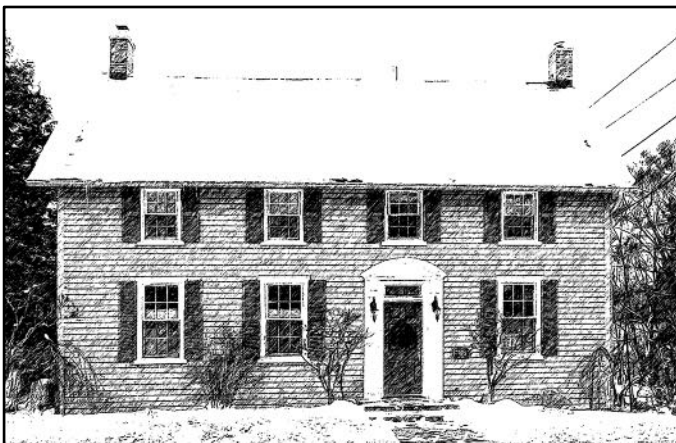
This frame church in the Gothic Revival style was built in 1831 - 1832 for a congregation formed in 1822. On land donated by Daniel Burritt Jr., this church is one of the oldest operating in Ontario.

21. 6718 Rideau Valley Dr.
Lindsay/Crawford/DeSousa house



The present cement block house was built by William Boyd of Osgoode in the early 20th century to replace the earlier brick one that burned down. It held a grocery store and telegraph office prior to 1900.

22. 4416 Donnelly Drive (Carlow Lodge)



Built in the 1860's, William Kidd, son of Thomas Kidd, lived and operated a store in the house. In 1895, Thomas moved to a brick house on Grenville St. and the house was turned into a double house and rented. Harold Kidd, his son, married in 1918 and undertook extensive renovations for his bride, Ray, converting it back to a single home and buying adjacent property for a garden. Ray named the house 'Carlow Lodge' after the county in Ireland where the Kidd family originated. 'Carlow Lodge' appears in the stained glass transom over the front entry which includes a curved pediment, dentil trim and pilasters.

23. 4368 Donnelly Drive (the Edwin Burritt House)



Grandson of Daniel Burritt Jr., Edwin had this house built in the 1860's on land he inherited from his father, Daniel H. Burritt. The house, which was built in the style typical of the period, appears to have been built in two stages, the first being the part facing west.

24. 4418 Donnelly Drive (the Depencier Hotel)



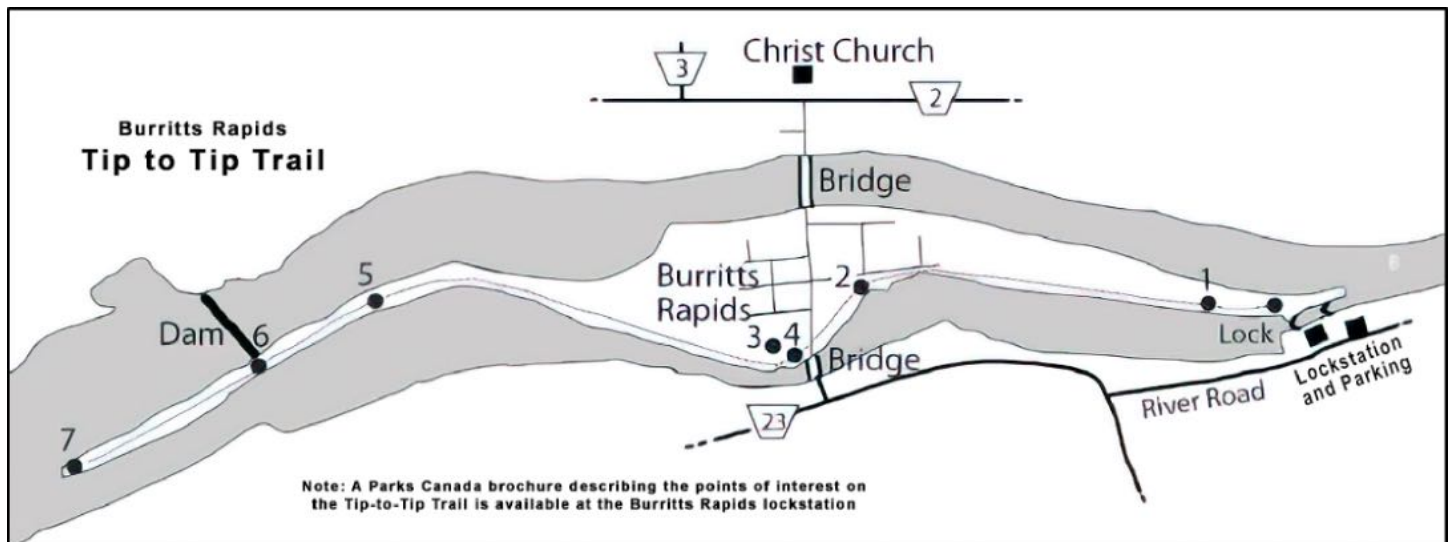
Originally an inn but now a private house, it is a classic example of post and beam construction. The pitch of the roof, returned eaves, lack of ornamentation and simple symmetrical proportions are typical of the neoclassical style of the mid-nineteenth century. Uriah Depencier was the first innkeeper in 1857. It had several owners until the 1960's when it became a private home. At times during its life as an inn, it had a brick wine cellar and a dance floor with a nickelodeon.

25. 7744 Dwyer Hill Rd. (the Marlborough Cottage)



Christened 'Marlborough Cottage' by owners in the 1970's, this house was built in the 1870's in a style typical of the time. It had several owners until 1920 when Mrs. Goodwin (Depencier) bought the house and enlarged it to the north to include the well.

The Tip – to – Tip Trail

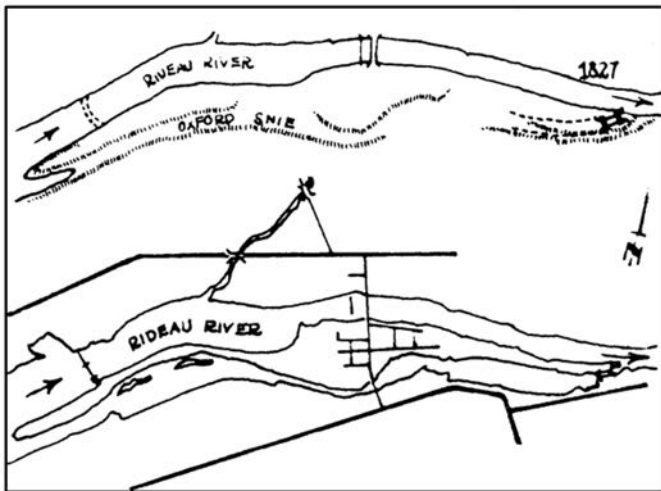


The island was created by the construction of the Rideau Canal. A dam was built upstream to bypass rapids and a channel excavated around the rough water. The 2 km trail leads past cool cedar forests, muskrat marshes, a beech nut grove and the pine covered upstream tip. You are walking on a soil ridge 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.

A Parks Canada's brochure describing points of interest along the Tip-to-Tip trail is available at the Burritts Rapids lockstation. The information in the brochure is also provided below.

The trail is an easy walk with a round trip length of four kilometres, taking about one hour to complete. Numbered trail markers along the path go with the following texts. They highlight features along the trail that were either influenced by or important in the construction of the Rideau Canal.

Stop No. 1: A Changed Environment



The canal channel you are walking beside did not exist before the Rideau Canal was built. The channel was originally a natural depression in the riverbank, known locally as the 'Oxford Snye'. Colonel By excavated the snye and used the dug material to build this embankment. This was done to prevent water from the canal channel from entering the natural river course. The eastern white cedar growing in the forest here is a tree species well suited to this area of moist soils and limestone rock. It is typical of many wetland forest habitats along the canal.

Stop No. 2: Surveying a New Land



Before the canal could be constructed, maps and surveys of its route had to be made. Some of the forests along the route were so thick that standard surveying techniques of taking sightings and bearings could not be used. The surveyors had to invent new techniques. One was to find a tree on a high point of land and set it on fire at night to take a bearing.

This stone boundary marker from the Ordinance Department was the method used to mark boundaries of crown lands along the canal. The broad arrow on the side was the department's symbol. The Roman numerals on the top of the stone were used to identify

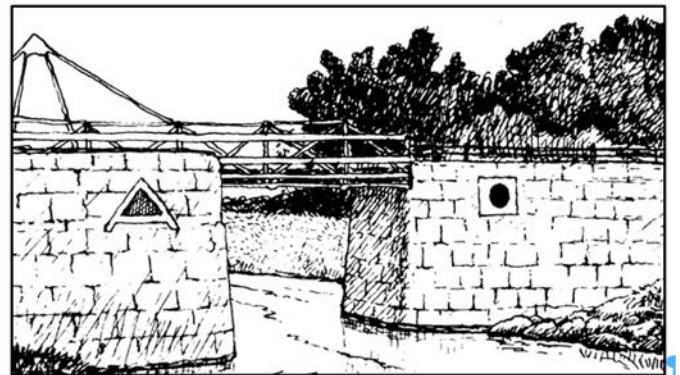
their location on the Ordinance Department's property maps.

Stop No. 3: The Founding of Burritts Rapids



Welcome to the village of Burritts Rapids. It was first settled in 1793 by Colonel Stephen Burritt, a United Empire Loyalist from Vermont. After the American Revolution, many Loyalists fled the United States to Canada. Many of them received land grants and settled along the Rideau and Cataraqui Rivers. Colonel Burritt was attracted to this site because of the water power from the rapids, which could be used to operate a sawmill. When Colonel By surveyed the canal in 1826, there was already a small village here.

Stop No. 4: Bridges and Bridgemasters



The excavation of the canal channel made it necessary to build a bridge to accommodate both villagers and boats. Several bridges have been built here since 1826. The present steel truss swing bridge was installed in 1897.

The bridge is opened by turning a crank in the pivot at this end of the bridge. Counterweights and a set of roller wheels mounted on a circular track underneath allow the bridge to be swung open with little effort.

The library across the street was originally the bridgemaster's home, and was used as the bridge office during the canal's navigation seasons earlier in the century. Swinging the bridge is done by lock staff today.

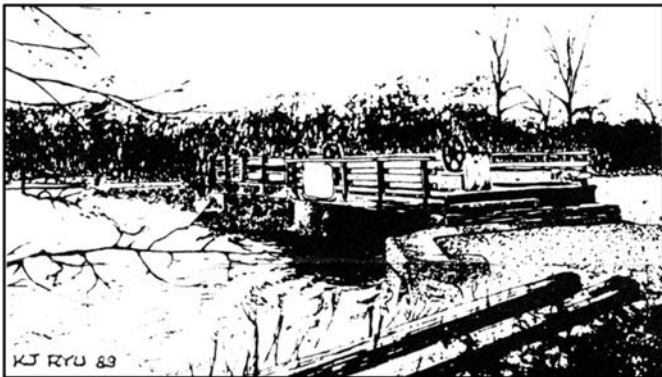
Stop No. 5: From Woodland to Wetland



To make a navigable waterway between Kingston and Ottawa, Colonel By had to raise water levels along the canal to flood out the rapids, waterfalls, and small areas of land. This marsh is an example of the variety of wetlands created along the Rideau Canal following construction.

Wetlands are important for many reasons. They provide habitats for many plants and animals. During periods of high water levels, wetlands act like giant sponges, holding water and helping to prevent flooding. They also filter out pollutants and sediments from the water. Because of the wetlands' importance to the whole ecosystem, Parks Canada regulates and manages the Rideau Canal to help protect them.

Stop No. 6: Controlling the River Flow



Most of the water for the Rideau Canal comes from a number of reservoir lakes. The flow of water from these lakes and along the canal is controlled by a series of waste weirs and dams. Like Colonel By over 170 years ago, Parks Canada uses these dams to raise or lower water levels. This is done by adjusting the number of stop logs in the dams. These water levels are regulated to meet a wide variety of needs, from navigation and natural habitat conservation, to hydro-electric and municipal water supplies.

WARNING: DAMS CAN BE DANGEROUS. BE CAREFUL!

Stop No. 7: The Tip



It took only six years to construct the Rideau Canal. The canal's effects on the human and natural history of the surrounding area are innumerable. It changed the natural environment it passed through and affected the lives of the settlers who were already here. It brought new settlers and commerce into areas which had been nothing but forests and wild rivers. Relax here awhile and try to imagine how this area must have looked over 170 years ago, before Colonel By's men tamed rapids and cleared the forest. Consider the feat Colonel By accomplished in building the Rideau Canal.