ADVANCE PRAISE FOR *OTTAWOLOGY*

"I can see *Ottawology* being THE BOOK on Ottawa for the next generation."

—**Peter Hodgins,** School of Canadian Studies, Carleton University

"An exceptionally vibrant narrative that brings to life Ottawa's places, memories, historical events. Packed with micro-stories valuing the banal, on a fascinating range of topics such as trees, work, and markets, Davidson's attention to detail, wealth of insight, and breadth of knowledge makes the ordinary exceptional, evoking a child's awe of new discovery. With a depth of perspective attuned to how colonialism, race, gender, and class shape Ottawa's places, *Ottawalogy* is a must read for urbanists, urban geographers, urban historians, urban sociologists, and especially any Ottawalogist — budding or seasoned."

—**Roger Picton**, Associate Professor, School of the Environment, Trent University.

"*Ottawology* is a roadmap to Ottawa as it's really lived — a city shaped by its people, places, and everyday connections, and by the forces and decisions that shape its future. From river paths to bus stops, nightclubs to neighbourhood parks, Tonya Davidson charts the routes that link Ottawa's history, culture, and daily life, while challenging assumptions and uncovering overlooked truths. It's a guide to discovering what you didn't know about Ottawa — and seeing what you thought you knew in a completely new light."

—**Joanne Chianello**, former Ottawa Citizen and CBC Ottawa City Hall journalist

"Ottawa is an iconic place in the mythical landscape of Canadian nationalism. This new book sheds new light on these icons, myths, and locales. Part urban studies, part tourism studies, part labour studies, this book provides a social and cultural geography of Canada's capital city, uncovering the making of this place and all of its meanings. Capital cities captivate public views in unique ways, and this book charts new directions in how to study these unique sites. Anyone interested in urban studies, cultural geography, and tourism studies should want to read this book."

—**Kevin Walby**, Professor, Department of Criminal Justice, University of Winnipeg

"In *Ottawology*, Tonya Davidson guides the reader through the rich history of Ottawa, extending beyond its role as Canada's capital. This sociological exploration is filled with unexpected insights and discoveries. It challenges us to comprehend the land we recognize as a colonial settler site, situated on unceded Anishinabe Algonquin territory, and reveals how it came to be established at the confluence of the Ottawa and Rideau Rivers. The narrative weaves together the social dynamics of work (represented by the civil service), home (in the Ottawa Valley and housing), and "third places" (like transit, libraries, parks, and green spaces) that have influenced the city's geography, its residents, and their neighborhoods.

From its origins as an early union town, with the Parliament Hill stonecutters at the forefront of workers' rights, to the community hub of Dundonald Park in Centretown, and the surprising early achievements of the Ottawa Transportation Commission (now OC Transit), each page offers fresh insights that will invite readers to revisit the book time and again. Davidson crafted this work "in its entirety, while waiting for the #7 Carleton." It's rare to find gratitude in long transit waits, but this is certainly one of those occasions! "

—**Catherine McKenney,** MPP for Ottawa Centre

OTTAWOLOGY

TONYA K.
DAVIDSON

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Introduction

ADVANCE-OTTAWA-EN AVANT

Newscasters and pundits make big claims about what's going on in Ottawa, and by that they mean what federal politicians are up to. People conjure images of the Parliament building perched on the hill by the Ottawa River, or maybe the art deco Supreme Court of Canada, or a glistening Rideau Canal full of jolly skaters when they think of Ottawa. Yet Ottawa's role as Canada's capital is far from the whole story of this city.

Just a few kilometres from Parliament Hill, two acres of green space, known since 1906 as Dundonald Park, offers a counterpoint to the government buildings; Dundonald Park is distinctly for the people of Ottawa. In the late 1800s, this block of land on Somerset Street was an informal dump and a common grazing land for neighbourhood cows and horses. Locals pushed for the creation of a park and by 1903 urban planner Frederick Todd included a park here in his plan for the city. Pathways, a ring of trees, and a fountain were installed in 1905. The city named the new park after the Earl of Dundonald, a British commander of the Canadian Militia who had been dismissed for "political agitation against the Government of Canada." The Ottawa Improvement Commission (OIC), and the Liberal government refused to use the name of a dismissed, insubordinate military leader. Yet it became officially known as Dundonald Park in 1911 when Borden's Conservatives came to power (Smythe 2022).

Ever since, Dundonald Park has been taken for granted, widely used, and, like its namesake, maligned; in 1905, the initial landscaping was deemed "disappointing" (Smythe 2022). In recent decades, its location across from the Beer Store has led some to call it "Beer Store park." Non-locals often only see the park as a site of deviance and social disorder. There is constant police surveillance here. In 2022, an elderly woman doing tai chi with an ornamental sword was arrested (Raymond 2022). Yet for locals, Dundonald Park offers so much. There is a playground, along with benches, chess tables, planters, and trees. Sociologist Susan Kerr engaged in participant observation in the park and described it as a "living room" for many in the neighbourhood, especially those living in the crowded rooming houses nearby, noting that many people met up with social workers, parole officers, and had supervised visits with their

kids in this park (Kerr 2004, 82). It has been the starting and ending point for protest marches, the location of countless picnics, impromptu concerts by brass bands and folk singers, and activities of the Centretown Community Association. Many people cut through the park's diagonal path on their daily travels and experience the flowers and shade of the trees, if only for a few minutes. As a counterpoint to Parliament Hill, Dundonald Park hints at the depth and breadth of experiences of Ottawa as a city of over a million people — and also a city of trees, beer, playgrounds, cops, live music, and protests.

Geographer David Gordon refers to discord between two Ottawas — Ottawa on Parliament Hill, the ring of "crown jewels" circling the Ottawa River and other national institutions — and Ottawa the messy, sprawling amalgamated city-suburban-rural complex, as the "town" versus "crown" tension (Gordon 2015). A story of this tension is on opulent display at the National Gallery of Canada (NGC). On the ground floor of Moshe Safdie's 1988 glass-domed gallery, flanked on one side by the "garden court" and on the other by the "water court," in the centre of a wing dedicated to Indigenous and Canadian art, is the Rideau Chapel. The sounds of choral singers draw visitors to the space; a 2001 audio installation by artist Janet Cardiff, *Forty-part Motet*, has been playing here since 2018. Forty speakers positioned around the chapel project the deconstructed voices of a forty-person choir singing a sixteenth-century choral piece. Visitors can walk to each speaker to listen to each individual voice.

The chapel is in a room specially designed to permanently house the interiors of an 1888 chapel that was originally at Rideau and Waller Streets, an addition to the Convent of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. In 1972, the Sisters of Charity sold their property and the convent was slated for demolition. Local groups organized, and while they could not save the chapel, they saved its interiors, with a promise from the NGC that the interiors would find a home in their not-yet-built art gallery. The interiors' most striking feature is the cream, gold, and blue fan vaulted ceiling. Modestly made out of wood, largely reflecting the limited means of the convent (Noppen 1988), the nevertheless awe-inspiring ceiling works in concert with the voices of the auditory installation to create an enthralling experience. People have been known to weep in this space, to lie down and spend minutes in silence on the few benches. It is a precious public space in which to be still in a busy city. It is sacred but, repurposed in a postmodern cathedral to art, it is de-sacralized. The Rideau Chapel expresses an adroit negotiation between the needs of the town (the citizens committed to saving their local church) and the crown (those responsible for designing and safeguarding art in the national art gallery).

Nineteenth-century French sociologist Émile Durkheim spent much of his career parsing distinctions between the sacred and the profane; the sacred are those things, ideas, and moments set apart from the everyday, which is the profane (Durkheim 2001). The Rideau Chapel is, in a way, a counterpoint to the everydayness (the profane) of Dundonald Park. Durkheim further identifies that one of the effects of religion is the generation of what he called "collective effervescence" (Durkheim 2001, 226) — that spirit beyond oneself that many identify as a god spirit, but Durkheim identifies as the spirit of the social collective. In the Rideau Chapel, we are moved by an overwhelming feeling of belonging to something bigger than ourselves; the social invoked there is beyond the town and crown to an even larger encompassing humanity. As we are surrounded by the singers of the *Forty-part Motet*, the collective effervescence is what elicits tears to flow. The piece is a powerful metaphor for society, reflecting what can be accomplished together (the choral music) and the potential for locating the individual within a larger collective (the individual voices). That it brings people to tears is telling. Yet a spirit of collective effervescence is also inspired in the protests and impromptu concerts at the very everyday Dundonald Park. The "Ottawa" at the heart of this book is the social collective, a historic collective that built and destroyed the spaces Ottawa now occupies, as well as the current unfolding (fraught, complex, inspiring) social collective forging new spaces and new societies.

"NOT A HANDSOME CITY": OTTAWA AND URBAN SOCIOLOGY

Ottawology is the systematic, interdisciplinary study of Ottawa the town. In this book I draw on history, urban geography, and especially on sociological studies of Ottawa. Sociology is, briefly, the study of the stuff between people, the "socius." There's a lot of stuff there: interpersonal relationships, language, social institutions, nations, wars, media, schools, religions. Sociologists begin by taking some aspect of the social (a hockey game, a church service, breakfast at a diner) that is taken for granted as natural, and they ask questions about it, answering those questions through the use of sociological research methods (qualitative interviewing, gathering and analyzing statistics, participant observation), and generating, applying, or testing sociological theories.

Sociologists are motivated by what C. Wright Mills called the "sociological imagination." For Mills, key to having a sociological imagination is the ability to see the relationship between private troubles and public issues (Mills 1959). To give you a very consistent personal trouble faced by many in Ottawa: the

bus is late, or hasn't arrived, so an individual is inconvenienced. Yet when so many Ottawans can't rely on public transit to get to school or work, this is a public issue, a crisis in fact. Student attendance suffers, employers are distraught as employees are constantly late, leisure spots are impacted when people worry about how to get home late at night. This book understands many private troubles sociologically as public issues: getting housed, pay equity in the civil service, facing police violence, anti-Black and anti-Asian racism in the immigration system, the shuttering of beloved dive bars, the felling of neighbourhood-cooling trees.

Sociologist Peter Berger suggested that the starting point of sociological inquiries is to look at what is taken-for-granted as "familiar" and ask questions, making this familiarity "strange" (Berger 1963). The starting point for a sociological inquiry of Ottawa is to problematize its existence, troubling the taken-for-granted-ness of a settler colonial city on unceded Algonquin Anishinaabe land at the confluence of the Ottawa and Rideau Rivers. This troubling is the focus of Chapter 1.

Urban sociology begins with cities as its object of study. Urban sociologists ask questions like: how do cities offer opportunities for ecologically sustainable living? How do strangers interact when living so closely together? What makes cities more or less functional? And who are they made functional for? In the mid-nineteenth century, when Bytown was being renamed Ottawa, horses were pulling streetcars on a new transit system and lumber barons were fixated on extracting resources from the region's rich forests, sociologists including Durkheim, Georg Simmel, and Friedrich Engels were all asking questions about urban life in the rapidly urbanizing contexts in Western Europe, where they lived. Durkheim asked: how is it that cities with populations of such diverse people (in Durkheimian terms, a high degree of "dynamic density"), doing different jobs and living in close proximity, manage to function? This is a pertinent question for thinking about Bytown's early history as a community that was created with a population of multiple ethnicities, languages, and religions from the outset. In the 1840s, Engels asked of industrial Manchester: why and how does industrial capitalism create cities of great inequality, where the rich trot off to healthy rural villas and the poor factory workers live in squalor with tuberculosis, cholera, and smallpox epidemics? Like Manchester, Ottawa was also stricken with infectious diseases (typhoid, smallpox, tuberculosis) that disproportionately impacted the poor. In Berlin, Georg Simmel asked if living in a city, with its multiple stimuli and highly rational forms of interpersonal interactions, gave rise to a specific type of urban personality. This

line of thinking informs the discussions here of interactions on public transit and on streets. All of these modes of engaging in urban sociology inform the Ottawology in this book; however, the urban sociology and urban planning being developed closer to home — in Chicago, a settler colonial city on the land of the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi nations — has more intimate ties and similarities to the urban condition of Ottawa.

Sociologist and founder of American social work Jane Addams established Hull House in Chicago in 1889 based on the settlement homes she'd visited in England. The settlement houses were created as a response to the social problems immigrants faced in growing, industrial cities. Hull House was home to twenty-five full-time residents, and was visited by approximately two thousand people weekly who would participate in the house's kindergarten, coffeehouse, laundry facilities, and art and drama classes and visit the house's museum and art gallery. The community residents (largely immigrant and working-class women) researched the living conditions in Chicago and published their findings in the *Hull House Maps and Papers.* The establishment of Hull House's "Working People's Social Science Club" in 1890 pre-dated the creation of the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago (Spain 2011). The result of the research of the Hull House residents was tremendous: "Nearly every piece of significant housing reform legislation during the Progressive Era was based on research conducted by settlement house residents" (Spain 2011, 57). Earlier, German philosopher, and the inspiration of an entire school of sociological thought, Karl Marx, wrote, "philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it" — a pull quote so significant it's on Marx's grave. Back in the United States, W.E.B. Du Bois, a Black sociologist known for his comprehensive ethnography of the lives of Black people in Philadelphia, was integral to the creation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909. Many Ottawa-based sociologists, like those who created the Criminalization and Punishment Education Project (CPEP) and those studying and working with tenants facing evictions, work in the same vein as these thinkers, studying the social world with an orientation toward improving social conditions.

Addams had an influence on William Lyon Mackenzie King, undoubtedly the most influential Canadian sociologist. That's right, sociologist. Canada's longest-serving prime minister studied sociology at the University of Chicago and interned at Hull House after meeting Addams in 1895. Mackenzie King's sociology background and his interactions with Addams influenced his work as the first employee of Canada's Ministry of Labour and his commitment to labour

reform (including banning the use of phosphorous in match factories, greatly impacting women working in Hull match factories). Towards the end of Mackenzie King's life, he mused in his diary about what Addams would have thought of his life's work (Gordon 2002b). Mackenzie King didn't, however, reflect on the disjuncture between his socially minded approach to labour reform and urban design and his anti-Semitic policies and internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II.

Chicago became a hub for urban sociology in part because the great fire of Chicago in 1871 positioned the city — being rapidly rebuilt in the context of immigration, urbanization, and industrialization — as a laboratory of urban living; the sociologists at Hull House and the University of Chicago seized the opportunity to engage in empirical, mapping, and ethnographic studies of the growing city. Ottawa also experienced devastating fires in this era, but it was not yet an object of sustained sociological study. For much of the nineteenth century, Ottawa was a great fire risk, built of wooden houses, full of the "natural tinderboxes provided by lumber stockyards," and with limited firefighting infrastructure. In late April 1900, twelve thousand people found themselves homeless after a fire, beginning in Hull, jumped along the wooden bridge at Victoria Island to Ottawa, eventually destroying 40 percent of Hull and 15 percent of urban Ottawa, from the Ottawa River to Dow's Lake, and from east of Hintonburg to the Rideau Canal (Walsh 2001, 165). In the aftermath of the fire, some made direct references to Chicago, like this newspaper editorial: "The great fire at Chicago may almost be said to have been a blessing in disguise, by converting a wooden city into one of stone and steel, and it would not be unreasonable to expect a similar change in Ottawa" (in Walsh 2001, 170). Indeed, the fire happened just a few years after politicians were considering that something should be done about Ottawa's … ahem … ugliness. As a MP in 1884, Wilfrid Laurier famously told an audience in Montreal: "I would not wish to say anything disparaging of the capital, but it is hard to say anything good of it. Ottawa is not a handsome city and does not appear destined to become one either." He offered a more optimistic estimation of Ottawa as the leader of the Opposition in 1893: "it shall be my pleasure and that of my colleagues, I am sure, to make the city of Ottawa as attractive as possibly could be; to make it the centre of the intellectual development of this country and above all the Washington of the North" (Woods 1980, 190). In 1899, prompted by the wife of the governor general, Lady Aberdeen, then–prime minister Laurier established the OIC, the precursor to the National Capital Commission (Gordon 2002a). While it did not immediately become a hotbed of urban sociology like Chicago,

Ottawa emerged from the 1900 fire as a city onto which broad-sweeping urban plans were inscribed. In 1903, the OIC hired landscape architect Frederick Todd, an apprentice of famed American landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead, to create the first urban plan for Ottawa. Key recommendations of the Todd report were the building of a boulevard between Rideau Hall and Parliament, the beginning of conservation in the Gatineau Park region (National Capital Commission 1998), and, of course, Dundonald Park.

In the ashes of the great fires the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, new buildings — skyscrapers — shot right up into the clouds in Chicago and other American cities. Ottawa had but one Chicago-style skyscraper, the Daly Building, at Sussex Drive and Wellington Street. Designed by Moses Chamberlain Edey, the 1904 Daly Building included Chicago-style skyscraper features: "steel joists and cast iron pillars, masonry cladding (Gloucester limestone), distinctive three-part 'Chicago windows' with large fixed centre panels, and ornamental cornice" (Jones 2017). It was demolished in 1991 and replaced with a Claridge condominium building in 2005. Ottawa's embrace of skyscrapers was slowed by planning dictates stipulating that the height of downtown buildings could not exceed 150 feet, to not eclipse the 322-foot-high Peace Tower, a policy not challenged until 1965 when local developer Robert Campeau successfully persuaded the city to approve his plan to build 225-foot-high office buildings at Lyon and Albert Streets (Gordon 2015, 238). Ottawa was influenced by Chicago-style architecture nonetheless. Ottawa architect Francis C. Sullivan worked for Chicago architect Frank Lloyd Wright from 1911 to 1916 (Duhamel 1961), and Wright's influence can be noted in some of Sullivan's prairie-style houses in Centretown, including a prominent and distinguished yellow house at 429–431 Bay Street (the Powers House) to which Sullivan added "broad overhangs, steep rooflines and banding with stucco" in his 1915 renovations to the 1887 building, which "reflect Chicago roots" (Waldron, Coffman, and Kalman 2017, 66). The house Sullivan built for himself at 346 Somerset Street East similarly reflects Wright's signature prairie style (Waldron, Coffman, and Kalman 2017). The Ottawology in this book focuses not on the style of homes but on the tenure of their ownership. From the nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth century, renting a home was not seen as subordinate to home-ownership, and many carefully designed neighbourhoods like Manor Park, Lindenlea, and Carlington, with single-detached homes, were built for renters. Of more urgent Ottawological concern today is the upselling of un-ecologically sustainable and socially anemic condos and suburban homes, as well as the deplorable condition in some rooming houses, public housing, and bunkhouses.

Mackenzie King was incredibly influential in the twentieth-century transformation of Ottawa. As a civil servant in the 1890s, Mackenzie King was exposed to the Garden City movement from Governor General Earl Grey. In Mackenzie King's 1918 *Industry and Humanity*, he spends a lot of the book detailing the impact that planning — with access to green space and clean, affordable, well-designed housing — has on a population. As prime minister in the postwar period, Mackenzie King guaranteed that planning and publicly built housing were key parts of the federal government's social policies (Gordon 2002b). Acting on his belief in the potential of a carefully planned city, Mackenzie King hired French urban planner Jacques Gréber to create a comprehensive plan for Ottawa. Gréber's 1950 plan included expropriating the lands of LeBreton Flats — plans that privileged aesthetics and national infrastructure over the homes of working-class people and were at odds with the sociology of Addams and other urban planning tenets, which had so moved Mackenzie King earlier in his career. Gréber's plan also included moving the downtown train station, decentralizing government office buildings, creating the Greenbelt, and developing Gatineau Park. Gréber's fingerprints are visible throughout this book in the discussions of creating the Queensway, relocating the train station, suburbanization, the pedestrianized Sparks Street mall, and the placement of the Supreme Court. While early on disparaged as not being "handsome" and not embraced as a laboratory of urban living, Ottawa emerged in similar conditions to Chicago — influenced by burgeoning urban planning strategies, the unfolding history of architecture, and the increasing and novel "dynamic density" of residents differing in religion, class, and ethnicity—all in the context of settler colonial urbanism on unceded Indigenous lands.

THE PROMISE OF SOCIOLOGY; THE PROMISE OF OTTAWA SOCIETY

Mills suggests that engaging a sociological imagination is both "terrifying" and "magnificent" (Mills 1959, 5). Understanding that public issues (historic homophobia in the civil service, the violent policing of sex workers and of Black people, the buses that never show up, the many blights and climate-change derechos impacting the city's tree canopy) exist, and that they exist quite outside of individual actions — they are structural, systemic, large — can be, indeed, terrifying. We are born into social structures — a nationality, a religion, a language, existing structures of social class, gender, race, ability — which inform our socialization, worldviews, aspirations, social ties, and life

opportunities. Here is the promise of sociology and society: we are also born with what sociologists refer to as agency — capacities to make decisions within the contexts of our lives, to conform, resist, negotiate (Giddens 1984). Social change is the result of generations of people making decisions that honour both their own desires and what society demands. Ottawa society is shaped by people organizing to create new social forms and opportunities for human flourishing and to resist oppressive structures — to live up to the city's motto: "Advance-Ottawa-En Avant."

The chapters in this book broadly address three forms of social interaction: at work (work, the civil service), at home (settling the Ottawa Valley, getting housed, suburbia), and in the many interstices of a dynamic, functional city (security, libraries, markets and malls, transit, trees, nighttime spaces). One of the threads that emerged throughout the writing of this book were the many ways in which individuals and collectives worked together toward realizing the city's motto in big and small ways: saving trees, unionizing workers, challenging evictions, resisting different forms of violence.

Many of the opportunities for collective well-being, for both social progress and for maintaining the rich, functional society that already exists, happen at what sociologist Ray Oldenburg called "third places." Third places are not one's primary home (first place), or place of work or education (second place), but those other places in society that allow for the creation of community and contribute to individual and community well-being. These are places demarcated for play (even if that play is referred to as sport or hanging out). Third places are marked with a feeling of hominess, levity, the levelling of social hierarchies, and friends "by the set." They are places that don't require appointments — when you arrive someone will be there to talk to or share in some activity. For Oldenburg, third places have individual and societal benefits. They are places of individual uplift and well-being, and societally, they are places where social divisions (age-based, occupational, political), can potentially be transgressed (Oldenburg 1999). Casual places for broad sociability, like what's found at Dundonald Park and the city's many average pubs, are underappreciated for the heavy lifting of society building and maintenance that they enable. They are at the heart of the promise of Ottawa. Beyond the scope of this book are Ottawa schools, hotels, health care, and infrastructure for play (pools, arenas, rivers, curling clubs, and playgrounds), all of which deserve comprehensive sociological engagement as sites that have also been mired in the morass of structures of oppression and places where individuals and groups have worked to push Ottawa ahead.

SACRED AND PROFANE ... SPIDERS

This book does not purport that Ottawa is especially distinct — it's not more distinct than how all cities are distinct. Only one city sits at the crux of the Red and Assiniboine rivers (Winnipeg), was the nation's only fortified city (Quebec City), boasts its own style of donair (Halifax). Every city is a distinct snowflake, so of course, as Canada's capital, at the junction of the Ottawa and Rideau Rivers, Ottawa is special. Yet, while it is easy to be dazzled by the architecture and experiences that are designed to invoke a collective and spiritual feeling of the sacred (the neo-Gothic Parliament buildings! Waterfalls!) that are distinct to Ottawa, it is also possible and important to notice the profane: the chess games played by neighbours in Dundonald Park, the interactions between customers and cashiers at an Overbrook butcher shop, evenings at the Bytowne Cinema, phenomena that might have similar counterparts in other cities. This offering of Ottawology should hopefully whet readers' appetites for thinking about this city and nation's capital with a sociological imagination, curiosity and enthusiasm, and perhaps inspire readers to pursue inquiries into those parts of Ottawa not discussed.

In the summer of 2017, a giant spider and a giant dragon puppet brought by France-based puppet company La Machine invaded the city. The puppets battled in the ByWard Market and at LeBreton Flats, and crowds swelled to 750,000 people to watch. Outside of the NGC, the thirteen-metre-wide spider climbed down the spire of the Notre Dame Basilica, gathering courage, I am sure, from the presence of its comrade, the giant Louise Bourgeois spider sculpture, *Maman*, before fighting the giant puppet dragon. A small orchestra of musicians buried inside the puppets provided the soundtrack for the epic battle. While some interpreted the spectacle as sacrilegious, the archbishop of the basilica defended the show, tweeting: "Our Lady who in Revelation defeats Dragon (& fulfills Genesis promise of crushing serpent) reigns again undisturbed." He added that the Catholic Church was happy to be a part of the street theatre spectacle, hoping it would contribute to a good relationship between the church and the community (Miller 2017). This whole mise-en-scène — giant imported puppets, a church, the national art gallery, a tweeting archbishop, thousands of locals and tourists, spiders, the Parliament buildings in the background — is a bit of a metaphor for the richness of Ottawa explored in this book. Whimsy exceeds bureaucratic order, locals show up, the capital city complex is decentred, and the profanity of spiders and the scaredness of spires collaborate to produce an ephemeral, and promising, moment for Ottawa society.

Chapter 1

SETTLER COLONIAL CAPITAL

The City of Ottawa begins many of its events with this land acknowledgement:

> Ottawa is built on un-ceded Anishinabe Algonquin territory.
>
> The peoples of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation have lived on this territory for millennia. Their culture and presence have nurtured and continue to nurture this land.
>
> The City of Ottawa honours the peoples and land of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation.
>
> The City of Ottawa honours all First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and their valuable past and present contributions to this land. (City of Ottawa, Community and Social 2024)

What does it mean for Ottawans to say and listen to this statement? To think about Ottawa sociologically, to trouble the taken-for-granted existence of this city requires asking why and how Ottawa was established here, at the confluence of Ottawa and Rideau rivers, south of the Canadian Shield, on the vast clay plains left by the receded prehistoric Champlain Sea, the territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin people. The editors of the book Settler City Limits define settler colonial cities as: "sites where settlers have come to constitute a sizeable demographic majority independent of ties with any metropolitan sponsor and assert a sovereignty distinct from that of the metropolitan core" (Dorries et al. 2019, 9). In other words, unlike in other colonial cities where a colonial minority ruled a colonized majority, in settler colonial cities, the population of settlers overwhelm and create a city in a colonized land.

The first step in the colonization of this land was imagining that it was, in fact, uninhabited and available for European settlement, that it was *terra nullius.* Patrick Wolfe describes settler colonialism as "a structure not an event" (Wolfe 2006, 388). Settler colonialism has, for hundreds of years, systematically structured land dispossession, displacement, starvation campaigns, and systemic forms of colonial violence, including overpolicing of Indigenous people, underpolicing of crimes against Indigenous people, and inequities

in education, health care, and housing, all rooted in a "logic of elimination" that "strives for the dissolution of native societies" (Wolfe 2006, 388). Yet the structure of settler colonialism and *terra nullius* logic was challenged from the beginning in the region that became Ottawa, through Anishinaabe Algonquin resistance — "movements and embodied practices focused on addressing and fighting against settler colonial and state violence" (Dorries et al. 2019, 7). The Anishinaabeg (plural form of Anishinaabe) refers to a number of Indigenous groups, including Ojibwe, Odawa, Potawatomi, Mississaugas, Nipissing, and Algonquin. This chapter begins by detailing forms of Algonquin resistance, and Algonquin, Métis, Inuit, and other Indigenous resurgence that take place in Ottawa, expressing individual and collectively organized agency in the face of the structure of settler colonialism. In Ottawa, these acts of resistance and resurgence challenge the overwhelming spatialization of the capital city of Canada as *terra nullius* onto which dreams of a white settler nation could be effortlessly manifested.

The second move in creating a settler colonial city was to facilitate the settlement of the land by European and American settlers, who were often invited and given provisions and land by colonial government agents. Relationships between settlers were marked by deep and persistent class, religious, and linguistic rifts in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, different contexts for immigration (a shifting federal immigration system, different push factors around the world), shaped the growth of the city, which continues to be marked by divisions, hostility, and many forms of racism that inform policing, housing development, schooling, and work today. Yet Ottawa has also been shaped by communities that have worked together to welcome refugees from Southeast Asia and Syria and resisted the anti-Black racism influencing many of the experiences of Somali and other African refugees. The second half of this chapter details this history and the interplays between structural forces and individual agency that have informed the unfolding of Ottawa as a multicultural city.

THE LAND OF THE ANISHINAABE ALGONQUIN NATION

Key to processes of settler colonialism is the coveting and exploitation of land. Because everyone has the same basic human needs — namely, good land and access to water — while all of Canada is on Indigenous land, cities in Canada were frequently developed at the specific sites of Indigenous habitations. In what would become Ottawa, the first settler buildings were constructed on the banks of the Ottawa River at what is now known as LeBreton Flats,

by Chaudière Falls, a symbolically and politically significant site for the Algonquin people. The site that became Ottawa was always a site of inter-nation Indigenous meeting and exchange; in fact, "adawe" — the origin of the name Ottawa — is the Algonquin word for "trade" (Tomiak 2016).

The 148,000-square-kilometre watersheds of the Ottawa River, called the Kiji Sibi or Kiji Zibi by Algonquin people, have been occupied by Algonquin people since time immemorial. To acknowledge that Ottawa is on "unceded" Algonquin land means that no agreement has been ratified between any level of colonial government and the Anishinaabe Algonquin people to cede their rights to the land; the vast territory that includes the city of Ottawa was never surrendered. From earliest contact onwards, Algonquin people have stopped settler incursions, petitioned various governments, and resisted their land dispossession in numerous ways.

From 1924 to 1996, a monument to an unnamed Indigenous guide crouched at the base of a grander monument to French explorer Samuel de Champlain that had been unveiled at Kìwekì (then Nepean) Point in 1915. This monument — with a triumphant, named white colonizer, standing above an unnamed, underdressed Indigenous figure — contributed to the spatialization of a dominant settler colonial narrative that concealed deep histories of Algonquin resistance. In 1613, Champlain met Chief Tessouat, leader of the Kichesipirini Algonquins of Morrison's and Allumette Islands at Tessouat's home, hoping to establish a friendly relationship and advance west along the river into Huron and Wendat territory. Tessouat refused to allow Champlain passage, arguing that the Nipissing, who lived further along the river, were too dangerous (Graham 2021). Upon the completion of renovations beginning in 2020, both Champlain and the Indigenous guide were returned to Kìwekì Point in 2025. Now Champlain is pedestal-less and the Indigenous man, now named Kichi Zibi Innini, is on his own, closer to the point's summit. Furthermore, a monument to Chief Tessouat was unveiled at the Canadian Museum of History in 2017. Of course, Algonquin of this region have a much longer history than its history of engagements with settlers. William Commanda (1913–2011), the Great Chief of the Algonquin, descendent of nineteenth-century Chief Pakinawatik, was the holder of many wampum belts. Wampum belts are made from shell-beads and have been used by the Algonquin to tell stories, record history, and, post-contact, make agreements with other nations. Commanda was the holder of the Seven Fires Prophecy Belt, a belt that dates back to the fifteenth century (Thumbadoo 2018).

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 transferred large swaths of North America from the French to the British. Under the British, people could not buy land directly from Indigenous peoples, Indigenous people could only sell their land to the British Crown. This set the stage for the ensuing land grabs in the region by churches, English, French, Scottish, and American speculators buying land from the Crown, and acquiring land after squatting. In 1772, Algonquin people unsuccessfully petitioned to remove settlers and recognize their land title (Tomiak 2016). The 1791 Constitutional Act made the Ottawa River the border between Upper and Lower Canada (what would become Ontario and Quebec), dividing the Algonquin nation. Beginning in 1793, the British hastened their aggressive logging and exploitation of other natural resources on Algonquin land. Two Algonquin families asked Philemon Wright — the American who, along with five families, arrived and settled on the north side of the Ottawa River in 1800 — to stop his land clearing because it was driving back their game. Yet, in his journal, Philemon Wright concludes that the Algonquin people he'd encountered had relinquished "all claim to the land, in compensation for which they receive annual grants from the Government, which shall be withheld if they molest settlers" (Wright Carr-Harris 1903, 11, in Smith 2011, 82). In 1802, the Algonquin unsuccessfully petitioned to the Upper Canada government to stop Philemon Wright from illegally clearing their land (Lawrence 2012).

Chief Pierre-Louis Constant Pinesi (1786–1834), the Great Chief of the Algonquin by 1830, fought in the War of 1812 on the side of the British. When Pinesi later requested that his own land be secured for hunting and fishing for his people, he was ignored (Jenkins 2020). Meanwhile, French, Scottish, and English War of 1812 veterans flooded the region and became some of the most lauded "founders" of the city. War of 1812 veteran François Dupuis built a log cabin in the region that became Orléans in the 1830s. This cabin is now a part of the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum. In thanks for his service in 1812, Scottish immigrant Archibald Petrie was given eight hundred acres, including the land that quickly bore his name, Petrie Island (SFOPHO 2023). Louis-Théodore Besserer was a lieutenant with the second military battalion of Quebec City during the War of 1812. He purchased an estate in Bytown in 1828 that would become the neighbourhood of Sandy Hill, with a street bearing his name (Gravel 1976). English and Scottish War of 1812 veterans were given land based on their rank; privates were given a hundred acres, sergeants two hundred, lieutenants

four hundred, and captains eight hundred. An exhibit in the Goulbourn Museum in Stittsville in the summer of 2023 titled "Supplied for Survival" displayed objects (such as a broadaxe and adze) that government agents gave settlers to help them survive in the region. Ottawa Valley's earliest roads, stores, and hotels were all developed to service the settling British, French, and other War of 1812 Loyalist veterans, all while dispossessing the Algonquin of their land.

From 1827 to 1832, Irish, French, and British labourers, led by British Colonel John By and a crew of engineers, built the Rideau Canal, a project of settler colonial military might. This project transformed the Pasapkwediwanong Sibi (known as the Rideau River) into a navigational system to facilitate the national security of British North America. The entrance to the canal shifted Bytown's downtown from LeBreton Flats to the ByWard Market neighbourhood. The canal also transformed settlers' orientation to the region from extractive colonialism to settler colonialism and military colonialism. Bytown grew as a settler colonial city.

From 1842 onward, Algonquin people petitioned for lands on Bob's Lake, 130 kilometres southwest of Ottawa (Tomiak 2016). In 1851, as the lumber industry thrived, the Canadian government began forcing Indigenous peoples to live on reserves. In 1853, a reserve established near Maniwaki, Quebec, became the Kitigan Zibi reserve (Bulmer 2017). The government created a reserve on Golden Lake — a lake on the Bonnechere River, 150 kilometers west of Ottawa — in 1873. This is the home of the Pikwakanagan First Nation and it is the only federally recognized Algonquin reserve in Ontario. The Indian Act of 1876 transferred power to the Department of Indian Affairs to control almost all the affairs of First Nations peoples (not Inuit or Métis) in Canada.

The beginning of the era of the Indian Act was also the era of Confederation. In Ottawa uncritical celebrations of Confederation abound. The author of the Indian Act, Sir John A. Macdonald, has been memorialized through a Parliament Hill statue, a named parkway (until its renaming in 2023), and as the name of the city's airport. Macdonald's French counterpart, Georges-Étienne Cartier, is also commemorated through the city's airport, a street name, and a statue; the conciliatory narrative of Canada as the coming together of English and French societies is well represented here.

While Ottawa, and most of the country, was aglow during Canada's Centennial in 1967, Chief Commanda hosted the first meeting of what he called the "Circle of All Nations" in Eganville, Ontario. He began hosting

annual Circle of All Nations gatherings at his Kitigan Zibi home beginning in 1969 (Thumbadoo 2018, 11). Thousands of people from around the world came to these gatherings to participate in inter-national dialogue "unified by his fundamental and unshakeable conviction that as children of Mother Earth, we belong together and with nature, irrespective of individual colour, creed or culture" (*Circle of All Nations* n.d.). In 1997 the Circle of All Nations appropriated an abandoned mill on Victoria Island (Eade 1997) and Commanda embarked on a long process of persuading the city and federal governments to return Victoria Island and Chaudière Falls (a region Algonquin people refer to as Asinabka) to its sacred purposes. Commanda's plan included freeing Chaudière Falls, creating a park and historical interpretive centre, and building a "peace building meeting site" and an "Asinabka National Indigenous Centre" (Thumbadoo n.d.). Heather Dorries and colleagues (2019, 7) define Indigenous resurgence as "movements and embodied practices focused on rebuilding nation-specific Indigenous ways of being and actualizing self-determination." Commanda's plan has not been realized, although a former rail bridge near the site repurposed for pedestrians and cyclists opened in 2022 as William Commanda Bridge.

On December 11, 2012, in response to the Harper government's recent passage of Bill C-45, which challenged certain Indigenous land and other rights, Chief Theresa Spence of Attawapiskat, a Treaty 9 community on the west coast of James Bay, began what would become a six-week hunger strike on Victoria Island, demanding a meeting with Prime Minister Harper to discuss, among other things, the untenable housing conditions in her community. Spence occupied the sacred Algonquin site in a moment of pan-Indigenous resistance. Ottawa, as both the land of the Algonquin Anishinaabe and the capital of a settler colonial nation, is often the site of pan-Indigenous forms of resistance. In 2017, when the city was awash in nationalist pomp for Canada's 150th celebration, the Bawating Water Protectors erected a teepee on Parliament Hill as a reminder that Indigenous communities were still without running water and experiencing inequitable access to education and state-led colonial violence (Ballingall 2017). In the summer of 2022, a spontaneous memorial of shoes, stuffies, and flowers grew at the Centennial Flame in the wake of news stories about the presence of unmarked graves of over two hundred children at a residential school in Kamloops, British Columbia. Protests, vigils, and political actions for Indigenous rights frequently occupy Parliament Hill and the Canadian Tribute to Human Rights on Elgin Street.

Resurgence, like the type enacted by Chief Commanda, exists throughout the city, much of it concentrated in the eastern neighbourhood of Vanier, leading Michif woman Jamie Morse to dub the neighbourhood "a little Indigi-city" (Panico 2021). At the heart of this Indigi-city is the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, which was designed by famed Blackfoot architect Douglas Cardinal and is highly reminiscent of his other national capital region project, the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau. Ottawa has the largest population of Inuit outside of the Arctic. We can see Inuit resurgence here at Tungasuvvingat Inuit — a hub offering health care, child and youth services, and language and cultural programs — and, a bit west on Rideau Street at Nunavut Sivuniksavut College — a postsecondary institution dedicated to Inuit studies. An exhibit in the Sandy Hill Community Centre showcases the art of Inuit artist Annie Pootoogook, near to the park that now bears her name, and a *Qamutiik* (Inuit sled) monument, outside of what was formerly Southway Inn (now the Waterford Retirement Home) commemorates the role of the hotel in welcoming Inuit to Ottawa for decades. To honour "all First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and their valuable past and present contributions to this land," as the land acknowledgement proclaims, means to support these expressions (and others) of Indigenous resurgence.

BIOGRAPHY AND HISTORY: SETTLING THE OTTAWA VALLEY

C. Wright Mills argued that a robust sociological imagination sees the relationships between personal biographies and history, understanding that everybody is a child of history (Mills 1959). Broad-sweeping historical events including wars, a potato famine, economic contractions, and religious and ethnic persecution all created push factors that led to different waves of settlers and immigrants making themselves at home in Ottawa and the Ottawa Valley. The promise of free and plentiful land for immigrants was the dominant pull factor. The story of immigration is a story of social structures (immigration policies and schemes, structural land dispossession from Algonquin people) and agency (the initiative and labour of immigrants).

There were two significant waves of Irish immigration to Canada and the Ottawa Valley in the nineteenth century: the pre-famine immigration wave (1818–45) and famine-era immigration (1847–54). In the pre-famine wave, Irish immigration accounted for 60 percent of new arrivals to British North

America. As a result of this immigration, 54 percent of the population in counties on the Ontario side of the Ottawa River were Irish, representing the largest concentration of Irish in British North America (Trew 1999, 224). The colonial government facilitated pre-famine Irish immigration. Between 1818 and 1853, Richard Talbot sponsored groups of Irish immigrants from Tipperary County in a bid to secure his own access to land and status (Elliot 2004). An assisted emigration scheme was organized in 1823 by Peter Robinson, a member of the Upper Canada Legislature for York. Robinson believed that Catholics were more compliant than (and thus preferable to) Protestants, with fewer republican tendencies. Through this scheme, five hundred Irish immigrants, all under age forty-five, received the cost of travel, provisions, tools, and, upon arrival, rights to one hundred acres (Trew 1999, 226). Between 1823 and 1825, Lord Bathurst's assisted emigration scheme led to over two thousand immigrants from Cork, Ireland, arriving in the region (Vance 2012, 38). These immigrants would be commemorated with the 2008 building of the Corktown footbridge, which crosses the Rideau Canal at Somerset Street, where almost two hundred years earlier, the Cork immigrants worked on the Rideau Canal and lived in a shantytown known as Corktown (Elliot 1991). The potato famine of the 1840s led to a large wave of Irish immigration; in 1847, there was a 250 percent increase in Irish immigrants to British North America (Trew 1999, 226).

The Scots are well represented in Ottawa. At my neighbourhood pub, Deacon Brodie's (named after a famous Scottish deacon and criminal house robber), a plaque proudly details many of the celebrated and prosperous Scots who have had their names on streets in the neighbourhood: Elgin Street, after Scot Governor General Lord Elgin; Minto Park, after Scot Governor General Lord Minto; Macdonald Street, after John A. Macdonald; and MacLaren Street after James MacLaren. Lewis Street is named after an island in the Scottish Hebrides, Gilmour Street after the Gilmours of Glasgow. The neighbourhood includes the Church of Scotland with the Knox Presbyterian Church, and the Cameron Highlanders Museum in the Cartier Square Drill Hall.

The earliest Scottish settlements in the region were in Glengarry County east of Ottawa, between the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers. Scottish Loyalists from the Clan Donald arrived in 1784 and were granted land after the American Revolution. After the War of 1812, Lord Bathurst instructed governors not to award land to Americans, suggesting instead giving passage and land to Scottish Highlanders, who were deemed more loyal to the Crown. The Highlanders had already earned a good reputation among the colonial

governments because their Glengarry Light Infantry regiment had fought for British North America in the War of 1812. In 1815, Sir Francis Gore (lieutenant governor of Upper Canada) created townships along the Rideau River specifically for Scottish immigrants, serviced by new roads and three military depots in Perth, Lanark, and Richmond (Vance 2012). For these reasons, many Scots were pulled to Canada — while being pushed out of Scotland due to large-scale evictions of farmers from their land, known as the "Highland Clearances," between 1750 and 1860.

French Canadians settled throughout the towns of the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Valleys and the Outaouais beginning in the early nineteenth century. In 1674, there were two seigneuries established along the Ottawa River — the Petite Nation, and Pointe à L'Original — yet these remained unsettled until the nineteenth century (Gaffield 1997). As available land in the St. Lawrence Valley became taken and French Canadians migrated to New England, priests in Lower Canada started eyeing land in Upper Canada and embarking on "church-sponsored programmes of colonization," facilitating French-Canadian settlers' moves west by providing the "essential ingredients of French-Canadian culture, language, and religion" (Cartwright 1977, 3). In 1841, Bishop Bourget in Montreal recruited Oblate priests from France to promote Christianity and colonial values among Indigenous people in the Ottawa Valley and service a growing French community in Bytown (Cartwright 1977). The Oblates were established in France in 1816 to counter the revolutionary secularization that had been unleashed by the French Revolution, preach to the poor, and engage in missionary work (Britannica 2025). For the Catholic Church in Canada, that same anti-revolutionary spirit would be useful in Bytown, which was full of the revolutionary zeal of the Irish and underpopulated by the French.

The work of settling French Canadians in the region was led by Joseph-Bruno Guigues, who by 1846 had become a bishop with a jurisdiction including Prescott, Russell, Carleton, Lanark, and Renfrew counties. Guigues promoted the land of the Ottawa Valley to potential French-Canadian settlers as being similar to the land of the Eastern Townships. Parish priests worked like land agents, coordinating collective efforts to improve land drainage and instructing settlers on coordinating planting and harvesting alongside their time in lumbering work (Cartwright 1977). In Bytown, the Notre Dame Cathedral was built in 1848 on St. Patrick Street to serve the growing French-Catholic community. Across the street is Rochon House, inhabited by sculptor Flavien Rochon from 1853 to

1897, which has been preserved by the National Capital Commission as an embodiment of a workingman's house (Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française 2017a). By 1901, 52.5 percent of Bytown's population was French (Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française 2017b), and, as this book details, that density would impact religious, political, social, and cultural life in the city.

The English that settled in the Ottawa Valley arrived as prospectors, appointed government officials, canal engineers, wannabe aristocrats, and predominantly as War of 1812 veterans. They also arrived as poor, parentless children. From 1869 until the 1940s over 100,000 poor English children were brought to Canada without their parents. Imagined and treated as orphans, many of them were not — they were just visibly poor and scooped up by British authorities from the streets of London as a part of a program called the "Child Migrant Scheme." The children as young as two were sent to Canada; some parents were notified of their children's whereabouts after they were at sea. While parents were told the children would grow up in the clean air wonderland of Canada and the welcoming embrace of Canadian adoptive parents, instead they often lived in squalid conditions, including group homes. Ottawa's New Orpington Lodge for British Home Children opened on Richmond Street in Hintonburg in 1895. An inspector's report condemned the home for its cheap camp beds, lack of ventilation, and skimpy blankets and pillows. In response, the home was renovated and renamed St. George's Home in 1904, and it was run by the Sisters of Charity of St. Paul until its closure in 1935 (Home Children Canada 2025).

Nineteenth-century settlement was not smooth; while Algonquin people were being systematically pushed off their land, the new arrivals brought with them religious, linguistic, and ethnic biases from their homelands. By the nineteenth century, the Outaouais was run by an American — Philemon Wright; a Scot — Archibald McMillan, who had sponsored an emigration scheme from Scotland to Montreal in 1802 and established settlements in Templeton, Lochaber, and Grenville beginning in 1806; and a French Canadian — Joseph Papineau, who had purchased the Petite Nation seigneury in 1801 (Gaffield 1997). Contact between Wright, McMillan, and Papineau and their American, Scottish, and French communities was sparse, and the communities were distinct, geographically and in form. The Petite Nation was structured along the seigneurial tradition — long strips of land with river footage — while Hull took the form of a New England village, and the British townships "followed the grid pattern preferred by British

authorities" (Gaffield 1997, 147). In Bytown, linguistic, religious, and class differences were also spatialized — the more well-heeled Protestant British settled on the upper lands south of Parliament Hill, known as Uppertown, while the Catholic French and Irish labourers, joined soon by Eastern European Jewish and Italian immigrants, settled in the lower, swampy lands of the ByWard Market, Lowertown.

In 1849, Governor General Lord Elgin signed the contentious Rebellion Losses Bill, which granted government compensation to both the rebels and the Loyalists who participated in the Rebellions of 1837. This bill angered Loyalists so much that they set the Parliament buildings (then in Montreal) on fire and pelted Elgin's carriage with eggs as he travelled through Montreal in April 1849. A few months later, on September 17, 1849, Lowertowners were meeting in the market to plan the festivities for an upcoming visit of Lord Elgin. They had set up a platform, and speeches were underway when fifteen hundred Loyalists (still not fans of Elgin) from Uppertown and neighbouring townships descended on the meeting (Mika and Mika 1982, 206). A riot ensued; people on both sides started throwing sticks and stones, there were a few gun shots, and one man, David Borthwith, was shot and killed. This event became known as "Stoney Monday." It occurred outside the Shouldice Hotel, a building which became the bar "Stoney Mondays" in the 1990s. Tensions were driven by class, politics, religion, and language, and these tensions would become codified in societies, lie dormant, and erupt throughout the city's history.

Many contemporary sociologists have critiqued Durkheim for his rigid separation of religious and political worlds. Sociologist Bonar Buffam details how a universal division of the sacred and profane, church and society, does not exist. His research on Canadian Sikh Gurdwaras shows that these are places of sacred rituals *and* places of prosaic, everyday service to society and political organizing (Buffam 2020). In Ottawa, churches were built to create opportunities for praising God and warding off the Devil, as in the medieval design of the asymmetrical towers of the 1891 Saint Francois d'Assise Church in Hintonburg (Leaning 2003), but churches were also places for socializing and for political mobilization, including the organizing of "secret" fraternal societies that provided opportunities for nurturing social capital and mobility for men.

The Orange Order — named for seventeenth-century King William of Orange — established halls throughout the region. Orangeism is a fraternal, oath-based Protestant order that had incredible social and political salience

in nineteenth-century Ontario and was notably anti-Catholic. An Orange Lodge was built in the 1850s in Bell's Corners (Elliott 1991, 54), and there are still Orange Lodge Halls in Richmond and Hintonburg. The town of Orangeville (now a neighbourhood known as the Glebe Annex, between Bell and Booth Streets) was named for its residents' extensive membership in the Orange Order before being renamed Mount Sherwood in 1873 (Stefko 2023). After the municipal election in 1856, sleigh-loads of Protestants, rejoicing in winning the majority of council, stopped off at a Catholic-owned tavern, trashed the house, and beat up customers. Denie Tierney Jr. was murdered; his death was deemed "caused by persons unknown" (Elliott 1991, 70). Tierney's murder became a rallying cry for those angry about anti-Catholic discrimination.

However, the Orange Order was not the only secret society in town. Beginning in the 1850s, Bytown and then Ottawa was home to a number of Masonic Lodges: the Civil Service Lodge, Builders Lodge, Doric Lodge, Bytown Corinthian Lodge, and Dalhousie Lodge (Jenkyns 2010). Lumber industrialist E.B. Eddy was a freemason, and a Lodge was created in his name in the 1870s (Vincent-Domey 1994). The Independent Order of Odd Fellows — a fraternal society for tradesmen — and their female equivalent, the Rebekahs, established groups in Westboro in 1911 (Elliott 1991).

On Beechwood Avenue, St. Charles Church, a wooden Catholic church built in 1908, is now nestled in a condominium–courtyard–yoga studio plan by ModBox Developments. From 1908 until its decommissioning in 2013, the church nourished Franco-Ontarian religious and social life. It was here that Father Barrette and thirteen Francophone civil servants founded the secret fraternal Order of Jacques Cartier, also known as "La Patente." The order was established to respond to the overwhelming influence of the English and Protestant secret societies on the city and nation. The membership grew to over seventy thousand members across the country and was involved in issues like increasing French-English bilingualism on street signs and stamps and ensuring Francophones were promoted in the civil service (MacKinnon 2018). That this order was established in Eastview, a Francophone city that would later become the neighbourhood of Vanier, is not surprising.

People began settling in Janeville, a community built on land owned by Scottish settler Donald McArthur (and named for his wife Jane), east of the Rideau River in 1873. Janeville became a village with an English majority. The villages of Clarkstown and Clandeboye, both of which had Francophone

majorities, grew north of Janeville in the 1880s. These towns were desirable for middle-class public servants, offering fresh air away from the bustle of Bytown, lower taxes, and fewer building restrictions. By 1887, two-thirds of the population of these towns was French. French establishments, schools, and churches — the Montfortains, the Notre Dame de Lourdes (1887) (which eventually built the St. Charles Church), the Pères Blanc/Missionnaires d'Afrique — nourished a Catholic, Francophone culture. The towns became incorporated as the city of Eastview in 1909, and by the time Eastview was renamed Vanier in 1969, after Canada's first French-Canadian governor general Georges-Philias Vanier (in office from 1959 to 1967), the city was the heart of Franco-Ontarian culture. The city's renaming occurred the same year as the passage of Canada's English-French Official Languages Act, a success that may have been, in fact, influenced by the activities of La Patente.

The nineteenth century also saw the beginning of immigration to Ottawa from Lebanon. Ottawa has the second largest population of Lebanese in Canada (after Montreal), and the highest concentration of Lebanese in Canada (Dib 2022). Lebanese-Canadian scholar Kamal Dib explained that the Lebanese who immigrated to the Ottawa Valley in the late nineteenth century initially worked as farmers and push-cart vendors. At that time the Lebanese and Syrians were all identified as "Turks" in Canadian records and were not recorded as Lebanese until after 1920. These early, largely Christian Lebanese immigrants established Ottawa's St. Elias Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral, Maronite Church, and Melkite Catholic Church. In the early twentieth century, Kfarmechki was a small town in Lebanon that, Dib joked, many in Ottawa presumed was the capital of Lebanon because so many from this town settled in Ottawa. In 1946, Diab and Jamily Boushey moved to Ottawa from Kfarmechki and established Boushey's Fruit Market, which served the community for seventy years (Deachman 2019). After it closed in 2016 the small plaza beside the former market was dedicated "Boushey's Square." Halim "Al" Saikali, a "pillar" of the Lebanese community also from Kfarmechki, opened Al's Steakhouse on Elgin Street as the neighbourhood's first fine dining restaurant in 1967, after learning how to cook as an employee of the Château Laurier as a new immigrant to the city in the early 1950s (Egan 2016).

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, immigration policy affirmed early colonizers' visions of Canada as a white-settler society. The 1967 introduction of the "points system" of immigration — which assessed potential immigrants on education, economic contribution, and language

rather than country of origin — changed the demographic makeup of the city. In Canada, multiculturalism has had four overlapping definitions. First, it refers to an old demographic reality — Canada's population has been ethnically and culturally diverse since the country's formation. Second, multiculturalism is an ideology — "normative descriptions about how Canadian society *ought* to be" — that suggests Canada should embrace cultural pluralism. Third, multiculturalism is "a process and a terrain of competition among and between minority groups for valuable economic and political resources" (Liodakis 2012, 258–9). Nikolaos Liodakis (2012) explains that the shift toward multiculturalism was not a natural or benign gift of the white majority. Ethnic groups, especially in relation to the Quebec sovereignty movement, fought for recognition, carving out this pluralist ideology. Finally, multiculturalism is a set of government initiatives and policies, most explicitly codified in the 1971 Multiculturalism Act. The twentieth and twenty-first centuries saw increasingly coordinated responses to refugee crises at the federal and municipal levels, reflecting a broader cultural adoption of multiculturalism.

During the Lebanese civil war (1975–1990), 75,000 largely Muslim Lebanese immigrants came to Canada, mostly from the war-impacted region of southern Lebanon. Because Lebanon was a French colony, many Lebanese speak French. In Ottawa, Lebanese-Canadians have higher rates of French-English bilingualism than other Canadians. Dib argues that it was Canada's openness as an immigrant-receiving country, and the French-English bilingualism in Ottawa, that made Ottawa an attractive place to settle.

In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, an acute and immense refugee crisis was unfolding in Southeast Asia. Malaysia, Singapore, and South Korea were facing arrivals of refugees in such numbers that by 1978 these countries often refused to admit them. After watching devastating news coverage of this crisis, Mayor Marion Dewar called a meeting for June 27, 1979, with a number of representatives of the Ottawa community. A federal representative confirmed that the Canadian government had recently increased the refugee target to eight thousand, and four thousand had already been selected for immigration. "Struck by the gap between the magnitude of the crisis as portrayed by the media and the official's comments, Dewar said, 'Fine. We'll take the other 4,000'" (Buckley 2008, 31). Project 4000 was born. The city approved a $25,000 budget for the project, and the *Ottawa Citizen* sponsored a family, advertised the project, and encouraged

other organizations to similarly step up. Volunteer committees organized clothing, housing, education, health care, and settlement and adaptation for refugees, along with handling government relations and starting a newsletter (Buckley 2008, 34–36).

By July 1979 Joe Clark's government had raised refugee admissions to fifty thousand, and by the end of 1980, sixty thousand refugees had settled in Canada. Brian Buckley states that "the radically increased target of 50,000 was well beyond the expectations of even the most vocal activists" (Buckley 2008, 29). Slightly over 10 percent of the two million refugees from this crisis came to Canada. As Mike Lolloy, head of the government's "Refugee Task Force" concluded: "no question … Project 4000 in Ottawa and Operation Lifeline in Toronto were the most influential of the local initiatives responding to the 'Boat People' crisis" (Buckley 2008, 71). Project 4000 continues to be remembered and upheld as an exemplar of what the people of Ottawa are capable of; it was evoked as a strong and powerful precedent during the more recent immigration of Syrian refugees.

Vietnamese and Laotian refugees have made their mark on a strip of Somerset Street, known somewhat erroneously as Chinatown. The Hungarian revolution of 1956, ethnic cleansing by the Ugandan Amin government leading to the refugee crisis of Asian Ugandans in 1971, the Iranian revolution of 1979, droughts in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia during the 1980s, civil wars in Somalia, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, the 2015 war in Syria, and the war in Ukraine (2022–) are likewise all global conflicts and phenomena that have shaped millions of individuals' personal biographies and contributed to the history, culture, experiences, and opportunities available in Canada. Meanwhile, Canadian groups have mobilized and pushed the federal government to adjust immigration policies, enabling new flourishing of cultural, ethnic, and racial difference in Canada and in Ottawa.

A NEW WAY FORWARD

In a book I co-edited on the monuments of Ottawa and Gatineau, we found that there are more monuments to white men named John than there are to Black Canadians, Asian Canadians, and named Indigenous people. From a cursory tourist perspective, it may thus appear that Ottawa and Canada have been created largely by British-descended white men. But this misconception is the result of a particular type of spatialized mythmaking. Confederation is lauded and the violence of the Indian Act, also orchestrated here, ignored. Yet Ottawans are increasingly realizing that they are living on Algonquin

land. In 2015, Ottawa was the site of the conclusion of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, marked by a four-plus-kilometre walk from Gatineau, past Parliament, and ending at Ottawa's city hall. The TRC interviewed seven thousand residential school survivors in its nine years of work, and between seven and ten thousand people from across the country participated in the walk, understood to be, as one banner read, "A new way forward" ("Walk for Reconciliation Draws…" 2015).

Problematizing Ottawa — its white John-ness — requires denaturalizing Ottawa's whiteness. First, since the beginning of settlement, Ottawa has not been all white. Samuel de Champlain, celebrated as one of the first Europeans in the region, travelled with Mathieu de Costa, a Black Portuguese man celebrated for his facility with languages. When Wright arrived in the region, a Black man — London Oxford — was a member of his party. Oxford's two hundred acres at the mouth of the Gatineau River became the site of launching rafts during the early days of the lumber industry (Henderson 2023). Policies crafted in Ottawa largely prevented much Black immigration until the mid-twentieth century, while the Chinese head tax from 1885 to 1923 significantly curtailed Chinese arrivals, explaining Ottawa's small Chinatown. The city's early Lebanese immigrants were also imagined and welcomed as white immigrants, unlike the later waves of Lebanese. This is a whiteness largely uncritiqued; in fact, the designers of the Chinese head tax and anti-Black immigration policies are celebrated with statues and named streets and hotels.

Ottawa's landscape of religious and cultural practices — the Lebanese Orthodox churches, French and Irish Catholic churches, synagogues in Lowertown and Centretown, tensions among secret societies — have similarly reflected broader push-and-pull factors and function as important historical markers. History has shaped the structures and opportunities that underpin life in the city, but the city has also been full of actors — Bishop Guigues, John A. Macdonald, Marion Dewar, Father Barrette, Lord Bathurst, Richard Talbot — who have demonstrated that history is not merely something that unfolds, but it is a collective accomplishment, for better and worse.