

From Sacred Site to Industrial Wasteland: Colonialism and Class Struggle in the Chaudière District

Walking tour with Brian McDougall of Peoples' History Walking Tours

Date: Sunday, September 29, 2024, starting at 10 am

Starting point: The tour starts from northeast corner of the intersection of Wellington Street and the Portage Bridge (roughly between **Library and Archives Canada** and the **Mill Street Brew Pub**). It will end near the War Museum. (Parking is available at the Mill Street Brew Pub.)

Note: participants will have the option of joining the guide at the Mill Street Brew Pub after the tour.



Cost: \$35 per person, by cash or via e-transfer, at the conclusion of the tour.

Registration: Please register in advance. Simply send an email with your name and cell phone number to brian.phwt@gmail.com, indicating you plan to join us for the tour.

Tour overview

This three-hour tour covers the 200-year transformation of an Indigenous sacred site into an industrial zone with massive factories, brutal working conditions, and militant strikes. It highlights the parallels between the exploitation of Chaudière workers, from the 1850s through to recent times, and the twice repeated dispossession of the Algonquin's sacred site, the islands and shore near the Chaudière Falls: first in the 1840s-50s, and second with the 2013 sale of the Domtar lands to property developers.

Tour Details

Like other parts of North America, the Ottawa-Gatineau region was once acknowledged to be Indigenous land. Through a unilateral and fraudulent 'legal' process, colonial officials dispossessed the Algonquin of the territory that includes present-day Ottawa. Focused on the islands and shore near the Chaudière Falls (the area called 'Akikodjiwan' by the Algonquin), this tour traces the 200-year history during which an Indigenous sacred site was transformed into an industrial zone, with huge factories dependent upon labour from nearby working-class neighborhoods in Hull and Lebreton Flats.

This tour takes a circuitous route the Chaudière District to Hull and back. During 8 or 9 stops, we tell the stories of Indigenous peoples, shantymen and raftsmen, sawmill workers, women match workers (les Allumettières), pulp and paper workers, the community activists who opposed the government destruction of their neighborhoods, and the anti-colonial activists who recently fought against the government handover of an Indigenous sacred site to condo developers. At each stop we talk about the implications of past events for current efforts to oppose colonialism and capitalism.



The tour covers the following:

- The pre-settler status of the Chaudière District as an Algonquin sacred site
- Early settlement in the Chaudière District
- The fur trade and timber trade on the Ottawa River
- Development of the sawn lumber industry and large factories in the Chaudière District
- Growth of the Chaudière's industrial working class and its communities in Lebreton Flats
- The 1891 sawmill workers' strike
- The 1924 strike by women match workers
- The 1974 anti-wage controls strike by pulp & paper workers
- Resistance to the federal destruction of the working-class neighborhoods in Lebreton Flats and downtown Hull
- Modern Indigenous use of Victoria Island as a site for gathering and protest
- Government and corporate debates about the fate of the decommissioned Chaudière industrial site
- Indigenous opposition to the 'condo-ization' of the Chaudière District

Tour guide: Brian McDougall, owner of Peoples' History Walking Tours (PHWT), will be your guide. Brian is a former university teacher and retired federal public servant who is an adjunct professor with Carleton University's Institute of Canadian Studies. Brian's interest in local history stems from almost five decades of leftist political activism, in the labour movement, anti-colonial struggles, and around many other issues. He started PHWT in 2014.

For more information: Contact Brian McDougall

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