1.2 THEMATIC HISTORY

This thematic framework has been developed to provide an overview of human activity within the City of Niagara Falls, which incorporates the former geographic township of Stamford, and portions of Willoughby, Humberstone and Crowland townships, all in the former Welland County. It describes various agents of change in the landscape and outlines social and cultural developments over time. The purpose is two-fold. It provides the criteria for identifying and mapping potential heritage features and defining zones of historical significance, and it provides the context for understanding the ways that heritage resources can be identified and interpreted.

This thematic overview is broad and is not intended to provide an exhaustive history of the City of Niagara Falls, which has been documented by numerous authors whose work is cited in this document. Furthermore, many of the themes are interconnected, demonstrating their validity as criteria that can be used to examine aspects of Niagara Falls's past that have contributed to its growth and development, and to suggest ways in which the interpretation of heritage features can enhance the understanding of that past.

1.2.1 Introduction

For the purposes of this historical overview, a few overarching themes have been chosen. These are:

- Settlement
- Economic Development
- The Underground Railroad
- Conflict Along the Border
- Spirituality and Modern Utopias
- A Changed and Changing Landscape

As will be evident in later sections, these overall themes have, in turn, been expanded into a more detailed and comprehensive list of themes and storylines. This longer list would be a suitable basis for a municipal interpretive master plan that would guide heritage tourism development.

It should also be noted that U.S. National Parks Service is undertaking a parallel process of identifying major themes for interpreting the history of the region, as part of their study leading to potential designation of the American

side of the Niagara River as a National Heritage Area. To date, the themes they have identified for the bi-national region fall under four main categories:

- The natural resource base
- Borderlands and border crossings
- Power generation
- The history and evolution of tourism

From discussions with Park Service staff, the themes they have identified blend well with the themes that our study is developing, and which are described in the following text.

1.2.2 Theme 1: Settlement

A. PHYSICAL BACKGROUND

The physical geography of an area, in particular its landforms and watercourses, is a major factor affecting settlement patterns (Turner 1994:180). In the City of Niagara Falls, two geographical features have been crucial in defining where people settled and how people travelled through the landscape. First, the shoreline of the Niagara River, which forms the eastern boundary of the study area, is more fertile and better drained than the inland plain. The river itself is an important passage between lakes Ontario and Erie, therefore, it was the key to contact between the Aboriginal people and the first European explorers who came from Quebec by water (Gayler 1994:1). Almost 200 years later, the Niagara River created a frontier for those loyal to the British Crown, who crossed it during the American Revolution and moved west into the Niagara peninsula, beyond the reach of the United States government (Gayler 1994:1). Today, it is more useful to see the land adjacent to the river as a middle ground between two countries instead of a border zone (Herzberg 2001).

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The other crucial feature is the Niagara Escarpment, which extends east-west parallel to the northern boundary of the study area, and rises sharply approximately 50 metres from the lake plain, precluding uninterrupted navigation on the Niagara River (Gayler 1994:1). The famous Falls below Goat Island were first depicted on Samuel de Champlain's 1632 Map with the accompanying caption, "Waterfall at the end of Lake St. Louis [Lake Ontario], of great height, where fish are stunned in descending" (cited in Cooper 1996:14-15).

These two geographical features are intimately connected, and play important roles in the narrative of the City's history, as will be demonstrated in their re-

occurring presence in the subsequent themes. Smaller scale landscape features, however, are largely undocumented by geologists and geographers, as is the diversity of form within each of the two major features. Geographer Keith Tinkler (1994:46) credits this issue of understudy historically for a lack of public interest in preserving landscapes in the Niagara Peninsula.

B. ABORIGINAL OCCUPATION AT THE TIME OF CONTACT

At the beginning of the period of direct contact between Aboriginal people and European explorers and missionaries, the Niagara Peninsula was home to a prospering population, who lived in numerous villages surrounded by extensive cornfields. By 1650, these people had abandoned their homeland joining other refugees in the Ontario Iroquoian diaspora. They left no written record of their traditions or the generations that went before. Their legacy is preserved in oral history, and the archaeological sites and artifacts that remain today (Cooper 1996:14).

The first recorded visit by a European explorer to southern Ontario was made in 1615 by Samuel de Champlain, who reported that a group situated between the New York Iroquois and the Huron were at peace and remained "la nation neutre" (Lennox and Fitzgerald 1990:405). This group, known as the historic Neutral, was a confederacy of Iroquoian-speaking tribes whose distribution is known through textual and cartographic information, as well as archaeology (White 1978:407). Unfortunately, none of the contemporary documents mention the term that the Neutral used to refer to themselves collectively. Although we do know the names of three Neutral groups from the Jesuit Relations, there is no known word comparable to the Huron word Wendat that would indicate that the Neutral recognised themselves as a confederation of individual tribes. The term "Neutral" is an artifact of the European explorers, a name that poorly describes their position vis-a-vis surrounding Iroquoian and Algonquian peoples. Moreover, it implies a level of political unity equivalent to the Huron or League Iroquois confederacies, which may be inaccurate (Cooper 1996:16).

The only first hand description of the Neutral country comes from a visit made in the fall of 1626 by Joseph de La Roche Daillon, a Recollet missionary who spent three months visiting a number of villages. In a letter to a friend he described the extent and pattern of Neutral settlements, noting 28 towns, cities, and villages made like those in the Huron country, and also of several little hamlets of seven or eight cabins, built in various parts convenient for fishing, hunting, or agriculture (cited in Cooper 1996:16).

He went on to describe an abundance of game and the recently harvested vegetal foods he observed. He noted incredible numbers of deer, moose or elk, beaver, black squirrel, and wild-cat, which probably referred to the raccoon, which had no analogue in France. Birds included wild geese, turkey and cranes, while the fish were described as excellent. Cultigens included corn, pumpkins, beans and a very good oil referred to as touronton, which was probably an oil rendered from the sunflower (Cooper 1996:17).

The next recorded visit to the Neutral took place in 1640 when the Jesuits, Jean De Brebeuf and Joseph Pierre-Marie Chaumonot attempted to establish a mission, named Notre Dame des Anges, among the Neutral. Their five month visit was transcribed by their superior, Jerome Lalement, in the Relation of 1641. Lalement mentioned that the last village of the Neutral was Onguiaahra, situated on the east side of the River of the same name. Lalement estimated the population at 12,000 individuals living in about 40 villages or hamlets (Thwaites 1896-1901:xxi, 189, 191). This estimate took into account that between 1636 and 1640, warfare, famine, and epidemics had taken their toll on the population (Cooper 1996:17). Following the visit of Brebeuf and Chaumonot, no further attempts were made to re-establish a mission, although it was reported that a number of Christian Huron travelled to the Neutral country to proselytize (Cooper 1996:18).

While there is no seventeenth century ethnographic information about the ideology of the southeastern Neutral, Niagara Falls no doubt figured prominently. It is unlikely, however, that we will ever know the precise relationship between the belief system of these people and one of the world's most powerful physical features (ASI 1999:3). The Falls may also have had a role in subsistence practice. It is possible that the carcasses of white-tailed deer, black bear, and other animals swept over the Falls were collected and utilized by the Neutral. A contemporary account by Francois Gendron, a Jesuit surgeon who resided among the Huron of Simcoe County in the 1640s, mentions that the Indians (unspecified) who lived in the vicinity of the Falls subsisted on game caught by the current and swept over (Revel 1965:3-4). The accuracy of this statement may be brought into question as it was not a first-hand observation (ASI 1999:3). Nevertheless, the presence of large quantities of carrion at the bottom of the Falls has been noted by most early observers, including the first recorded statement about Niagara Falls by Samuel de Champlain (Biggar 1936). If carrion was not a desired source of animal protein to the Neutral living in the southeastern Niagara Peninsula, it certainly was available whenever food resources became overly scarce (e.g., following crop failures).

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Gendron also discussed a much sought after medicinal substance, which he referred to as "pierres Eriennes" or Erie stone, that was obtained from sources along the Niagara River and traded to the Huron (ASI 1999:3). This material was reportedly used in salves or ointments for the treatment of open sores, skin lesions and malignant ulcers, and would appear to be aragonite, a mineral composed of calcium carbonate with inclusions of magnesium sulphate and calcium sulphate (Hunter 1985:4). Aragonite is formed on the walls of the Niagara gorge as a result of water percolation through the limestone bedrock to the underlying less permeable shales. The water, which carries dissolved carbonates , subsequently flows horizontally, discharges through outlets in the face of the gorge, and flows down the rock face. Evaporation of the water once it surfaces results in the accumulation of aragonite on the rock face (Hunter 1985:4). In some localities, such as to the west of the whirlpool, substantial deposits of this "frothy greyish" material may be found (ASI 1999:4).

Since the late 1960s, much archaeological research on the Neutral has focussed on refining regional chronologies, and describing settlement-subsistence patterns, in addition to excavating individual sites. It has been demonstrated that historic Neutral villages tend to cluster in distinct geographical areas. The City of Niagara Falls coincides with the most easterly cluster in Ontario, belonging to the Onguiarahronon tribe as named on the DuCreux map of 1660 (Noble 1978:Figure 1). One village in this cluster, known archaeologically as the Stanley site, is located close to the northern municipal boundary and the Niagara Escarpment. While surveys to relocate Neutral sites have concentrated on the Hamilton-Brantford, and Fort Erie-Port Colborne areas (Cooper 1996:19), no comprehensive surveys have been conducted to date in the City of Niagara Falls.

The New York Iroquois destroyed the villages of the Neutral between 1647 and 1651, and briefly settled along strategic trade routes on the north shore of Lake Ontario and the Niagara River during the late seventeenth century (Noble 1978:162). During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the former Neutral territory came to be occupied by the Mississaugas, an Algonquian people whose subsistence economy was based on garden farming, as well as hunting, fishing and gathering wild plants. The British crown recognized the Mississaugas as the "owners" of the west shore of the Niagara River and entered into negotiations to facilitate the settlement of Loyalists and the Six Nations allies after the American Revolution.

C. EURO-CANADIAN SETTLEMENT

Perhaps the most famous explorer to visit Niagara Falls and record his observations was Louis Hennepin, who accompanied La Salle on his second voyage of discovery to North America. During that time (1678-1681), the French staked out a formal claim of possession of the Niagara River, and continued to explore the Upper Great Lakes in search of a passage to China and the Gulf of Mexico (Revie 2003:21). At that time, permanent French settlements were confined to the St. Lawrence River and some of the maritime provinces in eastern Canada.

It was not until the Niagara frontier came under British rule that permanent Euro-Canadian settlements were established in the former townships of Welland County. In many aspects, they were conditioned by the same environmental constraints that played an important role in shaping the Aboriginal occupation of the study area. For example, Iroquoian farmers had used the best agricultural land centuries earlier and their main villages had been situated nearby. On the other hand, settlement was premised on the exploitation and domestication of the wilderness, and resulted in dramatic re-ordering of the environment. Colonial concepts of settlement, based on buildings located within blocks of land bounded by roads (typically a military grid system), somewhat mitigated against the need to work closely within the constraints of the existing environment. White settlers, seeking greater permanence in their surroundings, cleared their forested landscapes on a comparatively large scale for the purposes of agriculture. The eventual growth of centres of settlement, offering a range of specialized industrial and commercial services, and later providing distinct residential areas, also denoted a new permanence in the landscape.

United Empire Loyalists

The province of Ontario was born out of America's struggle for independence from Great Britain in the late eighteenth century. A great many of the wealthy merchants, farmers, and landowners in New York State resolved to remain loyal to the Crown, but were drawn into the war because they did not sign the Articles of Association against the Government drawn up by the Continental Congress. Loyalist properties were quickly seized and destroyed, and hostages were taken. To counter this threat, the British government charged Sir Guy Carleton with organizing a raid on New York to be undertaken by the Iroquois and a Loyalist militia. Carleton relied heavily on the expertise of Colonel John Butler, deputy for the Acting Superintendent of the Indian Department, who raised a corps of Rangers, many of whom could speak an Aboriginal language, to fight alongside the Iroquois against the Americans.

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Butler anticipated that this war would precipitate the immigration of many Loyalist refugees to the west side of the Niagara River, and at his suggestion, a large tract of land was purchased from the Mississauga people (Whitfield 1991:13). The purchase, negotiated by Colonel Guy Johnson on May 9, 1781, was the first permanent surrender of Aboriginal lands to the British in Ontario (Gentilcore and Head 1984:81). All the lands within the present City of Niagara Falls were included in this purchase as the western boundary started at a point on Lake Ontario near Six Mile Creek, dropped south to the Welland River, and continued southeast to a point on Lake Erie (Hughes 1994:214). The proposed settlement gained permanence in 1783 after the Treaty of Paris was signed and royal instructions regarding the policy of land grants to Loyalists and disbanded soldiers were finalized. The Loyalists were offered free land by the British government as an inducement to settle in Upper Canada, and as payment to those who had remained loyal and served during the American Revolutionary war (Hancocks 1984).

Following the 1787 survey of Niagara Township, 13 other townships in the Niagara Peninsula were laid out, either partially or fully, starting first with Stamford Township, surveyed in 1788 using the south boundary of Niagara Township as its baseline (Hughes 1994:234). It was the first to be surveyed after Niagara because it also contained a sizeable population of disbanded Rangers and other Loyalist settlers (Petrie 1977:15). A map attributed to surveyor Allan Macdonnel circa 1783 illustrated a string of farms along the Niagara River, where the soils were better drained, principally in Niagara Township, but three lots occupied by Francis Elsworth, Philip Bender, and Thomas McMicking, lay above the Escarpment beyond the township baseline (Hughes 1994:218, Figure 8.4). Thus, the earliest permanent non-Aboriginal settlement within the City of Niagara Falls predates the official survey of Stamford Township by five years.

Crowland and Willoughby Townships were only partially surveyed by the end of 1789, as the surveyors concentrated their efforts on settlements already formed along the Welland and Niagara rivers (Hughes 1994:237). The survey of Humberstone Township followed, although settlers had arrived in the early 1780s to take up locations fronting Lake Erie, outside of the study area (Anonymous 1887:276-77).

The network of roads developed by the Loyalist settlers in the 1780s in part followed trails used by the Aboriginal people (Turner 1994:189). They are rec-

ognizable because they do not follow the surveyor's grid, but rather take into consideration topographic features in order to follow the path of least resistance when travelling. Important early trails include the Mountain Road (Regional Road 101 from Queenston west to Thorold), which skirts the Escarpment; the Creek Road (Regional Road 63) and Welland River Boulevard, which follow the north bank of the Welland River west from Chippawa into the interior; Beaver Dams Road (Regional Road 53); Lyons Creek Road (Regional Roads 47 and 27), which follows the creek southwest out of Chippawa into the interior; Drummond Road (Regional Road 100) through Niagara Falls, which hooks up to Four Mile Creek Road (Regional Road 100) at St. Davids, a natural egress over the Escarpment when travelling north to Lake Ontario; and the Portage Road around the Falls on the east bank of the Niagara River.

The Loyalists were not a homogenous ethnic group and it has been noted that the Niagara region's early population was diverse (Turner 1994:190). The original Aboriginal and Metis inhabitants were joined by transplanted Loyalists from New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania of English, German, Dutch, Afro-American, Scots, and Irish backgrounds (Hancocks 1984:55). Some of the Afro-Americans arrived as freemen but most of them were slaves accompanying Loyalist families (Hill 1981:65). For example, Thomas McMicking, who settled Lots 1 and 2 in Stamford Township, brought a male slave with him in 1782 (Seibel 1990:26).

Settlement Centres in the Former Welland County

The War of 1812 disrupted the economy and halted the flow of immigrants to Ontario. After the Treaty of Ghent was signed in 1814, however, there was a renewed interest in emigration from overseas and the United States. Immigration combined with natural population growth in the established settlement centres resulted in the reformulation of the County of Welland in 1856 to include the townships of Crowland, Bertie, Humberstone, Pelham, Willoughby, Stamford, Thorold, and Wainfleet (Anonymous 1887:144). Welland County in turn was superseded by the Regional Municipality of Niagara in 1970, and the creation of the City of Niagara Falls from four of the townships.

The Loyalists were not a homogenous ethnic group and it has been noted that the Niagara region's early population was diverse.

Six early settlement centres were illustrated in the Historical Atlas of Lincoln & Welland: Drummondville, Clifton, Elgin, Chippawa, Stamford Village and New Germany. These communities contained places of worship, meeting halls, schools, blacksmith shops, stores, hotels, taverns, tourist attractions, and

other commercial service buildings, some of which are still standing today. In addition, an early commercial subdivision known as the City of the Falls was planned in Stamford Township, but never attracted a large enough population to warrant village incorporation.

Stamford Township: Drummondville, Clifton, Elgin, and City of the Falls

The community of Drummondville is centred on the homes and businesses established where the Portage Road intersected with Lundy's Lane and Ferry Street. It was named in honour of Sir Gordon Drummond, the leader of the British forces in the Battle of Lundy's Lane, and obtained village status in 1831 (Petrie 1967:36). Almost immediately after the War of 1812 was over, the battlefield of Lundy's Lane became a local tourist attraction to rival that of the Falls. Numerous commercially operated observation towers that overlooked the battlefield were constructed during the nineteenth century. In 1882, the community was incorporated and changed its name to the village of Niagara Falls South (Petrie 1967:44).

Captain Ogden Creighton laid out the village lots and streets in the community of Clifton on land that he purchased from the Bender family in 1832 (Petrie 1967:36). He apparently did little to promote this commercial venture, and it was not until Samuel Zimmerman purchased the land that the village population expanded along with the services that the village provided. In 1856, the community amalgamated with the village of Elgin, which is located where the first suspension bridge over the Niagara Gorge terminated on Canadian soil. The previous year, in 1855, Elgin became a railway town when the Great Western Railroad was put through from Hamilton, Ontario, and crossed a new bridge into Niagara Falls, New York (Petrie 1967:38). The amalgamated villages became known as the Town of Elgin, which later changed its name to the Town of Niagara Falls by a special Act of Parliament (Petrie 1967:42).

The Pavilion Hotel was not the first traveler's establishment to be built in Stamford Township close to the Falls, but for a short period of time it was the most infamous due to the actions of its owner, William Forsyth. Forsyth constructed it in 1822, and proceeded to monopolize the tourist industry by blocking public access to the Crown's 66 foot chain reserve adjacent to his property, thus preventing people from viewing the Falls without paying a fee to him (Petrie 1967:33). Forsyth lost the government lawsuit brought against

him, and in 1832, 400 acres of Forsyth's land was purchased for development into the "City of the Falls," where building lots for mixed commercial and residential use were laid out between Murray Hill and Table Rock. Ironically, the investors in this planned community did not make any money, despite its choice location, but they are remembered in the street names that straddle the Portage Road in the Falls View Area: Stanley, Robinson, Dixon, Dunn, Murray, Allan, Buchanan, and Clark (Petrie 1967:35). This area lay south of the City of Niagara Falls' boundary when the latter was incorporated in 1904 through the amalgamation of the village and town of Niagara Falls.

Crowland Township

The first settlers in this township immigrated during the American Revolution and settled on Lyon's Creek, which exits the township in the Fourth Concession on its way to the Niagara River (Anonymous 1887:240). Settlement centres established in this township are outside of that part incorporated into the City of Niagara Falls.

Humberstone Township

Only a fraction of Lots 1 through 10 in the northernmost concession of Humberstone Township were amalgamated into the City of Niagara Falls. No important settlement centres fall within this portion of the former township.

Willoughby Township: Chippawa and New Germany

The residents of Willoughby Township were primarily involved in agricultural pursuits in the nineteenth century, although today few people farm on a large scale (WTHC 1967:22). The principal village in the township is Chippawa, which developed where the portage around the Falls terminated at the Welland River. Here, where the river empties into the Niagara River, a number of enterprising immigrants set up commercial activities to serve the new local market. Thomas Cummings arrived in 1783 from Albany, New York, and opened a general store. He and his son imported goods from Montreal and Albany, and in turn exported flour and wheat grown by local farmers (Seibel 1990:209; Hughes 1994:193). James Macklem arrived in 1791 and opened a tavern. He later became a partner in the Niagara Chippawa Stage Coach Line, and also started a foundry, tannery and distillery at Chippawa (Seibel 1990:209). The village was destroyed during the War of 1812, but quickly rebuilt because of its location at the junction of the Niagara and Welland rivers.

Almost immediately after the War of 1812 was over, the battlefield of Lundy's Lane became a local tourist attraction to rival that of the Falls.

New Germany, or Snyder, is a post village on the southern border of Willoughby Township (WTHC 1967:19). It was founded by German families who immigrated in the 1830s (Anonymous 1887:382).

1.2.3 Theme 2: Economic Development

A. THE NIAGARA PORTAGE

The Niagara Portage was a vital link in the Great Lakes fur trade during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries. In 1787, for example, it was estimated that 40% of the furs acquired by the Montreal merchants were obtained through that route (Seibel 1990:14). The original overland portage route lay on the east bank of the Niagara River, however, as it was shorter than that on the west bank (Seibel 1990:1). It was not until the Niagara River became an official international boundary by the terms of Jay's Treaty that the British government formally established its portage on the west bank of the river.

Local settlers were engaged to haul goods along the Niagara Portage Road (also known as the Settlers Road), using their own wagons and teams, in exchange for credit at the store operated by the member of the portage company for whom they carried goods (Seibel 1990:15). The route crossed many private lands and followed the least strenuous path between nodes of commerce above and below the Falls. The Township of Stamford eventually codified the route of the thoroughfare in March of 1802 (Seibel 1990:18).

Commercial activity based on the growth of the province, tourism to Niagara Falls, and strong economic ties with the United States guaranteed heavy use of the Portage Road even after the fur trade ended (Seibel 1990:65; Herzberg 2001:42). A survey of the Niagara River by Captain Owen in 1817, for example, illustrated numerous stores and taverns along the Portage Road between Queenston and Chippawa (Petrie 1967:28). Today, the Niagara Portage Road remains largely intact within the city street system, except for that portion destroyed by the reservoir for the Sir Adam Beck Generating Station.

B. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Manufacturing in the early nineteenth century was comprised of small establishments, often at a distance to one another, which processed raw material such as wood or wheat fairly close to the resources themselves. Until the use

of steam power revolutionized milling practises, saw and grist mills were powered by dams constructed on watercourses. Unfortunately, many of the interior watercourses in the City of Niagara Falls were too sluggish to support water-powered industries because they flow on a relatively flat plain.

The Niagara River, however, does not have that problem, and the first industries were mills. John Burch build the first saw and grist mill in Stamford Township in 1786 on his land grant above the Falls, which extended between the mouth of Chippawa Creek and the rapids leading to the Horseshoe Falls (Bond 1967:14). A spot below the Dufferin Islands, identified today as the site of the Toronto Power Generating station, was chosen for the mills in consultation with the military and government officials, as a chain reserve of 66 feet inland from the river's edge had been set aside for the Crown (Seibel 1987:77). This area became known as the Hollow, and the gristmill, with its potential stores of surplus grain, soon attracted a distillery at this location, however, by 1800, that enterprise had been abandoned (Seibel 1987:13)

In 1794, Benjamin Canby and John MacGill constructed new mills on a high bank upstream from Burch, which became known as the Bridgewater Mills. The competition caused Burch's business to suffer. Furthermore, the flour ground at Burch's mill was considered unsuitable for export because it remained damp in the moist air close to the Falls (Seibel 1987:63). An iron works that used bog iron mined in Stamford Township was added to the Bridgewater Mills mill complex (Bond 1967:16), as was a tannery operated by John Hardy in 1808 (Seibel 1987:78). Workers' houses sprang up along the Portage Road at the point where a road down to the mills was cut into the sloping bank (Seibel 1987:61). Samuel Street Jr. eventually acquired the mills and iron works after the owner declared bankruptcy in 1809. Street had also acquired Burch's mills after the latter's death in 1797. Thus, Samuel Street controlled a significant stretch of land adjacent to the Niagara River and its early industries, and their importance was marked by the fact that two roads led to Street's Mills, one from the south off Portage Road, and one from the north (Seibel 1987:77).

Commercial activity guaranteed heavy use of the Portage Road even after the fur trade ended.

The American army burned down Street's mills and the other businesses after the Battle of Lundy's Lane in 1814, and the ones in the Hollow were rebuilt and soon enlarged, while the ones at Bridgewater were not (Bond 1967:17). Street added a cloth and fulling mill to the complex, and also built his home in the "Hollow," alongside the homes of the mill workers (Seibel 1987:77). A nail factory, established by Zeba Gay in 1826, and a clock factory, which built

wooden cases for clock works imported from Pennsylvania, were two other early industries present in the Hollow (Seibel 1987:78). Businessman William Hamilton Merritt expressed the importance of Street's mills in 1823 when he stated that they were the only mills from Long Point to Dundas that were capable of doing a "merchantable business" (Seibel 1987:78). The advent of steam power reduced the impact that the water powered mills had on industry, however, and when Street's Mills burned down in 1874, they were not rebuilt (Seibel 1987:78).

This expansion of hydroelectric power in the early twentieth century encouraged major industrial expansion as manufacturers opened new plants where there was reliable and cheap electric power (Montgomery 1967:85). Thus the greater portions of the former village and town of Niagara Falls are now largely zoned industrial (ASI and UMCA 1994:26).

It should not be forgotten, however, that at one time the farms of the former Stamford Township supplied grapes for wine, and tender fruits for processing and canning at plants in Niagara Falls, which supported a diverse food industry in the early twentieth century (Montgomery 1967:84). Furthermore, a picture of the thundering Falls was used for advertising purposes by the inventors of Shredded Wheat, Henry Perky and William Ford, who opened a plant in Niagara Falls, Ontario after starting their business in Worcester Massachusetts in 1890, and then expanding to Niagara Falls, New York in 1901 (Montgomery 1967:84). The company even offered tours that were to become a popular tourist attraction, and in 1907, 100,000 people visited their two plants on either side of the river.

C. TOURISM

Attractions

The Falls at Niagara have been nicknamed the "World's Most Famous Address" (Seibel 1967:48) although it may be more accurate to say that they are simply the world's most famous waterfall and one of the most enduringly famous global tourist attractions, and that subsequent images, such as being regarded as the "Honeymoon Capital of the World", may be a more accurate reflection of global public perceptions. Ever since Father Louis Hennepin set the precedent with his description and illustration of them in 1678, other writers, artists and explorer have been compelled to travel to this natural wonder and offer their assessment of the Falls too (Revie 2003). Soon, the general public in Europe and the North America became familiar with this body of literature and paintings, and in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, tourists began to travel to Niagara Falls. Before transportation was improved with construction of the Erie Canal, and later rail connections, the inaccessibility of the Falls gave it an exotic quality. Today, nearly 20 million visitors a year take the opportunity to travel to Niagara Falls (Herzberg 2001:46).

American entrepreneur William Forsyth, who emigrated to Canada after the War of 1812, quickly set up an infrastructure for bringing tourists over to view the Falls after he arrived in Willoughby Township. He purchased land near Table Rock, built stairs down into the Niagara Gorge, and hired a rowboat to ferry people between the Eagle Tavern on the American side of the river and his boat landing below the Falls (Seibel 1987:6-7). Sideline attractions also were developed to capture the tourist dollar early on, including a Bath House, a museum of natural and cultural curiosities opened by Thomas Barnett in 1827, and "The Burning Spring" (Seibel 1987:10, 12, 62). This legacy survives today with the museums in the Murray Hill district, such as "Ripley's Believe It Or Not" and Tussaud's Wax Museum. Stunters who performed high wire acts, such as Blondin and Farini, barrel riders, such as Annie Edson Taylor, cross-channel swimmers, and other daredevils also were attracted to the Falls and provided the ongoing public attraction of danger and thrills (Beese 1967; Berton 1992).

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Guidebooks that allow visitors to retrace the steps of soldiers who participated in the War of 1812 have been published since the mid-nineteenth century, with Benson Lossing's *Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812* (Lossing 1968) the most comprehensive guide published. Today, almost two hundred years later, the war still holds a fascination for people and Canadian author Gilbert

Collins (1998) has taken Lossing's work and updated the information by including modern landmarks or noting where buildings and the landscape have changed dramatically so that it is easy for people to find the historic sites of the War of 1812. It should be noted that the City of Niagara Falls contains 12 points of interest in Collin's book (Collins 1998:108-117).

Local Hospitality Industry

In the late eighteenth century, travellers coming to see the Falls used the Portage Road and stayed at one of its inns along the way or at the Chippawa terminus. The first entrepreneur credited with building a hotel at the Falls for tourists is William Forsyth, who built the Pavillion circa 1822 (Seibel 1967:49). By 1850, new hotels began to be built close to Table Rock in present-day Queen Victoria Park (Seibel 1967:52). After the Great Western Railway arrived in Elgin in 1853, and the suspension bridge at the Whirlpool Rapids was refitted for trains in 1855, the tourist trade increased significantly (Seibel 1967:52). Hotel and railway excursion packages catered to anyone who wanted to take a trip and stay overnight, especially newlywed couples who embarked on their honeymoon (Berton 1992:127).

The advent of the automobile and the construction and improvement of new roads revolutionized the local hospitality industry once again. In the 1920s, camping became popular and tent campgrounds and cottages were developed for tourists in numerous locations. Homeowners with a spare bedroom also got into the business of providing accommodations by hanging up signs advertising "Rooms for Tourists" (Seibel 1967:54-55). Individual cabins were replaced in popularity by motor hotels, or "motels," after the Second World War (Seibel 1967:58).

New hotels and attractions continue to be constructed in Niagara Falls today and are too numerous to list here.

D. WATER POWER AND HYDRO-ELECTRICITY

The development of a cheap source of hydroelectric power at the Falls by Canadian authorities was slow to take place relative to the advances that had been made on the American side in the late nineteenth century (Herzberg 2001:46). At the time that the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park Commission was created by an Act of provincial parliament in 1885, its commissioners were reluctant to lease water rights for commercial purposes because that was perceived as a conflict with their work of preserving and interpreting to

the public the natural beauty of the Falls. The commissioners stepped back from this position after they realized that their master plan would cost more money than the tourist concessionaires were generating (Ontario Hydro 1967:364; Seibel 1987:33). Furthermore, coal strikes in 1902 jeopardized access to the fuel that drove steam power, which was the energy source of choice in Canada at the time (Herzberg 2001:46). The question of private versus public ownership would assume an ever-growing importance as scientists and engineers solved the basic problems associated with the generation and transmission of electricity in the early twentieth century (Ontario Hydro 1967:364).

The Canadian precedent was set in 1892, when water was diverted from the Niagara River in order to operate a generating plant for an electric railway that ran between Chippawa and Queenston (Ontario Hydro 1967:364-65). The Ontario Power Company was one of the first to receive a franchise from the Park Commissioners to build a large-scale facility within their boundary. These works were eclipsed in 1917, when the Sir Adam Beck Generating Station #1 was constructed at Queenston. Its powerhouse was designed to generate over 400,000 kilowatts of electricity (the largest project in the world for its day), in part by harnessing an immense reserve of water in a forebay dug out of the limestone of Queenston Heights (Fram 1984:65). This reservoir extends into the northeast portion of the City of Niagara Falls, on Lots 1, 2, 3, 18 and 19 in the former Stamford Township. The development also included an eight and a half mile long power canal around the Town of Niagara Falls that opened in 1921. The construction work that took place indeed was disruptive to the Queen Victoria Park, with the land from Table Rock to the Dufferin Islands torn up to various degrees from 1892 to 1918 (Seibel 1987:35).

The mammoth Sir Adam Beck Generating Station #2 was finished in 1958. It is interesting to note that its construction was tied to a treaty signed between the United States and Canada that specified the minimum amount of water that was to pass over the cataracts during daylight hours, thus guaranteeing the scenic grandeur of the Falls (Ontario Hydro 1967:375).

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1.2.4 Theme 3: The Underground Railroad

Niagara Falls was one of several places in the Niagara Peninsula that attracted Black immigrants seeking freedom from slavery prior to the American Civil War (Hill 1981a). Slavery was phased out following passage of legislation in 1793 by the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada, but the first wave of Black immigration did not occur until the first quarter of the nineteenth century (Hill 1981b:48). After the Fugitive Slave Act was passed by the American Congress in 1850, Ontario experienced a second wave of immigration via the Underground Railroad (Hill 1981b:53).

The church was the social and spiritual core of Black communities established in Ontario during the nineteenth century (Hill 1981b:130). The immigrants from the United States in particular brought with them traditions that had been born out of years of racial segregation. For example, the British Methodist Episcopal (BME) Church was a Canadian sister of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, founded in Philadelphia by Richard Allen to provide an alternative for Black worshippers segregated in the Methodist Church (Hill 1981b:127). In Ontario, it was not until the 1830s that the AME Church officially organized congregations, with one established in Drummondville in 1836 (Hill 1981b:136).

The Black community in Niagara Falls remained small in the late nineteenth century, but one of its members, Burr Plato, served as an elected councillor for Drummondville prior to 1900. Another talented local African-Canadian was Nathaniel Dett, who was born in Drummondville in 1883, and became famous in the United States as a choral conducter (Kolesnikovs 1967:172).

1.2.5 Theme 4: Conflict Along the Border

Periodically, political tensions between the United States and Canada have disrupted the complex interdependent relationship that the two countries have in the Niagara region.

A. THE WAR OF 1812

The Niagara peninsula had been settled by large numbers of Americans, thus when the American politicians declared war on Great Britain in June of 1812, they foresaw an easy campaign of liberation rather than a difficult war of con-

quest. Major-General Isaac Brock, Commander in Upper Canada, had reason to fear that the Americans were right about the loyalty of the Canadian population as some militia units refused to muster, while others that did showed signs of being unreliable. Most proved to be loyal, however, and Brock could count on the superior quality of the British regulars and their Aboriginal allies.

At the outset, the Americans regarded Quebec and southwestern Ontario to be the principal theatres of operation (Stanley 1983:117). The Niagara region could be used for diversionary tactics and in early July, Brock reported to Lieutenant-General Sir George Provost, Commander-in-Chief of British North America, that the Americans made a daily parade of their forces between Fort Niagara and Black Rock, which Brock estimated to be 1,200 regulars and militia (Cruikshank n.d.:94). When war was declared, Brock had 500 soldiers and 800 militia at his disposal in the Niagara peninsula, and Fort George became his headquarters and the primary ordnance depot. He was in desperate need, however, during the summer of 1812, of additional officers, men and heavy ordnance (Cruikshank n.d.:243). The Americans were expected to attack first during the month of July, and the civilian population along the river removed their effects and families inland, leaving the villages along the Niagara River inhabited by only a few civilians, officers and soldiers (Cruikshank n.d.:126).

Following the surrender of American Brigadier General William Hull at Detroit, in August of 1812, Major-General Stephen van Rensselaer was dispatched to command the combined American force of regular soldiers and militia that was assembling along the Niagara River. Their position was strengthened by troop reinforcements and new defensive works, and Brock anticipated that an attack would be made against Fort Erie or Chippawa, above the Falls where crossing the river was easier, or at Fort George at the mouth of the river (Hitsman 1965:86). To watch the border, Brock formed four divisions, to be composed of regulars and militia, and placed them at strategic crossing points along the Niagara River. He posted the Second Division at Chippawa, which included the grenadier company of the 41st Foot and a portion of the Iroquois allies who served with Major John Norton. A defensive position was adopted and the British waited for the Americans to attack. This plan worked, and the opening engagements of the war brought some surprising American reverses. Although Brock was killed in the Battle of Queenston Heights in 1812, his strategy lived on, and the British were able to

The opening engagements of the war brought some surprising American reverses.

inflict a series of embarrassing defeats on their would-be invaders during the first two years of the war.

Lands within the present City of Niagara Falls did not serve as an important theatre of war until 1814, although a small garrison of the Lincoln militia was maintained at Fort Chippawa in 1813, and the fort was captured by American forces in May of 1813 (Cruikshank 1902:228; Seibel 1990:211-12). By 1814, the American army was finally becoming a well-trained and efficient military machine. As a result, the Niagara Campaign of 1814 would be bloodier than ever that summer. Although neither side ever fielded more than 4,000 men at any one time that summer, over 2,400 British and 1,800 Americans would be killed or wounded. These devastating casualty rates came in a campaign that would range the length of the Niagara frontier and include desperate battles at Chippawa and Lundy's Lane (Whitehorne 1991:27).

The Battle of Chippawa, fought between July 4th and 5th, marked the first major clash between the American invasion forces and those British troops rallying to confront them during the Niagara campaign of 1814. British casualties resulting from this confrontation numbered approximately 500, while the Americans, who held the field at the end of the battle, suffered a loss of 300 men (Whitehorne 1991:26, 1992:30-32; Graves 1994). During the mid-1990s, a multi-phase management plan was developed for the Chippawa Battlefield Lands and submitted to the Niagara Parks Commission to facilitate public interpretation of the site (ACSI et. al. 1996, 1997).

The Battle of Lundy's Lane was even more of a murderous nightmare for both armies, not only because it involved regulars, but also because it was fought largely at night (Graves 1993:ix). When morning broke, the British were atop the hill amidst hundreds of lifeless bodies. The dead of both armies lay in mounds, intermingled with lifeless horses and discarded equipment. The British fighting strength was reduced by 800; the Americans reported 860 casualties and missing men. Attrition in the U.S. officer ranks was particularly high, with Generals Brown and Scott included among the wounded (Graves 1993).

The Americans withdrew to Chippawa, then, after assessing their remaining strength, retreated all the way back to Fort Erie, burning Chippawa in their wake (Seibel 1990:214; ASI 1998:8). There, they endured an arduous siege during the months of August and September, but they did not give up the fort until early November (Whitehorne 1991:26). The American forces made no

further attempts to gain a foothold along the Niagara River and the war concluded formally with the Treaty of Ghent signed on Christmas Eve 1814 (Hitsman 1965:235). Almost immediately, relations between the citizens of the two nations reverted back to the way they had been prior to the war, with a shared economy of free trade as espoused in Jay's Treaty of 1794 (Herzberg 2001:42).

B. REBELLION OF 1837

The United States and Canada came close to waging a second war in 1837, precipitated by an international incident in the Niagara River involving the American steamboat the Caroline. The British navy set it on fire and sent it over the Falls in retaliation for transporting American volunteers to Navy Island, where political reformer William Lyon Mackenzie had set up a provisional government, the Republic of Canada, after his failed revolution against the British in York, now Toronto (Seibel 1987:245). American President Martin Van Buren dispatched Major General Winfield Scott to Niagara Falls, however, to diffuse the situation, and the dispute was settled quickly. Mackenzie himself left Navy Island voluntarily and retreated to Buffalo, New York, after realizing that the citizens of Upper Canada no longer supported his efforts to reform the government. Nevertheless, tensions lingered for another year and both forts at the mouth of the Niagara River were strengthened with renewed vigour (Herzberg 2001:42). Numerous artists depicted the incident for posterity, with the Falls featured prominently in the dramatic scene (Seibel 1990:84-85).

C. THE FENIAN SCARE

While the Fenian Brotherhood's invasion of Canada was confined to the Fort Erie area, and did not affect the City of Niagara Falls, the Portage Road did figure in Canada's defence. After 1,300 Fenians crossed the border into Canada on June 1, 1866, with their self-appointed mandate to free its people from British rule (Davies 1996:280), Canadian militia men who arrived in Niagara Falls as reinforcements were directed to proceed to Ridgeway with a field cannon to fend off the attack (Seibel 1985:245). The cannon, however, crashed through the bridge at Ussher's Creek outside of Chippawa, and the unit never made it to the skirmish. The brief encounter between local militia and the Fenians went no further, and the latter returned to the United States, where they were promptly arrested (Seibel 1987:245). The Canadian militia who turned out to help in turn were feted back home with massive displays of public affection, paving the way for the creation of a professional force after Confederation in 1867 (Owen 1996:284).

The United States and Canada came close to waging a second war in 1837.

1.2.6 Theme 5: Spirituality and Modern Utopias

The Niagara River is a powerful force, especially at the point in its 35 mile journey where it plunges 160 feet over a cataract in its descent to Lake Ontario (Herzberg 2001:38). As such, it has attracted a wide variety of people to Niagara Falls who have sought to attach a specific meaning to this spectacle (McGreevy 1994; McKinsey 1985; Revie 2003).

Many early writers such as Charles Dickens made reference to their visit to the Falls in terms of how they had witnessed a manifestation of God's work, reaffirming their belief in a supreme being who was capable of executing such a wonder on a grand scale (Berton 1992:73). Indeed, Niagara Falls is recognized as a Christian spiritual site, especially for the Catholic Church and other religious groups that claim to draw energy from the mysterious forces at work in this location. As early as 1837, local Catholic families established a church on the Portage Road at Falls View (Our Lady of Peace: Seibel 1990: 257). This site, directly above the Horseshoe Falls, attracted further attention from the Catholic Church. In 1876, the Archbishop of Toronto John Lynch wrote that the vision of the Falls haunted him and he wished to erect religious establishments near them "where God could be worshipped with a perfect homage of sacrifice and praise" (Egan 1967:153). Shortly thereafter, Lynch invited the Carmelite order to develop a new church site (flanking the existing church) as a pilgrimage centre where elderly clergy might retire and laity and clergy alike could go on retreat. The idea was ahead of its time, and the retreat project ended in failure during the First World War. The facility was reopened as a college for the priesthood in 1919, and enlarged in 1926 with a chapel that is visited by thousands of tourists every year because of the outstanding woodwork (Egan 1967:154).

Niagara has also attracted utopian movements of various kinds. Although Canada has no grand schemes to compare with Gilette's late 19th C. proposal for a mega-city located over the American Falls, or Love's model community in Buffalo, Navy Island was proposed as the site of the United Nations, and others have seen lands close to the Falls as fitting sites for utopian settlements or idealistic experiments. The Shredded Wheat factory was intended to be an inspirational example of enlightened labour and dietary practices, and the Niagara Parks were conceived as a pioneering public response to private sector appropriation of natural resources. The only utopian settlement established on Canadian soil was located in the extreme southeast corner of the City of

Niagara Falls in the early 1840s. Here a utopian community of 800 people collectively known as the Ebenezer Society briefly established itself north of Black Creek on the Niagara River in 1842. The community contained a store, blacksmith shop, mills, buildings for weaving and dyeing, as well as a communal kitchen and dwelling houses. Their chief industry was manufacturing cotton. The group left in 1859 and relocated to Amana, Iowa, founding what became one of the largest and best-known American utopian communities (Seibel 1987:245; Hayden 1976, Chapt. 8).

1.2.7 Theme 6: A Changed and Changing Landscape

A. DISASTERS

While some approached their visit to the Falls as an uplifting religious experience, for others, the Falls represented a terrifying site that invited the contemplation of the sublime and the frailty of human beings in the presence of the "River of Death" (Herzberg 2001:46). Not only has the powerful current of the Niagara River been responsible for altering the physical landscape of the gorge it lies in for thousands of years, but it also has a mesmerizing affect on people who stand close to it, and the Whirlpool Rapids continue to command respect from those who wish to navigate the river.

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In recent times, stabilizing the landscape features to make them less dangerous for visitors has been a concern, such that the Falls are no longer a pristine beauty but a carefully managed tourist attraction. In 1936, for example, the remaining overhang at Table Rock was blasted off to prevent further serious rock falls (Seibel 1987:20).

The River also presents a challenge to engineers wishing to span the river and connect the two sides of the border with steel bridges for ease of access to commercial markets. The story of Niagara Falls is punctuated with collapsing bridges, as well as accidents in the river, both during the summer and winter, when the ice bridge phenomenon was at its peak of popularity in the early twentieth century (Seibel 1987:131).

B. PUBLIC CONTROL OF OPEN SPACES

Many travellers to Niagara Falls in the early nineteenth century commented on the lack of public space where one could go to observe the Falls and not be bombarded by aggressive venders or have to pay an admission (Seibel 1987:22). It was not until several influential men, foremost among them American landscape artist Frederic Church and American landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead, got together to lobby for a public park that substantive actions were taken to create one. Church appealed directly to the Governor-General of Canada, Lord Dufferin, who in turn made public speeches in favour of the idea in the late 1870s, and also wrote to the New York State governor and the premier of Ontario (Seibel 1987:24). In 1885, a bill to create a state preserve was passed in New York, and the Ontario Legislature passed the Niagara Falls Park Act the same year (Seibel 1987:27).

Engineer Casimir Gzowski was appointed one of the first commissioners along with businessman John Langmuir. A survey was made of the natural topographic features around the Falls and it was up to them to decide which lands they could afford to purchase for the establishment of the "Queen Victoria Park" (Seibel 1987:27). In essence, the park was created on the former Niagara riverbed before it was pierced by the Falls. A stretch of the west bank of the riverbed in turn is bounded by a high ridgeback of glacial drift moraine, which affords a commanding view of the Falls (Tiplin 1967:233). The park boundary line was drawn just below the top of this escarpment, in order to include the beautiful woodlands that rise above the plateau adjacent to the gorge, but leaving the high priced table land in private hands (Seibel 1987:27).

The Commissioners recommended that funds be raised for the renovation or demolition of existing buildings and the purchase of land through the sale of government bonds. Their recommendations were approved and the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park Act was passed on April 23, 1887 (Seibel 1987:28). The first major job was to purchase the old toll road along the gorge owned by the St. Catharines, Thorold and Niagara Falls Toll Road Company and convert it into a broad gravel walkway for pedestrians. A different route was laid out for carriages and its form is essentially the same today (Seibel 1987:29). Popular attractions such as the Maid of the Mist boat excursion, Table Rock House, and the visit behind the cascading waterfall were taken over by the park commissioners and admissions charged in order to generate revenue for park maintenance. Provisions also were made for new public

washrooms, drinking fountains, rest shelters, a railing along the top of bank to the gorge, and places to tie up and water horses.

Over the years, Queen Victoria Park has remained a popular beauty spot while accommodating new innovations in transportation (the automobile), as well as increasing numbers of tourists who arrive in Niagara Falls by various means. It also is connected to other public spaces and historic attractions located along the Niagara River through a system of recreation trails and the Niagara River Parkway.

In summary, the main themes that can be extracted from an overview of local and regional history are:

1. Settlement
2. Economic development
3. The Underground Railroad
4. Conflict along the border
5. Spirituality and modern utopias
6. A changed and changing landscape

Each of these themes is inter-related, and together they inform both the identification of heritage resources and the development of cultural tourism projects that interpret and promote these resources.

A NOTE ON THEMES

Themes emerging from the thematic history are listed above. However, these are not the only themes that can be distilled from local and regional history. The past is a very rich resource, offering many different stories to tell. What is important for the Heritage Master Plan is to identify stories that are especially resonant for local people while, at the same time, providing compelling ideas that will attract visitors. These stories, known as interpretive themes and storylines, are a core component of initiatives to spur heritage tourism and community development, the twin goals of this Plan. Later in this section will be found an expanded list of interpretive themes and related storylines that, it is hoped, will be best suited to helping achieve these goals.