

HISTORICAL SKETCH



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PARKMAN writes as follows in his fascinating history of Champlain's trip up the Ottawa from Ville Marie (Montreal) and his first sight of the Rideau and Chaudière Falls in 1613, some three hundred years ago: "The canoes were launched again, and the voyagers held their course. Soon the still surface was flecked with spots of foam: islets of froth floated by, tokens of some great convulsion. Then, on their left, the falling curtain of the Rideau shone like silver betwixt its bordering woods, and in

front, white as a snowdrift, the cataracts of the Chaudière barred the way. They saw the unbridled river careering down its sheer rocks, foaming in unfathomed chasms, wearying the solitude with the hoarse outcry of its agony and rage. On the brink of the rocky basin, where the plunging torrent boiled like a caldron, and puffs of steam prang out from its concussion like smoke from the throat of a cannon, Champlain's two Indians stood and, with a loud invocation, threw tobacco into the foam, an offering to the local spirit, the Manitou of the cataract."

The available water power of the Chaudière Falls, and the pine forests of the neighboring region were the factors that made this place desirable for carrying on lumbering operations. Accordingly we