



The François Baby House - home of Windsor's Community Museum

Settlement and Diversity

Little archaeological evidence remains of the Anishinaabe, who camped seasonally on what is now present-day Windsor. The edges of the Ojibway Prairie and the surrounding thicker forests provided the mix of habitats that would have fostered human life and shelter.

In 1701 Cadillac founded Detroit on the North side of the river. From there, the French settled Petite Cote, the "small side" of the Detroit River, and set the tone for Windsor becoming a hub welcoming various waves of migration. The street names of Windsor, from Ouellette, Pelissier, and François, reflect this early

French heritage. Street pattern and the long-lot farming system fronting the river are other manifestations of early French settlement.

Connecting the threads that tie Windsor's settlement history together is the prominent early resident, François Baby. Born in Detroit of French heritage, he was raised in Upper Canada.

Baby was captured during the War of 1812, and his home was taken over by the American troops. After his return he was elected to the Legislative assembly, being an early proponent of bilingualism.

During and after the American Revolution, many British Loyalists, but also Black Loyalists and freedom seekers, arrived en masse to this area.

Sandwich town was established to accommodate both French and British who wished to remain loyal to the British crown.

With the arrival of the Great Western Railway in 1854 Windsor grew at exponential rates. However, the connections to Old Sandwich Town are still strong.

It is one of the most historically significant neighbourhoods in Ontario, home to Windsor's historic Black community, as well as The Duff Baby House, built in 1798 by Alexander Duff and purchased by James Baby in 1805.



The Duff Baby House



Heritage Festival



Mackenzie Hall, Old Sandwich Town