



# LIMELIGHT

## NEWSLETTER OF THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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1999

### A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The KHS does many things. We hold regular meetings, invite speakers, enjoy refreshments, and socialize. The newsletter appears regularly, each year **Historic Kingston** is produced, the Murney Tower is opened to the public, and Sir John A. is honoured.

As if this is not enough, KHS mounts special projects. In 1996, Joe Boucher and Wally Breck, worked long and hard to commemorate the Molly Brant bi-centennial. This summer, KHS was proud to be associated with the erection of a plaque in Portsmouth Village. Currently, a KHS Committee is diligently at work on the forthcoming Millennium Plaque book which is referred to in this issue of **Limelight**.

Then we have to deal with the unexpected. Earlier this year the proposed sale of our County Court House demanded our attention. In my letter to Council of 22 February, I argued that the KHS position was that "the important role played by the Court House in the development of the community during the past 140 years be continued by way of its traditional use as the area's centre of court activity." Further, the KHS presentation at the City Council meeting of 9 March advanced several reasons why the County

Court House was important: as a part of Kingston's historical townscape; as a building of architectural and historical distinctiveness; as a stately presence in its park setting; as an important element in Kingston's unique nineteenth century architectural complex. We like to think we helped the cause.



But a vital KHS needs people for a whole range of activities: providing refreshments and acting as "greeters" at meetings; maintaining membership lists; mailing communications; monitoring our P.O. box and answering machine; and applying for grants.

At a recent Annual General Meeting, retiring President Lou Grimshaw remarked that KHS activities just seem to "happen." However, Lou was well aware that, actually, the functioning of KHS relies on the dedicated efforts of many people and much long term planning. And we must constantly seek out new people to carry out our business. Some old

hands such as Joe Boucher and Ken Rutherford, have been lost to the "Grim Reaper." Others feel that their volunteering years are over and wish to be replaced by newer and younger members. This year, a number of stalwarts like Jim Warren and Don Redmond have "hung up their guns" and others have indicated that they would like to do so -- and soon!

There is room for -- and a great need for -- all sort of talents to help with running our society. Please consider serving KHS in some capacity and respond positively to requests for involvement -- or better still, **VOLUNTEER!**

(Desmond O'Meara)

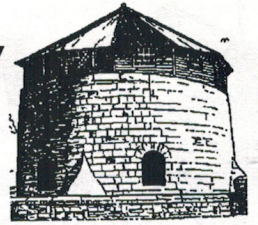
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# Kingston Historical Society

ESTABLISHED 1893



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Dr. Jack Pike (awards); Major Warren Everett (finances); Mr. Stewart Renfrew.

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## ...AND ONE FROM THE EDITOR

...or at least the interim Editor. Let me explain. A month ago, Terence Cottrell resigned as editor of the Society's newsletter. Hence this note. I've stepped in as the "stop-gap," "temporary-fill-in," "non-editor" -- or whatever else you want to call it -- to pull together the October issue of **Limelight**. Yes, it's still **Limelight**. For the sake of continuity -- and recognizing a good thing when we

see it -- it has been decided to continue with the title and format of the excellent first issue which Terence Cottrell produced last month.

But in doing so, I have turned to my colleagues on KHS Council and -- in the spirit of Desmond O'Meara's appeal for volunteers and service -- several stepped forward. Worthy of particular mention are Margaret Burdsall, George Dillon, Ed Grenda, Jennifer McKendry, Jack Pike, and Stewart Renfrew.

Another initiative that has been built upon is the attraction of Society Sponsors and you will note that we have added a new one -- Chez Piggy and Pan Chanco.

A final comment: all members are urged to contact us if there are items you wish reported or discussed in **Limelight**. Indeed, we might even start a **Letters from our Members** column.

(Brian Osborne)



## MEMBERSHIP

The vitality of any society is measured by its ability to attract new members who wish to share in our interests. This month, several new faces have come on board: Carl Bray, David Gordon, Jack Hickman, David Kasserra, Alan MacLachlan, and Ian Moore have joined as Regular Members; Deri and Nancy Fairman, and Jim Pritchard and family as Family Members; and Chez Piggy/Pan Chanco as a new Sponsor Member. Welcome all.

But while new members are vital, past members are important to KHS too! Margaret Burdsall reminds us that membership fees for 2000 may be paid at anytime, although there will be an additional prompt in the next number of **Limelight**. In particular, she suggests that those who are fleeing south for the winter may wish to consider paying their dues before they leave -- in U.S. currency if they like! The rates remain the same: Regular membership, \$35; Family Membership, \$40.





## CONGRATULATIONS

On 5 July 1999, Canadian Heritage Minister, Sheila Copps, named **Ian Wilson** as Canada's National Archivist -- though some still prefer the title Dominion Archivist! The seventh person to hold this prestigious title, Ian is well known to Kingstonians. Appointed to the Queen's archives in 1966, Ian was senior archivist there (1970-76), and most recently served as Archivist of Ontario (1986-1999). An active member of the KHS and co-author with Doug Stewart of **Heritage Kingston** (1973), we congratulate Ian on his well-merited appointment to one of Canada's most prestigious cultural positions.

## OUR SEPTEMBER SPEAKER

On 15 September, Dr. Stewart Fyfe spoke to KHS about his ongoing research project, "The Kingston Ice Storm of 1998." The talk opened with an account of the comprehensive gathering-in of a vast array of materials of use to the hypothetical historical researcher in 2098. Newspapers, municipal documents, personal recollections, videos, and photographs have all been collected and will be deposited eventually in the Queen's University Archives. But more than a salvage operation, the "Fyfe Project" also undertook an assessment of who did what, and how well did they do it, in order to be better prepared for future emergencies. Already, one conclusion has emerged: the strength of the local response and the effectiveness of the cooperation provided by other communities. This entertaining insight into a recent piece of our collective historical experience was enjoyed by all.

## THE DEAD CENTRE OF QUEEN'S



In 1877, Queen's acquired four lots in the then-new Catarqui Cemetery to accommodate prominent members of the university. Last summer, the Queen's University Secretariat hired an undergraduate student, Julianna Trivers to investigate the Queen's presence in Catarqui. The result is an attractive little pamphlet -- complete with map -- entitled, **Profiles of Queen's People in Catarqui Cemetery**. It identifies fifteen locations at which Queen's people of note are buried and provides mini-biographies of some of them. For further information, contact the University Secretariat (533-6095) or visit the web-site: [www.queensu.ca/secretariat/catarqui](http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/catarqui).



## FUTURE SPEAKERS

The next meeting of the KHS will be at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 20 October in the Kingston Public Library's Wilson Room when **Michael Dawber** will speak on "**Kingston's Street Names**." Toponymy -- the study of place-names -- is a fascinating topic. The way we name places says much about our society. Some grow onto places like lichen and become fixed by popular use. Others are assigned by those in authority to represent control, power, or ownership. Certainly, there is always a story to tell and Michael Dawber is one best qualified to do so.

## NEW YOUNG SCHOLARS AMONG US

Four recent theses at Queen's address subjects and issues that may be of interest to KHS members. One of these young scholars, Sarah Gibson, has already presented her work to KHS (**Historic Kingston** Vol. 46, 1998) and we hope that some of the others will do so in the near future: **Carmen Nielson Varty**, "Building Churches, Constructing Identities: St. George's Communities, Kingston, Upper Canada, 1784-1826" (MA, 1998); **Andrew Young**, "Behind the Loyalist Minority: American-Upper Canadians' Contributions to the Development of Early Colonial Political Opposition" (MA, 1999); **Sarah Gibson**, "Carleton Island, 1777-1783: An Imperial Outpost during the American Revolutionary War" (MA, 1999); **Ian MacDonald**, "Whaleboats, Galleys, and Floating Batteries: British Gunboats in the 1760 Canada Campaign" (MA, 1999).

Future meetings: 17 November, Bill Thomson, "The Canadian Locomotive Works"; 15 December, KHS Xmas Party at City Hall, with a presentation on the refurbishing of the Whig-Standard Building. More details in the next newsletter.



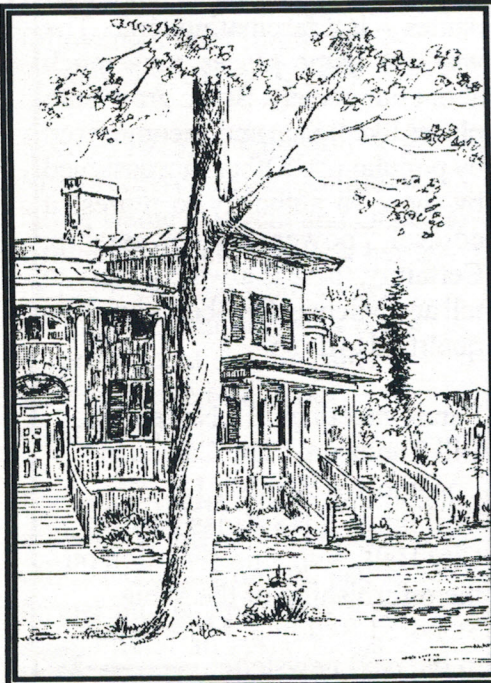
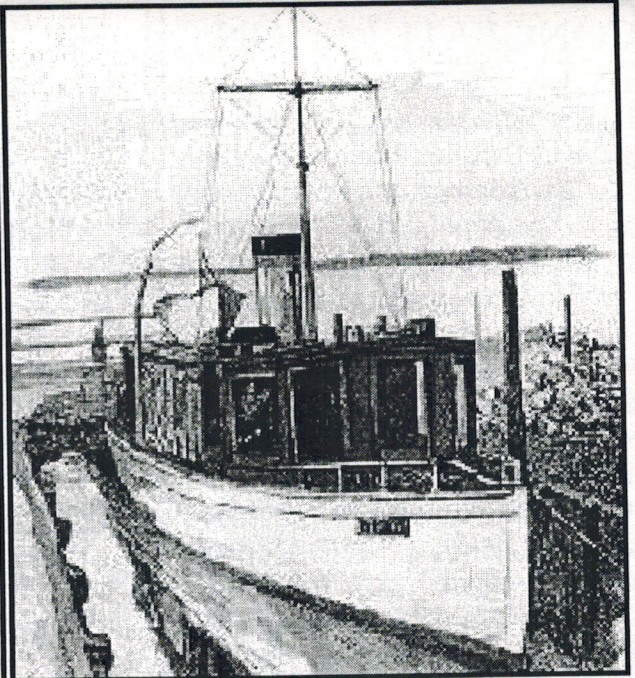
## A LETTER FROM PHOEBE

Dear KHS Members:

My name is **Phoebe** and I am writing to you because I am part of your history. In 1914, I started my life at Kingston's Davis Dry Dock. A gift for John Brashear, President of the University of Philadelphia, I steamed far and wide throughout the waters of the Muskoka Lakes, Lakes Erie, Michigan, Ontario, the St. Lawrence River and the Finger Lakes. This wonderful life lasted until 1978 when I was purchased by the Frontenac Society of Model Engineers and returned to me place of birth, Kingston.

Much to my chagrin, I was designated an "antique" under the Cultural Properties of the National Heritage Act. Even so, I still managed to show my paces in the waters around Kingston Harbour until it got to be too much for me. By 1984, age had taken its toll and I was sent off to dry dock and rested awhile, waiting for some essential remedial work. In the spring of 1988, Hank Wevers and several other volunteers started my treatment. As of this summer, my boiler and engine have been removed and rebuilt, my keel is being replaced, and my ribs and planking are receiving attention too. When all this is done, the crew will scrape me down, paint me and varnish me, and, hopefully, restore me to my original beauty. My only concern is that, at my advanced years, whether or not I'll ever be allowed into the water again. If not, I'll simply spend the rest of my life ashore, on splendid display at the Steam Museum.

If anyone is interested in providing labour or funds for my restoration, please call Hank Wevers (613-546-4154) or The Marine Museum (613-542-2261, fax 542-0043). Also, see web-site: [www.marmus.ca](http://www.marmus.ca), then click The Rebirth of the S/L Phoebe. (Article prepared by George Dillon from information from Patsy Fleming's column, "My Kingston," **Kingston Whig Standard**, Saturday, September 4, 1999, and from "The Phoebe Comes Home, A Love Story," **Live Steam**, August 1979).



## WHAT, WHERE, WHY AN ARBORETUM?

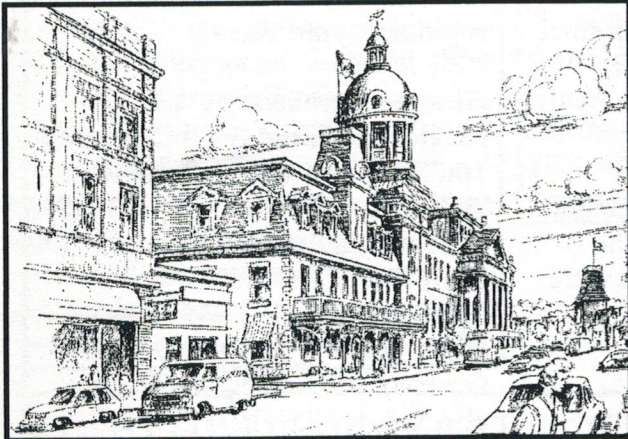
Did you know that Kingston has an "arboretum"? As befits a university with a strong medical connection, the Queen's campus has "a place where trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants are cultivated for scientific and educational purposes." That is, an arboretum! In 1853, Queen's College acquired Summerhill and, in 1861, Canada's first botanical garden was established on the slopes in front of this beautiful building. It was the main project of the Botanical Society of Canada that had recently been founded in Kingston.

Together with other trees planted for commemorative purposes over the years, the arboretum survives as a rich collection of native and exotic trees. This summer, Queen's Physical Plant Services produced a guide to this very attractive section of campus, **The Arboretum at Queen's University**. It consists of a map, self-guided tour, and detailed description of forty four species. One veteran -- No. 10, the "Ginko biloba" -- is dated c.1890! For more information call 533-6979, or contact [arbor@post.queensu.ca](mailto:arbor@post.queensu.ca)



## A PAINTER OF PLACE

There's a new artist in town! A.R. (Bob) Cooke was born in London, England and raised in the East Anglian port of Harwich. At 14, he joined the British Merchant Navy and had his first one-man exhibition of sketches and watercolours when he was 18 and stationed in Hong Kong.



A professional artist since 1967 and a resident of Canada for 40 years, Bob Cooke has come to specialize in the representations of distinctive places -- and Kingston is now one of them since his arrival here last year. We are grateful to Bob for allowing us to use details from several of his Kingston pieces as vignettes in this newsletter. To find out more about his work, call 385-1904.

## AWARDS

The Society's Awards Committee will soon be preparing its recommendations to Council for 1999 KHS Awards. In keeping with normal practice, members are again asked to participate in these deliberations by nominating individuals or organizations thought to be worthy candidates. Nominations should be put forward using the form enclosed with this newsletter. Completed forms may be mailed to the Awards Committee, c/o KHS, or passed directly to the Chairman of the Committee, Dr. J.G. Pike, 150 Macdonnell Street, Kingston, K7L 4B8, so as to arrive no later than 31 October 1999. It is requested that as much information as possible be included in support of each nomination so as the awards committee may be fully informed about each nominee.

## NEWS FROM THE TOWER

1999 was undoubtedly a banner year for the Murney Tower National Historic Site. For a structure designed to keep people out, it certainly did a fine job in packing them in! During its four-month, May-September season, the Tower attracted over 10,000 visitors who wanted a glimpse of Kingston's early military history. In addition, there were two out-reach days: a "Kid's Fun Day" in early July and a "Military day" in mid-August. The "Military Day" alone attracted over 1200 visitors to the various displays at the Tower and its surrounding grounds -- including 400 paid visits to the Tower itself. Finally, it should be noted that the very effective publicity campaign undertaken by the Tower staff headed by the Chief Interpreter, Sven Walker, significantly increased the visibility and public profile of our Murney Tower National Historic Site. (Prepared by Edward R. Grenda, Chair, Murney Tower National Historic Site Committee).

## NEWS FROM OTHER SOCIETIES

**Pittsburg Historical Society**, Tuesday, 26 October, Jonathan Moore, "The LaSalle Causeway"; **Gananoque Historical Society**, Thursday, 21 October, John Nalon, "Old Views of Gananoque"; **Lennox and Addington Historical Society**, 4 November, Brian Osborne, "The Rideau, Past, Present, and Future"; **Sydenham Ward/District 10 Tenants and Rate Payers Association**, 16 November, AGM and Mark Raymond, "Kingston's Market Square"; **Friends of the Rideau**, 30 October, AGM, Rideau Canal Museum, Smith's Falls, 9.30 a.m. to Noon.

## OUR CONSTITUTION

During the past sixteen months, a committee of Council has been engaged in a major review of the KHS Constitution and By-laws. A revised form has now been approved by Council and is ready for consideration by the membership.

The existing By-laws (clause X) require that a motion proposing changes to the Constitution and By-laws be duly put forward to a General Meeting of the society. Approval or rejection of the changes would be considered at the next Annual General Meeting, or at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose.

Accordingly, a motion concerning the current proposed changes will be put forward to the October General Meeting. Formal consideration of the motion will follow at a Special General Meeting to be held in November.

To assist in the understanding of the details of this matter, copies of both the current Constitution and By-laws (as amended in June, 1990) and the proposed revised Constitution and By-laws will be sent to each member prior to the October meeting. Members are urged to study these documents carefully in preparation for the noted meetings.



## BOOK CORNER

Several new books of local interest, some by local authors, have appeared in recent months:

Queen's history professor Gerald Tulchinsky's most recent volume, **Branching Out: The Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community**, Toronto: Stoddart, 1998, follows on from his earlier **Taking Roots: The Origins of the Canadian Jewish Community** (1992). It looks at the post-1920 history of Canada's 360,000 Jews in the context of such issues as immigration, the labour movement, farm colonies, their reaction to the Holocaust, involvement in WW II and the making of Israel, and their religious and cultural future.

The well known local writer,

Maureen McCallum Garvie, and Jennifer L. Johnson, a former Queen's student, have produced a wonderful little book, **Their Leaven of Influence: Deans of Women at Queen's University, 1916-1996**, Kingston: Queen's Alumni Association Committee on Women's Affairs, 1999. There have been eight Deans of Women since the inception of the office in 1911 and its termination in 1996. Apart from telling us about these remarkable women and their experiences and roles, the authors comment on the nature of the office -- and what had been there to serve women in the forty years prior to 1911.

In his **For King and Country: Lieutenant Colonel By, R.E., Indefatigable Civil-Military Engineer**, Merickville: Heritage Merickville Foundation, 1998, Mark Andrews explores the

personal background and pre-Rideau career of this tragic and enigmatic figure. His early life in Lambeth, his experiences in the Peninsular War, and his responsibilities at the Royal Gunpowder Mills are all provided as background to better understand the brilliance of his Rideau engineering projects.

George F. Henderson (**W.L. Mackenzie King: A Bibliography and Research Guide**, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998) and Barbara Aitken (**Local Histories of Ontario Municipalities 1987-1997: A Bibliography**, Toronto: Ontario Genealogical Society, 1999; See also Vol. 1, 1951-1977; vol 2, 1977-1987) have produced valuable reference works of much use to professional and amateur historians alike.



## IN MEMORIAM

Members of the historical community in Kingston were saddened to hear of the death of **Rose Mary Gibson (1913-1999)**, following a brief illness, on Sunday September 5, 1999.

Born in 1913, in Kingston, Rose Mary received her education at Notre Dame Convent and Queen's University where she took her BA in 1934. Coming from a very prominent local family, it is not surprising that she too came to play an active role in our community.

For many years, Rose Mary taught school and three of the priests who officiated at her funeral had been former pupils. Following a stint as school librarian in the 1950s, Rose Mary moved to the University of

Ottawa to study for a degree in librarianship which she completed in 1967. In 1968 she was hired by the Queen's University Archives and in the following year returned to Ottawa to take the "National Archives Course" which qualified her as a professional archivist. She continued as an archivist at Queen's until her retirement in 1978.

Several local community groups benefitted from Rose Mary's energy and imagination in many contexts: the community committee for St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital; archival advisor to the Sister's of Providence Manor; author of a history, St. Mary's of the Lake in Kingston; archival advisor to St. Mary's Cathedral; archivist for the Queen's Alumnae

Association; founder-member of the Kingston Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society. She was also a long time member of KHS and edited the society's newsletter for many years. Despite being virtually blind and confined to a wheel chair, her continued lively interest in the world around was demonstrated by her presence at this year's Queen's Archives Lecture.

Rose Mary Gibson will be remembered with great affection by her fellow Kingstonians, fellow workmates, and students for her inner strength, sound common sense, consistency of purpose, and -- most of all -- for her infectious good humour. (Prepared by Stewart Renfrew).





# MILLENNIUM PROJECT of the KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

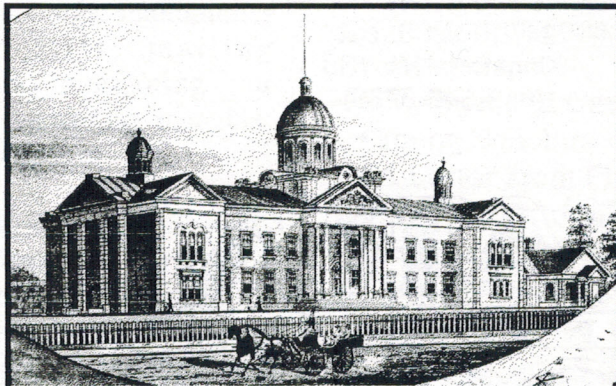
## DIRECTORY OF HERITAGE MARKERS IN THE KINGSTON AREA

compiled by

the Kingston Historical Society Plaque Committee: John Grenville, David Kasserra,  
Jennifer McKendry, William Patterson, and Ted Storey

This forthcoming book commemorates the new millennium by publishing the texts of more than 180 plaques, monuments, and memorials that record the history of this area from the 17th century to 1945. The information is taken from bronze plaques mounted on steel posts or fixed to stone cairns and the walls of various buildings, as well as from inscribed benches, sundials, and statues. The earliest installation date is 1826 (the Rev. Barclay's monument in McBurney Park) and the most recent 1999 (Portsmouth Village). Sponsors vary but many were, of course, erected by the Kingston Historical Society. The markers are grouped geographically for ease in touring, assisted by helpful maps. Additional information provides greater depth to the marker's text or supplementary material such as an architectural description of a building related to the marker. Suggested readings are given, so that a researcher can delve further into a subject. The readings, given in short form in the individual entry for a marker, have a full citation in the extensive bibliography. More than 150 interesting illustrations - contemporary and historic - are found throughout the *Directory*. This publication will appeal to tourists as a guide to the Kingston area, students, researchers, and those of us who love all things historic. It will be available through a special book launching party (look for an announcement in forthcoming KHS newsletters), KHS meetings, mail order, and bookstores. Here is the entry for the FRONTENAC COUNTY COURT HOUSE:

This grand Neoclassical building has served the courts of Frontenac County since its opening in 1858. Designed by the Dorset-born architect, Edward Horsey, it is superbly sited on land originally acquired in 1840 for a house of parliament at a time when Kingston was one of several possible sites for the capital of Canada. Constructed of stone quarried on site, it features many of the traditional exterior elements of large-scale mid-19th century court houses: the use of classical detailing the balanced three-part composition of centre pavilion and side wings and a bold portico and dome. *Location:* north of Court Street. *Sponsor:* Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. *Date Erected:* 1986. *Readings:* Angus 1966; Carter 1983; MacRae 1983; McKendry 1995. *Additional Information:* The court house suffered a severe fire in 1875, and was rebuilt with a new elevated dome by Power & Son, architects. They also designed the adjacent Registry Office at this time. The jailer's house of 1858 survives behind the court house, but the jail walls and jail were demolished in 1974. The last hanging was in 1949. This complex of buildings served three functions for the United Counties of Frontenac, Lennox and Addington from 1858 to 1864 and for County of Frontenac from 1865 to 1998: judicial, penal, and administrative.



Frontenac County Court House and Registry Office in 1878. J.H. Meacham, *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Counties*, 1878

article contributed by Jennifer McKendry



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