

# NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 1979 Vol. 7, No. 10 John Leaning, President Jennifer Roddick, Editor  
Julian Smith, Artist

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## NOVEMBER TOUR

Heritage Ottawa members are invited to tour Laurier House, on Thursday, 22 November, starting at 8:00 p.m.

This will provide us with a unique opportunity to view the home in the evening when the house is rarely open. At night, the house takes on a completely different atmosphere; the visitor achieves a feeling of being "at home".

Coffee will be served and the curator will be on hand to answer questions.

## DECEMBER SEMINAR

Heritage Ottawa members are invited to a seminar on 11 December at 7:30 p.m. in the Fraser Schoolhouse, 62 John Street, New Edinburgh.

Architecture students from Carleton University's "Heritage Design and Planning Workshop" will present a historical study and proposals for the south side of Wellington Street.

Emphasis will be placed on the two blocks in which the Rideau Club stood.

Visual and graphic material used in the presentation will be on display in the Schoolhouse Gallery for two weeks after the presentation.

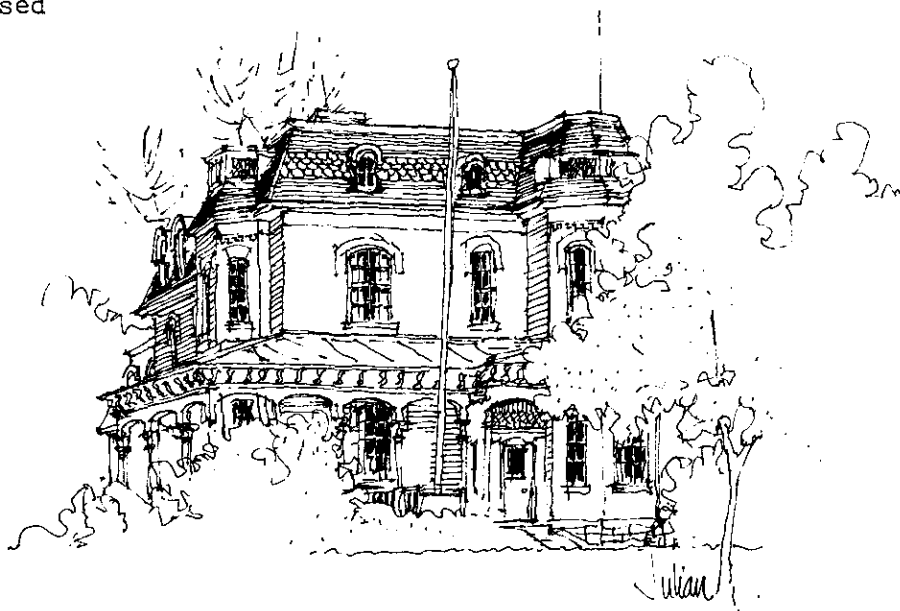
## THE CLEGG HOUSE - 136 Bay Street

In direct defiance of a City of Ottawa decision to expropriate The Clegg House and surrounding property from St. Peter's Lutheran Church, the Church took it upon themselves to demolish the 125-year-old former home of Captain William Clegg, Royal Engineer of the Rideau Canal.

Very early Saturday morning, October 27th, Dr. Wally Smith of St. Peter's Church supervised the commencement of bulldozing of the historic grey stone house. If it had not been for the timely intervention of Wynn Davies, architect and member of Heritage Ottawa who witnessed the attack from his apartment across the street, the entire house would now be rubble.

Thanks to Mr. Davies' interest, police were called to the scene to discover that the Church held no demolition permit. In an attempt to justify their blatant disregard for history, Dr. Smith produced a copy of the Heritage Act, claiming that this document somehow gave him the right to tear down a prominent piece of Ottawa's heritage.

In protest of this immoral act, members of Heritage Ottawa and many other heritage-conscious and prominent citizens



Laurier House

of Ottawa gathered outside the Church Sunday morning carrying placards and distributing leaflets showing concern to the parishioners.

Following is a copy of the telegram the President of Heritage Ottawa sent to Reuben Baetz, MPP, Minister of Culture and Recreation. With the Minister's approval, which was granted November 8th, the City of Ottawa can sue St. Peter's Church, under the Ontario Heritage Act, for willful damage to a heritage property.

Although expropriation is expected to proceed, the outcome of legal action by the City will not be known for some time. However, regardless of the decision of the courts, Heritage Ottawa is of the opinion that the Church acted in haste and without consideration for the citizen's wishes as expressed by our representatives at City Hall on September 19th when Council voted to expropriate in an attempt to save the heritage-designated property.

#### THE TELEGRAM

"The Board of Directors of Heritage Ottawa consider that it is vital to the future of heritage in Ottawa that you support the City of Ottawa's position in laying charges against St. Peter's Lutheran Church under the Heritage Act for the unlawful demolition of the Clegg House."

#### BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

Marg Oldfield: Membership Director

Marg joined Heritage Ottawa in 1975 and became a member of the Board of Directors in Spring 1976. Her interests in heritage buildings arose through her courses at Carleton University where she was involved in studies of recycled buildings. Because of her schooling, she does not consider herself so much as an architectural historian, but more as an urban planner. She "specializes in streets", in the planning aspects of heritage areas.

As a member of Heritage Ottawa, she was involved in the Heritage Conservation project of Queen Street where she helped document the houses to be designated as heritage. She is also

a member of the Centertown Citizens Community Association. The Association is currently preparing the final report of a study of Bank Street buildings. Marg believes that the businessmen and developers of Ottawa must be made aware of the potential of recycled buildings, especially in the commercial sector. These buildings can be converted and rehabilitated with imaginative design, and sensibility to their former use.

She considers this objective can be reached through collaboration with the Bank Street Merchants' Association. She sees the possibility of holding presentations and discussions on areas where recycled buildings are a financial success as a means of convincing the merchants. Marg feels that Bank Street could become a very interesting sector of the City. Sadly, she regrets the loss of her favorite building The Alexandra Hotel. The Centertown Association was too late in its efforts to save the Hotel from demolition. She thinks the Alexandra offered a great potential of interesting space for the new life style which is emerging in the Bank Street area. Right now the Association is involved in a fight to prevent the replacement of the Hotel by a parking lot. Marg sees the space filled by a pocket park or a summer park, or, ideally, by a building compatible with the image of Bank Street's other buildings.

As a member of the Board of Directors, Marg sees her role as one of keeping the Board alert on situations such as the Alexandra Hotel issue or the Clegg House issue. She expressed a great concern about the credibility of Heritage Ottawa following the turmoil surrounding such issues, but affirms she believes the Board is well supported in its undertakings by a heritage-minded City Council.

Carol Sheedy

#### FRASER SCHOOLHOUSE EXHIBITION

A new exhibition will commence at the Fraser Schoolhouse Gallery in December. "Muse of the Ottawa Valley" is a collection of National

Film Board pictures depicting rural scenes and houses by John Flanders.

#### CITIZEN OF THE YEAR 1979 - Nominations

The City of Ottawa invites nominations for the Citizen of the Year 1979 Award.

The Citizen of the Year is described as someone who has given freely and unselfishly of his/her time and energy for the good of his/her fellow citizens.

Please send your nomination, before November 26th, to Mr. Robert Labelle, City Clerks Office, City Hall, 111 Sussex Drive, Ottawa (Tel: 563-3371).

#### CITY'S ELMS PROTECTED

Board member Julian Smith reports that, at a meeting September 27th, the Physical Environment Committee voted to continue with injections to the City's elm trees. These injections will protect the elms for a few years to come.

The decision is a welcome reprieve for our elms which are considered synonymous with heritage.

#### A DAY IN THE LIFE...

Being a docent in the Fraser Schoolhouse is not without its own share of interesting sidelights on Ottawa's past. The recent display of photographs of Ottawa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was no exception, as this writer discovered.

Lack of captions provided a challenge to docent and visitor alike, to identify the scenes pictured. Surprisingly, a considerable number of visitors to the Schoolhouse recognized particular buildings or scenes because they had a direct or indirect link with its past. One lady remembered W.J. Topley, the photographer responsible for many of the photographs exhibited, because her uncle had worked with him. Another remembered attending a children's play in the old Russell House. The burning of the Parliament Buildings was etched in another's memory because her father, an

ardent political observer, had been in the Senate Chamber when the fire broke out. Another gentleman visitor had in his possession a painting of the Parliamentary Library as it stood alone after the fire. Innumerable visitors recalled a childhood trip or family outing by streetcar to Britannia-on-the-Bay; one recalled the toboggan slide down the locks in the shadow of The Château.

But perhaps the most interesting photo in the recent exhibit is one depicting -- or so my meagre information stated -- "a Home for Unmarried Mothers", located on Wellington Street. It portrays a dozen or more young women busily ironing and folding linen, surrounded by an assortment of small children and infants in baskets. Seated quietly in a rocking chair in the foreground is an elderly lady. Acting on a tip from a visitor, we were able to make further identification of this scene.

The photograph was indeed taken by Topley, dated February 1895, and is one of a group of photographs held by the Photographic Department of the Public Archives of Canada and indexed under Health and Welfare; Homes. Its full identification is: "The Ironing Room of the Home for Friendless Women, 412 Wellington Street, situated between Bay and Concession Street, now Bronson Avenue". "Friendless women" was doubtless a convenient euphemism for a state not then discussed in public; it also applied to any destitute female of any age. That many young Ottawa women found themselves in this condition is attested by the fact that a similar Home for Roman Catholic girls was administered by the Sisters of the Convent of the Good Shepherd on St. Andrew's Street. Both these institutions were photographed by Topley. In each case, the interior views show the washing and ironing rooms, indicating, one would suppose, the means by which the "friendless woman" repaid the institution for her upkeep. As it happened, this was exactly the base on which the Home for Friendless Women operated for more than fifty years.

The Home, so the Ottawa Journal tells us, was established by the Women's Christian Temperance Union in 1888, in order to provide shelter for "fallen and friendless women". The number of applicants soon outstripped the size of the building, and within a year, it was extended to accommodate a total of sixty women. At

the same time, it was decided to make the Home self-supporting by installing The Home Steam Laundry.

In 1914, both Home and Laundry moved to new quarters, again photographed by Topley. The new building was located at 37-39 Turner Avenue (now 327-329 Cambridge Street) at that time on the fringe of the City. The more commodious appearance of the Home and its situation immediately above the Laundry would seem to confirm the financial success of the earlier occupational venture. But its larger size would also suggest that the underlying social problems which necessitated the provision of such a home had not been resolved in the intervening years.

The two institutions remained in this location throughout the Depression and until the outbreak of war in 1939. However, the Ottawa Directory for 1940 lists the premises as vacant, and there is no subsequent entry for either the Home or the Laundry. The 1938 Directory lists the Agnes Stroud Home in its place but whether this institution is one and the same is not made clear. It, too, is not listed in subsequent issues. Thus the fate of these two institutions after 1939 is not easily ascertained. Did the Home amalgamate with other social agencies? Or did the War provide an increase in employment which allowed these women to become once more independent?

Sale of the Cambridge Street property eventually took place and today the Churchill Apartments stand on the site. A footnote to the story, again provided by the anonymous viewer in the Schoolhouse, is found in the fact that the Beechwood Cemetery contains a section of burial ground carrying a marker inscribed "For Friendless Women".

Barbara Tunis

#### MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

It's not too late to renew your Heritage Ottawa membership. As our membership year expired on September 30, future newsletter issues will not be mailed to lapsed members, so renew now! A list of paid-up members will be published soon. Make sure your name is on it. Mail your renewal to Heritage Ottawa, P.O. Box 510, Station "B", Ottawa K1P 5P6. (Application form below).

Anyone wishing to submit articles or announcements to The Newsletter is asked to contact:

The Editor  
44 Carmichael Court  
Kanata, Ontario  
K2K 1K2                      Tel: 592-4209

Many thanks to contributing authors this issue:

Carol Sheedy  
Barbara Tunis

JR

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#### Heritage Ottawa Membership Application

##### Category

Renewal ☐

New Membership ☐

Individual	\$ 7 <input type="checkbox"/>
Household	\$10 <input type="checkbox"/>
Senior Citizen/Student	\$ 4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Patron - donations over	\$50 <input type="checkbox"/>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_