



The CABHC Patch

News from the Community Archives

October 2023

"Widows and Old Maids"



Voting in municipal elections had been an entirely male affair until the election of 1884, when women were granted the vote for the first time. The franchise was still quite limited: it was only available to widows and unmarried women who owned property worth over \$400.

On 1 December 1884, the *Daily Ontario* newspaper published [a list of the names](#) of all the Belleville women who would meet these requirements. The headline was "Widows and Old Maids." In all, 223 women would be added to the voters' list as a result of the change. The city's population at the time was around 9,500, meaning that 1 in 20 women would be able to vote.

The woman with the largest number of city lots was Caroline Wallbridge, who lived from 1825 to 1891. In the map shown

here, we have marked the lots owned by Caroline in the northwest part of the city. The total value of her Belleville property was in the region of \$5,000 in 1884.

In the newspaper's words, this was more than enough for this particular "old maid" to be able to "vote like a man" in the January 1885 municipal election. It would be another 32 years before women would be permitted a similar role in Ontario's provincial politics.



CABHC: M440-1257 Sheet 1 Evans and Bolger plan of lots in northwest Belleville, 1877 showing Caroline Wallbridge's property

Recent Additions to the Archives

2023-074 Poster made for Belleville's Centennial, 1978

2023-075 Digital images of fire at Thrashers Garden Centre, 2023

2023-076 McGurn family photographs taken by Belleville photographers, 1870s-1890s

2023-077 Notes on the naming of Sir Winston Churchill Public School in Belleville in 1954, 2023

2023-078 Two photographs of classes at Ontario Business College, 1900 and 1913

2023-079 Photographs and flyers relating to St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Belleville, 1975-2018

2023-080 Honour rolls for members of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Belleville, c.1945

2023-081 Genealogy publications relating to the Chapman and Ketcheson families, 1979-1981

2023-082 Postcard of the Corby Public Library in Belleville, c.1908

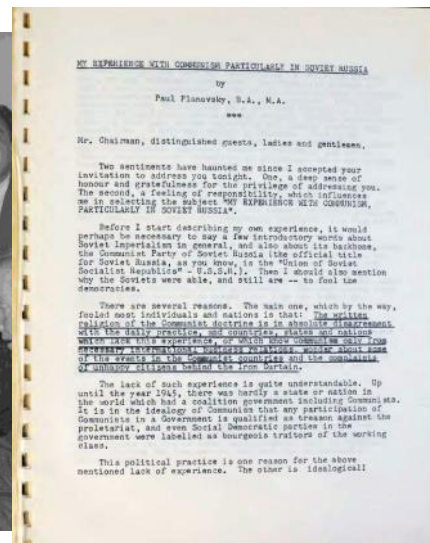
2023-083 Collage of topographical maps of the Bay of Quinte, 1933

2023-084 Collection of conservation-related books and reports, 1911-1978

2023-085 Collection of printed City of Belleville and County of Hastings publications, 1862-1920

What's in the Display Case?

Our display for October has been compiled by volunteer Trevor Parsons. Trevor has taken a closer look at some of the many stories of twentieth-century refugee arrivals in our region, including individuals from Czechoslovakia, Tibet, Uganda, Southeast Asia, Central America and Afghanistan.



CABHC: *Intelligencer* negative

Newly-arrived members of the Samang family from Tibet, 5 October 1971

CABHC: TR 3305

Speech by former Czech politician Paul Planovsky on his experiences of Communism in Soviet Russia, 1962

Taking a Trip Back to 1973

In September we took part in the Brown Bag Lunch series of talks to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the John M. Parrott Art Gallery. The talk was recorded and if you have access to the YourTV cable channel you can catch up with it in their Quinte Speakers Series.

