

**An Oral History of the Peterborough County Wardens: Nine Conversations with Previous Leaders of  
County Council**

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## **Abstract**

An Oral History of the Peterborough County Warden's: Nine Conversations with Previous Leaders of County Council

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This study about the former Wardens of Peterborough County was achieved by using the principles of oral history. The purpose of this study was to find answers to the questions of what each Warden's legacy was, as well as what Peterborough County was like at the time of each Warden. Within this report there is a summary of prior research, largely focusing on the themes of municipal government, oral history practices, and Peterborough County itself. Following an introduction to these concepts, as well as their application to this project, there is an explanation of the process undertaken by the researcher to obtain the findings, analyzed at the end of this work. Reflections upon the study itself are also contained within, as well as next steps, and how the information contained within this work and the accompanying archive can best be used in the future.

Keywords: Wardens, Peterborough County, Oral History, Government, Interviews, Collaboration, Care, Rural, Amalgamation

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<sup>1</sup> Trent University, *Trent University Michi Saagiig Protocol Guide Book* (Peterborough: Trent University, 2019), 4-5, [https://www.trentu.ca/fphl/sites/trentu.ca/fphl/files/documents/TrentU\\_MichiSaagiigGuidebook\\_Web.pdf](https://www.trentu.ca/fphl/sites/trentu.ca/fphl/files/documents/TrentU_MichiSaagiigGuidebook_Web.pdf).

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## Section 1: Overview

### 1.1: An Introduction to Municipal Government in Peterborough County

Extending over 4,000km<sup>2</sup>, and containing over 64,000 people, Peterborough County encompasses quite a vast area.<sup>2</sup> This area was designated as a County in 1849, although the region has changed many times over the years.<sup>3</sup> But what does it mean to be a County? Firstly, it must be understood, that in this case, Peterborough County and the City of Peterborough are two separate entities, having split in 1850.<sup>4</sup> While the City is discussed in relation throughout, the focus of this work is the County. Within the structure of the County there are two levels: the *lower tier* and the *upper tier*.<sup>5</sup> The *lower tier* of Peterborough County is comprised of eight municipalities (or townships): Asphodel-Norwood, Cavan Monaghan, Douro-Dummer, Havelock-Belmont-Methuen, North Kawartha, Otonabee-South Monaghan, Selwyn, and Trent Lakes.<sup>6</sup> Previously, there were 18 municipalities and separate villages, but with the amalgamation efforts as handed down from the province of Ontario in 1997, these numbers were cut by almost half.<sup>7</sup> The effects of this change still linger to this day, including in the responsibilities of the municipalities, including “public works, recreation and policing.”<sup>8</sup> While there is much autonomy and individual identity within these various townships, they all must work together under the name of Peterborough County. This collaboration is achieved through the *upper tier* of municipal government. In this example (and for the purposes of this study) this tier is the unified Peterborough County Council, which is led by the Warden. This body is

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<sup>2</sup> “Who We Are,” Living, Home, Peterborough County, accessed February 28, 2025, <https://www.ptbocounty.ca/en/governing/who-we-are.aspx>.

<sup>3</sup> A.O.C. Cole and Corporation of the County of Peterborough, *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Peterborough County, 1825-1875*, abridged ed. (Peterborough, Ontario: Corporation of the County of Peterborough, 1988), 4; Howard Pammett, “Prosperity Develops County Tho’ Half People Under 17: Progress of Peterborough XXXIX,” *Peterborough Examiner*, October 7, 1950, in 86-027 Series B, Choate Family fonds (1986 Additions).

<sup>4</sup> Zachary Spicer, “Municipal Organization in Ontario,” in *The Boundary Bargain: Growth, Development, and the Future of City-County Separation* (Montreal; McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2016), 28. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780773599048>.

<sup>5</sup> David Siegel, “Ontario,” in *Foundations of Governance: Municipal Government in Canada’s Provinces*, ed. Andrew Sancton and Robert A. Young (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 27. <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442697874>.

<sup>6</sup> “Townships,” Governing, Home, Peterborough County, accessed March 3, 2025, <https://www.ptbocounty.ca/en/governing/townships.aspx>.

<sup>7</sup> Ruth Flynn, telephone call with author, March 4, 2025.

<sup>8</sup> Zachary Spicer, “Barrie, Orillia, and Simcoe County,” in *The Boundary Bargain: Growth, Development, and the Future of City-County Separation* (Montreal; McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2016), 111. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780773599048>.

responsible for “land [...] planning, [...] waste management, [and] emergency services.”<sup>9</sup> On the Peterborough County Council, there are 16 members, which are the mayors and deputy mayors from each township.<sup>10</sup> These leaders of the various municipalities come together to think for the County as a whole and elect the Warden internally from within their ranks.<sup>11</sup> The term length, although varying over the years, is now two years, with a maximum of two consecutive terms.<sup>12</sup> It is these leaders of County Council, the Wardens, that this study is focused on.

## 1.2: Significance

This project is a crucial undertaking as it calls upon the intimate process of oral history to preserve the local history of Peterborough County. Although this concept will be further discussed later in this work, attention to municipal actions is often lacking, and this project attempts to help mend this disconnect by providing further information to the public. To increase community knowledge, part of the information will appear on the valuable resource of the *Warden’s Wall* display. In addition to this, the data gathered in this study will be transferred to Peterborough County to provide the foundations for an archive concerning the Wardens, allowing future researchers to access this past. By making this information available via archive, there is the hope that those who view the data will have a strengthened connection to their past, as well as a further understanding of the history of their area and municipal government, both of which deserve more attention. As such, the value of this project is not exclusive to the present.

Furthermore, in doing this work now, this allows for the Wardens themselves to participate, sharing details not contained within written sources, adding depth to common understanding and making local government more accessible. Moreover, by including these leaders of Peterborough County, there is an additional level of respect for their service, beyond the celebration and commemoration of their achievements on the *Warden’s Wall*. These narrators have done so much good for their communities that providing them the respect they are due and remembering their hard work is a key part of what makes this project so significant. This recognition is a valuable outcome for not only the Wardens, but also the County organization that remains grateful and thankful for the contributions of these upstanding people.

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<sup>9</sup> Spicer, “Barrie, Orillia, and Simcoe County,” 111.

<sup>10</sup> “County Council,” County Administration, Governing, Home, Peterborough County, accessed March 3, 2025, <https://www.ptbocounty.ca/en/governing/county-council.aspx>.

<sup>11</sup> Siegel, “Ontario,” 33.

<sup>12</sup> Joe Taylor (Warden 2017-2018), in discussion with the author, January 14, 2025, Microsoft Teams.

### 1.3: Structure of the Report

Following this introductory section, Section 2 explains the objective of this study, and the steps that were taken to meet this goal, including the initial research, the meetings themselves and the process of analysis. A reflection concerning the challenges faced during these undertakings will also be present within this section.

Next, a detailed examination of the themes found within this work will be provided, with connections between this project, and its findings, to the prior research and interviews. Many of these concepts explored connect in a variety of ways.

The final section of this report are the suggested next steps advised for the continuation of this work that may be of use to future researchers. While this study has achieved its goals in interviewing former living Wardens, creating biographies, and beginning an archive, the work here is far from complete, and I am hopeful that what was learned during this undertaking may be applied in the future.

A conclusion will follow these recommendations, offering an overview of the text, as well as some key takeaways. After this, a detail appendix is presented, containing forms used in this process, a listing of participants with basic and logistical details, finally finishing with the participant summaries that will be published on the *Warden's Wall Website*.

## Section 2: Methods

The intent of this study was to hold conversations with former Wardens of Peterborough County, keeping in mind the three guiding questions that the County strove to answer. These questions shaped the project and are listed below:

1. What was the most important decision, event, or impact of each Peterborough County Warden?
2. What was the legacy of each Peterborough County Warden?
3. What was life like in Peterborough County when each Warden was in office?

To answer these questions, the former Wardens of Peterborough County were interviewed by this author. These answers for each Warden were then compiled into a short biography. These paragraphs will be added to the virtual *Warden's Wall* display, with (at the County's discretion) the potential to be added to a physical wall in the future.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See section A-4.

## 2.1: Literature Reviews

To successfully complete this project, it was necessary to partake in initial research prior to conversations with the Wardens. As a history student who is not from Peterborough County and has worked primarily with written sources, there was much I needed to learn in terms of politics, the local area, as well as this specific type of history. To do so, three literature reviews were compiled, on these topics of municipal governance, oral history, and Peterborough County respectively, with considerations given to the specific applications to this project.

### 2.1: Literature Review One: An Overview of Municipal Government (written September 2024, edited December 2024)

The focus of this work was the governmental structure I would be analyzing; namely, municipal government. After reading these works, the key themes of the rural/urban divide, identity and exclusion were found and examined.

#### 2.1a: Rural/Urban

Beginning with the idea of the rural/urban division, this separation is often largely a cultural one, and as such, should rarely be treated as a foundation of government.<sup>14</sup> Despite the imaginary nature of this concept, and the increase in transportation blurring the boundaries between these two (supposedly distinct) groups, Peterborough County has a deep-rooted pride in their rural identity.<sup>15</sup> This concept of separation between rural and urban areas, however, led some scholars to raise issues of competition for growth, with some rural expansion prevented in favour of protecting the role of the urban.<sup>16</sup> In considering Peterborough County within these thoughts, beyond the reliance on rural concepts in their identity, issues of growth are something to be considered. In first reading these ideas, I questioned whether the Wardens would have examples of Peterborough County experiencing fights because of growth.<sup>17</sup> Over the course of

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<sup>14</sup> Claire Pidduck, "Literature Review 1: An Overview of Municipal Government Using the Themes of Rural/Urban Divide, Identity and Exclusion in Relation to The Wardens of Peterborough County Project (Edited)" (Unpublished work for History 4820Y, Trent University, 2024), 2; Zachary Spicer, "Introduction," in *The Boundary Bargain: Growth, Development, and the Future of City-County Separation* (Montreal; McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 3-5, 8-9. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780773599048>.

<sup>15</sup> Spicer, "Introduction," 5-6; Spicer, "Growth, Development and Conceptualizations of Urban and Rural," 68; Spicer, "Municipal Organization in Ontario," 35-36; Michael Woods, "Political articulation: the modalities of new critical politics of rural citizenship," in *Handbook of Rural Studies* ed. Paul Cloke, Terry Marsden, and Patrick Mooney (London: SAGE, 2006), 463. This theme is also discussed in section 3.1.

<sup>16</sup> Zachary Spicer, "Designing Institutions that Work," in *The Boundary Bargain: Growth, Development, and the Future of City-County Separation* (Montreal; McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 136, 142. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780773599048>; Spicer, "Introduction," 11.

<sup>17</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 1," 3-4.

the interviews, however, I have noticed that growth was not discussed in a negative light, apart from the landfill. This was a concern in the early 1990s, when the current dump site was deemed too small, and so, locations for another site were discussed.<sup>18</sup> Many were upset throughout this process as the plots considered for selection were often generational farms, which if selected, would have to cease agriculture operations.<sup>19</sup> Eventually, it was decided to expand the existing landfill, although this option occurred after an extensive preliminary site selection process.<sup>20</sup> While not an example of industrial growth, there is still a notion of challenges within changes to rural identity through expansion given need for a larger landfill (demonstrating the increased size of Peterborough) which was possibly going to impact agricultural land. A more direct idea of growth and competition arose in former Warden Neal Cathcart's tenure, with discussions about the supposed annexation of part of Cavan to the City of Peterborough.<sup>21</sup> While this proposal did not lead into a sizable conflict, such as the example of Barrie and the town of Innisfil in Simcoe County as explored in Zachary Spicer's work, it was still a moment of tension that reflects the control that can be put upon the rural Counties from urban spaces.<sup>22</sup> One reason for a relative lack of hostilities in Peterborough County could be the determination to co-operate and a commitment to negotiation.<sup>23</sup> Despite the few examples revealed in the interviews, overall the theme of conflict over growth has not been strong between the urban and rural areas of the Peterborough County region, despite the prevalence of this topic within the readings.

In further examination of what the rural means, however, the aesthetic ideals of the rural are also a central consideration. These notions focus largely on the greatly appreciated concepts of peace and nature, which play a predominant role in attracting tourists.<sup>24</sup> Tourism has always been something to consider within this project, given the long and ongoing connection between

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<sup>18</sup> Ron Gerow (Warden 1995, 2007-2009), in discussion with the author, January 24, 2025, Peterborough County Courthouse; Gary Stewart, written communication to author, February 14, 2025.

<sup>19</sup> Donald Boyce (Warden 1979) and Phyllis Boyce, in discussion with the author, February 4, 2025, Peterborough County Courthouse; Gerow, discussion.

<sup>20</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Stewart, written communication.

<sup>21</sup> Neal Cathcart (Warden 2005-2006), Connie Salome and Ken Tully, in discussion with the author, March 4, 2025, Cathcart Farm.

<sup>22</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Spicer, "Barrie, Orillia, and Simcoe County," 120-127.

<sup>23</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion. See section 3.3f for further information.

<sup>24</sup> David Crouch, "Tourism, consumption and rurality," in *Handbook of Rural Studies* ed. Paul Cloke, Terry Marsden, and Patrick Mooney (London: SAGE, 2006), 355-356, 357, 360; J. Murray Jones (Warden 2010-2016, 2019-2022), in discussion with the author, January 21, 2025, Microsoft Teams and phone; Taylor, discussion.

Peterborough County and the tourism industry.<sup>25</sup> In the interviews, many of the participants commented on the natural beauty, and while this was not directly connected to the rural identity, both were similarly appreciated.<sup>26</sup> The touristic draw of Peterborough County lies in its natural features, as one of the largest activities for tourists in this region are outdoor activities.<sup>27</sup> Without these ideas of peace and nature (essential to rural identity), Peterborough County would be significantly hurt in a crucial economic sector, demonstrating the importance of the rural identity to the County in more than an ideological aspect. This rural identity, despite being built from constructed ideas, is still necessary to the County, in the culture, and the applications of growth (to an extent) but also the industry of the area, which is crucial to remember throughout this report.<sup>28</sup>

### *2.1b: Identity*

Although briefly mentioned in the section above, the theme of identity was a key consideration within this literature review. One of the most prominent cases in which this was raised was the Amalgamation, taking place from 1996 to 2000 (specifically in 1997 in Peterborough County) under the leadership of Premier Mike Harris.<sup>29</sup> In this controversial movement (called the “Common Sense Revolution”), municipal government was deemed ineffective by Harris, and so efforts were made to streamline services, and decrease overlapping provincial involvement.<sup>30</sup> Beyond these shifts, community involvement was also brought to the forefront, as it was simultaneously demeaned and uplifted.<sup>31</sup> Local intervention was demeaned in

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<sup>25</sup> Cole and Corporation of the County of Peterborough, *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Peterborough County, 1825-1875*, 15; Elwood H. Jones and Matthew Griffis, *Postcards from Peterborough and the Kawarthas: Vintage Postcards from the Trent Valley Archives*, (Peterborough, Ontario: Trent Valley Archives, 2016), 27, 73; Ontario, “Region 8: Kawarthas Northumberland.” (Online: Ontario Regional Tourism, Updated July 15, 2024), <https://www.ontario.ca/document/tourism-regions/region-8-kawarthas-northumberland>; Howard Pammett, “Otonabee Boats, Railway Booms and Busts First Chemong Floating Bridge Opened: Progress of Peterborough XLVII,” *Peterborough Examiner*, December 2, 1950, in 86-027 Series B, Choate Family fonds (1986 Additions).

<sup>26</sup> Bonnie Clark (Warden 2022-Present), in discussion with the author, January 14, 2025, Peterborough County Courthouse; Jones, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>27</sup> Ontario, “Region 8: Kawarthas Northumberland.”

<sup>28</sup> See section 3.1.

<sup>29</sup> Flynn, telephone call; Siegel, “Ontario,” 28, 50.

<sup>30</sup> David J.A. Douglas, “The restructuring of local government in rural regions: A rural development perspective,” *Journal of Rural Studies* 21 no.2 (2005): 234 - 235. <https://doi-org.proxy1.lib.trentu.ca/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2005.01.003>; Siegel, “Ontario,” 51.

<sup>31</sup> Douglas, “The restructuring of local government in rural regions,” 238; David Sibley, “Inclusions/exclusions in rural space,” in *Handbook of Rural Studies* ed. Paul Cloke, Terry Marsden, and Patrick Mooney (London: SAGE, 2006), 403-405; Spicer, “Municipal Organization in Ontario,” 42; Michael Woods, “Political articulation: the modalities of new critical politics of rural citizenship,” in *Handbook of Rural Studies* ed. Paul Cloke, Terry Marsden, and Patrick Mooney (London: SAGE, 2006), 462, 466.

the lack of agency that was afforded to municipal governments in the decision to amalgamate, despite the fact that the goal of this process was to encourage the municipalities to take more responsibility.<sup>32</sup> In considering this role of local citizens in conversation with identity, the contrast between the unified image portrayed and the nuances inherent between the various townships of Peterborough County is worth noting. Many thoughts in the literature review revolved around this idea, but through the completion of this project, I have found answers to some of the queries I initially posed in my work. For example, the question of who is a local was heavily considered.<sup>33</sup> In considering the role of identity in Peterborough County, the interviews exposed that many people felt very strongly about the unique character of their home region.<sup>34</sup> One of the most poignant examples came from my discussion with former Warden Tom Flynn, where his wife Ruth emphasized how much gratitude residents felt towards Tom for his careful guidance through amalgamation, as despite many challenges, local identities were largely maintained.<sup>35</sup> Through this case, it is clear that unique characteristics that form the County itself are from a multitude of smaller regions.

Despite this understanding of how these communities are different, and the need to balance these differing municipalities, details as to how these variations exist in practicality were often excluded from the conversations.<sup>36</sup> This lack of information in this report concerning what makes each township distinct, however, reflects the research focus of the Warden or the head of the *unified* County. As this idea of township differences never came to dominate the conversation with mass amounts of details, the question posed in this literature review of “has the assumption of a single rural identity burdened Council at any time” has been answered as a strong negative.<sup>37</sup> Although this query has been dismissed, the topic of identity has not, through the centrality of this theme within the amalgamation, rurality, and the role of the Warden regarding balance and community is still present.

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<sup>32</sup> Douglas, “The restructuring of local government in rural regions,” 232; Siegel, “Ontario,” 24, 26; Spicer, “Municipal Organization in Ontario,” 42. See section 3.2 for more information.

<sup>33</sup> Pidduck, “Literature Review 1,” 6. See section 2.3c and section 3.10 in this report.

<sup>34</sup> See sections 3.1, 3.2, and 3.7.

<sup>35</sup> Tom Flynn (Warden 1978, 1997-1998) and Ruth Flynn, in discussion with the author, February 5, 2025, phone.

<sup>36</sup> See sections 3.3d and 3.3e for further discussion.

<sup>37</sup> Pidduck, “Literature Review 1,” 7.

### *2.1c: Exclusion*

Finally, on the topic of exclusion within this review, most of my queries in the literature review reflected this idea as something perpetrated by the municipal government.<sup>38</sup> As this is a challenging concept to engage with, it must be stated that from the findings of this project, it appears as though omissions by the County were not intentional. The Wardens who participated in this project care deeply for their communities, thinking of the residents in all decisions.<sup>39</sup> But before engaging in these conversations, Dr. Caroline Durand and I considered the lack of a Michi Saagig Anishinaabeg Representative on the County Council, despite the inclusion of Curve Lake First Nation within the boundaries of the County.<sup>40</sup> Although not directly asked about within the interviews, when discussing the idea of relationships within their tenures, relatively few Wardens discussed having (and creating) a connection with various Indigenous communities.<sup>41</sup> This was surprising to me, but this theme is crucial to consider in context of the research conducted. The goal of the interviews was to learn more about the Wardens themselves, and as such, relations with Indigenous communities, if not connected to their tenures, could legitimately be absent from their answers. The focus of the research is especially worth considering, as there was no direct question concerning relations with Indigenous peoples. It could also be that relations with Curve Lake First Nation were not a focus of the government during these years, although there seems to be a shift with the introduction of the Friendship Accord.<sup>42</sup> Answers to this query, unlike many of the questions posited during this literature review, remain elusive as to what a possible reasoning or solution may be. This, again, connects to the specific focus of this study, which is the achievements of the Wardens, rather than a presentation of each intricate detail of municipal government. Additionally, after the interviews and research conducted within this project focusing upon the Wardens of Peterborough County, I do not believe that this report is the right venue to thoroughly engage with this topic. Relations between Peterborough County and nearby Indigenous Communities, including Curve Lake First Nation are worthy to consider and examine, and it is for this reason, as well as the notable absence, that the point was raised initially. When the question was posited in the literature review, the interviews had not occurred, and as such, the potential to engage with the connections to Curve Lake remained. Within the

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<sup>38</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 1," 8-9.

<sup>39</sup> See section 3.10.

<sup>40</sup> Caroline Durand, meeting with author, September 17, 2024; Pidduck, "Literature Review 1," 8-9.

<sup>41</sup> Clark, discussion; Taylor, discussion. See section 3.3g.

<sup>42</sup> See section 3.3g.

conversations, however, there were few mentions of these relationships with Indigenous communities. While this silence is revealing, given the focus of this research, further observations would be too speculative to include. It is truly regrettable that a better answer cannot be provided at this time.

In examining the role of exclusion, but also the themes of the rural/urban divide and identity, as raised in this literature review concerning municipal government, there are many connections to the interviews conducted. The preliminary research done upon this topic helped both to shape the work that followed, as well as better understand the findings which will be analyzed in section 3.

## **2.2: Literature Review Two: The Potential and Challenges of Oral History (written October 2024, edited November 2024)**

Given the central use of oral history within this project, having a firm grasp on the practice was a key element to achieving success. Many of the sources analyzed in this work were formative in shaping the practice of this project. The issues that were established in this review were the need for initial research, the positives and drawbacks to oral history, and the necessity of personal connections between the narrator and the researcher.

### *2.2a: Background*

Beginning with prior study, possessing context before entering the interview stage is a crucial element in asking relevant questions.<sup>43</sup> This concept played a key role in this project, as without the research done within these literature reviews, creating pertinent and intriguing questions would have been near impossible. Even throughout the interview process, however, this background information was central, as I would have been completely out of my depth otherwise. Even despite this research, there were still moments where the Wardens, given our different life experiences, shared information that I was not properly equipped to meaningfully engage with. This presented a slight challenge; however, it was easily managed through either asking for clarification, or recording details for additional supplementary research. Although not everything was initially understood throughout this project, the need to be informed to thoughtfully engage with this process became quickly apparent.

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<sup>43</sup> Nancy Janovicek, “‘If you’d told me you wanted to talk about the ’60s, I wouldn’t have called you back’: Reflections on Collective Memory and the Practice of Oral History,” in *Oral History Off the Record*, ed. Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2013), 195.

The matter of background, however, applies to more than just prior research, as the personal history of both the investigator and the participants shape the conversations held.<sup>44</sup> In considering the role of personal background in the interviews, beginning with the narrators themselves, I found that oftentimes, the life experiences of the Wardens had influenced their tenures. In a notable example, Warden Bonnie Clark's prior time as a nurse led to her increased focus on healthcare.<sup>45</sup> Another case was the pivotal role Warden Ron Gerow's father played in his decision to run for Reeve and the "gentleman's approach" he maintained throughout his tenure.<sup>46</sup> This influence of the Wardens' pasts, adds another layer to the idea that the Warden represents the entire County, given the complex factors that create an individual.<sup>47</sup> Adding to the discussion of background, I also found that my past was beneficial to these conversations. Part of this was the rural environment I grew up, as well as my life as an only child who largely grew up around adults. The idea of personal history is a complex concept, featuring both the ideas of learned knowledge but also influences that were, in the case of this project, beneficial in creating a comfortable environment for these interviews to take place within.

### 2.2b: Cons

Beginning with the negatives within the practice of oral history, the problems largely stem from the time that has elapsed since the events occurred. This passage of time can lead to cultural memory colouring the actual events or the personal change of memories, intentionally or unintentionally.<sup>48</sup> Reflecting upon these ideas at the end of this project, I do not believe that cultural memory was as much of a concern as projected.<sup>49</sup> Rather, the larger challenge of recollection in these conversations was that these events were, at most, 47 years prior, and as

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<sup>44</sup> Janovicek, "If you'd told me you wanted to talk about the '60s, I wouldn't have called you back," 190; Joan Sangster, "Politics and Praxis in Canadian Working-Class Oral History," in *Oral History Off the Record*, ed. Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2013), 59, 68.

<sup>45</sup> Clark, discussion.

<sup>46</sup> Gerow, discussion. The term Reeve was later changed to Mayor, and as such, the terms are used interchangeably.

<sup>47</sup> Further consideration to concepts of unity, as well as thoughts surrounding the Warden as the face of the County can be found in sections 3.3 and 3.9.

<sup>48</sup> Janovicek, "If you'd told me you wanted to talk about the '60s, I wouldn't have called you back," 185-186; Erin Jessee, "The Limits of Oral History: Ethics and Methodology Amid Highly Politicized Research Settings," *The Oral History Review* 38, no. 2 (2011): 293, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ohr/ohr098>; Maddy Macnab, "Making Home and Making Welcome: An Oral History of the New Canadians Centre and Immigration to Peterborough, Ontario From 1979 to 1997," (Masters Thesis, Trent University, 2018), 42, 191, <http://proxy.lib.trentu.ca/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/making-home-welcome-oral-history-new-canadians/docview/2018881315/se-2?accountid=14391>.

<sup>49</sup> Claire Pidduck, "Literature Review 2: The Potential and Challenges of Oral History (Edited)" (Unpublished work for History 4820Y, Trent University, 2024), 4.

such, there were natural instances of forgetting, or misremembering specific details.<sup>50</sup> It is to this end, that moving forward, I recommend this process occur closer to the Warden's tenure.<sup>51</sup>

Examining the literature further, however, the example in this review from Erin Jessee's work was quite extreme.<sup>52</sup> As such, I believe that this led me to consider more drastic ideas, especially concerning the narrators entering this process with a specific agenda. I rarely noticed, however, any serious concerns about the presentation of the information within this project, as many of the Wardens were more excited about the process than anything. Of course, there was an element of personal bias but that is to be expected when discussing personal details (and it would be naïve to assume that this work is free of my own bias). Overall, however, ideas of agenda were never a serious concern during my research, as I believed they might be during the literature review.

Another con presented in the literature review concerning oral history was the idea of this research style as fitting into a one-size-fits-all process. Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki highlight this, recognizing the challenging in creating a unique process and matching requirements (such as ethics approvals) designed for more rigid research protocols.<sup>53</sup> In my prior work, I reflected upon the struggles in ethics approvals.<sup>54</sup> After partaking in this process I still would agree with those comments, although more depth has been added to these thoughts. As an example of an instance that occurred within this process, during the interviews, the questions that were asked would often shift based on what the Wardens had said. Although some questions were created in one interview and applied to another, there is still an element of deviating from a formal process to fully engage in the conversation. To put it plainly, no two interviews were the same, reflecting the differences in tenures and the personalities of the Wardens. This flexibility also aligns with the idea that what can be considered as a negative to oral history, is often a positive.<sup>55</sup> Through the variations in these conversations, I believe more information was gleaned, and that this process felt more natural, allowing for a better connection, which is so crucial to oral history, as well as the Wardenship.<sup>56</sup> Despite the positive applications, recognizing some of the challenges inherent in the research style itself, and their application to this project,

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<sup>50</sup> Flynn, telephone call (math done by author).

<sup>51</sup> See section 4.

<sup>52</sup> Jessee, "The Limits of Oral History," 291-292.

<sup>53</sup> Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki, "Who's Afraid of Oral History? Fifty Years of Debates and Anxiety about Ethics," *The Oral History Review* 43, no. 2 (2016): 342, 361-362, 365, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ohr/ohw071>.

<sup>54</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 2," 6.

<sup>55</sup> Sheftel and Zembrzycki, "Who's Afraid of Oral History? Fifty Years of Debates and Anxiety about Ethics," 349.

<sup>56</sup> See section 2.2c and 3.4b, respectively.

from memory to the comparative lack of structure, are beneficial to better understand the results, but also improve upon this process in the future.

### 2.2c: Pros

Further considering the positive elements of oral history, the micro level in which this research method operates is beneficial in finding concepts that could not be spotted from a higher level.<sup>57</sup> This close examination comes from the person-to-person discussions that oral history relies on. These conversations are a positive element of this research method, as the physical presence generates a more animated understanding of the words said and a better relationship to the source.<sup>58</sup> This space is more intimate, and as such, an opportunity for further revelations exists.<sup>59</sup> In this discovery of information, most of which is less likely to appear in primary sources, voices that have been excluded from such sources may also be amplified.<sup>60</sup> In considering these interconnected benefits of oral history to this project, the micro level is a central starting point. The small sample size of this project (nine participants) allowed for greater examination of more personal elements, exposing connections between the narrators themselves. Additionally, given the more intimate nature of this project, rather than the events of each Wardens tenure, something more akin to a psychological profile of successful traits for this role to have emerges. Given this focus on personal elements, it would be erroneous to exclude the connections generated through the conversation format. These links afforded opportunities for less formal topics of conversation to arise in our time together, establishing a bond outside of the requirements of the project. Since relationships were formed through this process, I found it easier to remember elements of conversations and the sources of information, as well as the various themes that kept recurring. Although this might not be true for everyone who partakes in

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<sup>57</sup> Denyse Baillargeon, “‘If You Had No Money, You Had No Trouble, Did You?’: Montréal Working-Class Housewives during the Great Depression,” *Women’s History Review* 1, no.2 (1992): 228-229, 231, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0961202920010202>; Janovicek, “If you’d told me you wanted to talk about the ’60s, I wouldn’t have called you back,” 194, 196; Jessee, “The Limits of Oral History,” 290; Macnab, “Making Home and Making Welcome,” 42, 43, 52, 60, 147; Sangster, “Politics and Praxis in Canadian Working-Class Oral History,” 61, 63, 65, 66, 69; Sheftel and Zembrzycki, “Who’s Afraid of Oral History? Fifty Years of Debates and Anxiety about Ethics,” 346.

<sup>58</sup> Baillargeon, “‘If You Had No Money, You Had No Trouble, Did You?,” 228-229; Jessee, “The Limits of Oral History,” 290; Macnab, “Making Home and Making Welcome,” 43, 60; Sangster, “Politics and Praxis in Canadian Working-Class Oral History,” 61, 63, 65.

<sup>59</sup> Sangster, “Politics and Praxis in Canadian Working-Class Oral History,” 66.

<sup>60</sup> Baillargeon, “‘If You Had No Money, You Had No Trouble, Did You?,” 217-218; Jessee, “The Limits of Oral History,” 290; Macnab, “Making Home and Making Welcome,” 40-42, 94; Sangster, “Politics and Praxis in Canadian Working-Class Oral History,” 60-61; Sheftel and Zembrzycki, “Who’s Afraid of Oral History? Fifty Years of Debates and Anxiety about Ethics,” 346, 352.

oral history, it was immensely effective within this study, for both myself as the researcher, but also the topic of municipal government. This idea of personal connections was embedded throughout the conversation process, as in engaging in this process, I found that the stories came alive more so than they would have if I had been reading them on paper. When re-reading the transcript and field notes after these conversations, I found that the information was different without the vocal tones and body language within the interview.

A challenge to this positive that may exist in the future, however, is how to translate the human elements of these conversations into the remaining evidence of the transcripts and other archival materials. With the conclusion of this project approaching, this task seems daunting, and I am not confident that this is even achievable, given the central role connection played in this process. This theme of human relationships is crucial to the topic of government, as for many years, there has been a struggle to connect people to the job of Warden and municipal politics.<sup>61</sup> I admit that before I began my participation in this project, I thought government was quite formal and aloof. But after engaging in these interviews and forging these human links through the topic of government, this pedestal status changed for me. I have always believed to communicate history effectively, there is a special experience in forging a connection with the topic, and I would like to create this bond here through this work. In experiencing the benefits of this human-focused process of research, I believe that government should more often be examined through oral history, given the connections that can form, and the humanized picture presented that is not often understood.

#### *2.2d: Marginalized Voices*

Within this literature review, I grappled extensively with the conflict of the role of oral history in uplifting marginalized voices, and this project focusing on elected officials.<sup>62</sup> Until the compilation of this project, however, the answer remained elusive. Although more attention is afforded to this consideration throughout this report, there has been thought concerning what the voice of the County is, and how the Warden works within this.<sup>63</sup> But in considering the Warden as a spokesperson, the person who is in the role of Warden can easily become lost as a symbol. In conversing with these people as individuals, about their time as Warden, there is an element of

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<sup>61</sup> See section 3.9b.

<sup>62</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 2," 8-9.

<sup>63</sup> See section 3.9.

peeling back the curtain to expose a more personal side. Part of these notions of uplifting, however, are from the struggles that are often connected to obtaining visibility for the County, which often occur through this leadership role.<sup>64</sup> The Warden, despite my assumptions prior to these interviews and despite being an elected official, occupies a complex position of public consciousness, and in this work, the goal remains to help acknowledge those who have done so much, yet not always received the recognition they deserve.

Overall, in considering the use of oral history in this project, an understanding of the role of background, the various positives and negatives to the process, and the focus upon often ignored sources, has been central to the formation of this project. In reflecting upon these themes in this report, further knowledge of the use of oral history concerning the municipal administration of Peterborough County has been obtained, which may be applied in further studies regarding local figures in government (even beyond the municipal level).

### **2.3: Literature Review Three: Local History (written December 2024, edited February 2025)**

As understood in the literature review on oral history, having a sense of background is crucial. As such, knowledge of Peterborough County's past was necessary to explore to understand the context of the community, but also potential historical influences.

#### *2.3a: Indigenous Peoples*

This literature review begins by focusing on the sites of the Serpent Mounds and the Petroglyphs (*Kinomaage-Waapkong*).<sup>65</sup> Following this discussion, a consideration of the various Treaties that created the area of Peterborough County occurs (namely "Treaty 20" and the "William's Treaties"), with a brief reflection examining the impact of these agreements upon Indigenous peoples today.<sup>66</sup> When examining the presence of Indigenous communities within

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<sup>64</sup> See section 3.9b for further details.

<sup>65</sup> "Avoiding crowds at 'unique' Petroglyphs: The province has expanded day-trip permit program to Peterborough County park," *Peterborough Examiner*, April 25, 2023, <http://proxy.lib.trentu.ca/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/canadiannews/newspapers/avoiding-crowds-at-unique-petroglyphs/docview/2805405193/sem-2?accountid=14391>; Claire Pidduck, "Literature Review 3: Local History (Edited)" (Unpublished work for History 4820Y, Trent University, 2024), 2-3.

<sup>66</sup> Gitiga Migizi (Doug Williams), and Julie Kapyrka, "Before, During, and After: Mississauga Presence in the Kawartha," in *Peterborough Archaeology*, ed. Dirk Velhulst, (Peterborough: Peterborough Chapter of the Ontario Archeological Society, 2015), 130-133; Pidduck, "Literature Review 3," 3-4; "Treaty Research Report, The Williams Treaties (1923)," Treaty Research Reports, About treaties, Treaties, agreements and negotiations, Lands, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, Robert J. Surtees, accessed February 15, 2015, <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100029000/1564415701529>.

this project, the challenges addressed earlier in the report re-emerge.<sup>67</sup> The culture of the Michi Saagig Anishinaabeg people was largely not a part of this research and this can be seen as a result of the colonial history of the area. The ramifications of these years of exclusion exist today, and this can be seen within the results of this project as well. On behalf of this author, there is regret that Indigenous cultures were not more prevalent in this research as well as the hope that work concerning future Wardens will not have this struggle, and can learn from this report, having a stronger foundation to build their reflection upon.

### 2.3b: *Settlers*

The next section of the literature review is the pioneer age, which is the traditional focus of history concerning Peterborough County.<sup>68</sup> The settlement of Peterborough County by European people began in 1818 with the land surveyors and increased with the mass influxes of immigrants (largely from the British Isles), including the famed Peter Robinson settlers in 1825.<sup>69</sup> Central parts of settler culture were literature (including the celebrated Strickland Sisters, Susanna Moodie and Catherine Parr Traill of Lakefield) and religion (with the exploits of the “Cavan Blazers” Protestant Orange Order).<sup>70</sup> In examining these topics, I initially considered the influence of parts of the settler identity upon the Wardens.<sup>71</sup> Given the impact of the background as expressed earlier, this theme is worth considering.<sup>72</sup> The agricultural influence, as well as the

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<sup>67</sup> See section 2.1c.

<sup>68</sup> Heritage Peterborough, “Heritage Peterborough: Historical Site and Tours” folding map, 1985, in 88-002, Box 1, Folder 5, Heritage Peterborough fonds, Trent University Archives, Peterborough, Ontario; Pidduck, “Literature Review 3,” 3-4; “Three Historical Productions Planned,” *Peterborough Examiner*, September 11, 2002, <http://proxy.lib.trentu.ca/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/three-historical-productions-planned/docview/354623052/se-2?accountid=14391>.

<sup>69</sup> Cole and Corporation of the County of Peterborough, *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Peterborough County, 1825-1875*, 5, 62, 70; G. Wilson Craw, typed manuscript of *1818-1967: A History of Springville Area and Congregation*, 1967, 1, in 86-003 Box 1, Folder 16, G. Wilson Craw Collection, Trent University Archives, Peterborough, Ontario; Howard Pammatt, “Townships Surveyed: Why Smith, Emily, Asphodel, Douro: Progress of Peterborough V,” *Peterborough Examiner*, in 86-027 Series B, Choate Family fonds (1986 Additions).

<sup>70</sup> Heritage Peterborough, *By Lake and Lock*, booklet, 1987, 10, in 88-002, Box 1, Folder 6, Heritage Peterborough fonds; “Old Times in Ontario: Mrs. Moodie Was Also an Artist,” in 86-027 Box 2, Choate Family fonds (1986 Additions); Howard Pammatt, “Churches, Schools and Homes Multiply Fine Carriages and Patent Elixirs Appear: Progress of Peterborough XLII,” *Peterborough Examiner*, in 86-027 Series B, Choate Family fonds (1986 Additions); Howard Pammatt, “Otonabee Boats, Railway Booms and Busts First Chemong Floating Bridge Opened: Progress of Peterborough XLVII,” *Peterborough Examiner*, December 2, 1950, in 86-027 Series B, Choate Family fonds (1986 Additions); “Parr Traill pioneered local storytelling: Her works offer a look at how the area was settled by Europeans in the 1800s,” *Peterborough Examiner*, February 5, 2022, <http://proxy.lib.trentu.ca/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/parr-traill-pioneered-local-storytelling/docview/2625476633/se-2?accountid=14391>.

<sup>71</sup> Pidduck, “Literature Review 3,” 6-7.

<sup>72</sup> See section 2.2a.

rural, natural identity, and the hard work that have been discussed demonstrate a connection to these traditional ideas, and as such, Peterborough County has maintained some of the traditional values of pioneer life.<sup>73</sup> This is not a critique, as agriculture is undoubtedly necessary, and I hold much respect for those involved in this intensive process, as well as the identity of the County. Furthermore, there is unquestionably a difference in time, as Peterborough County has grown over the years. Yet despite the differences, the continuation of these ideas, with the lasting influence of agriculture, and the family connections many had stretching back close to this bygone era, are infused within the decisions made today.

### 2.3c: *Industry*

The next section examines the history of transportation, specifically the water-based methods of steamers, the canal, and bridges, although the railway was also considered.<sup>74</sup> These transportation methods were central to the growth of industry in Peterborough County, especially the agriculture, lumber, and tourism sectors.<sup>75</sup> Transportation was key in the interviews as well, as the historical dependence of Peterborough County on these systems, given the landscape of the area, was still a consideration.<sup>76</sup> Most often, this theme was raised in conjunction of balancing the road budget.<sup>77</sup> The prevalence of this idea over time relates to the thoughts of background raised previously, for both the context to understand this topic, as well as the past shaping the decisions of the Wardens today.<sup>78</sup> I acknowledge that without this prior knowledge, I may have underestimated the importance of the transportation, for both the residents and the role it plays in the economic sectors of Peterborough County.

Examining the specific industries raised in conjunction with transportation, it is necessary to begin with agriculture, given its continued importance. There were many conversations within this project about farming, which helped further establish the centrality of the rural identity of

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<sup>73</sup> See sections 2.1a, 3.1 and 3.11.

<sup>74</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 3," 8, 9.

<sup>75</sup> Jean Murray Cole, *Origins: The History of Dummer Township*, (Warsaw, Ont: Township of Dummer, 1993), 236; Howard Pammatt, "Lumber Industry's Sensational Expansion Following Civil War and Railway Laying: Progress of Peterborough XXXVIII," *Peterborough Examiner*, in 86-027 Series B, Choate Family fonds (1986 Additions); Pidduck, "Literature Review 3," 10-13.

<sup>76</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Clark, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Douglas Percy (Warden 1996), in discussion with the author, January 28, 2025, Microsoft Teams; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>77</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Clark, discussion.

<sup>78</sup> See section 2.2a.

Peterborough County.<sup>79</sup> This identity, however, is also crucial to consider when analyzing background, as the agricultural influences upon the Wardens were influential during their tenures.<sup>80</sup> Rural experience was also a key part of connecting with the Wardens during this process, as I come from a rural background myself, giving a base for personal links, and further comprehension.<sup>81</sup> Although discussed at great lengths in earlier areas of this report, knowing the agriculture history, and having done prior research on this industry helped me to better understand the Wardens and the area of Peterborough County during the interviews and this reflection.

Another key industry of Peterborough County is tourism.<sup>82</sup> In considering the role of tourism, a discussion of cottagers must occur. In this literature review, as with the first work on municipal government, I believed the cottagers should be classified as tourists.<sup>83</sup> After my conversation with former Warden, Mayor Joe Taylor, however, I realized that I had misunderstood the role of cottagers. These people pay taxes and receive the services that the County provides, and, therefore, are citizens.<sup>84</sup> In this example, as well as other cases, the theme of identity is much more complex than I initially believed.<sup>85</sup> This reflection, although from an initial mistake on my behalf, is a prime example of the care that the Wardens feel for their communities, whether the residents are in the area for the duration of the full year or not. While this idea of care will be further explored later in this report, it is crucial to note this as an example of such dedication and respect for the community.<sup>86</sup> Akin to this love that is throughout this work, the historical impacts of industry are visible upon the actions of the Wardens, from the transportation that is so central to the County, but also the agricultural identity and the role of tourism.

### *2.3d: Use of History*

After this section on industry, the literature review focuses on the County's recent use of history, beginning with the County Courthouse.<sup>87</sup> The land that this building sits on, which also

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<sup>79</sup> See section 2.1a.

<sup>80</sup> See sections 2.2a and section 3.1 respectively.

<sup>81</sup> See sections 2.2a and 2.2c.

<sup>82</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 3," 12-13. See section 2.1a.

<sup>83</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 1," 6; Pidduck, "Literature Review 3," 13.

<sup>84</sup> Taylor, discussion.

<sup>85</sup> See section 3.3d.

<sup>86</sup> See section 3.10.

<sup>87</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 3," 14-15.

holds the remnants of the Jail, has since been sold to developers.<sup>88</sup> There is a heritage designation that was added to building, protecting the site from destruction.<sup>89</sup> While writing this review, I wondered why the County would sell this property, given the historical implications (although this may be inspired by my history background). During the interview process, however, I was informed that there are plans to build a new County Office, more centrally located in Peterborough County than within the City of Peterborough (where the Courthouse sits).<sup>90</sup> These plans reflect the focus of the County to best service their community, as well as reflect the unity of the townships in a centralized County. In considering the role of history, protecting the past while considering and planning for the future, yet prioritizing the care for the citizens within the resources provided, summarizes this concept in conversation with the role of the Warden.

In further exploring the role of history today, this literature review touches on what the County chooses to focus on while presenting history, as well as the importance of naming and various controversies that have been rectified in recent years.<sup>91</sup> The County largely presents a picture of agricultural and settler history, as seen in Lang Pioneer Village, with consideration given to structures associated with Peterborough County, as seen in a Community-Based Research project (prior to this one) concerning the jail.<sup>92</sup> As such, the topics of agriculture and the Peterborough County organization contained within this project follow the trends of what typically gains attention. Despite these connections to and thoughts of the past woven throughout this project, this process has not felt like a historical undertaking. There are two potential reasons, with the first being that because of the format used (oral history), the past came alive through the conversations with the narrators. The lynchpin of this project was not reading sources but instead relied on talking to people about their lives, with the human connection of the conversations further animating these discussions. The second possibility is that this project is largely an act of creation. It is charting unknown territory, with the goal not focused on

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<sup>88</sup> “County Courthouse Deserves Heritage Designation,” *Peterborough Examiner*, April 7, 2021, <http://proxy.lib.trentu.ca/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/county-courthouse-deserves-heritage-designation/docview/2519650117/se-2?accountid=14391>.

<sup>89</sup> Heritage Preservation Office, *Listed Heritage Properties in the City of Peterborough, Ontario*. (Peterborough, June 30, 2023), <https://www.peterborough.ca/en/explore-and-play/resources/Documents/Heritage/City-of-Peterborough-Heritage-Register---Listed-Properties-Accessible-web-version-2023.pdf>.

<sup>90</sup> Clark, discussion.

<sup>91</sup> Pidduck, “Literature Review 3,” 15-17.

<sup>92</sup> “Peterborough County Heritage Jail Park,” Exploring, Home, Peterborough County, accessed November 10, 2024, <https://www.ptbocounty.ca/en/exploring/peterborough-county-heritage-jail-park.aspx>; Pidduck, “Literature Review 3,” 13-14, 17.

answering a historical mystery or question, but instead providing the resources for those to do so in the future.

It is through the second point that I believe I have been thinking about the project, as for the duration of my research (in all aspects) I have caught myself considering the applications of this data in the future. Most of this has centered around ensuring that this research will be a useful resource to others, and, therefore, I have made efforts to explain potentially confusing parts and provide as much information as I can (to name a few examples). Throughout the project, I have known that these findings will be available to others, and as such, I have felt the gaze of the future, and tried to act accordingly. Despite this, I wonder how much resource this will be examined, as in doing the research for the literature review, there seems to be a lack of attention on history for issues such as homelessness.<sup>93</sup> I cannot comment on the public response from my experiences in this project, however, everyone who was involved with the project greeted this work with a great deal of enthusiasm. In general, how the County has considered and used history was a necessary consideration, as this project is another installment of these thoughts. Regardless of the influence on this work, however, the history of this region deserves an analysis here, given its influences on, and connections to the decisions made by the Wardens.

#### **2.4: Making the Questions**

Following the creation of the first two reading reports, my attention was turned to the creation of the questions that would guide the interviews.<sup>94</sup> These questions were largely inspired by the three key questions asked by the County, which focus on the biggest part of each Warden's tenure, the legacy they left behind, and what the County was like during their tenures.<sup>95</sup>

Another crucial consideration to the questions were the themes that had been raised in the literature reviews concerning municipal government and oral history. The governmental readings inspired more about the content of the questions, while the research on oral history informed the shape of these inquiries. For example, in the readings on municipal government, the focus on the

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<sup>93</sup> Robert Riley, "Options for museum(s)," *Peterborough Examiner*, February 21, 2004, <http://proxy.lib.trentu.ca/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/options-museum-s/docview/354602800/se-2?accountid=14391>.

<sup>94</sup> A final listing of the questions is available in A-1.

<sup>95</sup> See the beginning of section 2.

amalgamation led to a question concerning the biggest impact upon the Wardens' tenure.<sup>96</sup> As a comparable example, the work done with the theories of oral history inspired me to create two sets of questions, with one serving as an initial "get-to-know-you" conversation since the readings highlighted the importance of creating a personal connection during the interviews, sharing authority, and creating a more equal space.<sup>97</sup> This was something I wished to do, however, time constraints upon the project prevented the occurrence of the initial "get-to-know-you" conversation. The other grouping of questions was more research focused, with the intent of learning more tenure specific information, rather than the personal angle and connection desired from the first set of initial questions.

From these two sections, however, the research inquiries were divided further into subsections based on the concepts I believed to be the most important, namely, the influences upon the Warden's during their tenure, the relationships, the communities, general reflections and concluding thoughts. Although these questions were central to obtain answers to, they served the dual purpose of providing a starting point for conversation topics that I believed would be helpful in this reflection. In this process, the inquiries were intentionally left open-ended to let the participant lead the conversation (based on the themes), from which further questions would be asked based on their responses. It was necessary to me to follow the idea of rescinding some of the power that comes from an interview process.<sup>98</sup> Part of this was respecting these narrators by listening and thoughtfully considering their much larger knowledge base, rather than following my own pre-conceived notions. Another crucial element of the interviews was creating a space that would allow for a more back-and-forth dialogue. This was, again, partially achieved through the open-ended nature of the question, which served the dual purpose of not leading in a certain direction (thereby ceding control), but also creating a more natural environment through the need for spontaneous questions. Much thought was placed into this undertaking of creating the questions, with much of the prior research aiding in this step of the project, to create the best chance of success in answering the questions of the County.

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<sup>96</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 1," 5-6.

<sup>97</sup> Macnab, "Making Home and Making Welcome," 67, 68. Additionally, see sections 2.2a and 2.2c.

<sup>98</sup> Janovicek, "If you'd told me you wanted to talk about the '60s, I wouldn't have called you back," 192; Macnab, "Making Home and Making Welcome," 67, 78; Sangster, "Politics and Praxis in Canadian Working-Class Oral History," 65; Sheftel and Zembrzycki, "Who's Afraid of Oral History? Fifty Years of Debates and Anxiety about Ethics," 350, 356.

## 2.5: Ethics Approval: Submitted November 2024

Around a similar time that the questions were designed, ethics approvals began, which came with its own set of challenges. Although there were no issues gaining approval, questions quickly arose around research concerning Indigenous peoples/cultures, as well as transcriptions and capacity concerns. Beginning with the potential of Indigenous involvement in any aspect, this was at first hard to navigate, as the research team was unaware of any Wardens with Indigenous heritage, yet we could not contact the Wardens until we obtained ethics approval. Another complicating factor of this process was the openness of the questions designed. In this, there was no guarantee Indigenous cultures, peoples or communities would not be mentioned. The questions were phrased in such a way as to not directly ask about relations with Indigenous communities, however, as this was a conversation, participants were able to answer freely in response to the questions and could raise these topics themselves. After deliberation with Trent Research and Innovation (RI), it was determined that there was not enough focus on Indigenous aspects to adhere to the strict standards necessary when engaging in Indigenous-focused research.<sup>99</sup>

The ethical considerations of transcriptions were another element that we contacted RI about, as given the confidential nature of this project until approved by the participants, there were concerns about the security and confidentiality of transcription services.<sup>100</sup> Until this point, we had been looking into a purchased software transcription, rather than using Trent-licensed software such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom. After discussions with RI (and the Trent Information Technology Department), the decision was made to use Microsoft Teams (presenting Zoom as an option) and record the interviews on this service, thereby, circumventing the prior privacy concerns.

Finally, in terms of ethical concerns during the approval stage, considerations of capacity, and what would be done should the ability to provide consent be uncertain were questioned and addressed. At the time of the initial approval, when we contacted RI concerning this area of the application, there was the possibility that this *may* be a factor, given the older ages of the participants, and the fact that the potential narrators were largely unknown to me and my research team. From this, it was determined that this would not be a necessary section to

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<sup>99</sup> Anna Kisiala, e-mail message to the author, October 17, 2024.

<sup>100</sup> Anna Kisiala, e-mail message to the author, October 18, 2024.

complete at this time. This topic, however, arose again.<sup>101</sup> Through all these questions, however, we received ethics approval on November 6, 2024.<sup>102</sup> From this, we moved into the next step of the project: contacting the participants.

## **2.6: Initial Contact (December 2024 – February 2025)**

After ethics approval was granted, the process of contacting the participants began. Emmanuel Pinto (Executive Assistant to the Warden and Council at Peterborough County) with the help of former Warden, (current Mayor) Joe Taylor gathered contact information. Mr. Pinto then made introductory communication with the former Wardens who were still living, giving a general overview of the project. Once this had been completed, he passed along the contact information (as well as general notes) to me, and from there I took on the responsibility of contacting the Wardens. Over the course of this project, I reached out to ten former Wardens, with nine total participants.<sup>103</sup> These Wardens were contacted in various methods, with four Wardens contacted over email, and six reached from phone calls.<sup>104</sup> In my preliminary contact with the Wardens, I introduced the project, went through the consent form, and scheduled the interview. Within this conversation, the opportunity to ask any questions or seek clarification was provided. Given that contact had been established and participation had been secured, the next part of the project was to meet the Wardens.

## **2.7: Interview Process (January 2025 – March 2025)**

The interviews were offered either remotely (on Teams or Zoom) or in-person. Four interviews were held in-person at the County Courthouse, with one interview held in-person at the participant's place of residence. Three interviews took place over Teams, with two interviews taking place over the phone. The questions that were asked in the interviews largely consisted of those in the approved list, with the addition of follow-up questions based on participant responses. The length of these interviews was from slightly over an hour to just below two hours.<sup>105</sup> All meetings were recorded, mostly on Teams, with the exceptions of the two phone calls, which were recorded using the "record call" button on my cell phone, and the one in-person visit to the Wardens' place of residence, which was also recorded on my cell phone. After

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<sup>101</sup> See section 2.10b.

<sup>102</sup> Anna Kisiala, e-mail message to the author, November 4, 2024.

<sup>103</sup> A full listing of the participants is available in A-3.

<sup>104</sup> See A-3.

<sup>105</sup> See A-3.

these meetings, the transcripts would be generated by Microsoft, from which I would double check the statements, and correct any errors. As an acknowledgement of their time, the participants received a gift bag from Peterborough County (apart from one Warden, who declined the offer).

### **2.8: Draft Biographies (January - March 2025)**

After an accurate transcript was created, a copy of this information (as well as the recording itself) was given to the Wardens, offering each participant the opportunity to review the conversation we had. This process was inspired by Maddy Macnab's work of oral history in Peterborough, as her commitment to fully incorporating the participants in all stages of the research, beyond the interview itself, was inspiring.<sup>106</sup> In this process, the Wardens were given a deadline, before which they could request changes be made to their transcripts and recordings. After obtaining approval or following up with a check-in on the final day for edits, the process would move forward. With my field notes and the accepted copy of the interview, a draft of the biographies intended for the *Warden's Wall* virtual display were created. With the same thought as the transcripts and recordings, a copy of this biography was provided to the Wardens, who were (again) given a chance to review the information within and offer their critiques. Another deadline was provided for these changes, although edits to the biographies were optional. Each summary was inspired by our conversation and shaped by the three questions Peterborough County sought to answer of the most important event/impact, legacy, and life in Peterborough County during each Wardens tenure. The length of these biographies was also instructed by Peterborough County to be between four to six sentences (although each summary is six sentences). Copies of these biographies are available for viewing on the *Warden's Wall* website.<sup>107</sup>

### **2.9: Analysis and Presentation (February – April 2025)**

After the Wardens had a chance to approve the work submitted to them, the transcriptions and field notes were analyzed for frequent topics. This work formed the sections and reflections presented in section 3, although beginning thoughts were crucial to consider throughout the second half of the project (i.e. during the interviews). These common themes, however, were first

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<sup>106</sup> Macnab, "Making Home and Making Welcome," 67.

<sup>107</sup> See A-4.

presented as part of a research poster, exhibited on March 27, 2025, at the Trent Community Research Center's celebration event for the research projects undertaken during the 2024-2025 school year.<sup>108</sup> In addition to this visual summary, a presentation of these findings was given to County Council on April 23, 2025.

## **2.10: Challenges**

### **2.10a: Ethical Amendment – Verbal (December 2024)**

Throughout this project, although there were many beneficial and positive moments, an accurate reflection also includes some of the complications that arose during this study. While an overview of the queries posed around ethics I was presented earlier, some of the biggest challenges that arose were problems surrounding amendments that were made to our approval.<sup>109</sup> The first of these alterations concerned the use of verbal consent within the study. This first emerged during initial contact with the Wardens' in early December 2024, as it quickly became apparent that while participants with emails could be sent electronic documents, this became more challenging for those who could only be phoned. The first thought was to deliver paper copies, but the mail strike and complexities with transportation rendered this option impossible. Furthermore, should our meetings not take place face-to-face, it would be virtually impossible to obtain a record of consent, as how would these papers be signed in a timely manner? A pivot to verbal consent became necessary in some cases, and, therefore, an amendment had to be made to the ethics approval to incorporate this. In this amendment, it was proposed that the agreement be read to participants, with field notes of consent documenting this process, as well as a recording of their consent. Verbal consent was exclusively used for two participants, with all other seven narrators signing a physical form at some point during the study.

### **2.10b: Ethical Amendment – Questions of Capacity to Assent (January - February 2024)**

Another issue that arose during the contact stage of this project was the matter of capacity to assent to participation, and remembering that this consent had been provided, as two of the potential participants had been diagnosed with dementia. As mentioned earlier, it was deemed unnecessary to address this during the approval, as we had no clear indication at the time.<sup>110</sup> But in late November/early December of 2024, we became aware of a Warden who had these

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<sup>108</sup> See A-5.

<sup>109</sup> See section 2.5.

<sup>110</sup> See section 2.5.

cognitive concerns, and would not be able to meet, although his wife was willing to ask the questions. In December 2024, the research team decided that including this Warden in the project would be a risk in terms of not having me conduct the interview, as well as obtaining consent. As such, we decided against their involvement. In January 2025, however, the team became aware of another Warden with dementia, yet his caretaker was keen on his participation, and assured us that this could be done. Not wanting to be exclusive but unsure of the appropriate path forward, we reached out to ethics again with our dilemma in February 2025. We were initially given research concerning the lack of guidelines surrounding the inclusion of participants, which was informative, although could not provide much direction.<sup>111</sup> We were also referred to Dr. Blair Niblett, who advised that a blanket exclusion policy would be unethical, and the best path forward would be to modify the study to better incorporate a caretaker role in these cases.<sup>112</sup> After a brief meeting with Dr. Durand to assuage my concerns, as time was becoming a more urgent factor, the project was altered to reflect this additional element.

The implemented changes consisted of many elements. Although the question list was available to participants prior to their involvement upon request, this was altered in the case of concerns about capacity to assent. In these situations, the caretaker of the Warden was automatically provided the questions in advance to assess and report upon the participants ability to answer these queries. Additionally, a new consent form was created for the caretaker, who would also be present at the interview, and the original consent form was amended to reflect more accurately what would be asked of the participant in these situations. An additional document was also made to confirm the role of the caretaker. Beyond these changes in paperwork, further precautions were also implemented to ensure that there was awareness from the participant during the interview process. These safeguards included trusting the caretaker to explain the project to the Warden, telling the caretaker to step in should something feel off during the interview, as well as a recorded meeting after the interview between the caretaker and myself to reflect upon how the conversation had gone. Part of this was also contacting the caretaker rather than the Warden and forwarding all reviewable materials (transcripts, recordings, and

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<sup>111</sup> Amanda Grenier, Deborah O'Connor, Krista James, Daphne Imahori, Daniella Minchopoulos, Nicole Velev, Laura Tamblyn-Watts, and Jim Mann, "Consent and Inclusion of People Living with Dementia (PLWD) in Research: Establishing a Canadian Agenda for Inclusive Rights-Based Practices," *Canadian Journal on Aging / La Revue Canadienne du Vieillessement* 43, no. 4 (2024): 621–28. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0714980824000217>; Anna Kisiala, e-mail message to the author, February 7, 2025.

<sup>112</sup> Blair Niblett, e-mail message to author, February 7, 2025.

biography drafts) to this person. Should none of these conditions be met, the participation of this Warden would be terminated.

Once we had learned that a blanket policy would be highly unethical, we attempted to amend our former shortcoming by contacting the Warden that we had previously dismissed. Unfortunately, when communication occurred, we learned that this Warden had passed away the very same day I attempted contact.<sup>113</sup> I speak for both myself, and my team when I say we are truly sorry about these circumstances and wish that things had occurred differently. We hope that in detailing the process that occurred with this project, we may add to existing thoughts surrounding the inclusion of participants with dementia and prevent other situations such as this.

## 2.11: Limitations

As reflected above, there is a desire to correct various mistakes, and prevent future dilemmas that have occurred within this project. This is not the only element which, if this process is repeated, should change. One of the earliest examples of an unfortunate change to this study was the removal of an initial, more personal conversation to foster connection. It was my intent, as Macnab had done, to create a link between myself and the participants, since we were entering this process as strangers.<sup>114</sup> I believed that engaging in this process would have made the discussions of their tenure as Warden an even more comfortable environment, since it would not be our first meeting. Due to time constraints and other responsibilities, however, it was impossible to do so, and such, the questions in the *Initial* section of the question list were never asked of the participants.<sup>115</sup> This remains one of my regrets concerning the undertaking of this project, as I wished to make this process as easy as possible for those kind enough to partake. I will say, that despite this, I believe that the participants and I were able to connect during this process, through our interviews, but also additional follow-up discussions.

Overall, this process was lengthy and complex, with various parts of the project occurring simultaneously. The first literature review was completed in September of 2024, with the others completed in the next three months. During the latter part of these months, question creation and ethics approval transpired, with the amendments reaching into the new year, and the interview process beginning in January 2025 before finishing in early March 2025. Transcript review, draft

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<sup>113</sup> Suzanne Allen, e-mail to author, February 23, 2025.

<sup>114</sup> Macnab, "Making Home and Making Welcome," 65-66.

<sup>115</sup> See section A-1.

biographies, and analysis also came to be within this time. Finally this report and final presentations took place from March 2025 to April 2025. During the undertaking of this project, much was learned in both the preliminary work and while the study was occurring that were then applied to the methods seen in this section. It is the hope of this researcher that these findings in methodology may be applied to future works, to ensure the best possible outcome is achieved, and to ease the number of challenges faced.

## **Section 3: Themes**

### **3.1: Rural Identity**

Given then focus on Peterborough County within this project, it would be a mistake to ignore one of the defining features that was often raised in the interviews, namely the rural identity of the area. Beyond the prevalence of the agricultural industry (as mentioned by multiple Wardens), many of these leaders of Peterborough County came from a farming background themselves.<sup>116</sup> Out of the nine participants, six discussed having a farm during their tenure with many of these farms being longstanding family farms.<sup>117</sup> The Wardens were proud of these agricultural roots, with Neal Cathcart recalling the moment one of his cows was called “perfect beauty” at the Royal Winter Fair as a momentous occasion.<sup>118</sup> This rural background is crucial to consider within this project, given the discussion around individual histories in relation to oral history.<sup>119</sup> This past of the Wardens should be considered, especially given the influence of this personal agricultural history upon the various tenures examined. For example, during Warden Taylor’s term, the Agricultural Wall of Fame was added to Lang Pioneer Village, something of great importance to him, given his grandparents’ agricultural roots.<sup>120</sup> The history of the rural identity of Peterborough County was reflected upon earlier, as was the related discussion of how the County uses history.<sup>121</sup> Both the County and the Wardens themselves were created through a legacy of hard agricultural labour, and the Wall of Fame reflects this idea. The rural identity within the County of Peterborough has been a focal point for many years, and this is clear from

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<sup>116</sup> Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Jones, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>117</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Clark, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Stewart, written communication.

<sup>118</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion.

<sup>119</sup> See section 2.2a.

<sup>120</sup> Taylor, discussion.

<sup>121</sup> See section 2.3c and 2.3d respectively.

the background of the leaders, but also the continuation and respect afforded to these traditions.<sup>122</sup> While doing research for this project, I believed that, coming from a farming area myself, I understood the impact and role of agriculture. But to see the Wardens engage so thoroughly within this industry, and through their connections, keep this identity alive and well in Peterborough County, it extends far beyond what I imagined coming into this project.

The idea and definition of a rural identity, however, requires an urban identity to be distinct from.<sup>123</sup> Notions of this divide was explored earlier, and some Wardens touched on this difference, recounting a need for both the rural and the urban, and how in Peterborough County, both are nearby, giving residents the best of both worlds.<sup>124</sup> As also explored previously, there is a sense of merging and collaboration between close communities within these sentiments.<sup>125</sup> Regardless, given the attention that was afforded to the variations in these types of regions within the literature, the expectation entering this project was that there would be more separation. This study did not disappoint. While some discussions of direct differences arose (such as higher taxes), and the pride that exists for the rural, the overarching idea was of simply having different needs.<sup>126</sup> Within the first literature review, the idea of a common rural identity arose concerning the services provided, yet the importance placed upon the distinction in identity was still jarring to hear.<sup>127</sup> This shock, however, became clearer after further discussion, as, for example, former Warden Ron Gerow helped clarify this idea by returning to the origin of Peterborough County: the need for different services than the urban centers.<sup>128</sup> This historical trend remains today, as Warden Bonnie Clark emphasized that groups such as the ROMA (Rural Ontario Municipal Association) exist because of this concept, and they work together to support rural areas in providing the residents of these regions the services they need.<sup>129</sup> One example of a specific service is the Eastern Ontario Regional Network, which strove to provide high speed cellular and Wi-Fi access throughout largely rural regions.<sup>130</sup> Within an urban center, the need for this project

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<sup>122</sup> See sections 3.3b and 3.6.

<sup>123</sup> Crouch, "Tourism, consumption and rurality," 356, 360-361; Pidduck, "Literature Review 1," 2; Spicer, "Growth, Development and Conceptualizations of Urban and Rural," 63-64.

<sup>124</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Clark, discussion; Gerow, discussion. See section 2.1a.

<sup>125</sup> See section 2.1a.

<sup>126</sup> Clark, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>127</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 1," 2; Spicer, "Introduction," 3-5, 8-9; Spicer, "Municipal Organization in Ontario," 31.

<sup>128</sup> Gerow, discussion.

<sup>129</sup> Clark, discussion.

<sup>130</sup> Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

would be lesser, as many people in cities can access high speed internet, while service out in the country is often weaker.<sup>131</sup> As seen in these conversations, the rural identity of numerous regions, including Peterborough County, directly impacts the actions that are taken by the government. Different projects and services are planned and executed because of these varying landscapes. Prior to engaging in these interviews, I mistakenly believed that this divide was wholly based upon traditional cultural ideas, rather than physical considerations and variations in policy and planning.

A key focus of Peterborough County stemming from the rural identity of the region is the transit infrastructure, including roads and bridges. Many participants, including Ron Gerow, Neal Cathcart, Donald Boyce, Warden Bonnie Clark and Mayor Joe Taylor mentioned challenges in balancing the road budget and spreading these funds across the townships.<sup>132</sup> Transportation systems are a traditional responsibility of municipal government; however, the attention given to this concept in the conversations with the Wardens reflects the threat of isolation that Peterborough County faces due to its size, but also the rural landscape of the area.<sup>133</sup> The focus on maintaining roads (and thereby, connection) is a part of Peterborough County's rural identity, which further solidifies the idea that this distinction from urban centers is not wholly based upon cultural ideas. The prevalence of this issue within the interviews lends credence to notion that the landscape of Peterborough County forces the government, and the Wardens, to have different priorities from more urban spaces.

Beyond simply having this identity, however, there was a clear desire from the Wardens to keep this feature of Peterborough County. An issue that arose in the interviews was the move from *Reeve* and *Deputy Reeve* of the Townships to *Mayor* and *Deputy Mayor*.<sup>134</sup> Some controversy around this change arose, with some refusing to use the terms, as the motivations behind this alteration were unclear, and the term *Reeve* was unique to rural communities, coming from English tradition.<sup>135</sup> Considerations of terminology were never directly mentioned in the

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<sup>131</sup> Jones, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>132</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Clark, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>133</sup> Cole and Corporation of the County of Peterborough, *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Peterborough County, 1825-1875*, 14; Howard Pammatt, "224 Heads of Irish Families Given Lots Cabins of Primitive Log Design Built: Progress of Peterborough XVII," *Peterborough Examiner*, March 11, 1950, in 86-027 Series B, Choate Family fonds (1986 Additions); Pidduck, "Literature Review 3," 8, 9; Spicer, "Municipal Organization in Ontario," 23, 24.

<sup>134</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Gerow, discussion.

<sup>135</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Gerow, discussion.

research discussed earlier, yet this concept reflects the way that the cultural beliefs around specific identities can manifest, as expressed by David Sibley.<sup>136</sup> Although the differences in the landscape are crucial to recognize (as outlined in previous paragraphs), distinctions are also contained in language. Further determination to maintain traditionally rural concepts can also be seen in discussions of the amalgamation that occurred in 1997, with the desire of the communities to retain their names.<sup>137</sup> These two examples reflect the ways in which language has been used to guard rural identity, but also within the resolve applied to retain these defining characteristics. If rural identity was not a crucial part of Peterborough County, this determination to maintain these concepts would be significantly lacking. Throughout these conversations, however, this idea of indifference is clearly not present, and rural identity plays a central role in the County, permeating various areas of life, even beyond policies. From the variety of influences it is easy to say that while Peterborough County is attached to a rural identity, from the agriculture background of the area and the leaders to the practicalities of this within the services and language connected to the municipal government.

### **3.2: Amalgamation**

Although this was not an exclusive issue to Peterborough County, the specific impacts of the amalgamation must be considered, given the prevalence of the topic in the discussions. This was not a single event, however, as Warden Douglas Percy shared that “it always came back to [amalgamation], you know, everything was influenced by that thinking,” and Warden Flynn recounted the prevalence of the issue during his terms (which featured a gap of 19 years).<sup>138</sup> In 1996, Mike Harris and the provincial Government prioritized efficiency, and so, many small municipalities were merged into larger bodies.<sup>139</sup> Peterborough County was not exempt from this, and in 1997, shifted from 14 townships and four villages, to eight townships and 1 village (with Lakefield amalgamated later).<sup>140</sup> Given the scale of this undertaking, in my first literature review, I judged this to have been quite impactful, and expected it to arise within these

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<sup>136</sup> Sibley, “Inclusions/exclusions in rural space,” 406. See section 2.1.

<sup>137</sup> See section 3.2.

<sup>138</sup> Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Flynn, telephone call; Percy, discussion.

<sup>139</sup> Douglas, “The restructuring of local government in rural regions,” 234-235; Siegel, “Ontario,” 28, 50.

<sup>140</sup> Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Flynn, telephone call.

discussions.<sup>141</sup> While there were no direct leading questions to the issue, I was correct to believe the topic would be raised.

Despite a final result of 8 townships reached, this was not always the plan. A possibility that former Wardens Douglas Percy and Tom Flynn raised was the potential of the City and the County merging into one body, with discussions held concerning this merger.<sup>142</sup> Part of the incentive to this was the better financial standing of the County, which would (should the two bodies join) be beneficial to the City.<sup>143</sup> This unification was not implemented, however, as these conversations were abruptly ended by the City for unknown reasons.<sup>144</sup> Despite this, the potential inclusion of the city can be traced back to the involvement of the province. Throughout this process, from beginning to end, the province was a strong motivator.<sup>145</sup> Without provincial involvement, it would be reasonable to assume that Peterborough County would not have amalgamated, given the strong objection by the population.<sup>146</sup> To this end, former Warden Neal Cathcart described this process as a “fire overtop of your head from the provincial government.”<sup>147</sup> Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that there were those who were in favour of the change, with former Warden Gary Stewart serving in Queen’s Park with Mike Harris at this time.<sup>148</sup> Shockingly, given the debate that was had around the issue, there was very little disagreement between the Wardens on the issue of amalgamation in our conversations. It is, here, that the role of the province in municipal affairs is brought to the forefront, with the ties that exist between these governments exposed.<sup>149</sup> Within this idea, the crucial concept that the County does not exist within a vacuum and is (like so much else) beholden to outside influences is necessary to acknowledge and consider. The issue of amalgamation, while impactful upon many tenures, must be seen in conjunction with the other influences, such as the role of the province, to better understand the workings of municipal government, and the connectivity between various organizations.

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<sup>141</sup> Pidduck, “Literature Review 1,” 5-6.

<sup>142</sup> Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>143</sup> Flynn and Flynn, discussion.

<sup>144</sup> Percy, discussion.

<sup>145</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Douglas, “The restructuring of local government in rural regions,” 234-235; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Siegel, “Ontario,” 28, 50.

<sup>146</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>147</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion.

<sup>148</sup> Stewart, written communication.

<sup>149</sup> Douglas, “The restructuring of local government in rural regions,” 232; Pidduck, “Literature Review 1,” 5, 8; Siegel, “Ontario,” 24, 26.

Further considering the lack of desire for amalgamation, part of the protest against this change was from the loss of identity through potential name changes, and absorption. While both Gary Stewart and Neal Cathcart touch on the topic, this idea was largely explored in my discussion with Tom and Ruth Flynn.<sup>150</sup> Tom Flynn served as Warden in 1997, when the amalgamation occurred in Peterborough County, as well as 1998, when the first impacts of the unification were felt.<sup>151</sup> During our conversation, it became clear that this was a period of great difficulty for the County with the potential homogenizing of these diverse townships, and potential name changes.<sup>152</sup> As explored previously, terminology is a crucial part of rural identity, as it emphasizes the uniqueness of the area.<sup>153</sup> Within Peterborough County, however, this diversity extends beyond the distinction of being rural to the differences between the various municipalities. Prior to these interviews, the most knowledge I had concerning these variances was from the vast range of historical sources, highlighting diverse features, with some works exclusively focusing on a specific township.<sup>154</sup> It was only during this discussion of identity, however, that I fully understood the depth of the distinct personalities attached to the townships of Peterborough County. The differences in the past, and in landscape variations have led to the creation of distinct areas within Peterborough County, with unique presents, that will lead to various futures. Through the damage to these dissimilarities inherent in amalgamation, the importance of this variety to the people, and the determination to maintain this uniqueness becomes clear.

The issue of amalgamation can seem quite dark. But many today believe the identities of various townships were kept, including some of the former Wardens who were interviewed.<sup>155</sup> One notable example, however, is the woman who ran up to former Warden Flynn in a grocery store approximately 10 years after the change and thanked him for his successful navigation through the potential challenges of amalgamation.<sup>156</sup> This anecdote reflects the importance of local leadership, as explored by David Douglas, David Sibley, Zachary Spicer and Michael

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<sup>150</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Stewart, written communication.

<sup>151</sup> Flynn, telephone call.

<sup>152</sup> Flynn and Flynn, discussion.

<sup>153</sup> See section 3.1.

<sup>154</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 3," 10, 17-18.

<sup>155</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Stewart, written communication.

<sup>156</sup> Flynn and Flynn, discussion.

Woods.<sup>157</sup> The involvement of residents in big decisions such as these is crucial, as those who are impacted, have a choice to have their voice heard. This focus in Peterborough County, while further explored later, represents a great deal of care, and a focus on the residents in all decisions, including financial and identity matters, both of which are reflected in the concept of amalgamation.<sup>158</sup> It was this care that led Peterborough County through the challenges posed by restructuring, to a solution that is accepted by many. While amalgamation can still be a sensitive subject, as seen in the role of outside influences and the considerations of identity, the experience of these Wardens concerning the restructuring, adds new insights to both the events, but also the other themes contained in this report.

### **3.3: Collaborative**

#### **3.3a: Peterborough County Organization**

Despite the many references to and the focus of this project being the Wardens, it would be erroneous to ignore others involved in the Peterborough County organization. As such, this section is dedicated to the countless people involved in the operation of the County, and the many hours that these individuals invested in the area. Being Warden may sometimes appear as a one-person job. This could not be further than the truth, however, as I was reminded time and time again during this process.<sup>159</sup> Many of the Wardens in our conversations reflected upon the impact staff had, and how great their colleagues within the Peterborough County organization were.<sup>160</sup> Beyond this appreciation, however, the Wardens often insisted that any credit associated with their tenure be shared amongst themselves, the staff, and the County Council.<sup>161</sup> Had this project solely relied upon written sources, rather than interviews, this idea may have been lost, as it was the Wardens themselves in our discussions who ensured that this credit was given. In my prior research on municipal government, many of the works focused upon the role itself, rather than the numerous people involved.<sup>162</sup> But as the narrators were able to share their experience in the position of Warden, they were able to highlight the teamwork necessary, moving this idea to

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<sup>157</sup> Douglas, "The restructuring of local government in rural regions," 238; Sibley, "Inclusions/exclusions in rural space," 403-405; Spicer, "Municipal Organization in Ontario," 42; Woods, "Political articulation," 462, 466.

<sup>158</sup> See section 3.10.

<sup>159</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Clark, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion; Stewart, written communication; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 1," 2-10.

the forefront of our discussions. As such, the importance of involving former Wardens within this project is clear, given their familiarity with the office at the center of the research, and the unique knowledge they bring from the experience of having that job. Beyond simply having the opportunity to share their insights, the focus of the Wardens to afford proper credit within this project was heartening to hear and reflects the care that these Wardens possess. It would have been easy for the Wardens to take all the praise for their tenures given the focus of this project, but instead their prioritization of inclusion was inspiring. Although discussed in the considerations of next steps, it was this focus on the collaboration at the County that led to a wish for further projects to include others from the County organization.<sup>163</sup> The level of collaboration, as well as the care and consideration for others is clear within this focus that the narrators afforded others.

Beyond the impact of the various colleagues who were so central to the work achieved during the tenures of the Wardens, many of the participants mentioned the friendships made during their time on County Council.<sup>164</sup> The inclusion of these relationships reflects the benefit of oral history in revealing more personal details. These bonds of friendship from municipal government were not mentioned in the literature review (compiled from the written works) prior to these conversations.<sup>165</sup> The human connections are not often the focus of governmental understandings. Although a question concerning relationships was asked in the interviews (which often gave rise to these recollections) this query was initially inspired from the theme of connections to the community.<sup>166</sup> Oral history, however, as explored previously, is a vehicle for revealing and uplifting both people and information left out of official sources, or in this case, governmental paperwork.<sup>167</sup> Again, as expressed earlier, this was a positive element of this project, as governmental business was humanized from the foreign position is usually occupies for me.<sup>168</sup> During these conversations, however, with these cheerful narrations of friendship, it also became clear that while the role of Warden was hard work, these leaders found and

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<sup>163</sup> See section 4.

<sup>164</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion; Stewart, written communication.

<sup>165</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 1," 2-10.

<sup>166</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 1," 4, 9.

<sup>167</sup> Baillargeon, "If You Had No Money, You Had No Trouble, Did You?," 217-218; Jessee, "The Limits of Oral History," 290; Macnab, "Making Home and Making Welcome," 40-42, 94; Sangster, "Politics and Praxis in Canadian Working-Class Oral History," 60-61; Sheftel and Zembrzycki, "Who's Afraid of Oral History? Fifty Years of Debates and Anxiety about Ethics," 346, 352. See sections 2.2c and 2.2d for further discussion.

<sup>168</sup> See section 2.2c.

remembered the joy, and deeply cared for those they worked with.<sup>169</sup> From these connections, however, there is also a sense of the ability these participants had to successfully create relationships, which is a crucial element to the role of Warden.<sup>170</sup> It is in this idea of friendship (and in the paragraphs in this section) that the compatibility of these participants to face the role and challenges of the Warden is clear.

Within these examples of positive relationship and collaboration within the Peterborough County Organization, consideration must be given to the role of mentors. A question was created concerning relationships, listing mentors as an example of a possible answer, however, it is telling that many of the narrators spoke fondly of past Wardens, and had at least one specific response.<sup>171</sup> Regarding this idea, former Warden, and current Mayor Joe Taylor outlined the importance of a community between those who have held this position, as these people are the only ones who truly understand the role.<sup>172</sup> These sentiments were echoed by Warden Bonnie Clark through her emphasis on having a succession plan, as well as mentoring and investing in employees, continually encouraging these mentor relationships.<sup>173</sup> So much attention was placed upon these cross-tenure relationships, as given the short nature of the terms it is challenging to complete plans within this time.<sup>174</sup> As such, it is necessary to trust and collaborate with those who have come before, but also those who are yet to come. This cooperation can be seen in the example of the work done by EORN (Eastern Ontario Regional Network), which began almost 20 years ago in 2008.<sup>175</sup> In recognizing these cross-tenure connections between the Wardens, the need for collaboration is clear, as while the outcome may have occurred in one term, the foundations were potentially laid years before. Within this, there is a community created between the Wardens, as seen in the connections of the mentors listed, as there were both similarities, and mentions of other participants.<sup>176</sup> These links are easily visible through the practice of oral history, and as such, there is a clearer, more personal picture of collaboration available when considering the role of the Warden.

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<sup>169</sup> See sections 3.8, 3.3a and 3.10 respectively.

<sup>170</sup> See section 3.4b.

<sup>171</sup> Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Percy, discussion; Stewart, written communication; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>172</sup> Taylor, discussion.

<sup>173</sup> Clark, discussion.

<sup>174</sup> Gerow, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>175</sup> Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>176</sup> Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Percy, discussion; Stewart, written communication; Taylor, discussion.

To further understand the depth of the teamwork within the County organization, it is necessary to turn to the repeated concept of defending the staff from conduct lacking respect.<sup>177</sup> Beyond the connections to respect and care, these actions reflect a positive working relationship with those at the County Organization.<sup>178</sup> Having these favourable bonds and interactions was mentioned multiple times as a factor for success as Warden, especially with the Chief Administrative Officer.<sup>179</sup> Again, the theme of oral history providing a more human perspective, reflecting the relationships and collaboration within municipal government is clear. From the regaling of these stories in the human process of conversation, to the connections embedded within the tales, the influence of other people in municipal government is clear throughout this project. The centrality of the staff, and teamwork with multiple members of the County is apparent from the numerous mentions of relationships (as seen in the first paragraph of this section) but also in the way that the narrators fought for their staff. Again, the wish that others at the County could have been involved in this research arises, and although this cannot be changed in this project, their role can and should be recognized within this report.

As explored throughout this section, the relationships within the organization allow for better teamwork. It is this teamwork that allows the Warden and the County to do so much. A key part of this is the number of responsibilities the County bears, which are far too many for one person to manage alone.<sup>180</sup> Within the interviews, it was (as expressed in the paragraphs above) evident that collaboration is necessary, as seen through the focus on listening, as advocated by former Wardens Douglas Percy, Ron Gerow and Gary Stewart.<sup>181</sup> This, in combination with the understanding that nobody can do it all and dividing the work, makes for better results.<sup>182</sup> Within these ideas, respect and trust are throughout, demonstrating the importance of fostering relationships and working with other people.<sup>183</sup> In more top-down views of history, it can be easy to essentialize or overlook these complex webs of people. The literature review produced from the readings concerning municipal government reflects this mistake, with no acknowledgement of the numerous people involved.<sup>184</sup> This report, however, attempts to amend this error, and

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<sup>177</sup> Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Jones, discussion.

<sup>178</sup> See sections 3.3b and 3.10.

<sup>179</sup> Clark, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>180</sup> Taylor, discussion.

<sup>181</sup> Gerow, discussion; Percy, discussion; Stewart, written communication.

<sup>182</sup> Jones, discussion.

<sup>183</sup> See section 3.3b.

<sup>184</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 1," 2-10.

acknowledge these intricate networks of collaboration, while hoping that further work will include, but also expand upon these concepts. In thinking about collaboration within this municipal government, however, the ideas explored above are complicated with the Warden acting as the face of the County. Although this will be further discussed later, and it is necessary to have a representative, this focus on the ambassador of the region removes the networks that exist within the government, which is a positive in connecting to the public, but a negative in the essentialization that occurs.<sup>185</sup> The need for balance here is a complicated issue, but it is crucial to consider this labyrinth of relationships as a factor when reflecting upon teamwork at the municipal level. Overall, however, collaboration within the Peterborough County organization is central to the role of Warden, as seen in the themes of the collaboration to those within the Peterborough County business, through the friendships, mentors and communities, colleague relations, and the trust and respect necessary to succeed.

### **3.3b: Respect**

Given the prevalence that respect has played within the relationships of the County organization, a more detailed examination of this idea is required. Many Wardens touched upon this concept as a general part of governmental relations.<sup>186</sup> There is a common understanding that a level of civility will be present, further inspiring collaboration as less hostility outwardly exists. While these basic considerations must be a priority, the Wardens went beyond this to explain that respect goes both ways, and one must partake in this process to receive the same kindnesses, especially as the Warden, who sets the tone of the Council.<sup>187</sup> While there is some regard and responsibility inherent in being Warden, this person is still but one member of the Council.<sup>188</sup> Part of this leadership role includes fostering a climate of respect and teamwork to encourage collaboration. Another responsibility in the position of Warden is keeping everyone working together and on the same page.<sup>189</sup> While ideas of balance, and the role of the Warden will be further explored later in this report, it is necessary to introduce these concepts here, as they depend on respect to function.<sup>190</sup> Beyond the respect and collaboration achieved within the Peterborough County organization, however, this should also be considered in connection to the

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<sup>185</sup> See section 3.9a.

<sup>186</sup> Clark, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>187</sup> Clark, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>188</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Clark, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>189</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Clark, discussion; Jones, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>190</sup> See sections 3.3d and 3.9a.

residents. The issue here, partially lies in the struggles of being visible, as outlined later.<sup>191</sup> If the Warden is unknown to the people, how can the citizens respect someone they are unaware of? This ignorance does not create respect or inspire public involvement in government, harming the desired collaboration between residents and their representatives.<sup>192</sup> More than this, however, these Wardens deserve this high esteem. While respect is earned, through our conversations, given their care for the people and the good achieved within their tenures, these Wardens have more than earned this admiration.<sup>193</sup> Given the respect I now hold for these leaders after such a brief interaction, there is little doubt that these participants were able to foster the same feelings in others, and as such, partake in meaningful collaboration.

While this respect for those who have held the mantle of Warden is crucial in consideration of collaboration, regard for the title of Warden and traditions were frequently mentioned during the interviews.<sup>194</sup> Beginning with the honour afforded to the position, even while describing the ritual practices concerning the Warden, such as wearing the gown and having the Council stand for their entrance, former Warden J. Murray Jones highlighted that these actions were not about the person, but rather the office itself.<sup>195</sup> While the customs themselves may not be about those who have been Warden, there is, as briefly mentioned above, a respect for those who have held the title, whether they had been personally known, or those who served almost 100 years before.<sup>196</sup> This focus on honouring the past and the historical idea of a Warden is demonstrated through maintaining these ceremonial practices. As an example, when former Warden Ron Gerow updated the traditional Chain of Office to reflect the restructured region, there was a great deal of respect within this process to honour the dignity of the chain, which had served for many years as part of the Warden's outfit, and a physical representation of the unity of the County.<sup>197</sup> These traditional elements of local government, such as the chain of office or the gown, represent a physical manifestation of the County.<sup>198</sup> The

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<sup>191</sup> See section 3.9b.

<sup>192</sup> See sections 3.3a and 3.10.

<sup>193</sup> See section 3.10.

<sup>194</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Clark, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>195</sup> Jones, discussion.

<sup>196</sup> Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>197</sup> Gerow, discussion.

<sup>198</sup> The Chain of Office began around the 14th century in the United Kingdom (eventually spreading to the monarchy) and has since been accepted as a custom of municipal government in Canada, but also other former

continued use and maintenance of these symbols promotes a shared history that created unity and inspires collaboration. In having these physical customs to engage with, there is a sense of belonging to the County, which encourages teamwork to achieve the common goal of doing what is best for the shared identity of the County. This creation of a joint image for people to look towards is crucial within the government of Peterborough County to unite the various townships. While more has been said upon this theme in other areas of the report, the very existence of eight different areas requires compromise.<sup>199</sup> In the interviews, many Wardens reflected on this need to accommodate others.<sup>200</sup> These concessions are easier, however, when there is a common identity to believe in and shared goals to work towards. The respect of the past and this honoured incorporation within the County today, and as furthered by the Wardens, provides this symbol. This unity is inspired through the regard the people in the role of Warden have for the idea of one County but also the esteem held for the connections necessary within this position, including the public and their colleagues. The duties of being Warden and the concept of a unified Peterborough County are intertwined through notions of respect, and through this connection, there can be increased collaboration at the County level.

### **3.3c: Non-Partisan**

A clear example of fostering a collaborative environment from a space of respect is what Warden Bonnie Clark, Ron Gerow, and Douglas Percy emphasized: the removal of politics from municipal government.<sup>201</sup> This may at first seem counter-intuitive, as politics and government are usually closely tied. Municipal affairs, however, are quite different, and in Siegel's work, there is a discussion of how political parties are not often involved in local government in the same way as they are in federal or provincial affairs.<sup>202</sup> In this vein, Gerow and Percy were staunchly against discussing politics in the Council Chamber, as to not create division among the Council.<sup>203</sup> This removal of potential barriers to teamwork represents the role of the Warden in leading by example, and creating an environment of trust and respect conducive to collaboration.

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colonies. For more information see "Chain of Office," Mayor and Council, Municipal Office, Home, Township of Brock, accessed April 13, 2025, <https://www.townshipofbrock.ca/en/municipal-office/chain-of-office.aspx>.

<sup>199</sup> See sections 3.1 and 3.3d.

<sup>200</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>201</sup> Clark, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>202</sup> Siegel, "Ontario," 35, 36.

<sup>203</sup> Gerow, discussion; Percy, discussion.

The human connections that can be formed in the Council Chambers are prioritized over the ideological lines that are often quickly drawn.

The matter of non-partisan spaces was extended by Warden Clark, Gerow and Percy to include interactions with provincial and federal governments.<sup>204</sup> All three of these Wardens expressed their will to work with anybody at these levels to provide for the citizens of Peterborough County. This pragmatic determination places the goal of doing right by the County, and, therefore, the collaboration necessary to achieve this, above everything else. This is quite an inspiring feat, as in the context of writing this report, the world is becoming more and more politically polarized.<sup>205</sup> The commitment to the teamwork necessary to achieve the best for the County in the face of such division emphasizes just how important the residents are to the Wardens who have partaken in this project. In understanding this heightened estrangement in the world, where “sides” become part of personal bias, the fact that collaboration (at any level) is still prioritized over this division, emphasizes the central role of teamwork in the goals of the County, and, therefore, the Wardens.

### **3.3d: Townships**

In considering differing opinions, and the potential division that may arise from this severance, an examination of the relationships and cooperation between the townships must follow. This is no small part of being Warden, as multiple narrators stressed the impacts that harmony among the municipalities has upon the success of one’s tenure.<sup>206</sup> In 2025, Peterborough County has eight different municipalities, which as stated by several Wardens, are all unique.<sup>207</sup> As a reflection of these variations, partnerships and desires fluctuate by township, as each one has different needs within County Council, as well as various agreements among each other at the lower-tier.<sup>208</sup> As an example of the intrinsically unique nature of each municipality, when providing services for all the townships, further thought must account for the

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<sup>204</sup> Clark, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>205</sup> “People in Advanced Economies Say Their Society Is More Divided Than Before Pandemic,” COVID-19 & Politics, Health Policy, Political Issues, Politics & Policy, Research Topics, Home, Pew Research Center, Kat Devlin, Moira Fagan, and Aidan Connaughton, last modified June 23, 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2021/06/23/people-in-advanced-economies-say-their-society-is-more-divided-than-before-pandemic/>.

<sup>206</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Clark, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>207</sup> Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion; Peterborough County, “Townships;” Taylor, discussion. See sections 3.1 and 3.2.

<sup>208</sup> Gerow, discussion; Percy, discussion.

size of Peterborough County, as if this is not carefully considered and planned for, it could lead to inequality within the standard of resources.<sup>209</sup> Within these variations, the key for the Warden to create a cooperation at the County-level, is to balance the wants and needs of each township and press forward with one vision.<sup>210</sup> This can be a challenge, as what is best for the County may have negative results for a certain municipality.<sup>211</sup> For example, the decision to expand the landfill out around the existing site (rather than two separate facilities), was a necessary change and is a positive in providing the County a place to dispose of and process garbage.<sup>212</sup> However, there are adverse effects for residents who live near the larger dump in Otonabee South Monaghan township, as these citizens must bear the consequences (i.e. increased truck traffic) of this decision.<sup>213</sup> Regardless, growth must occur, and it is in these developments that accommodations and collaborations (as explored above) become central. Without compromises such as this example, however, the County could dissolve into warring factions. Zachary Spicer discusses this idea by stating that in competing with other districts in the same area, this often divides resources between regions, offering a lack of services.<sup>214</sup> Peterborough County, as seen through the Wardens interviewed for this project, is focused on doing what is best for the County, and as such, will collaborate through tough decisions (such as the dump site) to achieve this goal and prevent this threat of in-fighting.<sup>215</sup> As such, during the tenures of the participants, while there were friendly rivalries between the municipalities, the eight townships largely worked in harmony.<sup>216</sup> This is a sign of success of the Warden as balancing these various actors is part of their role, but this harmony also outlines the importance placed upon collaboration, County unity, and teamwork that is necessary to reach this outcome. Given the diverse identities within this task, and the success that has been achieved, it is evident that a focus on County unity and intensive teamwork has occurred. The cooperation of the townships for the good of the County is but another example of the collaboration required in a variety of spaces to provide for the residents, who the Wardens care so much for.

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<sup>209</sup> Flynn and Flynn, discussion.

<sup>210</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>211</sup> Taylor, discussion.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Spicer, "Designing Institutions that Work," 136; Spicer, "Introduction," 11.

<sup>215</sup> See section 3.10.

<sup>216</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Percy, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

### 3.3e: “Two Hats”

As expressed above, collaboration between the townships for the good of the County is necessary; but how does this happen? As suggested by the title of this section, the “Two Hat” analogy is a crucial component to this cooperation. In three separate interviews, with no question intended to inspire this concept, three separate Wardens discussed this analogy.<sup>217</sup> Given the prevalence of this idea within the conversations, as well its effectiveness in clarifying just how the ever-important collaboration is achieved, further discussion is merited. The concept is that when on County Council, the members are supposed to remove their metaphorical township “hat” and put on their Peterborough County “hat,” to think about what would be best for the County as a whole, rather than their home municipality.<sup>218</sup> The process, while easy to say, is more challenging to do, as to be on the County Council, one must be elected Mayor or Deputy Mayor of a township.<sup>219</sup> Within this position, one accepts a responsibility to do right by the people of that region.<sup>220</sup> This dichotomy was described by former Warden Gerow as “not to forget who we are and where we come from, but [...] you have to be able to work your way around those, those facts to know, why you're here and what your purpose is.”<sup>221</sup> While the “two hat” analogy was directly mentioned by three of the nine Wardens, others touched on the general idea of how crucial it is to think beyond one’s own municipality and do what is best for the County.<sup>222</sup> The concept of following the most beneficial course of action is further explored in relation to care, but this analogy focuses on the role that teamwork plays in this idea, and how the collaboration *is* what is best for the region.<sup>223</sup> Again, as expressed above, not competing with nearby areas serves to support all, as resources are not being wasted, and what benefits neighbouring areas can benefit you. Through this metaphor of hats, the ways in which the Wardens and the County Council practice this ever-crucial theme of collaboration is clearly revealed.

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<sup>217</sup> Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Siegel, “Ontario,” 33.

<sup>220</sup> Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>221</sup> Gerow, discussion.

<sup>222</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion.

<sup>223</sup> See section 3.10.

### 3.3f: Peterborough City

For many of the same reasons as the townships, the Wardens expressed how central positive relationships between the City of Peterborough and the County are to a successful term.<sup>224</sup> As an example, the concept of not competing with other governments in the vicinity arises, as even though the County and the City are separate institutions, what benefits one will help the other. This comes from the closeness of the people, as many people, including the Wardens, have moved between the areas, or work in the City while living in the County.<sup>225</sup> Considering the specific case of many Peterborough County employees, as of now, their workplace (the County Courthouse) is in the heart of Peterborough.<sup>226</sup> The seat of rural representatives sits in the nearby urban center, which is an interesting consideration to add to the idea of the rural/urban divide, as it reflects the increased blurring of these boundaries discussed in works by Zachary Spicer, David Sibley, and Michael Woods.<sup>227</sup> This idea of further interaction between these spaces, exposes the need for collaboration between Peterborough County and the city. Given the area in which they work so close together, longstanding hostilities would harm all parties involved.

This is not to say, however, that there have been no instances of conflict, or protection of the rural identity that Peterborough County holds so dear. Disagreements, as expressed by Spicer, can easily occur between the supposedly diametrically opposed ideas of urban and rural.<sup>228</sup> Within Peterborough County, some of these examples have been the challenges faced in the relationship with the City during former Warden Neal Cathcart's term in 2005-2006 with the potential annexation of part of Cavan township.<sup>229</sup> While this remained a long-standing issue for quite some time, during his tenure, Neal Cathcart prioritized negotiations and doing what was best for the people.<sup>230</sup> It must also be said that despite these challenges, the working relationship

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<sup>224</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Clark, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion.

<sup>225</sup> Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>226</sup> Clark, discussion; "County Buildings and Parks," Who We Are, Exploring, Home, Peterborough County, accessed March 11, 2025, <https://www.ptbocounty.ca/en/exploring/county-buildings-and-parks.aspx#The-County-Court-House->.

<sup>227</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 1," 2, 3; Sibley, "Inclusions/exclusions in rural space," 403-406; Spicer, "Introduction," 5-6; Spicer, "Municipal Organization in Ontario," 35-36; Woods, "Political articulation," 463.

<sup>228</sup> Spicer, "Barrie, Orillia, and Simcoe County," 119-122; Spicer, "Designing Institutions that Work," 142

<sup>229</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion.

<sup>230</sup> Brendan Burke, "Cavan Monaghan mayor proposes letting city annex portion of land," *The Canadian Press*, November 15, 2021, <http://proxy.lib.trentu.ca/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/canadiannews/wire-feeds/cavan-monaghan-mayor-proposes-letting-city-annex/docview/2598181725/sem-2?accountid=14391>; Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Brendan Wedley, "Border dispute hinders major job boom: City wants to annex part of township,"

between the City and the County was not damaged beyond repair here, as ideas of partnership and mutual benefits were placed above this dispute, saving this connection.<sup>231</sup> This focus on teamwork exemplifies the desire for collaboration that has been so embedded within the conversations with the Wardens, and the need for cooperation to achieve the best possible results, even if there are disagreements. Another such example would be the shocking move of Social Service responsibilities from the County to the City.<sup>232</sup> It has been posited that this change occurred because of assumptions that the County was less capable to manage these resources, mirroring the underestimation that rural communities can face as explored by Spicer in relation to growth.<sup>233</sup> The movement of this system was, understandably, not recalled in an entirely positive light given the circumstances around the shift, but despite this, there was very little remaining hostility in interviews, and congratulations were given for the quick adaptations.<sup>234</sup> Although there have been tensions, these were often quickly solved, complicating the idea of the rural/urban divide as a fully hostile process (as seen in the conflict between Barrie and Innisfil).<sup>235</sup> There are differences between these areas (as explored previously) yet these variations do not impede the collaboration that occurs.<sup>236</sup> As an example, while the City and County are separate, sometimes contrasting entities, they work together to provide beneficial Joint Services (such as social services, child care and shared paramedics) to the entire region, with each bringing a unique element.<sup>237</sup> There is a determination to do the best by their residents, and even when this partnership is tested through challenging situations, such as those listed above, collaboration is prioritized, demonstrating the central role teamwork plays in governmental affairs. As such, with this focus on working through issues to continue to collaborate, many of the Wardens reflected that the relationship with the city has largely been a

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*Peterborough Examiner*, March 22, 2006,

<http://proxy.lib.trentu.ca/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/border-dispute-hinders-major-job-boom-city-wants/docview/354857667/se-2?accountid=14391>.

<sup>231</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion.

<sup>232</sup> Gerow, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>233</sup> Gerow, discussion; Spicer, “Barrie, Orillia, and Simcoe County,” 121.

<sup>234</sup> Gerow, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>235</sup> Pidduck, “Literature Review 1,” 3-4; Spicer, “Barrie, Orillia, and Simcoe County,” 119-122, 124-125.

<sup>236</sup> See section 2.1a and 3.1.

<sup>237</sup> Gerow, discussion; Sheldon Laidman, *Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care Growth Plan 2023 – 2026, Report CSSSGPJSC24-001*. (Peterborough: City of Peterborough, March 14, 2024), page 1-2, <https://pub-peterborough.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=37614>; Randy Mellow, *Staff Report: Paramedics Operational Key Performance Indicators*. (Peterborough County, March 20, 2024), page 1, <https://pub-peterborough.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=37616>.

positive one of cooperation.<sup>238</sup> Overall, the proximity between the two governments, and the determination to be partners throughout the rise and fall of tensions, allows for the creation of better services for the population of both the County and the City, none of which would be possible without mutual cooperation.

### **3.3g: Outside the County Organization**

Although the City of Peterborough represents a key partner outside of the Peterborough County organization, it is but one example. There were various other organizations that the former Wardens recounted creating necessary, positive connections with. One such example is the Friendship Accord, which was created during Warden Joe Taylor's tenure, and served to create a space for nearby parties to jointly discuss and navigate through regional issues.<sup>239</sup> Examples of conversational topics include economic concerns, tourism, and education.<sup>240</sup> Members of this Accord include the First Nations of Hiawatha and Curve Lake, as well as Otonabee South Monaghan Township, Selwyn Township, the County of Peterborough, and the Peterborough Economic Development Corporation.<sup>241</sup> Beyond the incorporation of these various governments, the inclusion of nearby First Nations communities represents the connections that are established for the betterment of all. As of this writing, the Accord has not needed to mediate any problems, but has been largely used as a space to communicate, keeping parties updated on developing affairs.<sup>242</sup> As seen in this example, the County has not, will not, and does not work in a vacuum, and as such, it is crucial to connect with those who will be affected by decisions, before these impacts are felt. The desire of the Wardens to work alongside other communities represents both an understanding of, but also active participation in collaboration.

The Friendship Accord, however, is not the only example of connection with other organizations for the betterment of all parties involved. The Warden's Committee in Eastern Ontario or the Eastern Ontario Warden's Caucus (EOWC) is another such case.<sup>243</sup> Former Warden Gary Stewart touched on this coalition, highlighting this purpose of collaboration within

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<sup>238</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>239</sup> Taylor, discussion.

<sup>240</sup> "Treaty 20 Friendship Accord: A CEDI Success Story," Resources, Home, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, accessed April 5, 2025, <https://fcm.ca/en/resources/cedi/treaty-20-friendship-accord>; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Taylor, discussion.

<sup>243</sup> Stewart, written communication.

its creation.<sup>244</sup> Many other Wardens expressed the need for this type of teamwork in sharing perspectives, ideas and resources throughout a wider community.<sup>245</sup> In this space, the sharing of resources increases efficiency, and this alliance works together to tackle large issues, such as working together to connect with American allies in the wake of tariffs and combining funding to build more houses within the regions involved in the EOWC.<sup>246</sup> By pooling resources, better services for the citizens (which is a common focus) may be obtained through this process. Within the meaning of this Committee, the fact that Peterborough County exists beyond the borders of the organization is apparent, and, therefore, the need to collaborate to achieve the best for the County is similarly transparent.

As seen in the discussion of the EOWC, some problems are better handled by more than one group, requiring teamwork and collaboration from outside the Peterborough County organization. An additional example is the lobbying work that the Wardens did at the provincial and federal levels to obtain resources for their community. In the interviews, the process of campaigning at other institutions of government arose multiple times, with the positive results of this collaboration mentioned frequently.<sup>247</sup> For example, a few Wardens highlighted the importance of and hard work obtaining external funding in achieving the results of the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN).<sup>248</sup> To provide services that are beneficial to the community, yet beyond the capabilities of the municipal government, it is necessary to work with organizations outside Peterborough County. This can be a challenging process, but the determination to create these partnerships reflects the desire to do what is best for the community. It is hard to say whether projects such as EORN would have been possible without connections to organizations outside Peterborough County. While answers to this hypothetical should be pondered, it is crucial to acknowledge the established positive impacts this endeavour (achieved through hard work and collaboration) has had upon the community.

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Clark, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion.

<sup>246</sup> “About Us,” Eastern Ontario Wardens’ Caucus, accessed April 13, 2025, <https://eowc.org/about-us/>; “Ready to Work, Ready to Grow: The EOWC’s Path Forward,” Strategic Priorities, Eastern Ontario Wardens’ Caucus, accessed April 13, 2025, <https://eowc.org/ready-to-work-ready-to-grow-the-eowcs-path-forward/>; Jessica Foley, “Eastern Ontario Wardens’ Caucus remains ‘Ready to Work’ after 2025 ROMA Conference,” *Kingstonist.com*, January 24, 2025, <https://www.kingstonist.com/news/eastern-ontario-wardens-caucus-remains-ready-to-work-after-2025-roma-conference/>.

<sup>247</sup> Clark, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>248</sup> Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Taylor, discussion. See sections 3.1 and 3.4a.

Finally, in examining the concept of collaboration from a closer angle, local connections within the County borders are also a necessity. These leaders are elected via democratic process, and as such, these representatives must work with these residents to create the best version of the County.<sup>249</sup> As former Warden Donald Boyce reflected, community is a crucial element of this position of governance.<sup>250</sup> Reflecting this idea, in some of the conversations had, the importance of various non-governmental organizations in Peterborough County arose, with considerations of how to best support these bodies that better the lives of citizens.<sup>251</sup> In other words, this reflects collaboration with the citizens these representatives act on behalf of. An example of this that multiple Wardens highlighted was being present at as many local events as possible.<sup>252</sup> In this case, the attendance of the Warden strengthens their community relations through trust and support, which can lead to increases in teamwork. This human connection that occurs with the physical attendance of the Warden is further discussed later, although the concept of being present to further solidify partnership is relevant here.<sup>253</sup> While this visibility is necessary to collaboration, the role of Warden does not include being a dictator. This form of leadership requires teamwork, not supreme authority. In this position, there is the need to work in tandem with both the people (as seen here) but also those within the Peterborough County organization, the townships, the city, and others outside of the County, considering the themes of respect, being non-partisan, and overall, simply caring for the people.

### **3.4: Connection**

#### **3.4a: Digital**

In a more literal sense of the word “connection,” however, this section focuses on the digital aspects mentioned during the interview process. One key moment in developing these virtual relations was the COVID-19 pandemic. This global health crisis was discussed with J. Murray Jones, as he had been Warden during this time.<sup>254</sup> The resulting lockdowns disrupted connections and suspended many services.<sup>255</sup> In the face of this threat to various community bonds, Jones used his background in Communication to make the best of a challenging situation, further

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<sup>249</sup> Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Taylor, discussion. See sections 3.3b, 3.3e and 3.10.

<sup>250</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion.

<sup>251</sup> Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>252</sup> Clark, discussion; Jones, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>253</sup> See section 3.4b.

<sup>254</sup> Jones, discussion.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

advancing the technological connections of the County.<sup>256</sup> As an example, the *County Connection* videos were created as part of this initiative, which involved interviews with other various members of the County.<sup>257</sup> This process strengthened relationships through these conversations, and brought information to the public, despite the mass disruption occurring. Neither these attachments nor community were something Jones and Peterborough County were willing to sacrifice, and in the face of a pandemic, they did their best to maintain these necessary concepts. The determination to adapt and go through such efforts to create new connections, while maintaining existing links is telling of the centrality of these relationships. Collaboration, as explored above, is key to the role of Warden and the functioning of Peterborough County, which requires contact to achieve. Part of this, in this new ever-changing world, is the use of digital technology to further this ever-important goal.

The threat of the COVID-19 pandemic emphasized just how central virtual connections are in this modern age, but even prior to this event, the Wardens had recognized the need for increased technological access. As such, the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) was created in 2008.<sup>258</sup> EORN was a massive undertaking, stretching through the tenures of many Wardens, involving many partners, with the goal of providing high-speed internet and cellular availability throughout Peterborough County.<sup>259</sup> The need for this project (as discussed earlier) was the rural nature of the region, as many spaces often went without network access, given the challenges in adding relay towers to this hilly and diverse landscape.<sup>260</sup> The drive for this project came from a care for the people, however, as in one poignant example, there were children who were unable to do their homework because of this lack of service.<sup>261</sup> Within the interviews, much importance was attached to this project, and this is telling of the necessity for connection not just at the County organization, but within the entirety of Peterborough County. This further emphasizes just how close many Wardens hold these links and relationships, and, given the amount of work involved in EORN, but also during the COVID-19 pandemic, how necessary connections are to both the Wardens and the County itself.

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<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Gerow, discussion.

<sup>259</sup> Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid. See section 3.1.

<sup>261</sup> Jones, discussion.

### 3.4b: People/Community

As explored in the last section, there is much effort in maintaining connections. But what are these relationships exactly? Quite simply put, these are the links between people.<sup>262</sup> Many times, human links were discussed in the interviews, often in the variety of ways that the Wardens created these relationships. As an example, former Wardens J. Murray Jones, Douglas Percy and Neal Cathcart all recalling the humor and fun they used to relate and foster connections with others.<sup>263</sup> But despite the methods used to create these relationships, the key element of being relatable and having these personal associations as the Warden of the County was impressed throughout many discussions.<sup>264</sup> Interpersonal skills are central in this role for effective collaboration, as in this idea of establishing these links, multiple Wardens discussed the use of these abilities to increase the visibility of Peterborough County to open areas of new communication.<sup>265</sup> While more about distinguishing the Warden and the region is discussed later (as well as visibility as a whole), concepts of awareness must arise here, as to have beneficial relationships, there must be some understanding of who one is working with.<sup>266</sup> A clear way to comprehend these ideas, as introduced by former Warden Donald Boyce, is to look at the County as a business, as neither can alienate or lie to their customer base (in this case the voters) and continue to function effectively.<sup>267</sup> In this idea, the role of both creating, but also maintaining these relationships after their inception is necessary. This is hard, but integral work to achieving the collaboration required within municipal governance. It is clear, however, that from these discussions, as well as the diverse networks that the Wardens have maintained throughout their tenure, that the narrators were aware of this need for positive relationships and their role in keeping these links, and, therefore, appropriately prioritized these connections.<sup>268</sup>

While human relationships are natural, its application to leadership roles was excluded from many of the sources reviewed concerning municipal government.<sup>269</sup> This discussion of the importance of community provides a clear example of the applications of oral history, given the

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<sup>262</sup> See sections 3.3a, 3.3b, 3.3c, 3.3d, 3.5, 3.9 for additional discussions.

<sup>263</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>264</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>265</sup> Clark, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>266</sup> See section 3.9.

<sup>267</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion.

<sup>268</sup> Clark, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>269</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 1," 2-10.

common oversight of these personal relationships for the events that occurred.<sup>270</sup> Although these connections, as explored here and previously in this report, lead to and support these larger concepts, the human links are often buried in discussions of policy.<sup>271</sup> By partaking in this process, I have begun to understand just how anthropological government truly is. In focusing on and including people who have been Warden, I have gained a greater understanding of the motivations and influences behind the decisions that shape the daily lives of many. Given this depth that has been added to various policies from this examination of digital and personal connection (based upon the findings of oral history) more studies concerning government should use this practice to understand these intrinsically human structures.

### **3.5: Family and Friends**

In considering the human connections often hidden in discussions of government (as explored above), the specific example of family and friends must be examined, as these relationships were often raised in the interviews. Part of this was in the reflection of the townships as a family, but the less metaphorical idea of support and teamwork within these personal relationships was more common.<sup>272</sup> Being the Warden is quite a busy job, and with these demands, members of one's inner circle are crucial in achieving success. For example, Phyllis Boyce (Donald Boyce's wife) recalled that during Don's tenure, they had to hire people to help with their land, as with the demands placed upon the Warden, it was impossible for Don to work the farm to the same extent as before.<sup>273</sup> While not collaboration within the role of Warden, there is still extreme partnership, as this example demonstrates the work done to allow more focus to be given to the County, and the residents, while still maintaining structures at home. Teamwork does not have to be entirely in matters of government, as while personal support and its impacts upon the service given to the County are clear within this case, the previously discussed topic of collaboration is also displayed.<sup>274</sup> From this recollection's exposure of the personal elements of being Warden, however, the opportunity that oral history provides to share this knowledge is apparent. In applying a conversation-based approach to this process,

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<sup>270</sup> See section 2.2.

<sup>271</sup> See section 3.3.

<sup>272</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Clark, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Pearcy, discussion.

<sup>273</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion.

<sup>274</sup> See section 3.3.

creating more flexible and casual environment, this offers an increased opportunity to form relationships and increased inclusions of personal details. These intimate elements, including the role of family, shaped the Warden's tenures, and as such, should be considered when analyzing what occurred during each participant's time in office.

Beyond the teamwork that occurred during each Warden's tenure, family influences also had an impact upon the tenures of these Wardens. As Ron Gerow's father (who also served on County Council) said, it is about "who you are and where you come from."<sup>275</sup> Many other Wardens also discussed their personal history during our conversations, and given the prevalence of these recollections it became clear that these familial impacts often inspired these participants.<sup>276</sup> These effects often emerged in a variety of ways, from the agricultural history mentioned by Warden Bonnie Clark and Donald and Phyllis Boyce, to the connections to County Council through various relatives as explained by Gary Stewart, Ron Gerow and Tom Flynn.<sup>277</sup> As explored earlier, and stated by Joan Sangster, backgrounds are a crucial component to participating in, understanding, and analyzing oral history.<sup>278</sup> The past shapes the present, and this can be seen in the various influences upon the tenures of the Warden. For example, after Mayor Joe Taylor discussed his involvement in the creation of the Agricultural Wall of Fame, he stated that his grandparents had been later added to this memorial.<sup>279</sup> In exploring the connections and inspirations of the Wardens themselves, further acknowledgement of the people who held the office, rather than the specific title of Warden, has occurred. This can be a challenging process to engage in, as explored earlier with the common dehumanization of policy. But in recognizing and exploring the humanity of those who have been Warden, there is further understanding of the people and connections that influence the decisions of the leaders and, therefore, Peterborough County.

### **3.6: Past, Present, Future**

The title of this section is quite broad, literally spanning all of time. This idea, however, contains a key concept Joe Taylor described, who said that being Warden meant having, "respect

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<sup>275</sup> Gerow, discussion.

<sup>276</sup> Clark, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Stewart, written communication.

<sup>277</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Clark, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Stewart, written communication.

<sup>278</sup> Sangster, "Politics and Praxis in Canadian Working-Class Oral History," 59; See section 2.2a.

<sup>279</sup> Taylor, discussion.

for past [...], liv[ing] in moment, [...] and understand[ing] decisions you make will shape the future.”<sup>280</sup> I was (as a history student) fascinated by this concept, and as such, asked many of the Wardens their thoughts upon the matter. Multiple Wardens directly agreed, and many others described this idea (although not word for word) in our conversations.<sup>281</sup> Despite this consensus, however, there was a difference in understanding as to what this meant in practice. Two notable examples of this are the tenures of J. Murray Jones and Ron Gerow.<sup>282</sup> Beginning with Jones, who agreed with the sentiment and engaged in many future-focused ideas, there was a large focus upon respecting the past within our discussion.<sup>283</sup> Although respect has been discussed in terms of collaboration, the focus of this theme as an influence of time upon the Wardens is crucial.<sup>284</sup> This attention to the actions of the past was often used by Jones as a blueprint for the best course forward, stating, “if you can't remember and respect yesterday, it will be very hard to do what you should be doing today.”<sup>285</sup> In these reflections, it is evident that what Jones believed was the best course forward, was inspired by a knowledge of the past. Furthermore, the connection across time in using the past to inform the present is apparent, and the use of the resource past knowledge provides is, as explored within conversations with Jones (and agreed upon by others) is a factor one must consider when examining or fulfilling the role of Warden.

As to the other part of this idea, the influence of the future upon the present, Ron Gerow expanded on this matter. As in the case of Jones, Gerow was not exclusively inspired by one time period.<sup>286</sup> In this conversation, however, these concepts of time were explained as, “you live with today, because that's the way it is. You think about tomorrow. And you dream about the future.”<sup>287</sup> This quote emphasizes the optimism that is necessary for the role of Warden but also a sense of care for the residents, which spans beyond the length of a term.<sup>288</sup> While both concepts will be further examined in this report, the conceptualizations of the past within this add additional dimensions as to the reasons and influences of these actions. The perception of the future explored here, is quite different from the influences of the past (see above) and it is

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<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Clark, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion.

<sup>282</sup> Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion.

<sup>283</sup> Jones, discussion.

<sup>284</sup> See section 3.3b.

<sup>285</sup> Jones, discussion.

<sup>286</sup> Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion.

<sup>287</sup> Gerow, discussion.

<sup>288</sup> See sections 3.10 and 3.8.

necessary to analyze the ways in which these tools may be used to best lead Peterborough County. While a focus on both the past and the future is crucial to have (as seen in the examples here), it is evident that it is a consideration of the present remains central, and that all three eras must be used in conjunction.

### 3.7: Pride

An element of pride extended throughout the interviews, which was apparent from the way these reflections were expressed. The use of conversation and oral history, as foretold by Macnab, Joan Sangster, and others, drew attention to this emotion throughout this process.<sup>289</sup> Further considering the role that the methods of this project had upon this theme, a question was asked concerning pride near the end of most interviews; however, many Wardens reflected on their joy in their achievements before this question when discussing the major moments during their time in office.<sup>290</sup> Given the variations between the tenures of the Wardens, these differences were mirrored in what they considered with pride. Warden Bonnie Clark was proud of the effective management of the bridge and road budget (as well as her staff).<sup>291</sup> Joe Taylor was proud of The Friendship Accord and their activities.<sup>292</sup> Douglas Percy was proud of raising the profile of the County and the connections forged.<sup>293</sup> J. Murray Jones was proud of the work done by and put into EORN.<sup>294</sup> Despite these specific examples, both Donald Boyce and Neal Cathcart highlighted that they were not proud of one thing, but rather of simply being elected Warden, and considered worthy of that respect and honour.<sup>295</sup> As seen in these vastly different answers, the idea of pride is not a simplistic one, as are very few things within this study of municipal government and the role of the Warden. This wide range of responses highlights the multiple opportunities for joy that can be felt within and associated with this job, but also the mass number of responsibilities attached to this title that must be handled.

From this diversity, however, many other topics discussed within this report are connected to this theme, including the rural needs of roads, collaboration, connection, and

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<sup>289</sup> Baillargeon, "If You Had No Money, You Had No Trouble, Did You?," 228-229; Jessee, "The Limits of Oral History," 290; Macnab, "Making Home and Making Welcome," 43, 60; Sangster, "Politics and Praxis in Canadian Working-Class Oral History," 61, 63, 65.

<sup>290</sup> Clark, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>291</sup> Clark, discussion.

<sup>292</sup> Taylor, discussion.

<sup>293</sup> Percy, discussion.

<sup>294</sup> Jones, discussion.

<sup>295</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion.

respect.<sup>296</sup> While these ideas have largely been presented with a lens of slight determinism, it is necessary to expand upon the hard work that this concept of pride brings to the forefront. As seen in the works assembled concerning municipal government and local history, these events and results seem inevitable.<sup>297</sup> Yet in considering these concepts with pride (and the hard work that is inherent within this idea), further acknowledgment of the necessary, although somewhat hidden work is applied. The presentations of these Wardens tenures were not displayed as a final, immaculately organized and cut-and-dry tales, but instead showed the work necessary and the human involvement that would lead to this pride. Had these tasks been easy or inevitable, the same sense of accomplishment would not have been present.

In considering pride, however, one must consider the opposing concept of regret. In examining this emotion, however, further gratification about the achievements of the Wardens is revealed. As discussed by Maddy Macnab, Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki, what is often not said can also provide information about the topic at hand.<sup>298</sup> In the nine conversations that I had with these Wardens, I rarely heard deep regrets. In the odd case these arose, they were outweighed by the sense that each one of these Wardens felt that they did the best they could for the County, and the pride this gave rise to.<sup>299</sup> In this idea of doing the right thing for the region and making this the focus, there is a clear sense of care in this idea. More will be touched upon the concept of consideration in a later section, but these reflections are telling of the importance associated with this idea, as seen in the centrality of participating in actions that align with this core tenant.<sup>300</sup> The pride, and the resulting lack of regrets demonstrates the hard work that was invested into providing the best for the citizens of Peterborough County.

Despite the importance of pride as a theme in these conversations, and its influence upon the decisions of the Wardens, it was missing in the research done upon municipal government, with little discussion of the motivations, emotions, or connections these leaders had regarding their region.<sup>301</sup> In pondering the reasons behind this absence (since Macnab, Sheftel and

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<sup>296</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 1," 2-10; Pidduck, "Literature Review 3," 2-19. See sections 2.1a and 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, and 3.3b respectively.

<sup>297</sup> See sections 2.1 and 2.3 respectively.

<sup>298</sup> Macnab, "Making Home and Making Welcome," 60; Sheftel and Zembrzycki, "Who's Afraid of Oral History? Fifty Years of Debates and Anxiety about Ethics," 361.

<sup>299</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Percy, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>300</sup> See section 3.10.

<sup>301</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 1," 2-10.

Zembrzycki highlighted this is often revealing) the conclusion was reached that the answer may lie in the format of the history itself, as so much does within this report.<sup>302</sup> The opportunity afforded by oral history to acknowledge concepts that are often excluded from other sources gives rise to these more psychological considerations that can only be guessed at in retroactive history that cannot converse with the long-deceased subjects.<sup>303</sup> It is to this end that the significance of this project, as well as the importance of including the narrators, is brought to the forefront again. Within this example of pride, the variations, emotional considerations, as well as the absence of regret, but also emotions in general within other works, are exposed. These personal, feeling-based reflections would be incredibly challenging to discover from written sources, again highlighting the importance of partaking in this research, and incorporating those who are the subject of this study.

### **3.8: Optimism**

As another reflection on more personal aspects, in engaging within this process it became clear that these Wardens were generally positive people. These leaders of County Council often revealed that they were grateful for all their blessings and looked at the world with a glass half full mentality.<sup>304</sup> In practicality, this meant that they would simply try again if at first they did not succeed and would attempt to make the best of negative situations.<sup>305</sup> While optimism was not the focus of our conversations, the pervasiveness of this concept was too great to ignore. Part of the reasoning behind highlighting this trend was that in prior research on municipal government, the traits that make a good leader were rarely explored.<sup>306</sup> These traits, while not central to this report either, became prevalent given the face-to-face nature of the conversations, and as such, various characteristics that make a successful Warden have been mentioned throughout this report.<sup>307</sup> Focusing on the role of optimism plays in success, however, the resistance to negativity powers the drive to keep going until the best outcome is reached.<sup>308</sup> This hard work must be, as many Wardens did, met with a smile and a determination to keep fighting for both the residents

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<sup>302</sup> Macnab, "Making Home and Making Welcome," 60; Sheftel and Zembrzycki, "Who's Afraid of Oral History? Fifty Years of Debates and Anxiety about Ethics," 361.

<sup>303</sup> See sections 2.2c and 2.2d.

<sup>304</sup> Clark, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>305</sup> Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion.

<sup>306</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 1," 2-10.

<sup>307</sup> See section 3.3, 3.9, and 3.10.

<sup>308</sup> Gerow, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

and for a better future.<sup>309</sup> In other words, optimism is the glue that connects the various other traits and themes explored within this report, and as such, is a central aspect to discuss when examining the Wardens of Peterborough County.

In considering the role that this positivity played upon the methodical aspects of this project, however, the upbeat nature of the Wardens was also vital. The sunny, friendly nature of all the participants within this project helped create a positive environment to engage in the connection process central to oral history. Erin Jessee, Joan Sangster, and Maddy Macnab detailed the importance of creating relationships with the participants to best engage with the work.<sup>310</sup> While the lack of an initial interview to foster these all-important connections is regrettable, the openness and positive nature of the participants was crucial to compensate for this lack of prior meetings. In many of the recordings, a few laughs were had, making the process more comfortable, if not more enjoyable, for all parties.<sup>311</sup> For that, I am grateful. Given the ease in which their optimistic disposition was beneficial in this situation, the use of this in fostering collaboration and creating relationships for matters of municipal affairs became quickly apparent.<sup>312</sup> From the joy and determination which hard work is faced with to the role of this positive nature in forming relationships (both in this project and the role of Warden), optimism was a common trait which served to benefit these narrators during their time as municipal leaders.

### **3.9: Profile and Visibility**

#### **3.9a: What is the Warden?**

The question that titles this section (“what is the Warden?”) was addressed at the very beginning of this report.<sup>313</sup> The reply provided there, while not incorrect, is more akin to a dictionary definition. Throughout these interviews and the response of the Wardens, I began to contemplate what this position means in practicality. The answer to this query largely concerns the role the Warden plays in the public sphere, with many of the narrators agreeing that the

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<sup>309</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>310</sup> Jessee, “The Limits of Oral History,” 291; Macnab, “Making Home and Making Welcome,” 67; Sangster, “Politics and Praxis in Canadian Working-Class Oral History,” 62.

<sup>311</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Jones, discussion.

<sup>312</sup> See sections 3.3 and 3.4.

<sup>313</sup> See section 1.1.

Warden is the face of the County, akin to an ambassador or a diplomat.<sup>314</sup> Given the prominent nature of this position and these duties, the Warden is often the one who receives the thanks, with many participants recalling times when residents have gone out of their way to thank them for what they did.<sup>315</sup> Despite the appearance of the Warden as the face, however, (as discussed previously) there are many other people involved, leading former Warden Douglas Percy to state, he and other Wardens just “led the charge.”<sup>316</sup> In this leadership role, however, the Warden serves as the representative for the united picture of the County to the people, especially when attending events.<sup>317</sup> This public role is an example of how the function of Warden provides a face to the symbolic idea of Peterborough County for the public to connect to. Given the complexities inherent within the region, with various townships and levels of government, without a physical symbol (the Warden), it can be hard to understand these concepts. Beyond connecting with the people within the region, however, the Warden is the one who brings attention to the County by being both the physical manifestation of these ideas but also a human being. This humanity is central to the role of Warden, as the interpersonal skills of the people in the position help to forge relationships and offer a point of connection. In embodying the ideas of the unified County, the Warden, while reflecting the desires of the region, reduces the abstract nature of the government, generating and creating a physical visibility that is central to the connections (with both the people and outside the region) inherent within and crucial to municipal government.

### **3.9b: Struggle**

Although the duty of being the face of the County and the visibility (as expressed above) were central themes within the interviews, part of these discussions involved the uphill battle necessary to gain this recognition. Part of this, as a few of the participants shared, was confusion surrounding the term of *Warden*, as this word is more commonly used in conjunction with prisons, leading to some misunderstandings.<sup>318</sup> This common mistake reflects the challenges of getting the attention of and connecting to the citizens. As discussed throughout this report, having a link with the residents is central priority within the functioning of municipal

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<sup>314</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Clark, discussion; Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>315</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>316</sup> Percy, discussion. See section 3.3.

<sup>317</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>318</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Gerow, discussion.

government and the role of Warden.<sup>319</sup> This relationship is only hindered through this confusion over names, as in being unknown only adds to the challenges of collaboration and understanding the will of the people. Beyond the example of this error in titles, and the difficulties this creates in forging connections, there is a specific challenge in this area, adding to these obstacles. Peterborough County and the City of Peterborough, while being distinct governments, share the same name, leading to confusion from some citizens.<sup>320</sup> Despite the focus on collaboration within this report, given this corresponding trait and the proximity of the regions, there is an increased level of competition, seeing as the fight is over very similar (if not the same) people. Oftentimes, in these battles for public focus, through no fault of effort, the County is overlooked.<sup>321</sup> This is reminiscent of the trend raised by Spicer concerning the prioritization of urban growth over rural interests. While this concept has been discussed in this report concerning a lack of hostility, this emphasis upon urban areas poses challenges in the attention given to the County.<sup>322</sup> Many of the Wardens vocalized their desire to obtain more recognition for Peterborough County, as many great things occur within the region.<sup>323</sup> It must be stated here, that many of them did, and are still doing work to further this goal.<sup>324</sup> The intent of this reflection was not to dismiss the efforts that have been made, but was rather to highlight the difficulties in this pursuit (that largely relate to challenges of names) that the participants faced during their tenures.

Considering the implications of these struggles upon this project, however, this examination has helped to answer a question posed within my reflection upon the practices of oral history. The problem I grappled with was that oral history is typically used to amplify marginalized voices, adding those who have been excluded to the historical record.<sup>325</sup> In first reflecting upon this usage, my concern grew as to how this was applicable to this project, as in being elected to a governmental position, these leaders obtain a platform to speak from and be heard.<sup>326</sup> Throughout this report, however, numerous examples of elements that are often

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<sup>319</sup> See sections 3.3b and 3.9a.

<sup>320</sup> Clark, discussion; Jones, discussion.

<sup>321</sup> Clark, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion; Spicer, "Barrie, Orillia, and Simcoe County," 121.

<sup>322</sup> See sections 2.1a, 3.1 and 3.3f.

<sup>323</sup> Clark, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>324</sup> Clark, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>325</sup> Baillargeon, "If You Had No Money, You Had No Trouble, Did You?," 217-218; Jessee, "The Limits of Oral History," 290; Macnab, "Making Home and Making Welcome," 40-42, 94; Sangster, "Politics and Praxis in Canadian Working-Class Oral History," 60-61; Sheftel and Zembrzycki, "Who's Afraid of Oral History? Fifty Years of Debates and Anxiety about Ethics," 346, 352.

<sup>326</sup> Pidduck, "Literature Review 2," 8-9.

excluded from the written record (largely concerning the municipal government research explored earlier) arose.<sup>327</sup> This initially forced me to reconsider my concerns around the amplification of traditionally ignored voices, as the personal side of those selected as Warden was rarely discussed. In further reflecting upon the struggle for visibility, however, I realized my mistake in assuming that because one is in an elected position, one automatically gains more attention in all realms. In undertaking this project, however, I began to see the hard work that many Wardens have done to generate this visibility, and in their achievements, I began to understand the effort is necessary to receive this attention. In coming to reconcile these thoughts, and get to know the Wardens throughout this process, I hope that this project will aid in the drive for further visibility and awareness in allowing others to come to the same conclusions I did. Overall, there is still work to be done, as current Warden Bonnie Clark understands.<sup>328</sup> But her work, as well as the efforts of the various Wardens that came before her, may eventually take Peterborough County above the challenges of various misconceptions, in naming and ill-informed assumptions to generate the full attention that this region deserves.

### **3.10: Care for Residents**

As the care the Wardens hold for their residents has been spread throughout this report, it is integral to focus upon this concept as a conclusion to this discussion of common themes. To begin, when stating “residents,” this term encompasses those who own a cottage and may only reside in the County part-time. I was mistaken in my exclusion of these citizens prior to the interview process, where I was quickly corrected.<sup>329</sup> The emphasis of the Wardens to be inclusive in their definitions of citizen when I was incorrectly categorizing these property owners as tourists represents the deep care and consideration which extends even to the terminology which describes the people who live (for any amount of time) in Peterborough County.

Part of this care that *all* residents receive from these leaders is the determination of the Warden to do what is best for the County. Most of the Wardens touched upon this, often saying the same statement of “do the right thing.”<sup>330</sup> Forming the basis of what the best course of action is listening to those who elected you, although it can be difficult to follow the will of the people

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<sup>327</sup> See section 2.1, 3.5, 3.7, 3.8, and 3.10.

<sup>328</sup> Clark, discussion.

<sup>329</sup> Taylor, discussion.

<sup>330</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion.

if these desires are unclear or diverge from what the right thing appears to be.<sup>331</sup> Despite this challenge, however, in truly listening and weighing the opinions of those who have supported you (and will live with the ramifications of these decisions), a great deal of respect and care for the people emerges.<sup>332</sup> If these leaders had not cared, what concern would they have for the opinions of the people, or making Peterborough County better than before? The answer is that there would be no such consideration of these thoughts, aside from the fame that may potentially arise. The Wardens, however, in their conversations, were abundantly clear that their actions were not motivated by any notions of celebrity, and that the right actions were prioritized above any of these thoughts.<sup>333</sup> This drive for doing what is best for the people reflects the care of the Wardens for the region, but also their careful consideration of the trust that has been placed in them. This confidence, as discussed above, comes from the simple fact that the members of County Council had to be elected to either Mayor or Deputy Mayor, and from that position, were voted in as Warden.<sup>334</sup> Being chosen as a governmental official through due process means serving the people, which requires cooperation with residents to best understand how to reflect their wishes. Collaboration has been a common concept within this report, but without the care that the Wardens have for the people and the County, this feature would never have been raised. A quote from Gary Stewart summarizes these ideas, which reads, “I want to express how much I enjoyed my time as Warden of the County, working with people and for the people.”<sup>335</sup> The centrality of the public in these relationships and collaborations demonstrate the care that these Wardens have for their citizens, and their desire to do their best, rather than a “good enough” mentality. It is this determination to do the right thing, powered by the care for the citizens, and the trust they have placed in the Warden to reach this objective, that encompasses the tenures of all these Wardens.

Care can be found in every decision these Wardens made, with numerous examples to draw upon. As a case study, the efforts that are made to communicate with the people reflect the deep consideration and attention the public receives from these leaders of Peterborough County. The specifics vary with each Warden, but as some examples, Warden Bonnie Clark works hard to

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<sup>331</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Stewart, written communication.

<sup>332</sup> Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion; Taylor, discussion.

<sup>333</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion.

<sup>334</sup> Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Siegel, “Ontario,” 33.

<sup>335</sup> Stewart, written communication.

ensure that the staff of the Peterborough County organization are accessible for people to ask questions of and receive help from.<sup>336</sup> Mayor Joe Taylor, during the planning stages for the James A. Gifford Causeway, made a point to talk to residents and local businesses to best understand the impact of and the needs of the population concerning this project.<sup>337</sup> During the landfill site selection process, Ron Gerow went to the homes of the various landowners who would potentially be impacted at their homes and had a conversation with them, despite the extremely difficult nature of these discussions.<sup>338</sup> Douglas Percy emphasized the importance of connecting with the population through attending various events hosted by community organizations.<sup>339</sup> This is only but a small sample of the various actions undertaken by the Wardens reflecting their care for their communities, but also their efforts to maintain and form meaningful connections with the people they treasure. The desire to have these relationships, let alone the work that has been put into these efforts, reflect the care inherent within the position of Warden, but also the desire to provide the best solutions for the needs of the people. Again, this knowledge of what is best cannot be understood without actively engaging with the people and having these relationships. This analysis of the success of these Wardens to do right by the residents in the region would not be considered to this depth, however, without the care that has demanded this effort and inspired this success.

Another common example of the applications of this care is through fiscal means. To many Wardens, part of doing what is best for the residents is through not wasting money, as the residents are the ones who pay, and should have the finest services this money can buy.<sup>340</sup> Within this idea, the Wardens also understood that many citizens have financial struggles, and driven by their concern to do right, attempt to maximize the money available in the budget while also looking to other funding sources to ease the financial burden.<sup>341</sup> Part of this comes from an emphasis on the planning, providing strong fiscal foundations, that reflect not only a care for the residents of today, but also of tomorrow.<sup>342</sup> As an example of the efforts made to best reach this

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<sup>336</sup> Clark, discussion.

<sup>337</sup> Taylor, discussion.

<sup>338</sup> Gerow, discussion.

<sup>339</sup> Percy, discussion.

<sup>340</sup> Clark, discussion; Percy, discussion; Taylor, discussion. An additional consideration to this idea can be seen in section 3.3c, as in refusing to work with governments that do not align with the partisan ideas of the Warden, the services of Peterborough County would suffer. Also see section 3.4b for comparisons of the County as a business, as in this idea, there is a similarity in the attempts to provide the best for the cheapest option.

<sup>341</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion; Clark, discussion; Jones, discussion; Stewart, written communication.

<sup>342</sup> Clark, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Gerow, discussion. See section 3.6.

objective of providing for the citizens, J. Murray Jones described the fictional citizen of “Mrs. Glutz” (an older lady with minimal disposable income) to remind the Council that the taxpayers come first and should not be subjected to unnecessary or wasteful purchases by their government.<sup>343</sup> To achieve these goals, collaboration is necessary. This is, as elaborated upon above, accomplished through discussions with the people about what best meets their needs. Beyond this, cooperation with other organizations, whether this be through the resources shared at the Eastern Ontario Warden’s Caucus, or the lobbying done at the provincial or federal levels is also necessary.<sup>344</sup> The partnerships and alliances intended to make processes more efficient and prioritize teamwork also further the goals of having good financial health and extending the reach of the budget. As another example of this, the process of amalgamation was also founded upon these ideas, as understood throughout this process.<sup>345</sup> While this was a controversial issue, the intent to do what was best financially (driven by care for the people) lies at the heart. Finances a central consideration of government, and by examining this crucial element, and finding care within these decisions, it is clear to see how central considerations for the public are within municipal operations in Peterborough County.

Throughout these examples of various policies, and the care that lies within them, the residents are always the top priority of these former Wardens, from J. Murray Jones’ willingness to fight for the people no matter what, the human connection prioritized by Douglas Percy and Donald Boyce, to the concern Tom Flynn had for those on the outer reaches of the County.<sup>346</sup> In these examples (and this section as a whole), the theme of having a “soft heart” that arose in conversation with Neal Cathcart is clear to see.<sup>347</sup> There is much love for Peterborough County and those who live within its borders from each of these Wardens. Despite the centrality of this concept, however, in the literature review upon the topic of municipal government, this care was not at the forefront as it rightfully should be.<sup>348</sup> This consideration and protection of the citizens are considered less analytical findings, and as such, required the use of oral history to explore these concepts (as stated throughout this work). From this methodological approach, it is clear

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<sup>343</sup> Jones, discussion.

<sup>344</sup> See section 3.3g.

<sup>345</sup> Douglas, “The restructuring of local government in rural regions,” 234-235; Percy, discussion; Stewart, written communication. See section 3.2.

<sup>346</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Flynn and Flynn, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion.

<sup>347</sup> Cathcart, Salome and Tully, discussion.

<sup>348</sup> Pidduck, “Literature Review 1,” 2-10.

that the care that inspires the actions of municipal government is just as, if not more central to highlight. Care for the residents is within all decisions made by the Wardens and the County Council, as seen in the examples of connections to the people, the desire to do right by those who have trusted in their abilities, the financial considerations, but also throughout the topics of this report.

### **Section 4: Next Steps**

To maximize the potential of this project, although my involvement will end, there are further directions in which this work could positively continue. The first step to undertake after the conclusion of this study would be to create an archive to contain not only the information gathered in this study, but also relevant paperwork and photographs that relate to the tenures of the Wardens (or future findings). Given the focus on the commemoration of the Wardens from the County of Peterborough, to further acknowledge the work that has been done by these leaders, information about their impact should be available in one spot, to aid future researchers who may wish to honour these Wardens in future works.

In considering the future, a next consideration as to the direction of this project would be to engage in this interview process shortly after a Warden leaves office, as to not create further backlog and avoid issues with memory that were occasionally raised in these discussions. The question list used here could be form the basis of further conversations, however, exclusively following this document and not asking any additional questions would lose the personal and conversational nature that was so rewarding in this project. To only ask these inquires this would be a detriment and deprive others of deeply engaging in the process. Regardless, it is stil crucial to collect this information, adding these findings to the archive, expanding the material available to future researchers, while also providing the basis for the biography upon the *Warden's Wall*. This would be an option as to offer future Wardens the opportunity to participate in this commemoration, although due to the work involved, the process may not be as extensive as the research done here.

While future Wardens must be considered, with the completion of this project, I advise that attention next be turned towards the Wardens who are deceased. These Wardens were not included in this project, as their participation within oral history would have been impossible, and time constraints prevented the additional research necessary to replace the interview process.

A project concerning Wardens who are no longer alive to tell their stories, would follow a different process than this one, as it would focus more upon archival research work. A potential thought to consider, however, would be potentially supplementing this written research with conversations with those who knew these Wardens and may have memories to share. Of course, this would depend on the time in which these Wardens led County Council, and the information gleaned would be different from this project, as these recollections would include fewer reflections concerning the emotions of the Warden themselves. It is worth consideration, however, given the value oral history has added to this work.

In connection with this idea, a further recommendation for this process would be to involve more people who were not the Warden themselves but worked with these leaders. Colleagues, as explored in this report, are central and their insights would add depth to the findings within this project, but also future research. Firstly, I would advise involving the various people who held the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) in this process. Many times was the role of CAO discussed within this project, as they are central to the role of the Warden.<sup>349</sup> From these findings, I believe that these people would be a beneficial resource to work with, and while time constraints upon this project prevented this, I would advise that this be changed in the future to achieve the best possible results. With the hopeful continuation of this work of commemorating the Wardens into the future, after experiencing and learning from this process, I advise the creation of an archive, considerations of incorporating past and future Wardens, as well as involving others within this research, with the key example of the CAO as a valuable resource to potentially include.

## **Section 5: Conclusion**

As explored within this report, much has been revealed about both the role and desirable qualities of a Warden, but also the functions of municipal government. Throughout these findings, the effects of oral history in exposing these ideas must be acknowledged. In considering the impact of using oral history, I want to begin by highlighting the influence that the connections fostered within this project have had on me. I feel so incredibly lucky to have been able to converse with all these people, and I have truly grown from the personal knowledge

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<sup>349</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Clark, discussion; Jones, discussion; Stewart, written communication; Taylor, discussion.

imparted here. I cannot stress enough how wonderful these narrators were, and it is lessons such as the need for optimism and the centrality of human connection, that I will carry with me throughout my life.

Beyond impacting my own life, the use of oral history regarding this work also changed these findings for the better, as within this methodological approach, there was an increased opportunity for the flexibility that was crucial to the completion of this project. In being adaptable in conversations and following what the participants deemed to be most crucial to impart, I believe this led to better research and increased understandings. For example, without ceding some of the interview structure, the “two hat” analogy may never have arisen, nor would the importance of collaboration have been understood to the same extent. Furthermore, without the conversations that oral history affords, there would have been a greater struggle to put human elements first. If the insights of these narrators guiding this process were lost, I believe the intrinsic personal connections that were so central in the themes of this project may have been overlooked in favour of the policy that is often elevated. It is this anthropological element that is shared between oral history and government, that demonstrates the suitability of this method in studies of administration. Many times I was reminded that government is meant to serve the people, and, again, I believe that this central element would have been lost without the use of oral history, and the narrators re-enforcing this idea in our conversations.

This humanity was not often discussed within the previous sources examined, despite the prevalence of the topic in these conversations (as stated many times). Connection and collaboration, as well as the human feelings of care and respect lay behind almost every part of this report. In undertaking this project, it was impossible to ignore the way that humanity is within governmental systems, and after the completion of this work, I feel as though it is a mistake to exclude this idea in any discussions of government. The role of Peterborough County Warden depends on these human relationships, as made clear by countless examples of collaboration, but also how the Wardens often assured me that not all credit must go to them but should instead be shared amongst the people they worked alongside.<sup>350</sup> Should I be asked to describe one of the most crucial findings of this project, I would say that government and, therefore, the position of Warden hinges on relationships. Collaboration is the central tenant, and

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<sup>350</sup> Boyce and Boyce, discussion; Clark, discussion; Gerow, discussion; Jones, discussion; Percy, discussion; Stewart, written communication; Taylor, discussion. See section 3.3a

as such, without participating in these human connections, the suitability of the person elected, and the effectiveness of the Warden would be *extremely* limited.

Further considering the role of Warden, I admit that prior to this project, my knowledge of local governance was woefully low. From this research, however, I have gained a deeper understanding of the visibility that is so central. Across these conversations, this concept was a continually reoccurring one, and as such, I believe that this, in connection to the ideas of relationships expressed above, is one of the most crucial elements to being Warden. Another key consideration would be the discussions surrounding the duty of the Warden to be the symbolic face of the County. While the narrators were generally aligned understanding the need for this representation, there were variations in the ways this should be achieved. This again speaks to the personal nature that has been so essential within this research, as while these differences are revealing and crucial to understanding the workings of government, they would have likely remained hidden without this focus on humanity. I had never much considered the public front of governmental roles in depth, yet throughout this process I have learned much about the workings of this position, but also the amount of focus these political leaders give to these community connections and questions of representation.

Additionally examining the personal elements of Wardenship, this project revealed the character traits that help achieve success in this position. Many of the common findings were not about legislative work, but rather common personality traits that led to success in this role. For example, the considerations to interpersonal skills and optimism, while influential to policy, are more reflective of the individuals within this role. In these more human-focused considerations, I believe a greater understanding of the requirements to be Warden, as well as how these factors apply to this position has been generated. While not expressly a guide as to what makes a good leader, these themes that have been discussed over the course of this report reveal the common traits that led to the success of these figures. Again, while these characteristics are applicable and beneficial in governmental interactions, these traits are something that we should strive to embody in *all* situations. It is these qualities that one should wish for in a leader, and in my opinion, Peterborough County is lucky to have had these role models leading for so many years, and I feel honoured to help acknowledge this legacy.

Overall, as explored many times, a central idea in this report was collaboration, and as such I wish to finish this report by emphasizing the teamwork necessary to complete this

research. This project truly would not have been the same without the various people who supported this undertaking, as reflected in the acknowledgement, although special thanks must be given to the project team of Dr. Caroline Durand, Malaura Lucas, and Emmanuel Pinto. This research, however, would have impossible without the input of the Wardens, which reads throughout every section. Their impact and role within Peterborough County has been the focus of this process, and as such, this report must conclude with an acknowledgement of the hard work they, and so many others, did for the County of Peterborough. To the Wardens, again, thank you.

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## Appendix

### A-1: Question List

#### *Initial Questions*

1. Would you mind telling me a bit about yourself? For instance, where you are from, your education, etc.
2. What would you say your passions are? Have these changed since your time in office?
3. I am curious, what is something you think people should know about your time in office?
4. Do you have any additional questions for me? These could be about the project, or who I am.

#### *Interview*

#### Influences

1. When considering your time as Warden, what would you say, had the biggest impact on your tenure?
  - a. What was the biggest external impact on your tenure? (ex. the Harris amalgamation, growth of GTA, etc.)
  - b. Would you mind telling me if anything in your life experience shaped your time as Warden?
2. When making decisions for and with the County Council, what would you say your primary focuses or motivations were?
  - a. Would you say the County Council had a specific focus under your leadership? For example, was there more emphasis on environmental policies, economic growth, etc.
3. Could you tell me what factors you would say influenced your decisions?

#### Relationships

4. I'm wondering about the relationships that you had during your time as Warden. For instance, with the population of the County, your colleagues, as a mentor/with your mentor, various communities and even the impact that the previous Warden had. Could you tell me more about that?

#### Community

5. Could you tell me about the relationships between the various communities within your tenure as Warden? Did the townships work well together, or were there issues?

- a. How would you describe the community?
  - i. Both the County as a whole and your own municipality?
- 6. What does the network system look like within Peterborough County? Are there links that you are proud to have helped create or ones you would like to see in the future?
  - a. Beyond Peterborough County as well
- 7. How would you describe the identity of Peterborough County, and how would you say this shaped your time as Warden?

### Reflections

- 8. What was the biggest decision you made or advocated for and could you walk me through your thought process or emotions concerning this?
- 9. How would you describe Peterborough County at the time of your leadership?
  - a. What would you say the biggest change has been?
- 10. In considering the impact you made, what do you think the people of Peterborough County, or the next Warden would say? What would you hope they would say?
- 11. What would you consider to be your biggest challenge during your tenure?
- 12. Overall, what is the thing you are most proud of from your time as Warden?

### Concluding

- 13. Is there something that we have not covered that you feel should be discussed today?

## **A-2: Consent Forms**

### **A-2.1: General**

#### **Commemoration Project for Former Peterborough County Wardens Consent Agreement**

You are invited to participate in a research study. Before you agree to participate, please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have to be sure that you understand what your participation will involve.

**INVESTIGATORS:** This research study is being conducted by Claire Pidduck and Caroline Durand, from the History Department at Trent University.

This study is funded by Peterborough County and the Trent Community Research Center.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:**

This study is designed to analyse the tenure of former Wardens of Peterborough County. Information shall be obtained through interviewing these former leaders, as well as using archival research and scholarly sources. The questions this study will focus on are what

Peterborough County looked like during the tenure of each Warden, the most important aspect of each Warden's service, as well as the impacts upon and left by each Warden. This information will then be compiled into a 4 – 6 sentence summary of each Warden's tenure. This summary will be added to the Warden's Wall on the Peterborough County website with the potential to be added to a physical wall in the future. A final report will also be compiled further analysing the data and the key questions mentioned above. There is also the likelihood of a presentation to the Peterborough County Council discussing the findings and analysis in the final report. The final report (as well as the raw data collected) will be given to the County for their use in the future, with the likelihood that other researchers will be able to access this data. Participants within this study are exclusive to those who have previously served as Warden and are available to be interviewed.

**WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO/WHAT PARTICIPATION MEANS:** If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

#### Meeting

The main interview will involve a discussion using some guiding questions. These questions will center around your tenure as Warden, focusing on the themes of influences, relationships, community, and reflections. The questions asked may vary depending on the answers provided, as this is a conversation. The location for the meeting is flexible, as it can either occur in person at the County Office in Peterborough, or over Teams. This meeting will be recorded on Teams (for both in-person and remote meetings) and transcribed, although some notes will also be taken during the meeting. This meeting should not extend beyond 2 hours.

#### Review

As a participant in this study, you will have the opportunity to review the data collected within the recording and the transcript, as well as the draft of the summary written for the wall. Copies of these files will be sent to you for your review, which is an optional but recommended process. Should you have edits, these will be made to your approval. Once the data is accepted, this allows for the Principal Investigator to use any of the information in the accepted data in the final report. The amount of time this will take depends on the length of the interview as well as the number of edits needed, but an estimation is approximately 30 minutes to 2 hours.

At the end of the project, the final copy of the summary will be sent to the participant if concerns, and should the participants wish, a copy of the final report will also be sent.

#### **POTENTIAL BENEFITS:**

The potential benefit participants can expect from this study is a more detailed commemoration on the Warden's Wall. From this, there is a potential for a better public understanding of the tenure of each Warden. Without your participation in this study, we cannot guarantee an extension of your record on the Warden's Wall.

#### **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL RISKS TO YOU AS A PARTICIPANT:**

The risks of this study are minimal and may not be greater than what you experience in an average conversation. There is, however, the potential for negative emotions to arise during the interview process, including (but not limited to): embarrassment, sadness, anxiety, etc. Furthermore, there is a potential for some unpleasant thoughts concerning representation during the final report. A positive public reception to the information released as part of the summaries is also not guaranteed.

To minimize these risks, we wish to re-iterate that you are not obliged to answer all questions that are asked of you. Furthermore, should these risks be too great, your participation is also voluntary. As to the information in the final report, it is not the goal of the project to represent those interviewed in a negative light, even though criticisms may occur in the analysis. Despite the potential of a critical examination within the report, the public commemoration will display a positive celebration of your achievements, however, we cannot guarantee a positive public response.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Due to the nature of this project, your name will be used in records as well as published material. Should you, however, not wish to be quoted directly in the final report, you may opt out in the checkboxes on the signatory page.

The data will largely be stored on electronically, on a password protected laptop, as well as a backup copy on OneDrive, with an external drive as a possibility. Should an external drive be used, this drive will be stored in a locked safe. The raw data, including the transcripts and the recordings will be presented to the County of Peterborough to use at their discretion, for as long as they wish. Further access by the public may be provided upon request in the future.

Part of this project includes the recording of participants. You retain the right to review these recordings and the transcripts that are made. Should you wish to remove any data from these, your request will be honoured. These will be stored using the methods outlined above and will be transferred to Peterborough County at the termination of this project. These recordings and transcripts will be available upon request to the County in the years to follow. As to when the records will be deleted, this is at the discretion of Peterborough County, although they will be removed from the Principal Investigator's laptop at the end of the project.

### **INCENTIVES AND/OR COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION:**

The participant will not be paid to participate in this study, however, upon completion of the interview, a complimentary gift basket will be provided to thank you for your time. In addition to this, another incentive to participate in this study is the guarantee of commemoration upon the Warden's Wall.

### **COSTS TO PARTICIPATION:**

There are no mandatory costs to participation, however, should participants choose to partake in an in-person interview, there may be gas and parking costs associated with this. This can be avoided, however, using Teams at this stage.

### **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL:**

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can choose whether to participate or not. If any question makes you uncomfortable, you can skip that question. You may stop participating at any time. Should you choose to stop participating, you may also choose to have your data not included in the final report. Furthermore, if you stop participating and wish your data to not be included within the study, all relevant notes and information will either be deleted or physically destroyed depending on the medium. Your data, after the date of April 26th, 2025, will no longer be in the hands of the Principal Investigator, and should you wish the data deleted, you must apply to the County. The cut off for removing your data from the final report is March 11, 2025, after which your data will remain in this report. Additionally, should you choose to stop your participation in the study, this will not influence your future relations with Trent University, the County of Peterborough, or the investigators (Claire Pidduck and Dr. Caroline Durand) involved in the research.

**QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY:** If you have any questions or concerns about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact:

Project Researcher:

Claire Pidduck - Undergraduate Student, History Department, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario

Tel: 519-365-8875

Email: [clairepidduck@trentu.ca](mailto:clairepidduck@trentu.ca)

Project Supervisor:

Dr. Caroline Durand – History Department, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario

Tel: 705-748-1011 x 7109

Email: [carolinedurand@trentu.ca](mailto:carolinedurand@trentu.ca)

Trent Community Research Center (TCRC):

Malaura Lucas – TCRC Project Coordinator, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario

Tel: 705-748-1011 x 7610

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Peterborough County Contact:

Emmanuel Pinto - Executive Assistant to the Warden and Council

Tel: 705-743-0380 x 2510

Email: [epinto@ptbocounty.ca](mailto:epinto@ptbocounty.ca)

This study has been reviewed by the Trent University Research Ethics Board, the study number is 15455. If you have questions or concerns that you don't wish to share with the researchers, please contact:

Anna Kisiala  
 Coordinator, Research Conduct and Reporting  
 c/o Office of the Vice President, Research and Innovation  
 Trent University  
 1600 West Bank Dr  
 Peterborough, ON K9L 0G2  
 705-748-1011 ext. 7866  
[annakisiala@trentu.ca](mailto:annakisiala@trentu.ca)

**CONFIRMATION OF AGREEMENT:**

- I have read, or have had read to me, the information in this agreement;
- I have asked any questions I have about the study;
- By signing, I agree to participate in the study;
- I am aware I can change my mind and withdraw consent to participate at any time;
- I have been given a copy of this agreement;
- I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this consent agreement;
- I am aware that the researcher will use my name when discussing my contributions in their report;
- I allow myself to be quoted in the final report; and
- I agree to be [audio, video, or both] recorded for the purposes of this study. I understand how these recordings will be used, stored, and destroyed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Participant (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

**A-2.2: Questioned Capacity to Assent**

**Commemoration Project for Former Peterborough County Wardens  
 Consent Agreement**

You are invited to participate in a research study. Before you agree to participate, please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have to be sure that you understand what your participation will involve.

**INVESTIGATORS:** This research study is being conducted by Claire Pidduck and Caroline Durand, from the History Department at Trent University.

This study is funded by Peterborough County and the Trent Community Research Center.

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This study is designed to analyse the tenure of former Wardens of Peterborough County. Information shall be obtained through interviewing these former leaders, as well as using archival research and scholarly sources. The questions this study will focus on are what Peterborough County looked like during the tenure of each Warden, the most important aspect of each Warden's service, as well as the impacts upon and left by each Warden. This information will then be compiled into a 4 – 6 sentence summary of each Warden's tenure. This summary will be added to the Warden's Wall on the Peterborough County website with the potential to be added to a physical wall in the future. A final report will also be compiled further analysing the data and the key questions mentioned above. There is also the likelihood of a presentation to the Peterborough County Council discussing the findings and analysis in the final report. The final report (as well as the raw data collected) will be given to the County for their use in the future, with the likelihood that other researchers will be able to access this data. Participants within this study are exclusive to those who have previously served as Warden and are available to be interviewed.

**WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO/WHAT PARTICIPATION MEANS:** If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

#### Meeting

The main interview will involve a discussion using some guiding questions and will be scheduled before March 15, 2025. These questions will center around your tenure as Warden, focusing on the themes of influences, relationships, community, and reflections. The questions asked may vary depending on the answers provided, as this is a conversation. The location for the meeting is flexible, as it can either occur in person at the County Office in Peterborough, or over Teams. This meeting will be recorded on Teams (for both in-person and remote meetings) and transcribed, although some notes will also be taken during the meeting. This meeting should not extend beyond 2 hours.

#### Review

As a participant in this study, you will have the opportunity to review the data collected within the recording and the transcript, as well as the draft of the summary written for the wall. Copies of these files will be sent to you for your review, which is an optional but recommended process. Should you have edits, these will be made to your approval. Once the data is accepted, this allows for the Principal Investigator to use any of the information in the accepted data in the final report. The amount of time this will take depends on the length of the interview as well as the number of edits needed, but an estimation is approximately 30 minutes to 2 hours.

At the end of the project, the final copy of the summary will be sent to the participant if it concerns, and should the participants wish, a copy of the final report will also be sent.

#### **POTENTIAL BENEFITS:**

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**WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL RISKS TO YOU AS A PARTICIPANT:**

The risks of this study are minimal and may not be greater than what you experience in an average conversation. There is, however, that the potential for negative emotions to arise during the interview process, including (but not limited to): embarrassment, sadness, anxiety, etc. There is also potential for memory issues and related emotions to this, although these should not be greater than you experience in an average conversation. Furthermore, there is a potential for some unpleasant thoughts concerning representation during the final report. A positive public reception to the information released as part of the summaries is also not guaranteed. There is also the risk of not remembering the information which has been told.

To minimize these risks, we wish to re-iterate that you are not obliged to answer all questions that are asked of you. To further mitigate these risks, your caretaker will also be present throughout all stages of this process to help in terms of memory related and cognitive concerns. Should these risks be too great, your participation is also voluntary. As to the information in the final report, it is not the goal of the project to represent those interviewed in a negative light, even though criticisms may occur in the analysis. Despite the potential of a critical examination within the report, the public commemoration will display a positive celebration of your achievements, however, we cannot guarantee a positive public response.

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Tel: 705-743-0380 x 2510

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This study has been reviewed by the Trent University Research Ethics Board, the study number is 15455. If you have questions or concerns that you don't wish to share with the researchers, please contact:

Anna Kisiala  
 Coordinator, Research Conduct and Reporting  
 c/o Office of the Vice President, Research and Innovation  
 Trent University  
 1600 West Bank Dr  
 Peterborough, ON K9L 0G2  
 705-748-1011 ext. 7866  
[annakisiala@trentu.ca](mailto:annakisiala@trentu.ca)

**CONFIRMATION OF AGREEMENT:**

- I have read, or have had read to me, the information in this agreement;
- I have asked any questions I have about the study;
- By signing, I agree to participate in the study;
- I am aware I can change my mind and withdraw consent to participate at any time;
- I have been given a copy of this agreement;
- I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this consent agreement;
- I am aware that the researcher will use my name when discussing my contributions in their report;
- I allow myself to be quoted in the final report (optional); and
- I agree to be [audio, video, or both] recorded for the purposes of this study. I understand how these recordings will be used, stored, and destroyed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Participant (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Caretaker (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of Caretaker

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

### A-2.3: Caretaker

#### Commemoration Project for Former Peterborough County Wardens Consent Agreement

A Warden you are a caretaker for is invited to participate in a research study, and your involvement is requested. Before you agree to participate, please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have to be sure that you understand what your participation will involve.

**INVESTIGATORS:** This research study is being conducted by Claire Pidduck and Caroline Durand, from the History Department at Trent University.

This study is funded by Peterborough County and the Trent Community Research Center.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:**

This study is designed to analyse the tenure of former Wardens of Peterborough County. Information shall be obtained through interviewing these former leaders, as well as using archival research and scholarly sources. The questions this study will focus on are what Peterborough County looked like during the tenure of each Warden, the most important aspect of each Warden's service, as well as the impacts upon and left by each Warden. This information will then be compiled into a 4 – 6 sentence summary of each Warden's tenure. This summary will be added to the Warden's Wall on the Peterborough County website with the potential to be added to a physical wall in the future. A final report will also be compiled further analysing the data and the key questions mentioned above. There is also the likelihood of a presentation to the Peterborough County Council discussing the findings and analysis in the final report. The final report (as well as the raw data collected) will be given to the County for their use in the future, with the likelihood that other researchers will be able to access this data. Participants within this study are exclusive to those who have previously served as Warden and are available to be interviewed.

**WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO/WHAT PARTICIPATION MEANS:** If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

#### Question Review

You will be provided a copy of the question list that will be taken into the interview. If you have any concerns about the ability of the participant to answer these questions, you are asked to let the principal investigator know prior to the meeting.

#### Consent

During the consent process, in addition to your own form, you are asked to help the principal investigator clarify any questions for the participant and ensure that participants understand what they are being asked to do.

#### Meeting

The main interview will involve a discussion using some guiding questions and will be scheduled before March 15, 2025. These questions will center around the participants tenure as

Warden, focusing on the themes of influences, relationships, community, and reflections. The questions asked may vary depending on the answers provided, as this is a conversation. The location for the meeting is flexible, as it can either occur in person at the County Office in Peterborough, or over Teams. This meeting will be recorded on Teams (for both in-person and remote meetings) and transcribed, although some notes will also be taken during the meeting. This meeting should not extend beyond 2 hours. During this meeting, should you notice any times that the participant appears to not be capable of answering questions, or does not understand, you are asked to alert the Principal Investigator, so a course forward may be determined.

### Discussion

Following this meeting, you will be asked to discuss with the Principal Investigator about your assessment of the participant's capability during the meeting. This will be recorded. Any issues that arise will be discussed, although should something arise during the interview, you are asked to alert the Principal Investigator then.

### Review

You will have the opportunity to review the data collected within the recording and the transcript, as well as the draft of the summary written for the wall. Copies of these files will be sent to you for your review, which is an optional but recommended process. Should you have edits, these will be made to your approval. Once the data is accepted, this allows for the Principal Investigator to use any of the information in the accepted data in the final report. The amount of time this will take depends on the length of the interview as well as the number of edits needed, but an estimation is approximately 30 minutes to 2 hours.

At the end of the project, the final copy of the summary will be sent to the participant it concerns, and should the participants wish, a copy of the final report will also be sent.

### **POTENTIAL BENEFITS:**

The potential benefit participants can expect from this study is a more detailed commemoration on the Warden's Wall. From this, there is a potential for a better public understanding of the tenure of each Warden. Without your participation in this study, we cannot guarantee an extension of their record on the Warden's Wall. In aiding with this, you are helping the participants be recognized for their work as Warden.

### **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL RISKS TO YOU AS A PARTICIPANT:**

The risks of this study are minimal to you and may not be greater than what you experience in an average conversation. There is, however, that the potential for negative emotions to arise during the interview process, including (but not limited to): embarrassment, sadness, anxiety, etc. Furthermore, there is a potential for some unpleasant thoughts concerning representation during the final report. A positive public reception to the information released as part of the summaries of the Wardens is also not guaranteed.

To minimize these risks, we wish to re-iterate that participants are not obliged to answer all questions that are asked in the interview stage. Furthermore, should these risks be too great, participation is also voluntary. As to the information in the final report, it is not the goal of the project to represent those interviewed in a negative light, even though criticisms may occur in the analysis. Despite the potential of a critical examination within the report, the public commemoration will display a positive celebration of the Wardens' achievements, however, we cannot guarantee a positive public response.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Due to the nature of this project, the Warden's name will be used in records as well as published material. Your involvement can be kept secret from the public, should you wish. Additionally, there is an option that Wardens' can be quoted in the final report, although there is a space to opt-out of this on the checkboxes of the signatory page of the Wardens' consent form.

The data will largely be stored on electronically, on a password protected laptop, as well as a backup copy on OneDrive, with an external drive as a possibility. Should an external drive be used, this drive will be stored in a locked safe. The raw data, including the transcripts and the recordings will be presented to the County of Peterborough to use at their discretion, for as long as they wish. Further access by the public may be provided upon request in the future.

Part of this project includes the recording of participants. You retain the right to review these recordings and the transcripts that are made. Should you wish to remove any data from these, your request will be honoured. These will be stored using the methods outlined above and will be transferred to Peterborough County at the termination of this project. These recordings and transcripts will be available upon request to the County in the years to follow. As to when the records will be deleted, this is at the discretion of Peterborough County, although they will be removed from the Principal Investigator's laptop at the end of the project.

### **INCENTIVES AND/OR COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION:**

The participant will not be paid to participate in this study, however, upon completion of the interview, a complimentary gift basket will be provided to thank you for your time. In addition to this, another incentive to participate in this study is the guarantee of commemoration upon the Warden's Wall.

### **COSTS TO PARTICIPATION:**

There are no mandatory costs to participation, however, should participants choose to partake in an in-person interview, there may be gas and parking costs associated with this. This can be avoided, however, using Teams at this stage.

### **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL:**

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can choose whether to participate or not. If any question makes you uncomfortable, you can skip that question. You may stop participating

at any time. Should you choose to stop participating, you may also choose to have your data not included in the final report. Furthermore, if you stop participating and wish your data to not be included within the study, all relevant notes and information will either be deleted or physically destroyed depending on the medium. Your data, after the date of April 26th, 2025, will no longer be in the hands of the Principal Investigator, and should you wish the data deleted, you must apply to the County. The cut off for removing your data from the final report is March 20, 2025, after which your data will remain in this report. Additionally, should you choose to stop your participation in the study, this will not influence your future relations with Trent University, the County of Peterborough, or the investigators (Claire Pidduck and Dr. Caroline Durand) involved in the research.

**QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY:** If you have any questions or concerns about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact:

Project Researcher:

Claire Pidduck - Undergraduate Student, History Department, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario

Tel: 519-365-8875

Email: [clairepidduck@trentu.ca](mailto:clairepidduck@trentu.ca)

Project Supervisor:

Dr. Caroline Durand – History Department, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario

Tel: 705-748-1011 x 7109

Email: [carolinedurand@trentu.ca](mailto:carolinedurand@trentu.ca)

Trent Community Research Center (TCRC):

Malaura Lucas – TCRC Project Coordinator, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario

Tel: 705-748-1011 x 7610

Email: [malauralucas@trentu.ca](mailto:malauralucas@trentu.ca)

Peterborough County Contact:

Emmanuel Pinto - Executive Assistant to the Warden and Council

Tel: 705-743-0380 x 2510

Email: [epinto@ptbocounty.ca](mailto:epinto@ptbocounty.ca)

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Peterborough, ON K9L 0G2

705-748-1011 ext. 7866

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- I have read, or have had read to me, the information in this agreement;
- I have asked any questions I have about the study;
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- I allow myself to be quoted in the final report (optional); and
- I agree to be [audio, video, or both] recorded for the purposes of this study. I understand how these recordings will be used, stored, and destroyed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Caretaker (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Caretaker

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**A-2.4: Confirmation of Caretaker**

**Commemoration Project for Former Peterborough County Wardens  
Caretaker Agreement**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ certify that I am the caretaker for

\_\_\_\_\_, and will act in this manner for the purposes of the

Warden's Wall Commemoration Project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Caretaker (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Caretaker

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**A-3: Participant List**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Years Warden</b>	<b>Home Municipality</b>	<b>Contact Method</b>	<b>Interview Method</b>	<b>Interview Duration</b>	<b>Were other people there?</b>
Donald Boyce	1979	Smith (now Selwyn)	Phone	In-Person	1:07:16	Yes
Gary Stewart	1992-1994	Otonabee (now Otonabee-South Monaghan)	Phone	In-Person	1:33:09	No
Douglas Percy	1996	Norwood (now Asphodel-Norwood)	Phone	Online (Microsoft Teams)	1:24:23	No
Tom Flynn	1978, 1997-1998	Galway-Cavendish & Harvey	Phone	Phone	1:19:45	Yes
Neal Cathcart	2005-2006	Cavan-Millbrook-North Monaghan (Now Cavan Monaghan)	Phone	In-Person	1:08:37	Yes
Ron Gerow	1995, 2007-2009	Havelock-Belmont-Methuen	Phone	In-Person	1:52:53	No
Joe Taylor	2017-2018	Otonabee-South Monaghan	Email	Online (Microsoft Teams)	1:32:23	No
J. Murray Jones	2010-2016, 2019-2022	Douro-Dummer	Email	Online (Microsoft Teams) and Phone	1:26:14	No
Bonnie Clark	2022-Present	Otonabee-South Monaghan	Email	In-Person	1:07:16	No

## **A-4: Biographies**

### **A-4.1: Donald Boyce**

*1979*

*Smith Township (Now Selwyn)*

During Warden Donald Boyce's tenure, he employed a crucial element of being Warden in maintaining a balance between the complex responsibilities found within this position. This is apparent in the fact that while his home municipality of Smith (now Selwyn) was facing larger projects, he evenly and effectively managed these responsibilities with his role at the County. At the County level, he managed a relatively calm year (although the job of Warden is never dull) with one of his largest focuses being the road budget, given the importance of transportation within the County, with its size and various geographical features. Such elements include the vast natural spaces and numerous farms that make Peterborough County so unique, and it is this rural and agricultural identity that Warden Boyce appreciated and respected in all his decisions, consequently maintaining this throughout his tenure. Another part of what made (and still makes) Peterborough County so special are the communities formed through this rural character, which he also recognized and prioritized. During Warden Boyce's time in office, these rural, agricultural roots were maintained as well as the communities within this identity, to reflect the residents of the area, and this can still be seen within Peterborough County today.

### **A-4.2: Gary Stewart**

*1992-1994*

*Otonabee Township (Now Otonabee-South Monaghan Township)*

Warden Gary Stewart was a part of many sizeable endeavours, including the creation of the Eastern Ontario Warden's Caucus, which brought Wardens in the area closer together in the hopes of saving money and increasing communication in the region. During his tenure, however, Warden Stewart had to navigate many controversial issues, such as the selection of the landfill sites, as well as the beginning of the amalgamation process, which saw Peterborough County go from 18 municipalities to 8. It is his handling of and impact on these controversial issues that shapes Warden Stewart's legacy, as the effects of both the landfill decision, and the amalgamation are still present in Peterborough County to this day. In addition to this, Warden Stewart's focus on and determination to save money for the taxpayers of Peterborough County, shaped by his years in business, is crucial to mention when discussing his tenure. This idea of

focusing on the people, is also seen in Warden Stewart's motto of "keep your mouth closed and ears open," which demonstrates his desire to reflect the will of the people during these periods of great change within Peterborough County. With Gary Stewart as Warden, Peterborough County was a place of progress where these developments were determined through listening to the needs of others.

#### **A-4.3: Douglas Percy**

*1996*

*Village of Norwood (now Asphodel-Norwood Township)*

During his tenure, Warden Douglas Percy was involved in the long-standing, yet central issue of amalgamation, as this was a large process and required many people and many years of work to achieve the result known today. As part of this unification effort, Warden Percy was involved in talks with the City of Peterborough, considering the idea of creating one government, including both the City and the County. Through these talks between the City and the County, the relationship between the City and the County was strengthened, resulting in an improvement of the Joint Services shared between the two, especially within the welfare system. Warden Percy's tenure was driven by a focus on providing the best services for the region, which reflects his desire to do right by his County. To reach these ends, under Warden Percy, these themes of community, personal connections, and relationships were prioritized, both inspiring and benefiting Peterborough County. Overall, these actions were achieved through a great deal of respect, which Warden Percy received, but also felt for the County, the City, and the people who lived within these areas.

#### **A-4.4: Tom Flynn**

*1978, 1997-1998*

*Harvey Township (Now Trent Lakes)*

The tenures of Warden Tom Flynn, although including the signing of a petition to keep Quebec as part of Canada, were largely shaped by the issue of amalgamation, despite being almost 20 years apart. This long-standing issue, arising both times he was in office, demanded more focus during his second term, as this is when the issue of the amalgamation of the County from 14 municipalities and 4 villages to 8 municipalities and 1 village was finalized. It is for this that Warden Flynn is often remembered by the public as a positive figure in helping to maintain the identities of the various communities in the face of pressure from both the provincial

government, and others who advocated for the change. Community was a central theme during this time, which is reflected in Warden Flynn's strong relationship with the people, but also the staff of the County, and other members of municipal government. During this time, life in Peterborough County was quite challenging, with such a massive (and divisive) change occurring, although Warden Flynn navigated this issue with grace and with County Council, provided strong leadership. The impacts of amalgamation can still be seen today, and as such, the actions of Warden Flynn to mitigate possible negative ramifications remain visible as well.

#### **A-4.5: Neal Cathcart**

*Cavan-Millbrook-North Monaghan*

*2005-2006*

Warden Neal Cathcart, during his time in office, was well-respected, as earned from his determined fight for residents, especially including his involvement in the creation of Centennial Place Long Term Care Home in Millbrook. In his role in the creation of Centennial Place, Warden Cathcart's deep love and consideration for Peterborough County, is seen in this example, through contribution to ensure there was care for many otherwise vulnerable people. Another example of his concern for residents of Peterborough County would be his determination to maintain the identity that was so central to those living in Cavan Monaghan, through his tireless negotiations with the City during the potential annexation process. It is this respect and care that marks Warden Cathcart's legacy, with many remembering the hard work that he did for the County, but also his humourous and playful nature. Peterborough County, from his leadership, followed suit, and while there were many challenges during this time, they were handled with an aura of grace, collaboration, and joy, with consideration given to all parties involved. As such, Warden Cathcart helped protect the rural identity of Peterborough County through these politics of compromising, ensuring the best outcome was achieved for everyone involved, and setting a positive example for Peterborough County to follow.

#### **A-4.6: Ron Gerow**

*1995, 2007-2009*

*Belmont & Methuen (Now Havelock-Belmont-Methuen)*

A motto for Warden Ron Gerow's tenure would be "remember who you are, and where you come from, but also work for the County," as this thought influenced his time as Warden. This family saying, which incidentally was also another major factor in Warden Gerow's term,

helped guide him through larger initiatives such as the landfill site selection, and the beginning of the Eastern Ontario Regional Network, but also the daily activities of Peterborough County. Although these undertakings continued beyond Warden Gerow's terms as Warden, these projects are a part of his legacy, as his involvement shaped their trajectory. Additionally, during Warden Gerow's tenure, he spearheaded an update of the Warden's Chain of Office to better reflect the post-amalgamation structure of the County, as well as the name change from Reeve to Mayor in the townships. It is actions such as these that demonstrate the future-focused nature of Peterborough County under Warden Gerow's leadership that helped move the County forward into a new era. This next step came after careful consideration of the past that had come before, as well as the interests of the people, much like the changing time of the age in which Warden Gerow was in office.

#### **A-4.7: Joe Taylor**

*2017-2018*

##### *Otonabee South Monaghan Township*

Warden Joe Taylor was involved in many projects during his tenure, including the Friendship Accord, which created a partnership consisting of 2 First Nations Communities, 3 municipalities, and the Peterborough Economic Development Corporation to educate each other on various issues. Furthermore, as a member of the Eastern Ontario Warden's Caucus, Warden Taylor was also involved in the Eastern Ontario Regional Network, which strove to provide high-speed internet and cellular access throughout Eastern Ontario, including the County of Peterborough. Final planning stages for the construction of James A. Gifford Causeway also began in Warden Taylor's term, which included discussions with Curve Lake First Nation and the residents and businesses affected. Additionally, during Warden Taylor's time in office, the Peterborough County Agricultural Heritage Building and the Agricultural Wall of Fame opened at Lang Pioneer Village, celebrating the rich Agricultural history of the County, and those involved in this pursuit. These projects are still active today, providing a sense of connection and community throughout the County. With the support of a dedicated Staff and Council, during Warden Taylor's leadership these projects advanced, making Peterborough County a place of progress, while still-being respectful of the rich history and pioneers of the County of Peterborough.

**A-4.8: J. Murray Jones***2010-2016, 2019-2022**Douro-Dummer*

The tenure of Warden J. Murray Jones is hard to summarize, as at 11 years, Warden Jones is the longest serving Warden of Peterborough County. Over those 11 years, Warden Jones and the County Council achieved many great things, with one example being the work with the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN), which strove to provide much of the County with high-speed internet access. Even during large projects such as EORN, however, Warden Jones was always thinking of the monetary side, using the idea of “Mrs. Glutz” to ensure that the best was being done for the County taxpayers. In this example of “Mrs. Glutz,” the respect that Warden Jones had for the people of Peterborough County, but also the responsibility of being Warden is clear (as well as the humor Warden Jones often used). It is this humanity, as well as his focus on communication that Warden Jones brought to this prestigious position that shaped both his tenure, but also the landscape of Peterborough County during this time. Peterborough County, with the work Warden Jones did, became a place of increased connection, through both technological aspects, but also the vibrant and friendly nature found within Peterborough County residents.

**A-4.9: Bonnie Clark***2022-Present**Otonabee-South Monaghan Township*

Warden Bonnie Clark did many great things for the County during her tenure as the third woman to hold the office, with one of the most striking examples being the priority she gave to the ever-important emergency services within the County. In addition to opening a new ambulance station to improve the response time and equipment of paramedic services, Warden Clark also made healthcare a priority during her tenure, recognizing the growing needs of Peterborough County residents. Warden Clark also moved the County into a greener future, with more environmentally conscious initiatives, including the beginnings of a new County office (more centrally located in Peterborough County) using green technology. It is this County-focus that has led Warden Clark to increase the profile of Peterborough County, generating more public attention for this crucial component of government and supporting the creation of new economic development and tourism divisions for the County. Furthermore, Warden Clark and the County

Council expanded the role and connections of Peterborough County by working with regional organizations such as the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus and advocating at provincial and federal levels. Through her recognition of the needs of the people, as well as innovative uses of new technology and heightened attention, Peterborough County retained its special touches that make this area so unique, while rising to new heights.

### A.5: Trent Community Research Centre Poster




**Trent Community Research Centre**

## THE ORAL HISTORY OF PETERBOROUGH COUNTY WARDENS

Researcher: Claire Pidduck  
 Course: HIST 4820Y (2024-2025)  
 Faculty Supervisor: Caroline Durand  
 Host Organization: Peterborough County  
 TCRC Coordinator: Malaura Lucas

#### BACKGROUND

Peterborough County is a collection of 8 townships, spanning 4,000 km<sup>2</sup>. This municipal government body is responsible for local concerns, such as emergency services, roads, and waste management, although some of these services are undertaken in conjunction with the City of Peterborough. The government structure is comprised of a County Council, on which the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor of each township (16 people) all sit. The elected leader of this Council is called the Warden. The purpose of this project was to compile more information about each Warden's tenure as the head of County Council, as well as Peterborough County in general, to share with future residents on the *Warden's Wall* website.

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There were three main questions about each Warden:

1. What was the most important decision, event, or impact?
2. What was their legacy?
3. What was life like in Peterborough County?

#### FINDINGS

Although this project is still active, some key themes have emerged:

- There is an extreme level of care from the Wardens about their communities and Peterborough County
- It is challenging to lead both a municipality and the County as a whole
- Learn from the past, live for today and try to make a better future
- Wardenship is a collaborative role (i.e. family, staff) and is not just about one person
- Public awareness is an obstacle many Wardens face

#### METHODS

Research was a crucial starting point for this project. The focus of this background knowledge was varied, with specific concentrations on structures of government, oral history, and Peterborough County as a whole.

Once this initial research was completed, the project moved forward into the interview stage. Each Warden participated in recorded and transcribed interviews, where the same questions were asked to all. This information was then used to create summaries of their tenures for the *Warden's Wall* website.

In addition to these brief biographies, a more comprehensive final report will be created, analyzing these findings in depth.

#### CONCLUSION

**Next steps:**

- Create an archive so project information is available to future researchers

**Recommendations:**

- Honour deceased Wardens
- Initiate the biography process soon after Wardens leave office to recognize all leaders within Peterborough County.

The researcher wishes to thank all those who participated and/or helped in this project!

#### Local Municipalities & First Nations of Peterborough County



A map of Peterborough County and the 8 municipalities within.



Scan the QR Code to be taken to the online "Warden's Wall" website!