

Members of the Law Amendments Committee and fellow citizens

My name is Eleanor Robertson Smith and I had **roots already entrenched** when 217 years ago on 16 December 1785 the Nova Scotia House of Assembly declared Shelburne, a county. There were only eight counties at that time. Of the 27 allotted county seats three were for Shelburne County - one from the town and two from the county. The three men elected were Loyalists.

Four of my ancestors were living here at that time. Two were Loyalists, namely, Jasper Harding who arrived from Philadelphia and James Hamilton who came from Hudson, New York. Two others were disbanded soldiers who left their homeland in Scotland to fight for the British in the American Revolution. Their names were Sgt. James Hogg and Private John MacDonald. Also, in my lineage is Heman Kenney, a Barrington Township grantee who settled here before 1762.

Secondly, in addition to our deep roots do you know there are approximately twenty heritage buildings, in Shelburne town, which were built before 1800 and have been proudly maintained throughout the years by the citizens who have resided here? These buildings are part of our heritage and of our uniqueness.

I'll only mention one of these building, which in 1785 was the home of the James Humphreys' family consisting of his wife and four children. These children were christened in Christ Church, Shelburne. James Humphreys, an already established printer and merchant arrived from Philadelphia in 1784 and had his impressive Georgian style home built on the corner of Water and George Streets. Incidentally, each of the four corners of these two streets still has an original Loyalist home which housed a family.

Humphreys was a member of the House of Assembly from 1793 to 1796. His wide- spread fame, however, is focused on his four page weekly newspaper, one of three newspapers in the town in 1785. Humphreys' printing press was imported from England. Before 1800 there were only 16 printing presses in what is now, Canada. Three of those printing presses were in Shelburne. Copies of these newspapers were preserved, in Shelburne, and have been digitalized and are available and highly valued by world –wide researchers.

Thirdly, a 1784 muster roll shows Birchtown had a population of more than 2,500 inhabitants which included 640 male heads of families. Birchtown became the largest settlement of free blacks outside of Africa. Their dedicated descendants, who have worked long and diligently over the years **to preserve and promote their heritage** were rewarded this year when federal and provincial funding was provided to build the Black Heritage Centre. It will be an international land mark and a destination point created by a unique local community.

Fourth, In Barrington there stands the oldest nonconformist house of worship in Canada and among the oldest in North America. It is the sole survivor of five such Congregationalist church buildings built in Nova Scotia. In 1889, an Act of Parliament was passed to demolish this old church which had fallen in disrepair and was considered by some as an eyesore. Inspired by Thomas Watson, the people of Barrington rallied and worked to restore this historic gem.

Fifth, In Lockeport there is ***Nova Scotia's 1st Provincially Registered Streetscape***. Five homes in a row – overlooking Lockeport harbour - built by members of the Locke family between 1836 and 1876. Once again this is a well preserved unique Shelburne County heritage landmark.

I have briefly highlighted some of our very distinctive characteristics. They are minute snapshots of our 217 year old county and the citizens; who have proudly lived here; who have preserved our heritage; and proven their love for our unique and varied communities. I, firmly believe we deserve to remain as a **viable and whole entity!**

**It is now up to you**, the members of the Law Amendments Committee, as to whether we will continue to survive as we wish or whether you will change our boundaries and thus split up and destroy our historic designated place in Nova Scotia.