



A SOCIAL AND LEGAL HISTORY OF 524 CLARENCE STREET / 102 WURTEMBURG STREET, OTTAWA

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A Social and Legal History of 524 Clarence Street/102 Wurtemburg Street, Ottawa

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Cover photographs:

bottom: building from the south-west, showing the main entrance to 524 Clarence Street.

top: building from the south-east, showing main entrance to 102 Wurtemburg Street

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Origins of the Neighbourhood

The origins of 524 Clarence/102 Wurtemberg are shrouded in mystery because of missing or contradictory records, but the present house was built on a large plot of land once associated with one of the earliest inhabitants of Bytown.

Colonel By's Plans for Lower Town

When he arrived at the site of Ottawa in 1826 to begin construction of the Rideau Canal, Lt-Col John By laid out two townsites, Lower Town east of the site of the citadel that was to guard the entrance to the new canal, and Upper Town to the west. By bought the site of Lower Town (lots B and C in Concessions B and C of the broken front of Nepean Township – the land bounded by the Ottawa and Rideau Rivers, Rideau Street and Cathcart Street) for the Board of Ordnance (the branch of the British government which managed military property). The Board kept ownership of the land, but leased out individual building lots (a common arrangement in England, but unusual in Canada).

By expected Bytown to grow quickly as both a commercial and military centre. He planned the land east of King Street (today's King Edward Avenue) as a neighbourhood for senior military officers or wealthy merchants, with large lots of 1/3 of an acre or more on streets and squares with suitably elegant names, including Wurtemberg for the King's eldest sister Charlotte, Queen of Wurtemberg (the French spelling in common use at the time), and Franklin, for Sir John Franklin, the admiral and arctic explorer. (The search for the Northwest Passage was a priority for the Royal Navy, and arctic explorers were celebrities.)

By's hopes for his new town were disappointed. It was many years before Bytown began to prosper, and when it did, people did not want to live in the eastern part of Lower Town. Not only was it away from the new mills at the Chaudière and the Rideau Falls, the low areas were impassible hemlock swamp cut by streams, the higher ground

pine-clad hills that turned to loose, blowing sand once the trees were felled (a fact noted as late as the fire insurance map of 1901). The Board of Ordnance was reduced to letting the land in large 2-3 acre lots to farmers and market gardeners, and to looking the other way at squatters who simply occupied the land without any legal title.

John Joyce Buys the Corner of Franklin (Clarence) and Wurtemburg Streets

We must imagine a landscape of scattered sheds, shanties and houses, separated by market gardens, arable fields and waste land used for storing firewood for sale in the market (and probably for dumping garbage and sewage). Among the houses were the institutions that people did not want in the centre of town: the new city cemeteries (opened 1844, closed ca 1897 and later rebuilt as Macdonald Gardens), the rifle range for the militia (Anglesea Square, roughly the current site of the athletic fields behind the Patro Centre), the Protestant General Hospital (opened 1852, rebuilt 1872, closed 1924 and now the Wallis House condominiums), and Ste-Anne's Hospital, an isolation hospital for the treatment of contagious diseases (corner of Heney and Cobourg Streets, opened 1879, closed after 1925).

In 1843 an act of the Upper Canada legislature gave the Board of Ordnance clear title to its lands, but also required it to sell all lands not required for the operation of the Canal. The Board, which had given up its earlier plan to build a fortress, began to sell off the townsite, giving existing leaseholders and squatters first right of purchase. Untangling the leases was a slow business; the land east of King Street was re-surveyed in preparation for sale in 1859, but it was only in 1871 that the Board granted John Joyce a patent for lots 16 and 17 on the south side of Franklin Street. Grant of patent meant that Joyce received title for a nominal payment, just like settlers who cleared and farmed land in the countryside.

Joyce was only a boy between five and ten years old in 1828 when his parents brought him from Cork, Ireland, to Bytown (his father may have been a relative of Mrs By, nee Joyce). At the time of Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee in 1897 he recalled the bonfires lit at the corner of Rideau and Nicholas Streets to celebrate her accession sixty

years earlier. As a young man, Joyce moved to the United States, but returned to Ottawa. Early directories listed him as “farmer”, and the fact that the land was granted by patent rather than sold suggests that he had already occupied and improved the property.

Lots 16 and 17 extended 132 feet, roughly 40 metres, west from Wurtemburg Street and all the way from Clarence Street to Heney Street. Although Joyce bought other lots (e.g. the north side of the block of Rideau Street from Cobourg to Charlotte), he built his own house on the south side of lot 17, at what later became 89 Heney Street, overlooking the cemetery (this house was demolished before 1912 and replaced by a new house sometime later). In 1893 Joyce moved to 77 Heney, on lot 16, and seems to have lived there, a life-long bachelor, until his death in 1904 or 1905.

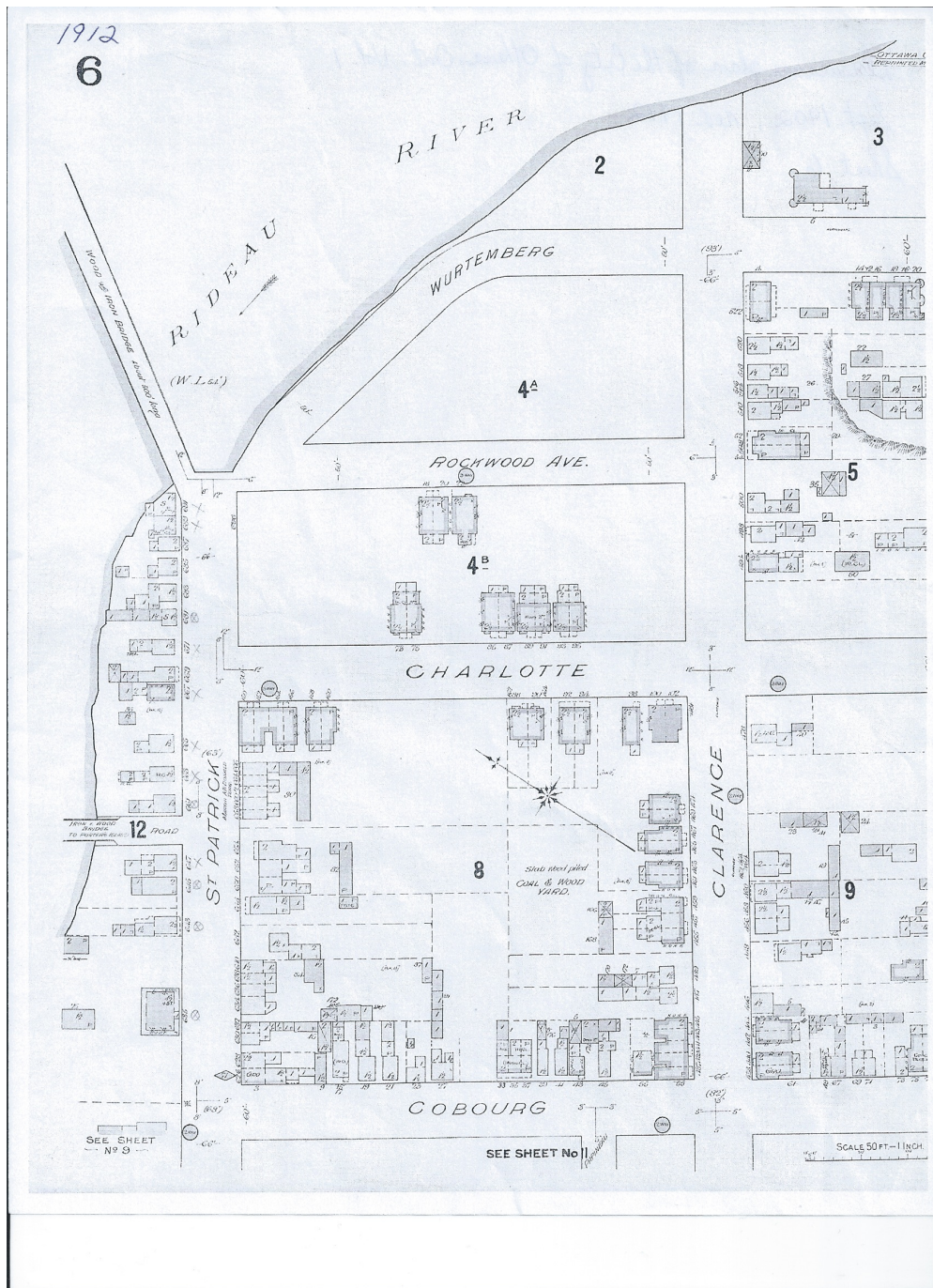
In the 1870s, the Post Office began house-to-house delivery. The City began numbering houses, posting street names, and cleaning up the confusing mix of duplicate street names. As part of this effort, Clarence, Parry and Franklin Streets, all more or less on the same line from Sussex Street to Wurtemburg Street, were united as Clarence Street. Numbering on Clarence Street has remained unchanged since then, but Wurtemburg Street was renumbered twice, most recently in 1915 when all numbers south of Clarence were raised by 100 to make room for building between Saint Patrick and Clarence.

Alfred Gendron builds 524 Clarence / 102 Wurtemburg

Multiple Houses Built on a Large Lot

In 1885 Joyce sold the north half of lots 16 and 17 (132 feet along Clarence Street and 99 feet along Wurtemburg Street) to James Hall, a carter and neighbour at 73 Heney Street, for \$1,550, which suggests that there may have been one or more buildings (houses, stables, barns) on the land. While Hall built houses on his property (or leased

land to others to build) the north-east corner of the lot (the present site of 524-102) was certainly vacant in 1901 and remained vacant at least through 1912, probably until 1915.



Insurance Plan of the City of Ottawa, volume 1 sheet 6, 1902 rev 1912, showing house at 522 Clarence / 4 (104) Wurtemberg

Ottawa grew rapidly around the turn of the century (the population increased 60% between 1891 and 1901, 45% between 1901 and 1911), and investors began to show interest in a central area that had been bypassed by development. In 1905-1907, lot 17 was re-assembled by Sir Charles Fitzpatrick, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, most famous as defence counsel for Louis Riel during his trial for treason in 1885. Fitzpatrick held the assembled property for only a year before selling to J. Alfred Gendron for \$5,000, a price that included leases or ownership of houses on Wurtemberg and Heney Streets. Lot 17 was to serve as a revenue property for non-resident owners until 1952. We'll trace the ownership of the house first, then return to look at its residents.

When was the House Built?

We have not been able to trace Gendron's occupation or address, but he moved quickly to demolish all the houses on the Wurtemberg side of the lot, as well as no 89 Heney, and to replace them with the present four-door row at 114-120 Wurtemberg. He also built the present house at 524 Clarence / 102 Wurtemberg, but it is unclear what he built, or exactly when.

The City Directory listed the corner as "vacant" until the edition for 1916 (with information collected in 1915), which listed a single house at 102 Wurtemberg Street with the note "new house, vacant". Only the single address, 102 Wurtemberg was listed in subsequent editions.

However, the Fire Insurance map of 1912 shows what is clearly the current house, labeled as a two-storey semi-detached frame house with plank siding, porches front and rear, divided east / west, labelled as 522 Clarence and 4 (i.e. 104) Wurtemberg, with a fence dividing the two yards and a one-storey shed or stable on the 522 side. It looks like a standard semi-detached house of the period, with doors for both units facing Clarence Street, a symmetrical arrangement of windows, and no firewall between the two halves (giving an address on one street when the door faced the other street was not unusual for corner properties on the fire insurance maps of the time).

Was this a later addition (some sheets of the insurance plan were revised in 1915)? Did Gendron build a semi-detached house and then change his mind before renting it

out? If the original house (as indicated by the Fire Insurance Map) had plank siding, a new stone foundation must have been built when the brick facing was added, or the original foundation was made wide enough to support a brick facing at a later date. Certainly the conversion from two units to one must have taken place before the house was bricked, as the asymmetrical arrangement of windows on the Clarence Street side shows uniform colour and placement of bricks. Under the ground-floor window of 524 that faces Wurtemberg Street a panel of a contrasting colour of brick could suggest that this had been a door at one time.



Northeast corner of 524 Clarence, showing possible indication that the window was formerly a door

Gendron died in 1920, and his widow sold lot 17 for \$8,000 to a real-estate syndicate of investors from Montreal and Ottawa who also owned a part interest in lot 16 (516-520 Clarence). This would have been a package deal for 102 and 114-120 Wurtemberg and one or more houses on Heney Street and possibly 106 Wurtemberg. In 1925 the syndicate mortgaged the north and south halves of the property separately: 102.88 feet south from the corner of Wurtemberg and Clarence, along with 102 and possibly 106 Wurtemberg to Joseph G. Pigeon, a civil servant who lived on Sweetland Avenue, and the remaining 90' with 114-120 Wurtemberg and the houses on Heney Street to the Huron and Erie Mortgage Co.

We don't know what other properties the syndicate owned other than a part interest in 520 Clarence, but they were badly affected by the Depression. In 1932 and 1937 they walked away from their two mortgages, and Pigeon ended up owning all of lot 17. Pigeon sold the north half of the lot, with 102 and 106 Wurtemberg in 1940 for \$3,100 to a family

called Schindler or Shindler, and in 1942 sold the south half with 114-120 Wurtemberg and the houses on Heney Street to a family called Archambault.

With the Schindlers, 524/102 began to take the shape familiar today. They immediately divided 102 Wurtemberg into two units, creating 524 Clarence as a separate dwelling, and in 1943 they split the lot, keeping 106 Wurtemberg and a plot 56 x 66 feet, but selling 524/102 and a plot 46.88 x 66 for \$5,150 to Henry Moore, a landlord who had lost a half-interest in 520 Clarence to the mortgage company in 1937. Moore died in 1946 and his executors sold 524/102 to Steve Pentiseule for \$5,500. Pentiseule in turn sold in 1952 to Lionel Lanthier for \$9,700. Lanthier, a bus driver / streetcar motorman for the Ottawa Transportation Commission, was the first owner of 524/102 actually to live in the house.

Residents of 102 Wurtemberg

With the 1920s, Lowertown east had finally built up. With the departure of the hospitals, factories and workshops and the laying out of parks and playgrounds, the area had become a pleasant place to live. Two contrasting neighbourhoods met in the area around Macdonald Gardens: Lowertown, strongly catholic and francophone, and Sandy Hill, somewhat wealthier, with many civil servants and academics, and unusual in old Ottawa for being mixed ethnically and religiously. The list of residents in 102 Wurtemberg and 524 Clarence reflects the influence of both neighbourhoods.

The first recorded tenant in 102 Wurtemberg (1916-1925) was Lionel Boisvert, an engineer for the CNR, probably based at the engine terminal at Mann Avenue and Nicholas Street. After standing vacant for two years, the house was rented 1928-32 by Errol Bouchette, a stenographer in the Department of Agriculture and his wife Alice. Bouchette was the son of Robert-Errol Bouchette (1862-1912), Ottawa native, lawyer, journalist, civil servant, campaigner for the modernization of French-Canadian society and a leading intellectual of his day. The Bouchettes were succeeded by Gerald and



Arthur Godbout, date of photo unknown

Constance Ballard (1933); Ralph Field, a clerk in the Department of National Defence, and his wife Edna (1935-38) and Rufus Parent, a medical doctor, and his wife Adèle (1939).

Another notable family followed in 1941-42: Arthur Godbout (1908-1985), at the time a master in the Normal School of the University of Ottawa (the French-language teachers' college for Ottawa). He had been a high school teacher in Ottawa, Sudbury and Kirkland Lake, and returned to Sudbury in 1943 as a school inspector. He resumed his position at the Normal School in 1945, where he became noted for his work in improving the quality of education in the French schools of Ontario. When the English and French Normal Schools merged to form the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa, Godbout

became one of its first professors. In his later years he was a prolific author of books, articles and journalism, and active internationally in organization related to education. Arthur's wife Noella outlived him, dying in 2005 at the age of 90.

The Godbouts were followed by Robert Laliberté and his wife Aline (1943). Laliberté was a travelling salesman for the Rock City Tobacco Co. Ltd, a Quebec City company that made the brands of its British parent Carrière's for the Canadian market: Black Cat, Craven A, Sportsman and others. (Through mergers, Rock City is now part of Rothmans Benson and Hedges, which still operates the Quebec City factory.). Aline Clyne rented 102 Wurtemberg in 1944, joined by her husband Orville on his return from active wartime duty to a job at the Post Office. Orville stayed in 102 until 1959, but after 1954 his wife is listed as Gretta.

The 1950s and After: Decline and Renewal

The first recorded tenants in 524 Clarence were Percy Carrière, a car dealer, and his wife Anita (1941-1949). The house was vacant until Lionel Lanthier moved in in 1951, initially it seems as a tenant, but from 1952 as owner. In 1959 he sold vacant possession of 524/102 to Paul Menard, a machinist at National Brake and Clutch on Wellington Street and his wife Noella for \$14,000.

Like other central neighbourhoods, by the 1950s housing in the area was run down after the tight money of the Depression and the war years. The new, planned postwar suburbs offered quality housing at cheaper prices and with easier financing than established neighbourhoods, and more cars and suburban growth made Charlotte Street a major through road.

The City's review of housing stock in 1958 rated 524/102 along with the rest of the block as in "poor" condition (on a four-point scale from "good" to "very poor"), but a subsequent policy review (1962) considered that no intervention was needed. As it was once again fashionable to live in a central neighbourhood, new owners were already renovating existing houses or replacing them with denser development

A number of spin-offs from the Lower Town East urban renewal project of the 1970s benefitted the neighbourhood, including renewed community facilities, closure of the the roadway through the middle of Macdonald Gardens, and the closing off of Charlotte and Clarence Streets to through traffic (the origin of the "East" in Clarence Street East). Another renovation of Macdonald Gardens, including reconstruction of the summerhouse, is underway now to mark the park's 100th anniversary (August 2014). Although 524/102 must have gone through major repairs and renovations during this period, we have been unable to trace the actual dates or the work done.

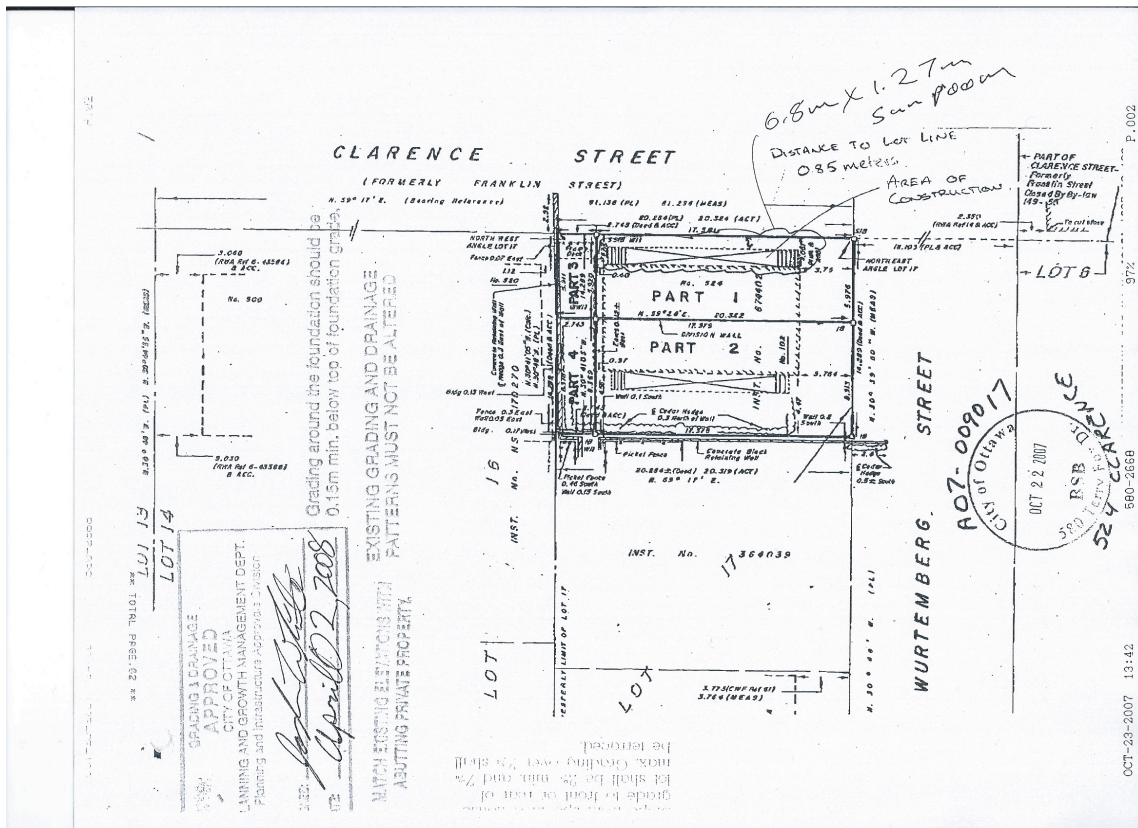
The Menards moved into 102 Wurtemberg, and rented out 524 Clarence to F.J. Kitt, a clerk in the Passport Office, and his family. In 1963 the Menards sold vacant possession of 524/102 to Robert and Theresa Stewart for \$16,500. The Stewarts owned the Russell Lunch at 5 Besserer Street, one of the many cheap restaurants and hotels clus-

tered around the old Union Station (today this site would be under the Westin Hotel). The Stewarts lived in 524 Clarence until 1969, renting out 102 Wurtemberg to Robert Gauthier (1963-1969) and Michel Gagné, a social worker (1966-73). 524 remained vacant from the time the Stewarts moved out until they sold 514 and 102 to Gagné in 1973 for \$31,000. The house was sold and resold and finally purchased in 1975 by a partnership of Guy Côté and Guy Huot for \$52,500.

Guy Huot moved into 524 at once, but 102 remained rented to Alain Forget, a clerk in the Library of Parliament until 1977 or 1978 when Guy Côté moved in. Côté was a manager in the Department of the Secretary of State. Guy Huot (1943-2002) was a noted figure in Canadian music. Ottawa-born, he was an organist for several Ottawa churches and a reviewer for *Le Droit* before serving as head of music for the Canada Council (1966-1973), administrator for the National Arts Centre Orchestra (1973-75), Secretary-General of the Canada Music Council 1976-1985, and finally Secretary-General of the International Music Council, part of UNESCO, until his early death from a brain haemorrhage. He is commemorated by an undergraduate music scholarship at the University of Ottawa and a UNESCO bursary for young composers.

In 1985, Côté and Huot had the property re-surveyed and divided into four parcels, parts 1 and 3 comprising 524 Clarence and parts 2 and 4 comprising 102 Wurtemberg. Both houses were then sold in 1986 for \$190,000 to David Arenburg, a civil servant. The greatly increased price may reflect heavy renovation at this time, or just inflation, which was had been running at 10% a year for some time. Arenburg initially managed both houses as revenue properties, selling and then quickly rebuying a 50% interest. But in 1988 he moved into 524 himself and sold 102 for \$145,000 to Judy Charlton, the first time ownership of the two houses had ever been separated.

Arenburg lived in 524 until 1995, sharing it for part of this time with Steve Brighton, a teacher for the Ottawa Board of Education. Although he kept the house, Arenburg then rented it out to Michael Brisebois, a salesman for Tabufile, a Saint John, N.B. manufacturer of filing and storage equipment (1996) and Jean Lefebvre (1997-1999). Arenburg seems to have accumulated financial problems, including failure to pay taxes, and in 1999 the National Bank foreclosed and sold 524 to Ida Smith and John Lyttle.



Plan of 524 Clarence and 102 Wurtemburg filed with the application for building permit for the new sun porch, 2007

Smith and Lyttle sold the house in 2005 to Rene Unger and Saraswathi Basappa. Unger and Basappa converted the existing front porch and main door facing Clarence Street into an enclosed sunroom, re-using the existing door and stained glass, in 2007/2008. They continued to live in 524 until selling to the current owners, Francois Michaud, a committee clerk in the Senate, and Isabelle Cousineau, a teacher for the French language public school board, in 2012.

Judy Charlton, a salesman for On Course Learning Centres on Laurier Avenue West, moved into 102 on purchase, selling in 1992 to Clayre Bertrand and Bertrand Gauthier for \$165,000. Bertrand and Gauthier sold in 1993 to Lesley Anne Paterson for \$177,500; it is not clear who (if anyone) actually lived in 102 during 1992-1994, but Paterson is confirmed as living there from at least 1995 until she sold to Alex von Schilling and Melissa Fama in 2002. Von Schilling and Fama lived in 102 until selling to Bruno Thériault, the current owner, in 2008.



The sunroom at 524 Clarence Street, as converted from the original porch in 2007/2008

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- City of Ottawa archives: also allows consultation of Newspapers.com.
- City of Ottawa Planning Branch *Urban Renewal Ottawa Canada* 1962
- Ottawa Journal 1897-06-21 p 3 (reminiscences of old residents of celebrations in 1837, including a picture of John Joyce). Available on newspapers.com
- Ottawa Public Library main branch, Ottawa Room

- Fire Insurance Maps: (many of these are digitized and online through Library and Archives Canada - go to collectionscanada.ca and search for "Ottawa, fire insurance")
- City Directories 1884-2012 (also available at Library and Archives Canada)
- Province of Ontario Land Registry Office Number 4: Older records related to ownership can be found through the abstracts for Lot 17 South Franklin (Clarence) Street, on microfilm reel 4 AR 131. Since the introduction of computerized records in the mid-1980s, abstracts for 524 Clarence (parts 1 and 3 plan 5R 8858) can be found by searching for the address, or the PIN (property number) 04236-0072; records for 102 Wurtemburg St (parts 2 and 4 plan 5R 8858) by searching for PIN 04236-0073 (search by address will fail). There is a user fee to consult the computerized records.
- St Paul University archives
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- University of Ottawa, Centre de recherche en civilisation Canadienne-française, fonds Arthur-Godbout
- various websites, including Wikipedia, Cigarettespedia.com



Northeast corner of 524 Clarence. This type of heavy embossed street sign, placed on the walls of buildings, was last used by the City in the 1940s