

**Subject:** Middlesex County's 225th Birthday and Tourism  
**Attachments:** Happy 225th Birthday Part 1.pdf; happy 225th Birthday Part 2.pdf

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**From:** Committee To Establish a Middlesex County Archives <[proposedmiddlesexcountyarchive@gmail.com](mailto:proposedmiddlesexcountyarchive@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** April 14, 2025 10:56 AM

**To:** Warden Brian Ropp <[bropp@middlesex.ca](mailto:bropp@middlesex.ca)>; Deputy Warden Aina DeViet <[adeviet@middlesex.ca](mailto:adeviet@middlesex.ca)>; Councillor Allan Mayhew <[amayhew@middlesex.ca](mailto:amayhew@middlesex.ca)>; Councillor Cathy Burghardt-Jesson <[cburghardtjesson@middlesex.ca](mailto:cburghardtjesson@middlesex.ca)>; Councillor Colin Grantham <[cgrantham@middlesex.ca](mailto:cgrantham@middlesex.ca)>; Councillor John Brennan <[jbrennan@middlesex.ca](mailto:jbrennan@middlesex.ca)>; Councillor Mike McGuire <[mmcguire@middlesex.ca](mailto:mmcguire@middlesex.ca)>; Councillor Michelle Smibert <[msmibert@middlesex.ca](mailto:msmibert@middlesex.ca)>; Councillor Sue Clarke <[sclarke@middlesex.ca](mailto:sclarke@middlesex.ca)>; Councillor Sharron McMillan <[smcmillan@middlesex.ca](mailto:smcmillan@middlesex.ca)>; Durk Vanderwerff <[dvanderwerff@middlesex.ca](mailto:dvanderwerff@middlesex.ca)>; Marci Ivanic <[mivanic@middlesex.ca](mailto:mivanic@middlesex.ca)>; Cara Finn <[cfinn@middlesex.ca](mailto:cfinn@middlesex.ca)>

**Subject:** Middlesex County's 225th Birthday and Tourism

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Dear Warden Ropp, Members of Middlesex County Council, Mr. Vanderwerff, Ms. Ivanic, Ms. Finn,

Congratulations to Mr. Vanderwerff on his appointment as Acting CAO. We do look forward to working with him.

-  
This year marks a significant milestone in the history of Middlesex County - it is 225 years since the County of Middlesex came into existence. In many counties, that is cause for celebrations throughout the year. We note that London has celebrations planned for its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Neighbouring County of Oxford is also celebrating their milestone 175 years. What has Middlesex County planned for its 225<sup>th</sup> birthday? It would be a shame to miss celebrating the County's inception. As demographics and boundaries change over the years, it is imperative that the County's heritage be celebrated whenever possible.

In the past few years, members from several heritage and cultural groups in Middlesex County have attended seminars provided by Middlesex Tourism. Heritage and culture are the main drivers of tourism. Our heritage groups have made this point many times. In fact, those in the tourism businesses in Middlesex County pointed to heritage and culture as many of the inquiries from their clients. Yet, Middlesex Tourism fails to acknowledge their importance and fails to promote them. This is concerning.

In this time of economic uncertainty, Canadians from across this great country, are choosing to see Canada. Middlesex County has an opportunity to enhance and promote tourism with its 225<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations. In many municipalities, tourism dollars are a major contributor to the economy. Once again, it seems the governance of Middlesex County fails to recognise the long, rich history of this County and its possible contributions to the County's economy.

It is time for Middlesex County to invest in its heritage and culture. Aging volunteers are burning out and cannot continue to save our history alone. The day-to-day responsibilities heaped on volunteer organizations to meet the need for preservation and presentation is, frankly, unfair. The few are saving the County's heritage for the many. Without them, there would be a great deal of information lost. Middlesex has an incredible heritage that should be celebrated and preserved with pride.

The Committee To Establish A Middlesex County Archives (CEMCA) encourages County Council to approve a heritage study. Such a study, completed by heritage professionals, is needed to determine the extent of the records, including archival and retained documents, kept by the municipalities and the County. In addition, small archives, historical societies, universities and neighbouring county archives need to be assessed to gauge the quantity of records better suited to a Middlesex County Archives facility.

Once the study is completed and recommendations are made, Council needs to act upon the report. What a boon a County Archives would be to tourism in Middlesex County! Such a study, being completed in 2025, would be a fantastic gift to the County to commemorate 225 years!

Please find attached an article on the History of Middlesex County from *The Middlesex Banner*.

We look forward to hearing from you in the near future about this vital aspect of Middlesex County's heritage and tourism. Should you wish a presentation on this topic, please do not hesitate to ask.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol Small".

Carol Small, Chair  
Committee To Establish a Middlesex County Archives

# THE ARCHIVE ALLEY

## Happy 225th Birthday, Middlesex County (Part I)

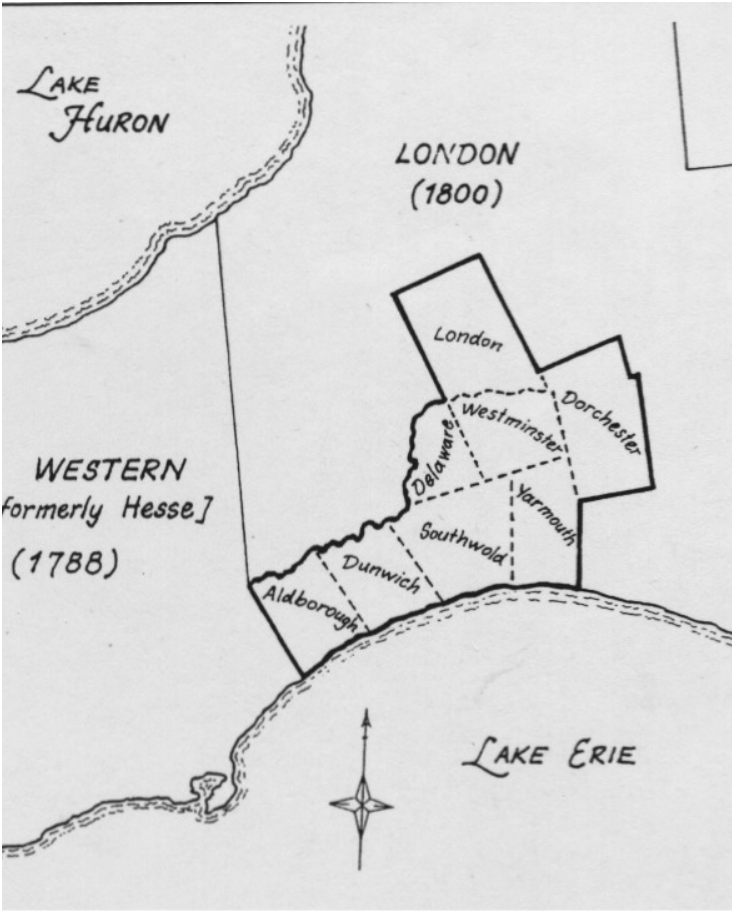
Written By Carol Small, Middlesex Centre Archives

Middlesex County has a long and rich history. This year, 2025, marks a special milestone. It is 225 years since the name of Middlesex County first appeared. It also is 175 years since Middlesex County was first designated for administrative purposes. As always, history is evolutionary. It is no different with our County history. This is a very brief outline of the County's very rich history. To understand it, let's begin at the very beginning.

Original inhabitants in the County were the Attawandaron, Anisinabeg, Haudenosaunee and Lunaapeewax. They had called this land home for centuries. Explorers and trappers first appeared in this area in the 1600s and 1700s. In 1747, French pioneers began settling along the Detroit River in Southern Ontario. With the Treaty of Paris in 1763, after the Seven Years War, most of New France in North America was awarded to Britain. The British called the area the Province of Quebec. From 1788, the Province of Quebec was divided into Districts. Middlesex County was situated in the Hesse District (Western District in 1792).

With the American Revolution in 1776, people loyal to the Britain moved north to settle in British territory. Britain granted loyalists 200 acres of land per household to compensate for their losses in America. In 1794, Simcoe granted Ebenezer Allen (1752-1813) 2000 acres of land near Delaware. Allen had fought with the Butler's Rangers (British) in the American Revolution and Colonel Butler recommended Allen to Simcoe. Allen, a colourful character, was required to establish a sawmill, gristmill, a church and a promise of 200 acres for every settler brought in. The church never happened. Allen's lands can be found along the Thames River and Belvoir Estate. More Loyalists followed Allen to the Delaware area.

In December 1791, the Constitutional Act split the Province of Quebec into two areas – Upper and Lower Canada. This area caught the attention of Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe even before he



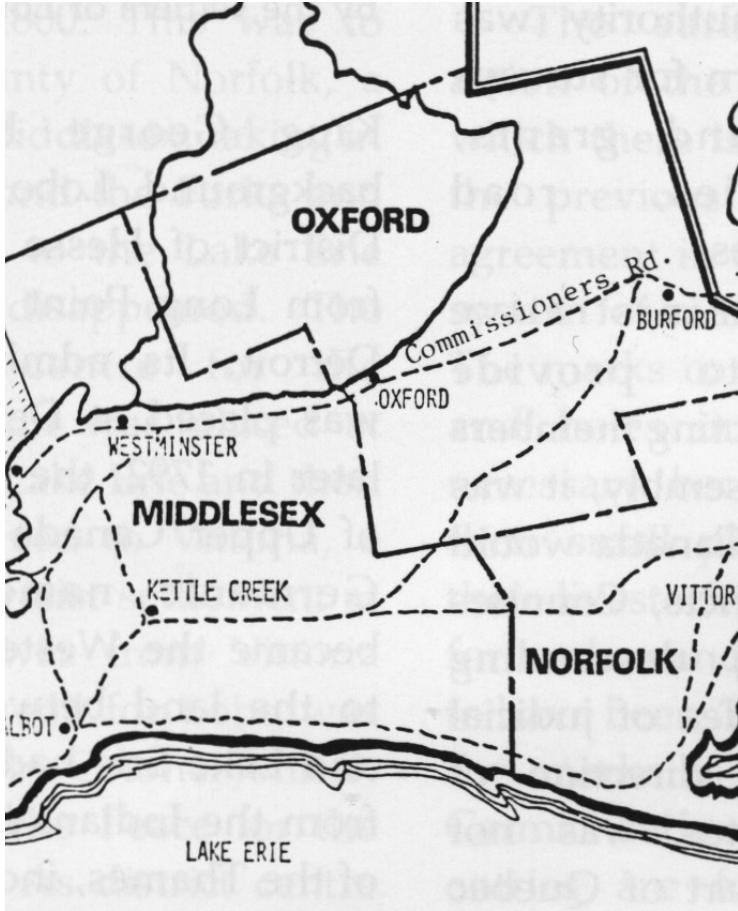
MIDDLESEX COUNTY 1800 - DELAWARE & WESTMISTER TOWNSHIPS HONOURING OUR ROOTS (PAGE 52).

left England and before the formation of Upper Canada. In early 1791, Simcoe wrote to Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society: "I mean to establish a Capital in the very heart of the country, upon the River La Tranche (Thames)". Simcoe travelled to the Fork-of-the-Thames and thought it was a good site for the government of Upper Canada. Lord Dorchester, Governor of the Canadas, did not support the idea and named York (Toronto) as capital. Simcoe, in his five years as Lieutenant-Governor, ordered the lands of the Thames Basin be surveyed for settlement, and roads be built –including Dundas Street or Governor's Road from Burlington to the Thames, Longwoods Road from Chatham to Delaware and Commissioners Road from Delaware to Dorchester.

Upper Canada created the first counties in 1792 for election and militia purposes. They were the basis for the surveying and creation of townships, and for land registration. In 1792, Simcoe originally named the area, Suffolk County. It

included from Norfolk County west to Essex County, south to Lake Erie and bounded by the unsettled territory in the North. After his visit to the area in 1793, Simcoe concluded the area was better suited to the name Middlesex in the London District.

In 1798, the Upper Canada government created districts for local governance. The London District included Middlesex, Oxford, Norfolk, Elgin, Huron, Perth, and Bruce counties. The district town was Charlotteville (Turkey Point) but moved to Tisdale's Mills (Vittoria) in 1815. In 1826, the district town was moved to London, with the removal of Rainham and Walpole Townships to Haldimand County. In 1837, Oxford and Norfolk Counties left London District. In 1840, Woolwich and Nichol Townships left to join Waterloo and Wellington Counties. Huron County withdrew in 1841. In 1845, the district was restricted within Middlesex County to include the townships of London, Westminster, Dorchester, Delaware, and townships from what is now Elgin County, includ-



LONDON DISTRICT 1825 - HERITAGE OF LOBO 1820-1920 (PAGE 33).

ing Yarmouth, Southwold, Dunwich, and Aldborough. By 1850, only Middlesex and Elgin Counties remained as London District.

In January 1850, London District was abolished and replaced with the United Counties of Middlesex and Elgin, with Middlesex designated for municipal purposes. Yarmouth, Southwold, Dunwich, and Aldborough separated in 1853.

By the early 1800s, settlers began arriving into all parts of Middlesex County. Most were from the British Isles. Some were simply looking for a better life. Some came under settlement schemes such as with Colonel Talbot. Others were escaping persecution such as the Highland Clearances in Scotland and abominable conditions in Ireland. The names of townships, towns, villages and hamlets reflect the nationality of the settlers, as they tended to name their community for the ones they left in the "old country".

**Read the second part of this interesting article in our next March first edition.**

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# THE ARCHIVE ALLEY

## Happy 225th Birthday, Middlesex County (Part II)

Written By Carol Small, Middlesex Centre Archives

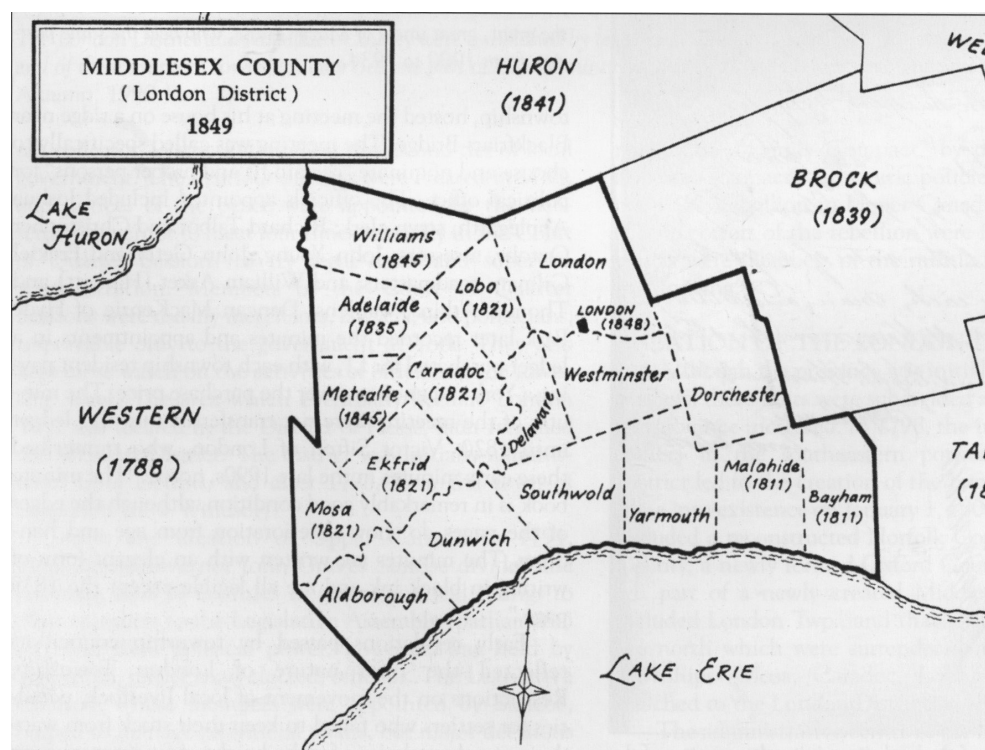
Depending on sources, some give the date of formation of Middlesex County as 1798 when the London District was created. The Archives of Ontario sites Middlesex County as being formed in 1800. (<https://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/maps/ontario-county-table.aspx>). For the purposes of this history, the Archives of Ontario date is used. Middlesex County included the townships London, Westminster, Dorchester, Yarmouth, Southwold, Dunwich, Aldborough and Delaware. Middlesex County evolved to include: the addition of the townships of Moza, Ekfrid, Caradoc and Lobo in 1821. Adelaide Township came from the Huron Tract in 1835, and Williams Township (divided into East and West Williams 1859) was withdrawn from Huron County and annexed to Middlesex in 1845. In 1837, Bayham and Malahide Townships were transferred to Middlesex from Norfolk County. Metcalfe Township was formed from the north part of Ekfrid and the south part of Adelaide in 1845. West Nissouri was divided from Oxford County in 1851 to become part of Middlesex County. At the same time, North Dorchester was divided from Elgin County. Biddulph and McGillivray Townships from the Huron Tract became part of Middlesex County in 1862. Three Indigenous communities reside also within the boundaries of Middlesex County, including the Onieda Settlement, the Chippewa of the Thames and Muncey-Delaware Nation.

Middlesex County continued to change. London, once a part of Middlesex County, became a city in 1855 and left the County. The City of London's population grew. As the population grew, London annexed its neighbours' territories many times over the years: 1885 London East; 1890 Wortley Village; 1897 London West; 1912 Pottersburg, Knollwood, Ealing, and Cheslea Green; 1961 Byron, Broughdale and Masonville; and 1993 Westminster Township and north to the Sixth Concession in London Township. Thus, the size of Middlesex County diminished over the years.

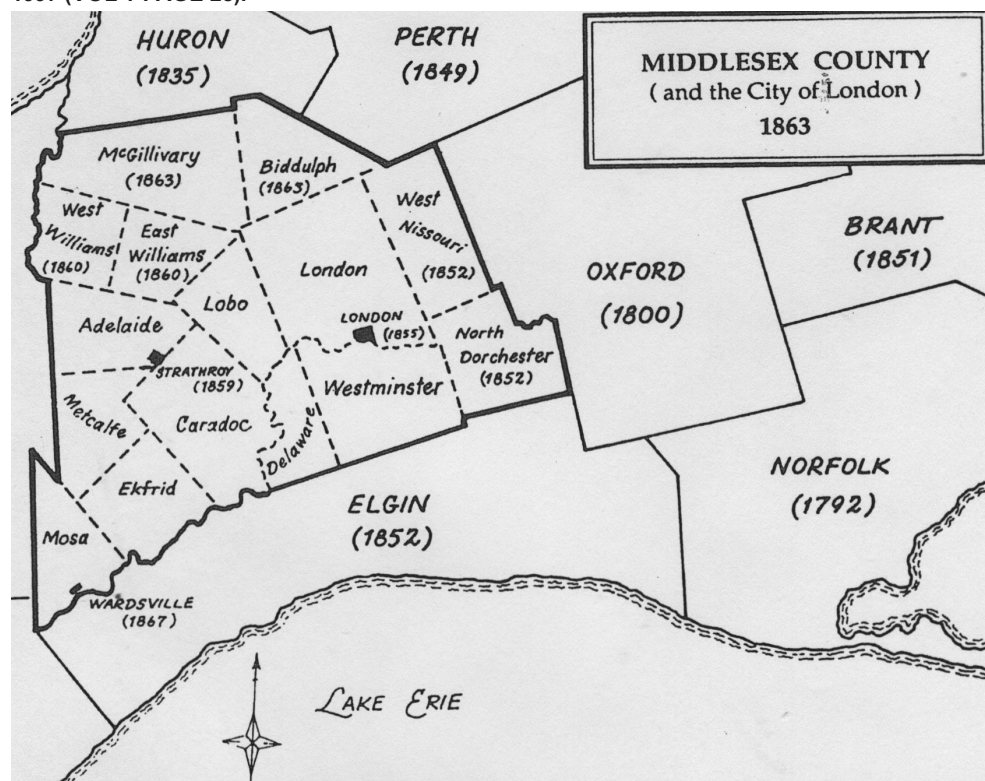
Yet another change came to Middlesex County as the Provincial Government mandated a smaller municipal government.

- In 1998, London, Lobo and Delaware Townships combined to form the Municipality of Middlesex Centre.

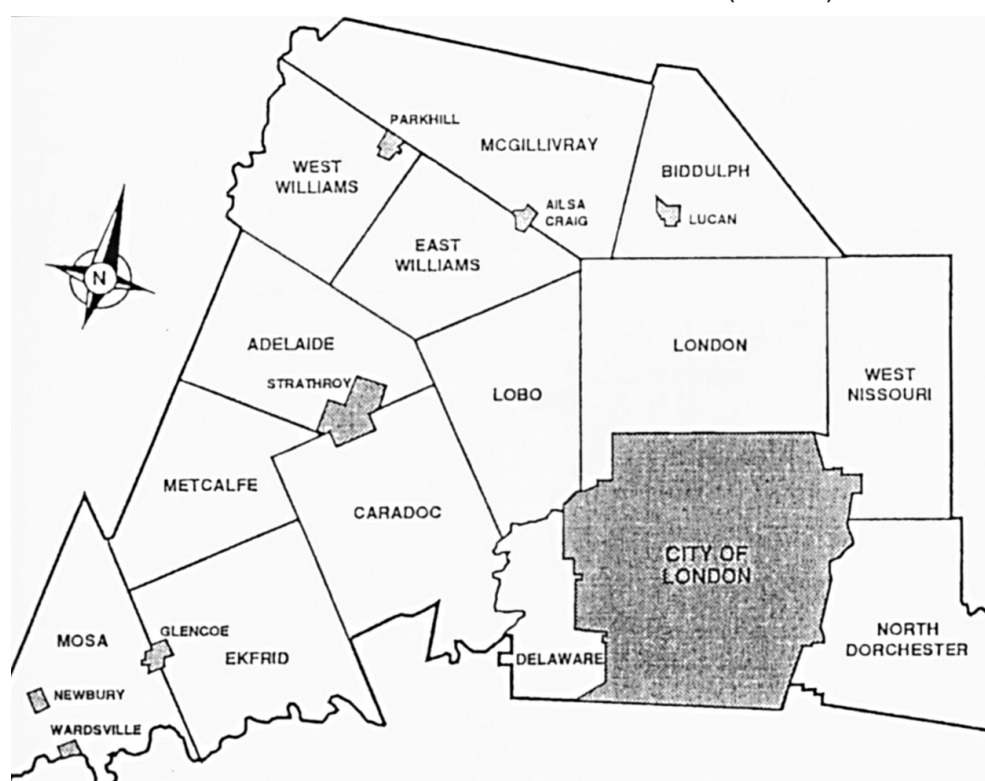
- 1999, the Biddulph Township and Village of Lucan combined to form the Municipality of Lucan-



MIDDLESEX COUNTY 1849 IN LONDON DISTRICT - LONDON TOWNSHIP - RICH HERITAGE 1796-1997 (VOL 1-PAGE 28).



MIDDLESEX COUNTY 1863 - EAST WILLIAMS PAST AND PRESENT (PAGE 12).



MIDDLESEX COUNTY 1990S - A RICH HERITAGE 1796-1997 (VOL 1-PAGE XI).

Biddulph.

- 2001, the Township of Caradoc and the Town of Strathroy combined to form the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc.

- 2001, the Townships of Ekfrid and Mosa, and the villages of Glencoe and Wardsville, combined to form the Municipality of Southwest Middlesex.

- 2001, the Townships of Adelaide and Metcalfe combined to form the Municipality of Adelaide-Metcalfe.

- 2001, the Townships of North Dorchester and West Nissouri combined to form the Municipality of Thames Centre.

- The Village of Newbury retained its own separate governance.

- The three Indigenous communities of Oneida Settlement, Chippewa of the Thames and Munciey-Delaware Nation continue to be part of Middlesex County.

These are the current Municipalities of Middlesex County.

Without a doubt, the history of Middlesex County is complex and rich with stories of sacrifice, survival and success. For generations, people have chosen the county as a place to raise families, operate their business and call home. The sense of pride to choose this area is evident with its continued growth. The heritage and legacy that has been left by those first settlers to the most recent resident is powerful and should be celebrated.

Middlesex County continues to be one of the largest and oldest counties in the province. Unfortunately, heritage preservation is not a priority as in other regions across the province. A centralized heritage facility is greatly needed to further preserve the story of Middlesex and its people for the future. Currently, this job falls on the backs of volunteers across the county, operating small, shoe-string funded historical groups and facilities to do the best they can. As these same volunteers who have given countless hours continue to age, the questions arise about the future of the historical items that have so far been kept: Where will it go? Will it survive? Who will care for it? Will anyone care?

There are no known plans from the County of Middlesex to celebrate the 225th birthday of Middlesex County. Perhaps all communities could celebrate that milestone as they celebrate Canada and other community events throughout 2025.

**Happy 225th Birthday  
Middlesex County!**