

The Great War and Identity

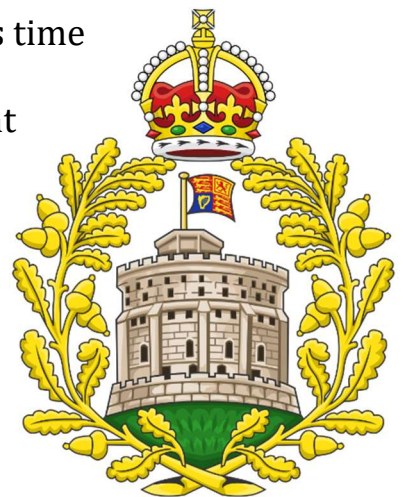
The Royal Family and Kitchener, ON



Britain (and Canada)'s King George V, Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II and Russia's Tsar Nicholas II. All were Queen Victoria's grandchildren.

- When Britain declared war on the German empire in 1914 Canada, as an integral part of the Empire, was at war – no questions asked.
- Anti-German sentiment swept across the British Empire at this time with many different effects, including Canadian citizens with German or Austro-Hungarian heritage being sent to internment camps.¹
- The British Royal Family, known as the House of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (a German name), is originally from Germany.

His Majesty King George V changed the family name to the ultra-British “Windsor” on July 17th, 1917. The Royal Family renounced all German titles, and abandoned their German relatives.



Badge of the House of Windsor

¹ According to the Canadian Encyclopedia: According to official records, 8,579 men were held at 24 internment camps and receiving stations across Canada. This included 5,954 men of Austro-Hungarian origin, the majority of whom were Ukrainian. There were also 2,009 Germans, 205 Turks, and 99 Bulgarians. Roy, Patricia E. "Internment in Canada." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Historica Canada. Article published August 27, 2013; Last Edited June 11, 2020.

- From 24 to 28 June 1916, the city of Berlin (Ontario) held a referendum that saw only 18% of registered voters participate. Of the 892 who voted, 346 selected to rename the community Kitchener, after Lord Horatio Kitchener (of recruiting posters fame), the British Secretary of State for War who had drown in June after his ship struck a mine.

Retaining the name Berlin was not one of the options on the ballot.

Choice	Votes	%
Kitchener	346	38.79
Brock	335	37.56
Adanac	23	2.58
Benton	15	1.68
Corona	7	0.78
Keowana	3	0.34
Invalid/blank votes	163	18.27
Total	892	100
Registered voters/turnout	4,897	18.22



Berlin, June, 1916 Voting for a new name for the City of Berlin	BROCK
	KITCHENER
	CORONA
	ADANAC
	KEOWANA
	BENTON

The original shortlist of names was Huronto, Bercana, Dunard, Hydro City, Renoma and Agnoleo.

LIST OF SUGGESTIONS OF NAMES		
AS RECOMMENDED		
By Special Committee of the City Council.		
ONTARIO CITY EDWARDSTOWN VERBENA BROCK CABOT ANZAC SUPERIOR HAVERLIN TECK HYDRO BENEBY FONTIAC KING GEORGE HOMELAND CANADIA KHAKI ONTARIO TAMAKWA HURON EMPIRE CITY PRINCE EDWARD KEESHENAH EMPIRE DUNARD BRIEF IMPERIAL CITY NUNDAWA HYDRO CITY OUNETA ATKINS BRENTANIA KESHENAH VINITA CADAC READING PRINCE GEORGE CANATA RENOMA	AMITY EMPORIA UNITED CITY INDUSTRIA PROGRESS SAXON ALLIANCE NAIDANAC BALADAN FACTORIA KANNATA EDISON ARCOT COSMOS VERDALE VERO KEOWANA CORONA BENAVY WOOLWICH LESTER KENNICK DAWN EMELEM MUTUAL ALTYNE AGNOLEO BURBANK ONTONIA NEWBORN UNISON PREMIER BODMIN ONTACAN PATRIA PATORIA PARAGON WAKASHA	MAJESTY ENGADA HENLEY BELDA GEORGIA BALAMORE CAMEO URANUS WINDIGO IMPERATOR MACASSA AIDAN ARENA PANADA ORION RAWACA BERCANA ARTEAGA COLONIA MATABANICK CANARIO ASTRACA MINEOLA MECHANO SCOTTEBY HURONTO HYDROPOLIS HONORA TWIN-CITY CANDOR BENTON CONFIDENCE NACADA INDUSTRY ALCOTA CHICOFEE BROCTON

- Even with the name change, Kitchener's German identity remains quite strong. Can you think of some examples? Click [here](#) for one!

- In 1897, a bust of Kaiser Wilhelm I was placed in Berlin/Kitchener's Victoria Park. However, it was thrown into the park's lake once war was declared in 1914. It was moved to the Concordia Club, but was stolen and paraded through the streets of the city before disappearing while in the possession of a drunken mob.



The bust of the Kaiser after it was pulled out of Victoria Park Lake on August 23, 1914.

How can we apply the Historical Thinking Concept *Cause and Consequence* to these events?

Cause and Consequence *Why do events happen, and what are their impacts?*

Guidepost 1 Change is driven by **multiple causes**, and results in **multiple consequences**. These create a complex web of interrelated short-term and long-term causes and consequences.

Guidepost 2 The **causes** that lead to a particular historical event **vary in their influence**, with some being more important than others.

Guidepost 3 Events result from the interplay of two types of factors: (1) **historical actors**, who are people (individuals or groups) who take actions that cause historical events, and (2) the social, political, economic, and cultural **conditions** within which the actors operate.

Guidepost 4 Historical actors cannot always predict the effect of conditions, opposing actions, and unforeseen reactions. These have the effect of generating **unintended consequences**.

Guidepost 5 The events of history were **not inevitable**, any more than those of the future are. Alter a single action or condition, and an event might have turned out differently.