

# Limelight

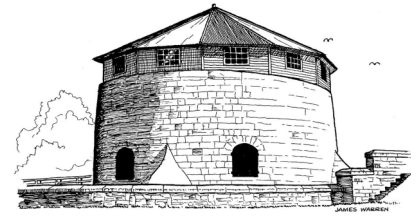
## Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

Kingston Ontario Canada

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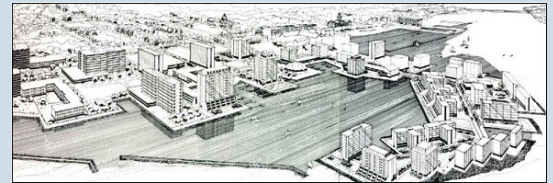
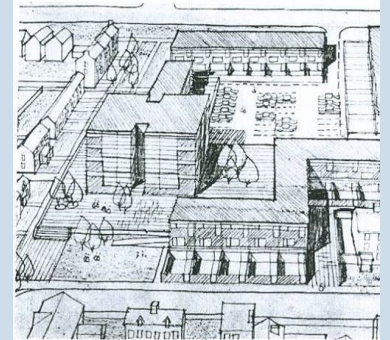
### KHS MEETING Wednesday, 16 October 2019

Seniors Centre 56 Francis Street Gathering at 7 for 7:30pm

Speaker: **David Gordon**

### Two Visions to Address the Sydenham Ward "Slum": Urban Renewal in Kingston, 1958-70

Sydenham Ward was clearly in decline in the post-war period, and many of its large older homes had been converted into student boarding houses. Housing conditions were poor, and the City of Kingston targeted the area for widespread demolition of its older buildings and their replacement by apartment blocks. This presentation compares two reports - the 1958-60 *Planning Study of Kingston* and the 1970 *Sydenham Ward Urban Renewal Scheme*. These plans show different (and disturbing) visions of a future that almost came to be.



**David Gordon** teaches planning history, community design and urban development at Queen's. He has also taught at the University of Toronto, McGill, Ryerson, Western Australia, Harvard, and University of Pennsylvania, where he was a Fulbright Scholar. Before becoming a professor, David was a professional planner for over 15 years, as director of an urban design firm and project manager for a Toronto waterfront agency. He has lived in Sydenham Ward for the past quarter century and is an advocate for its heritage conservation.

### ***The Kingston Branch of Ontario Ancestors*** meets **Saturday, 19 October 2019** at the Seniors Centre.

Coffee is on at 9am. Anne Levac will be discussing the Tweedsmuir History Books, what they are, and what we can learn from them. For more info: <https://fwio.on.ca/tweedsmuir-history-books>

A 9:30 demonstration of a few image scanners and a short business meeting will precede Anne Levac's talk.

### **Pittsburgh Historical Society**

Meeting: **Tuesday, 29 October 2019**, Fire Hall 3, Gore Rd. at Hwy 15, 7:30 p.m.

Speaker: **John Grenville**

### ***"Rooney Castle and the War of 1812 Defence of the Western Approaches to Kingston"***

During the War of 1812, the fear of a land attack on Kingston from its western approaches prompted the construction of a series of blockhouses and connecting palisades. John Grenville, in this illustrated presentation, will speak about this defence system including Rooney Castle, the blockhouse that stood at the end of Sydenham Street.



## THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Established 1893*

*LIMELIGHT is published nine times a year, September to May.*

*Please forward submissions to the Editor [betty.andrews@gmail.com](mailto:betty.andrews@gmail.com)*

*Reprinting of articles from the Limelight must be accompanied by an acknowledgment of the Society, the issue and date. Photo credits and by-lines must be retained.*

*The KHS gratefully acknowledges the support of its sponsors in producing Limelight .*

### 2019-2020 KHS Executive Council

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## President's Message

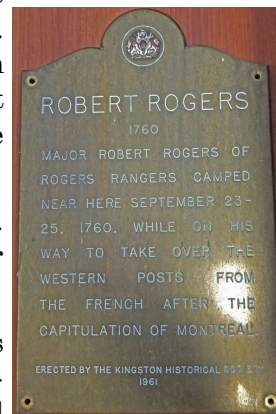
*Warren Everett*



Your council met on September 11<sup>th</sup> to start off the year for the Society. At that meeting, Graeme Watson announced he needed a well-earned rest after years of intense work at the Murney Tower Museum. During his years as Director, he made significant improvements, not only to the fabric of the museum but also to the financial health of the museum. There was a time not so long ago when the museum was in danger of closing. Graeme's leadership and drive have put that likelihood well behind us. On behalf of the Society, I wish him well in future endeavours.

Tabitha Renaud has agreed to accept the position of Director for the coming year. I would be remiss if I did not mention that Tabitha has successfully defended her thesis and will soon be granted a doctorate.

An item from the past: in 1961 the Society erected a bronze plaque to Roger's Rangers at Fort Frontenac. During the reconstruction of the Fort walls, beginning this summer, the plaque was removed by Parks Canada. It will be cleaned and reinstalled once the wall repairs are completed. It is in remarkably good condition.



**The Kingston Historical Society Award** is given to individuals, groups and institutions in recognition of their contributions to the preservation, understanding and interpretation of local Kingston history.

Kingston Historical Society members are asked to nominate those they believe meet the award criteria. Please send nominations by letter or email, and include the nominee's contact information and the reasons for your nomination.

Nominations by mail can be sent to Chairperson, KHS Awards Committee, Box 54, Kingston, Ontario K7L 4V8.

If submitting by e mail send your nomination to Joe Brites at [jnbrites@aol.com](mailto:jnbrites@aol.com)

The deadline for nominations is **October 31, 2019**. The awards will be presented on December 4, 2019, at the KHS Christmas event which will take place at the Renaissance Event Venue.

Cash bar and hors d'oeuvres beginning at 6 pm. Awards presentation at 7 p.m.



John Morgan's September 18th Historical Society presentation on his great-great-grandfather, the Honourable Alexander Mackenzie, brought home the fact that Sir John A. Macdonald is not the only politician of his era to have a lasting effect on Kingston.

From a humble start as a new immigrant of limited education and a stonemason by trade, Alexander Mackenzie rose to prime minister, succeeding Sir John A. after the Pacific scandal. On the way he served as foreman on the construction of the Murney, Cathcart and Shoal Towers, and he was involved in the construction of Fort Henry. Kingston can also thank this remarkable man for the founding of the Royal Military College of Canada here.

Thanks to John Morgan for an enjoyable and informative evening on Alexander Mackenzie and the complex issues facing him and his fellow politicians during the early years of confederation.



## SAVE THE DATE – Saturday, February 29, 2020

### Canadian Heritage Dinner

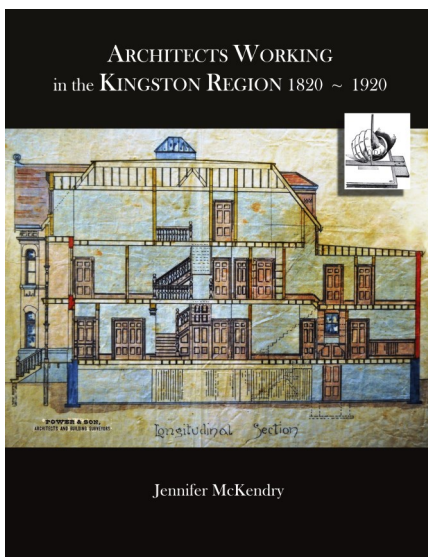
This is the second notice for the second annual Canadian Heritage Dinner, sponsored by the Kingston Historical Society. We have an exciting speaker scheduled for the upcoming dinner. She is Dr. Laura Brandon, former curator of the war art collection at the Canadian War Museum.

Our event will be held at the Senior Staff Mess at the Royal Military College.

Further details will follow.

## New Publication

### ARCHITECTS WORKING IN THE KINGSTON REGION 1820 – 1920 by Jennifer McKendry



147 pp., pb, well illustrated in black & white with colour cover, 8.5 x 11 inches, ISBN 978-0-9866343-5-2, \$22.

About 100 architects, who worked in the Kingston, Ontario, region from the early 19th to the early 20th centuries, are described with brief biographies and selected projects. Also included are a list of selected builders, contractors and craftsmen; architectural pattern books available in Kingston; and a bibliography of Kingston architecture.





## FORGOTTEN ELGINBURG/KINGSTON HYMN WRITER REDISCOVERED

**By: George Henderson and Jon McLurg**

Late in 2014, a researcher from Germany contacted the clerk of session of Trinity United Church at Elginburg with a question about the background of a hymn to be included in a hymnal he was compiling. He had learned from an early printing of The Revivalist that James Lawson of Elginburg, Canada West, authored the hymn of interest.

Inspired by his question we did some research and found some interesting facts about Lawson.

He wrote his most famous hymn I Will Follow Thee at 13 years of age. This piece has since been published in 62 hymnals around the world. The simple hymn dwells on the topics of commitment, pilgrimage and perseverance. The first verse and chorus read as follows:

*I will follow thee, my saviour  
Whereso'er my lot may be  
Where thou goest I will follow  
Yes, my Lord, I'll follow thee  
I will follow thee my saviour  
Thou didst shed thy blood for me  
And though all men should forsake thee  
By thy grace I'll follow thee*

Lawson was born in Elston, Nottinghamshire, England, on March 17, 1847, to Joseph and Jane (Marriott) Lawson. James had eight brothers and one sister. He immigrated to Canada with his family when he was four years old. They settled near Kingston where Lawson attended school.

The Inverary Women's Institute Tweedsmuir History records that Reverend James Lawson (1847-1926) worked as a schoolteacher at Cataraqui before marrying Charlotte Campbell, the daughter of farmer James Campbell, in 1871. He then moved to Battersea where he addressed a temperance meeting that November. He wrote and lectured on a wide range of religious and social matters.

Charlotte and James had five children, three boys and two girls.

Following Charlotte's death in 1909, James married the widow of George Leacock of Smiths Falls.

Prior to his preaching career, Lawson taught in Newburgh and at Kingston Collegiate Institute (now K.C.V.I.). Lawson became a minister in 1879 and served as minister for a year in Battersea from 1881-1882.

As late as 1920 he lived and preached in Verona. He was remembered for his very long and faithful service to many congregations throughout Eastern Ontario.

Rev. Lawson died at Ottawa on May 1, 1926. He is buried in Beechwood Cemetery.

Lawson was a creative person who wrote many articles and spoke at many events. His musicianship earned him the position of musical director at a local annual Methodist conference. He was a strong supporter of the temperance movement and spoke frequently on this topic. One of his early works was included in a collection of temperance hymns entitled Temperance Jewels.

The Lawson name is an important one in the history of Trinity United Church. George Lawson (1838-1921), brother of James, was one of the first trustees of the church and thus can be considered one of the founders. He signed the deed for the property where Trinity United Church now stands. Reverend Elwood Lawson, a nephew, was appointed minister in 1936 and remained in that position until 1946. He was instrumental in keeping the church going through The Great Depression.

In addition to *I Will Follow Thee*, Lawson wrote many other hymns and set tunes to the poetry of other writers. We have located six Lawson hymns.

On May 3, 2015, Trinity United Church celebrated its 152nd anniversary. As part of this celebration, Lawson's most popular hymn was sung as a solo.

Congregants noted how meaningful it was to hear the old hymn which had circled the world and then returned to the Kingston area.

### **STILL STANDING: Looking at Regional Architecture with Jennifer McKendry**

**The Marine Museum** buildings and dry dock at 55 Ontario Street have seen their share of strife in recent years but, in some ways, that pales in comparison to the birthing pains of the dry dock in the 1890 era. "If this contract is a history of fraud, and of these changes [reflecting an increase in cost], made from the hour when the tender was first delivered to the department [of Public Works, Canada] down to now, discloses to my mind, without any doubt, reckless extravagance, waste, deception, jobbery, fraud and forgery," was just one example of the bitter words debated in the Parliament of Canada. Were bribes and false tenders involved? What role did Sir Hector Langevin of Public Works play in this? Even death found a place during construction in 1890, when a workman named Sims was killed by a defective derrick in use to lift stone. Caught up in this whirlwind were experienced dry dock builders Michael and Nicholas K. Connolly from Quebec.

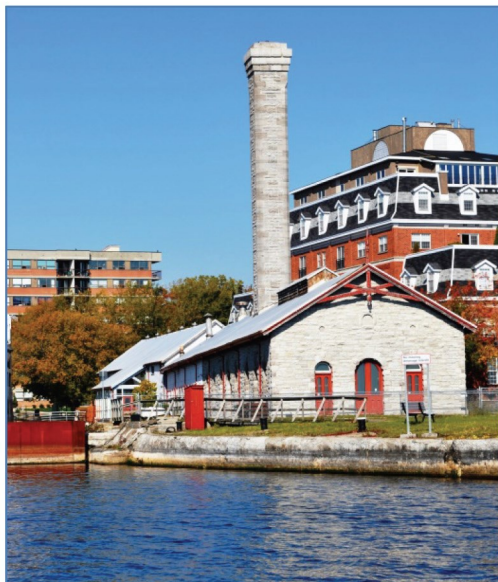
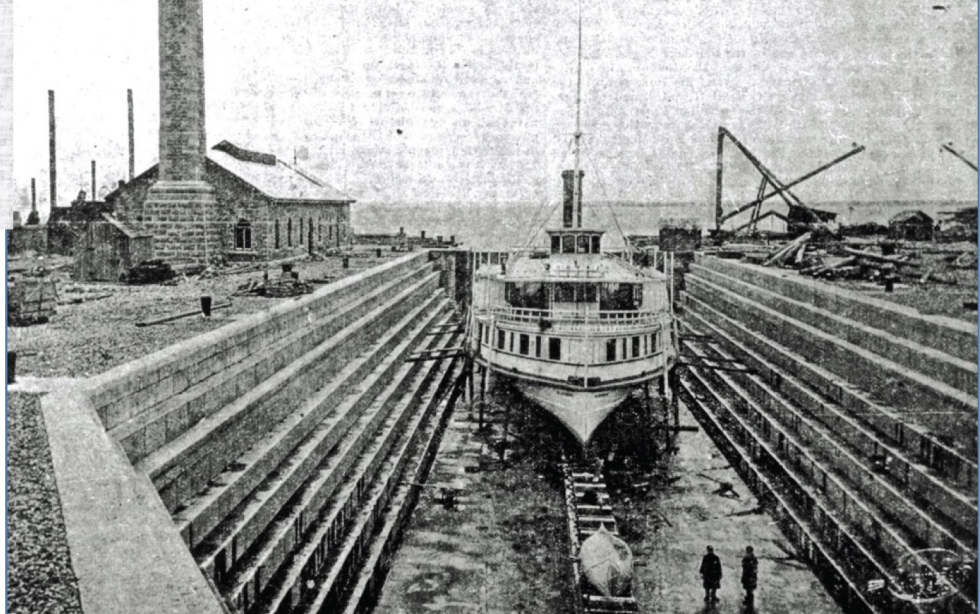
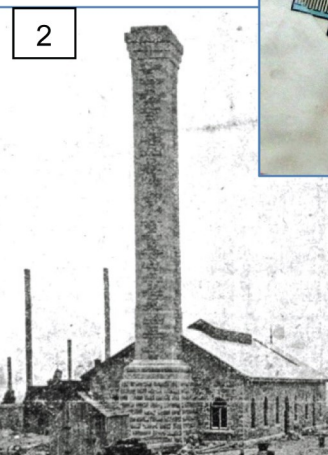
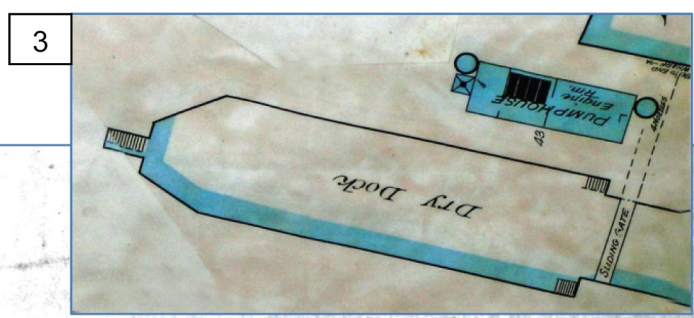
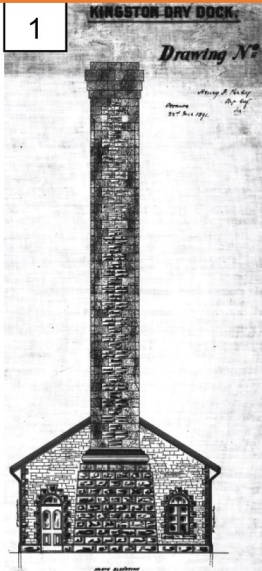
But today we are discussing architecture, in particular the Engine House of 1889-1892, which held the machinery to operate the caisson gates allowing water to flow in or out of the dry dock in order to repair ships. The Public Works engineer from Ottawa was Henry F. Perley, 1831-1897, but the 1891 drawings for the aesthetically pleasing Engine House suggest the hand of an architect, perhaps by or supervised by Thomas Fuller, Chief Architect for Canada from 1881 to 1896. The builder, contracted at \$12,000, was Patrick Navin from Amherstburg. Of the buildings lined up along one side of the dry dock, the stone Engine House with its 90-foot high chimney survives with the most architectural integrity. It originally stood as an unattached building and hence its end walls were important – particularly the one fronting the lakeshore, as it was highly visible when approaching by boat. The turned roof finial, reaching down to embrace the X cross pieces between the roof angles, adds visual interest to the end gable wall with its three blind portholes worked into the stone. They hover over three round-arch doors, which have glazed panels. The round-arch theme continues for the windows and doors articulating the long walls, which were made from coarsely worked stone, popularized by the Romanesque Revival style.

Certainly, it is the giant chimney that makes the building literally a landmark. Originally, it was fully exposed on the exterior of the gable wall facing Ontario Street. It is a formal rendering of a functional element. Chamfered corners feature smoothly worked quoins contrasting with the rough surface of the coursed stone in the middle of each face. The top is composed of three ledges of smooth stonework logically increasing in width, as they move up from the shaft to the sky, to compensate seeing it in perspective. The wide base (now hidden by the machine building of 1915) visually and substantially supports the shaft.

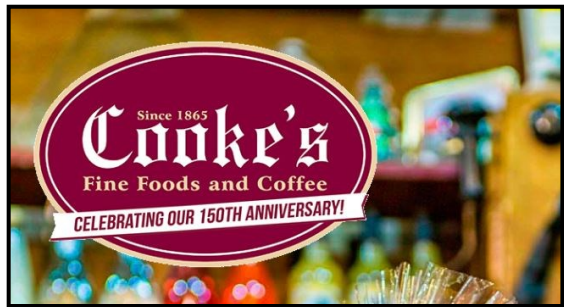
It is important to preserve industrial architecture – particularly if related to the history of the Great Lakes, given Kingston's position at the junction of the Rideau Canal, St Lawrence River and Lake Ontario.

1. 1891 drawing of the Engine House chimney (LAC, courtesy Marine Museum of the Great Lakes) and today (J. McKendry)
2. Engine House and dry dock in 1892 (QUA)
3. 1892-1904 fire insurance plan (coll. J. McKendry)
4. Engine House seen from the water in 2011 (J. McKendry)
5. Engine House stonework and openings in 2019 (J. McKendry)



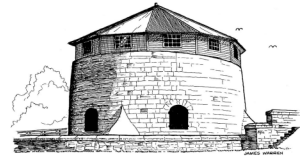


**HOMESTEAD**



## Murney Tower

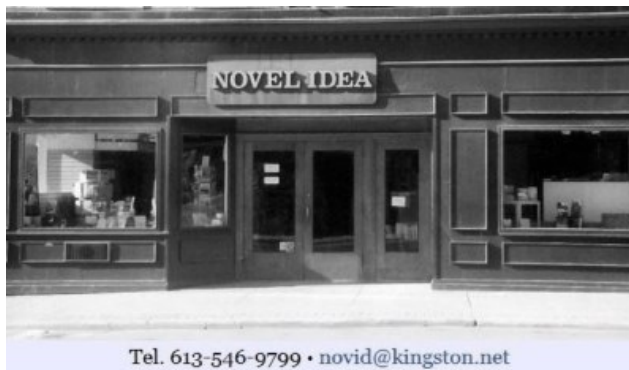
Operated by the Kingston Historical Society



This year, the Chief Interpreter, Madeline Legg, had the opportunity to attend, with Curator Danielle Marshall, a workshop on Autism in Museums. This was a wonderful opportunity to learn of new ways to make the museum more accessible and welcoming to all visitors. Through this workshop, additional research, and an assessment of what is feasible at the museum, we have begun to create resources to make visiting the Murney Tower more accessible. The major resource that we have introduced is the Social Story, now available on the website under the link, 'What to Expect'. This resource gives a tool to the support people of those with Autism or Anxiety to help prepare them to visit the tower. With feedback from members of the Autism community, the link will be updated to maximize its usefulness. A document has been prepared to answer the most frequently-asked questions, and questions about accessibility at the tower to allow for planning visits more easily.

These resources have the advantage of being inexpensive and easy to accomplish while helping to make visitors feel more welcome. Approximately 1-2% of the population is believed to be on the Autism Disorder Spectrum.

In the future, we hope to be able to get sound-canceling headphones for those who find noise too stimulating; we are continuing to research and plan for a potential quiet space room. Additionally, there will be documents and information provided for Interpreters so they can understand how best to accommodate those with disabilities.



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On September 17, the City of Kingston held its Sir John A 360° panel discussion at the Grand Theatre with a reported 500 attendees representing a wide demographic. The panel discussion is part of a broader initiative by the City of Kingston which aims to tell more inclusive/diverse histories of Kingston.

This event provided for a public conversation on Macdonald's historic connections to Kingston, which included his role as a political figure and the legacy of his actions as viewed through the lens of reconciliation.

A common thread weaving through the ideas of panelists Charlotte Gray, Lee Maracle and Christopher Moore is that the statues of Macdonald should not be removed, but that the accompanying plaques need to be changed to address the historical treatment of Canada's First Nations. Gray said, "We need to balance his more egregious actions against his accomplishments. Canada would not exist without Macdonald." Maracle made it clear she does not like Sir John A. but later added that, "Sir John A. is not just one thing."

There was no appetite for trying to erase Macdonald from history, in no small part because of his central role in the founding of the nation. Moore described Macdonald as a man with a "...mixed legacy... The Indian Act was a moral catastrophe. But he was the same leader who gave us a constitution.... We need to confront our history and decide how we want to interpret it."

Reminding the audience that all people are products of their time, Gray said we need to keep in mind how future generations will think about us. How will they view how we have ignored the environment, or our need-less cruelty with factory-farmed animals.


The unanimity of the evening extended to the need to better memorialize the history of the First Nations in the public square. To this end there was a call for more narrowly-focused monuments that recognize specific First Nations individuals, not just broad groups. Maracle stressed that any work being contemplated around First Nations history must include the participation of its people. Throughout the evening, she repeated the phrase, "Nothing about us without us."

Gray pointed out that Canada is not unique in its re-examination of history. Referencing Oxford University's Oriel College and the call to remove a statue of Cecil Rhodes, and the removal of a Gandhi statue from the University of Ghana, these types of discussions are happening across the globe.


The evening was moderated by Bob Watts, an adjunct professor in the Queen's University School of Policy Studies and a former CEO of the Assembly of First Nations. Lee Maracle is one of the most prolific aboriginal authors in Canada and a recognized authority on issues pertaining to aboriginal people and aboriginal literature. She is an award-winning poet, novelist, performance storyteller, scriptwriter, actor and keeper/mythmaker of the Stó:lō people.

Charlotte Gray is one of Canada's best-known writers, and author of ten acclaimed books of literary non-fiction. She worked as a political commentator, book reviewer and magazine columnist before she turned to biography and popular history.





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