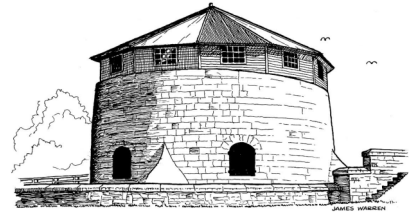


Limelight

Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

Kingston Ontario Canada



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April 2020

KHS MEETING 15 April 2020

Kingston Frontenac Public Library, Central Branch, 130 Johnson Street Room # 1

Meeting at 6:30 for 7

Speakers: Heather Home & Janice McAlpine:

“Community Archiving:

the Kingston LGBTQ Archives as Collaborative Model.”

Community archiving is a documentation strategy aimed at working with a community to create archives, the objective being to have stories of the past told by those intimately involved in the activities, and resulting outcomes, of that lived experience. It is not about establishing a history; it is about revealing a history. The presenters will look at this type of community work in the creation of the Kingston LGBTQ collection at the Queen's University Archives.

Heather Home is an archivist at Queen's University specializing in cultural and social records; Janice McAlpine is a Kingston community member.

THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established 1893

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Please forward submissions to the Editor 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.

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

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President's Message

by Vincent Durant

What a difference a month makes; to paraphrase Robbie Burns, the best laid plans of mice and men do indeed often go awry! Because we had to cancel the March meeting at the Library, the talk on *Harriet Dobbs Cartwright* will be rescheduled. Dr. Duncan McDowall, the chair of our programming committee has a short piece elsewhere in Limelight related to this. We are still hoping that the April and May meetings will take place, and of course the June 6th ceremony honouring Sir John A. Macdonald.

At the March meeting of KHS Council the following appointments were made: Betty Andrews - editor of Limelight; Peter Gower - editor of Historic Kingston and Webmaster; Tabitha Renaud – director of Murney Tower Museum. As well, several members and volunteers were appointed to the Museum Committee: Chair – Tabitha Renaud; Treasurer – Peter Ginn; and Don Richardson, Tanya Scott and Liz Watkins as members at large. Congratulations to all the appointees, and thank you all for your willingness to serve in these vital roles with the Society.

Council also discussed the next awards ceremony, tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, December 2nd at the Renaissance Event Centre. Hopefully, Covid19 will be but a fading memory by then. Also discussed was KHS membership, which totalled 202 in 2019 but stands at only 159 so far this year. Membership chair Paul Van Nest reported that there are a number of members yet to renew – if you're in this category, please take this as a hint!

As we struggle through the pandemic, please stay in touch with the Historical Society online (links below). A new feature on the KHS website is a reading list, roughly divided between general Kingston area history and literature more specific to Sir John A Macdonald. The list can be reached by clicking on the *Meetings & Events* icon on the KHS website. Feel free to share other works for the list. As well, you may wish to set up a “virtual reading club” on your favourite historical topic. It's a great way to stay in touch with friends during these difficult times.

(The link to the list is in the green sentences near the top of the Meetings and Events page.)

Web addresses:

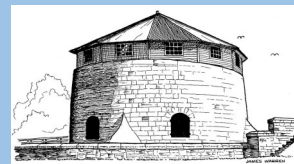
KHS website: <https://www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca/>

KHS Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KHSOntario/>



**Please renew your
KHS membership
now!**

Murney Tower
Operated by
the Kingston Historical Society



In the summer of 2019, Skye, one of the Tower's interpreters, had the opportunity to take on a project collecting and analyzing the Tower's demographic information. Throughout the season interpreters kept track of the number, age, and sex of visitors, and asked them to volunteer information on where they were visiting from. Interpreters also tracked the approximate amount of time each visitor spent in the museum, whether they received a guided tour, and if they preferred to interact in English or French.

Collecting this information has proved useful for the Tower in many ways. Collecting information on the age and sex and origin of visitors allows interpreters to better tailor social media posts: either to target demographics already attending the museum to maximize the effect of the post, or to target demographic groups with low numbers to encourage them to come in. Knowing the number of families, children, and the relative ages of visitors is helpful for curation and programming, to ensure that the museum is being designed to accommodate its visitors. The information collected is also helpful for grant writing, to demonstrate a full understanding of the museum's audience, and the operational strategies that work well for them. Tracking information on origin has also proved useful in identifying which marketing tactics are working. For example, when there was a decrease in international and Canadian visitors, interpreters made a trip to the Visitor Information Center to find that rack cards were depleted and replaced them to increase awareness.

Tracking how long groups spend in the museum helps to measure engagement across all the demographic groups we analyze. This helps to guide curators and interpreters in developing exhibits and programs which are engaging for different ages and origins, and to attempt to fill in the gaps with additional panels or by interacting with guests. It is also helpful to keep track of the first languages spoken by visitors so that efforts can be made to increase translation availability (e.g. a French and Italian self-guided tour that was created this summer) and to inform staffing decisions in the future.

Skye has been analyzing the information collected in a biweekly report that have been compiled into an end of season report. In general, the museum's audience tends to be evenly split between men and women. The main age groups are people between 20-60 years old, followed by children under 12. Teens and seniors are the smallest demographic groups that visit the tower. Most of our visitors tend to be local or international, and the average time spent in the museum is about 23 minutes. Interpreters have found that keeping track of this information has helped inform daily operations and broader decisions and hope that collection and analysis will continue in coming seasons.

The Heritage Fair is cancelled for the year 2020 due to COVID-19.

Please see the committee's official statement here: <https://www.krhf.ca/about/news/cancellation-notice-kingston-regional-heritage-fair-2020>

Thank you all very much for your willingness to participate in the Fair each year. We love working with all of you and hundreds of students throughout the region appreciate your programming very much. We could not run the Heritage Fair without our community partners and I really hope you will all return next year. I am happy to take your questions and comments. And please don't hesitate to touch base with me throughout the year.

Tabitha Renaud

QUILL: Engaging Queen's Lecture Series Resumes in September 2020

The Queen's Institute for Lifelong Learning recently marked its 25th anniversary year of presenting stimulating lectures by professional speakers, and a concomitant series of lively seminar discussions. A warm invitation is extended to the general public to try out the QUILL experience for free when the programme begins again in September. (Sessions have been temporarily suspended as Kingston manages the public health challenges around the global Covid19 pandemic.)

Illuminating topics over the years have included many themes of particular interest to Kingstonians: local history, the military, environmental issues, health, politics, and religion. History presentations have been particularly popular.

During this past winter session, Paul Van Nest, a long-time member of the Executive Council for the Kingston Historical Society, Rotarian, leader of the Civil War Round Table, and respected instructor (retired) from RMC and St. Lawrence College, offered a fascinating, in-depth look at the historical complexities of the Klondike Gold Rush, over the course of two exceptionally background-rich lectures in February. Much about this famous gold rush has been romanticized through poetry, novels and Hollywood style films. The Klondike Gold Rush was, in fact, a brutal wilderness experience for all who participated, driven often by naively desperate dreams of easy wealth and adventure during the late Victorian era.

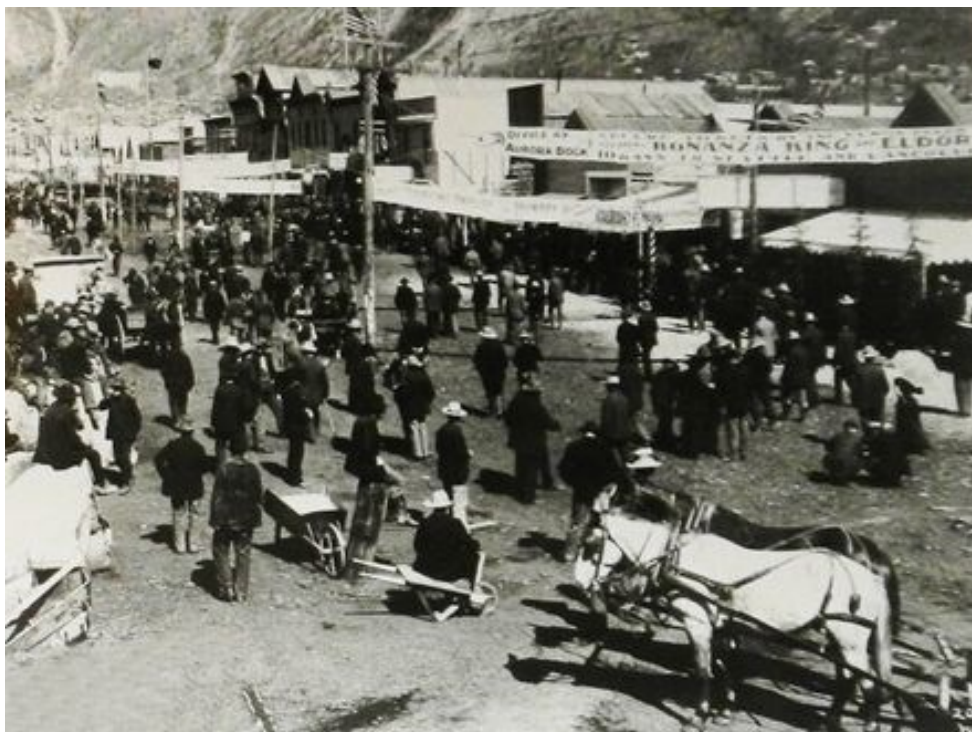
The remarkable on-site photos, and some previously unseen documented archival materials, together with the poignantly memorable personal stories of the *Sourdoughs* and the *Stampedeers* were collected together for this unique overview. The harshly contrasting reality of

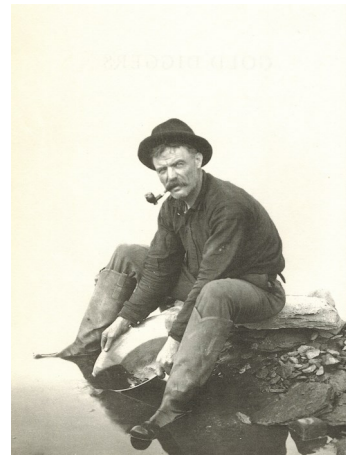


Paul Van Nest

Photo Eva Barnes

this chapter from Canadian history was illustrated with insightful passion by the speaker.





In January, the Reverend Doctor Andrew Johnston, the 12th minister at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church during its 200 year history, offered his extensive knowledge and enthusiasm about the significant role of the church within the context of Kingston's colourfully dynamic 19th century development, from colonial outpost to thriving city. Some of St. Andrew's best known congregation members from the past have included such formidable historical political personalities as John A. Macdonald and Oliver Mowat, as well as many former mayors of Kingston. Queen's University was founded through this congregation. The Rev. Dr. Johnston spoke at length about the daunting and unique challenges faced by the first minister of the church, the Rev. John Barclay, upon his arrival from Scotland in 1821. The thought-provoking discussion period that followed was lively, with posed questions probing the nature of the Presbyterian faith and practices here in Kingston in the 1800s, in juxtaposition to those of the modern era.

Many interesting history lectures, presented by talented local public speakers and academics, will be included in the QUILL programme for 2020-2021. For information about upcoming programming and locations, please visit the QUILL website at www.quillkingston.org and contact Gerard Chouest at (613) 549-3089 or QUILL President Deborah Wintrob at (613) 777-8835. The cost of membership is \$50 for the fall and winter semesters together, and \$35 for just one session. The fee covers both lectures and seminars. Lectures are presented on Sunday afternoons at 2:00 pm, with seminars taking place on Tuesdays at 1:30 pm.

"A commitment to lifelong learning is a natural expression of the practice of living consciously."
(Nathaniel Brandon)



**The Reverend
Dr. Andrew Johnston**

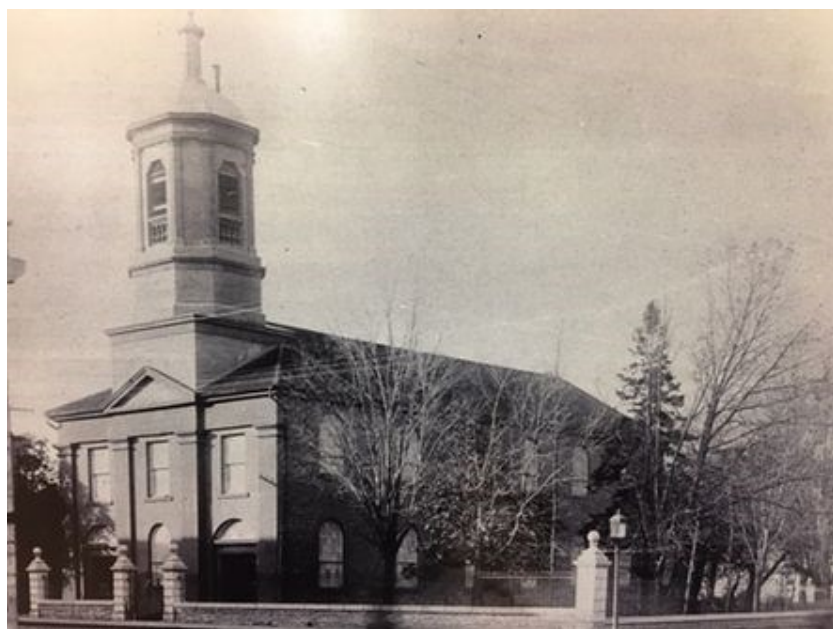
Photo Eva Barnes



Photos pertinent to Andrew Johnston's lecture for QUILL in January. The shot where the minister is leading a guided Sunday afternoon tour was taken in McBurney Park, while he is explaining the backstory to the memorial monument for the Rev. John Barclay who is buried there. It is the only cemetery marker left standing from early days as a pioneer burial ground. The Rev. Barclay was the first minister to arrive from Scotland to Kingston in time for Christmas in 1821. (There are thousands of Irish arrivals buried there, people who died during the many waves of illnesses that ravaged Kingston in the 1800s).

An archival picture of the early first church, St. Andrew's Presbyterian, which was destroyed by fire 8 April 1888.

The current church that was constructed at the corner of Clergy and Princess was rebuilt by 1890.



Speaker's Corner

by Duncan McDowall

Sadly, the Society's March 18th lecture joined the long list of events interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. This was principally because the City of Kingston wisely closed the city library system, thereby denying us the use of the lecture venue. Happily, our speaker, Queen's doctoral candidate **Victoria Cosby**, has agreed to present her lecture on pioneering Kingston artist and feminist Harriet Dobbs Cartwright once the future becomes clearer. Her talk will also appear in next year's *Historic Kingston*.

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Many of us read Robert Louis Stevenson's great adventure novel when we were young. It was an exciting story then, and it still is. What I would not have noticed then, but did notice while rereading it in 2020, was the subtext. Stevenson, who lived from 1850 to 1894, was not writing just to entertain the reader. In this novel he showed in heartbreaking detail how the social structure and culture of the Highlands of Scotland had been systematically destroyed following the suppression of the Jacobite Rebellion, which ended with the defeat of the Jacobite forces at the Battle of Culloden in 1745 and Bonnie Prince Charlie's subsequent flight into exile in France.

The two main characters in *Kidnapped* are Alan Breck Stewart and David Balfour. The former is an historical figure; the latter is fictional. Alan Breck was a fugitive accused of the murder of Colin Campbell, a Lowland Scot who had made himself hated as a tax collector for the English. These are facts upon which the plot depends. But for us reading the book in 2020, it is not the plot that matters. It's the subtext, the description of the suffering of the "Hielands," that brings to mind troubling aspects of our own history. What the English did to the Highland Scots in the second half of the 18th Century bears uncomfortable similarities to what we have done to our own First Nations, including the Metis. It is a striking coincidence that Louis Riel was hanged in the very same year that Stevenson was writing *Kidnapped*. That year was 1885.

Balfour, the narrator in *Kidnapped*, tells us:

I met plenty of people, grubbing in little miserable fields that could not keep a cat, or herding little kine about the bigness of asses. The Highland dress being forbidden by law since the rebellion, and the people confined to the Lowland habit, which they much disliked, it was strange to see the variety of their array. Some went bare, only for a hanging cloak or a greatcoat, and carried their trousers on their backs like a useless burden; some had made an imitation of the tartan with little parti-coloured stripes patched together like an old wife's quilt; others, again, still wore the philabeg [kilt], but by putting a few stitches between the legs, transformed it into a pair of trousers like a Dutchman's. All those makeshifts were condemned and punished, for the law was harshly applied, in hopes to break up the clan spirit...

No Highland Scot was allowed to carry arms, not even a knife. To carry a pistol was punishable by a fine of fifteen pounds for a first offence, and by transportation to the colonies for a second.

The story in *Kidnapped* is set in 1751. That is to say, Stevenson was writing about something that happened 134 years earlier but still had consequences for his own time. As the movement for Scotland's independence shows, those consequences linger still. May 12, 2020 will mark the 135th anniversary of the Battle of Batoche, which was the decisive battle of the North West Rebellion. For the Cree, Sioux and Metis, this was their Culloden.

The Highland Scots had Bonnie Prince Charlie. Canada has Louis Riel. How long will it take for us to undo the harm that our predecessors?

Treasured Memories Brushed with Love

by Shirley Gibson-Langille

This is a book of 71 short stories of paintings and the fascinating experiences that go with them. They are about Kingston and Area except for a few from her time in Germany.

Enjoy reading such titles as Perseverance Soup, Faith and Fate with Mr. Blue Eyes, Tea for Two, My Treasure Chest, After a Funeral, Rosemary's Bathroom Experiences, The Top of the World, The Haunted House in Lansdowne, As Good as it Gets, The Man in the Red Shirt, Sammy Newt, 1937 Dodge Deluxe, Down Life's Road (revisited), The Block and Cleaver, Cornerstone, A-One Clothing Store, Vandervoort's, Morrison's Restaurant and much more about Downtown Kingston.

Find out why Shirley doesn't believe in coincidences, feels everything is for a reason and is open to being led to all kinds of interesting places and experiences.

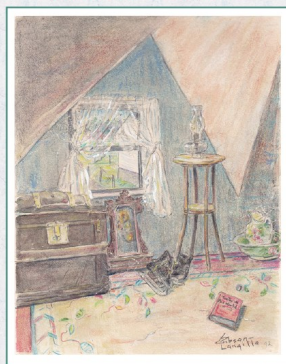
Read how she senses ghosts and how they were screaming at her when she went on a tour of the Kingston Penitentiary.

Find out the eerie experience that stopped her from ever telling fortunes again.

Why was she so interested in the Broom Factory?

Besides painting and writing stories Shirley loves History. She enjoys looking into the history behind the subjects she paints to add to her stories.

Treasured Memories *Brushed with Love*



Shirley Gibson-Langille

Treasured Memories Book Launch

27 May 2020 6:30—8:30

James Reid Celebration Centre

1900 John Counter Blvd. Back Entrance

**71 stories and the paintings that go with them 124
pages (\$25.00 Cash or Cheque)**

From the Mailbag

I am interested in Nicholson's Point, where I grew up. I'm curious why it is named that, and who it is named after. You could save me a lot of research if you happen to know! jaypinkerton@gmail.com

I'm hoping you might offer a bit of guidance to me. I'm in possession of a rocking chair that belonged to Prime Minister Laurier. His niece was a family friend of my parents and I know the full story of the chair but am struggling to document this information. Now that I'm downsizing, anticipating moving to an apartment, I am looking for a new home for it.

The chair was gifted to PM Laurier by the town of Ste Pie, Que. during his time in office

– 1896-1911. I am certain this would have been a newsworthy event – but cannot track any newspapers from that time. Do you have any suggestions for me. I've attached for your review the head panel of the chair which is beautifully painted with the Canadian flag and crest of the day (prior to all provinces joining) christinek009@gmail.com



Geraldine Chase, author of "Harvards Above" receives photos from the families of men who trained here at the WW2 Flying School. Usually the location is identifiable, but this one is not known. Can anybody help? Remember, the photo is from the early 1940s and things may have changed!

