

LIMELIGHT

Vol. 4: No 2
February 2002

NEWSLETTER OF THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As this will be my last letter as President, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all those members of the Society who have been responsible for the success I have enjoyed these last two years. When it was first announced that I was President, one of our long time members summed up my appointment as "a meteoric rise from obscurity." How right that person was!

So, I want to thank those people who had the confidence to recommend me and continued to help along the way. I was extremely fortunate to have a superb team working me and whatever success the Society has had over the last two years is due mostly to their efforts. More importantly, I would like to thank those folks whose service sometimes goes unnoticed, yet are key to the Society's accomplishments: the welcoming committee of Mary and Jack Clarke, Bea Corbett, Helen Coffey, and Shirley Gibson-Langille. They greet our guests and members at the monthly meetings and establish a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Also, Jennifer McKendry and her son, John, serve the Society well by providing us those desserts that cap off each meeting with style. Finally, John Grenville and his staff at Bellevue House work quietly behind the scenes supporting many of the Society's initiatives.

Many of the challenges which faced the Society over the last two years are still out there and I urge every one of you to give your full support to the new President and council.

In closing, these last two years have been thoroughly enjoyable. The hugely successful Sir John A. Macdonald dinner and the interest being generated around the history of Sir John and the Kingston area are prime indicators that the Society still has a viable role to play in this community.

Finally, to fellow opsimeaths: "Keep the faith!" (Warren Everett)



OUR NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday 20 February 2002

Place: The Wilson Room, Kingston Public Library

Time: 7.30 p.m.

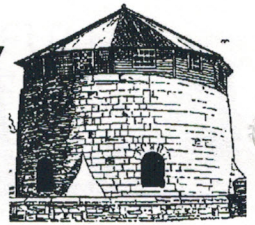
A.G.M. and Elections, followed by annual "Members' Show and Tell."

CONTENTS

- PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
- EDITORIAL
- SIR JOHN'S BIRTHDAY
- IMAGES OF KINGSTON
- MCBURNEY PARK
- NOMINATIONS
- KHS AGM
- SHOW AND TELL
- LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES
- SPONSORS

Kingston Historical Society

ESTABLISHED 1893 ISSN: 1488-5565



Limelight is published nine times a year - September to May. Copyright rests in Kingston Historical Society. Submissions should be addressed to the editor. **Past President:** Desmond O'Meara. **President:** Warren Everett. **Vice-President:** Brian Osborne. **Secretary:** Paul Ross. **Treasurer:** Stewart Renfrew. **Councillors:** Carl Bray; Jane Errington; Ed Grenda; Lou Grimshaw; Alan MacLachlan; Sarah Meharg; Doug Petty; Jack Pike; Barbara Snyder.

Memberships: Individual, \$35; Family, \$40; Institutional, \$40; Student, \$25.

Copyright © KHS, Box 54 Kingston Ontario Canada K7L 4V6 (544-9925)

Editors: Jane Errington - (613) 533-2150 and Brian Osborne - (613) 533-6042

KHS Web Site: <http://www.heritagekingston.org/khs>

AND ONE FROM THE EDITORS...

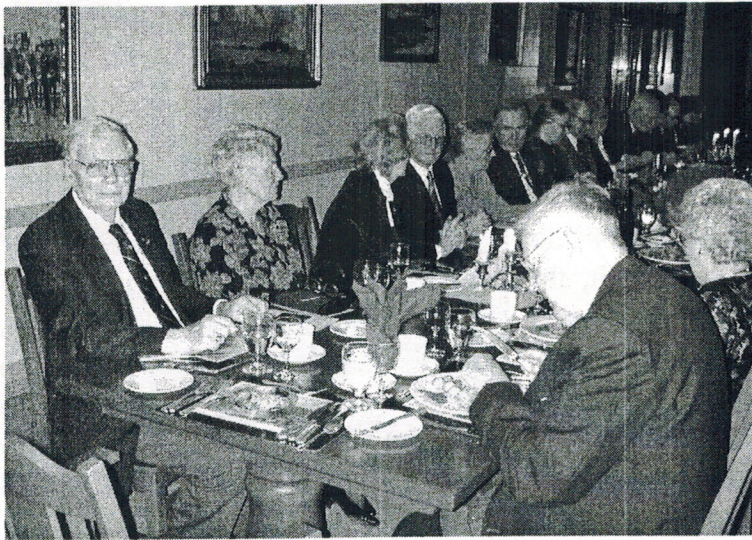
February is the shortest month of the year - and yet, for many, it seems the longest. Days are still short; the weather is cold and blustery. We in Kingston are not alone in looking for some sign that winter is coming to an end. Seventeenth century British, German and North American folklore predicted that "If Candlemas Day (the mid point between the winter and spring solstice) "be fair and bright, Winter has another flight. If Candlemas brings clouds and rain, Winter will not come again." More than 150 years ago, descendants of German settlers in Pennsylvania anxiously waited to see if a wandering groundhog would cast a shadow on 2 February. And even the most sceptical among us noted, on what is now called Groundhog Day, whether "Warton Willey" or "Punxsutawney Phil" had determined whether or not we could expect another six weeks of snow.

But February is also a month of celebration. On the 6th, New Zealanders marked the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi between the British Crown and Maori chiefs that led to the founding of New Zealand. In mid-month, with the arrival of the new moon, the Chinese will celebrate the coming of their New Year - the Year of the Horse - and begin two weeks of festivities. While St. Valentine's Day - originally designated in 496 AD by Pope Gelasius - will prompt many Kingstonians to declare their love with cards, chocolates, or a romantic dinner. But for KHS, it is 18 February which is of particular importance: National Heritage Day. This is the one day of the year that the nation officially recognizes and commemorates our rich history and those many great men and women whose actions, words, and determination shaped who and what we are today.

This year we would suggest that you remember particularly what happened on another day in this month. On 15 February 1930, Cairine MacKay Wilson was appointed to the Senate of Canada. After a long and bitter political and legal fight waged by a group now called "The Famous Five," Canadian women were finally legally recognized as "Persons" and, therefore, eligible to sit in the Senate. And Cairine Wilson was a most worthy candidate. Before her appointment, she had been an active member of the Victorian Order of Nurses, the YWCA and the Salvation Army, in addition to being the mother of eight children and wife of a Liberal MP. While in Senate, she championed issues such as divorce and immigration. She also served as president of the League of Nations Society in Canada, was Canada's first woman delegate to the UN General Assembly in 1949, and was chair of the Canadian National Committee on Refugees.

So February may be both the shortest and the longest month of the year. It is also a month that brings in a New Year for many, offers an opportunity for fun and frolic, and was a month in which we as a nation were changed and continued to grow.

THE ANNUAL SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY DINNER



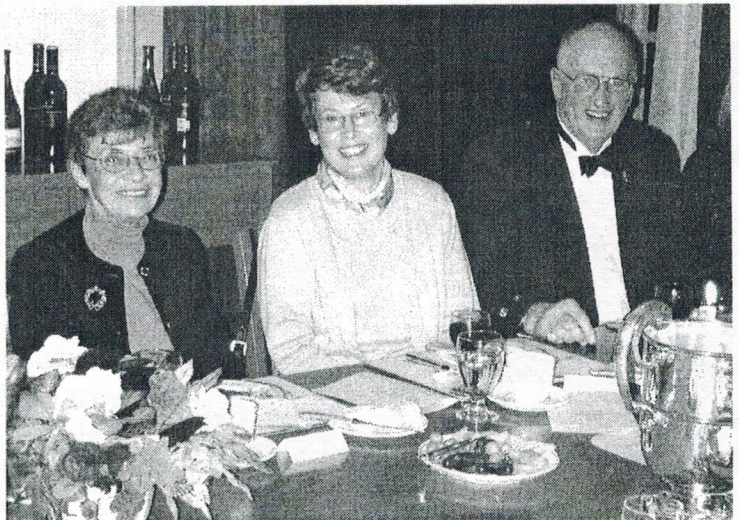
On 11 January 2002, the Kingston Historical Society held its second annual birthday anniversary dinner for Sir John A. Macdonald at the Officer's Mess, Royal Military College.

Over 135 members and friends attended the dinner including our guests: the British High Commissioner, Sir Andrew Burns and Lady Sarah; Her Worship the Mayor, Isabel Turner and her husband John; the Member for Kingston and the Islands, Mr. John Gerretsen MPP; the Past President of the St. Andrew's Society, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Smith; and Admiral David Morse, Commandant of R.M.C., and his wife, Susan. Greetings were read from our Prime Minister, the Right Hon. Mr. Jean Chretien, and also from the



Member of Parliament for Kingston and the Islands, the Hon. Mr. Peter Milliken. Our special guest and key-note speaker was the former Member of Parliament for Kingston and the Islands, the Hon. Ms. Flora MacDonald, who was received with a standing ovation.

The talk by Ms. MacDonald not only recounted and evaluated the contributions of Sir John A. Macdonald but revealed him as a wonderful visionary who established foundations for Canada that have carried through into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This was a most fitting tribute to Sir John on the anniversary of his birthday. (Alan MacLachlin, Photos by Jennifer McKendry). —



DEVELOPMENTS IN MCBURNEY PARK

In many ways, our parks reflect the history of Kingston. They are the product of many factors: forward looking planners and short-sighted individuals; accidents of ownership and topography; as well as changing military, economic, and social demands for particular pieces of land. McBurney Park, popularly referred to as "Skeleton Park" and formerly known as Frontenac Park, is an instance of the interplay between events, social change, and land.

Kingston's original burial-ground was the site upon which St. Paul's Church was subsequently built. As the town grew around it, the limitations of a small site became apparent. Accordingly, a new facility, the "Upper Burial Ground", was opened at the north end of Clergy Street, an area depicted on an 1815 map as being "unallocated land...principally only fit for a Quarry." It was to be administered by the "established" church of the day, the Anglicans of St. George's.

Following pressure from the Roman Catholics and Presbyterians of the city, these two denominations were granted rights to bury their dead in additions to the Upper Burial Ground. In recognition of the role played by St. Andrew's first minister, the Rev. John Barclay, in acquiring this land, a twenty-four foot high monument was erected in his honour following his death in 1826. It is the oldest monument in Kingston.



The Barclay Monument

By the mid-nineteenth century, pressure on cemetery space combined with growing concern with burials in proximity to residences prompted the establishment of the Cataraqui and St. Mary's cemeteries, well outside the city limits of the day. While most of the bodies interred in the old Upper Burial Ground were exhumed and re-buried in the new cemeteries, not all were located. The semi-abandoned graveyard became an eye-sore until a private bill was passed in 1893 giving the city title to the property and establishing it as a park. However, its former function cannot be forgotten as human remains are often uncovered whenever any excavations are made in the area.

Recently, McBurney Park is in the news again. First, the City has undertaken the restoration of the Barclay Monument at a cost of \$62,000. This is part of a general programme of restoring some of Kingston's prominent monuments: the Sir John A. Macdonald monument; the Cross of Sacrifice; the 21st Battalion memorial; and the lion in Macdonald Park. This programme is, in part, a product of KHS's recent publication on historical markers.



"Skeleton Park," late C19th

The second initiative comes from the Kingston Irish Folk Club which, with the support of Tir Nan Og Irish Pub, the Kingston Brewing Co., and the City of Kingston, have raised \$10,300 to erect a Celtic Cross Monument in McBurney Park, the final resting place of many immigrants of Irish and Scottish descent, who died between 1813 and 1865. "There are no observable signs in the park to make newcomers aware of the fact that they are standing upon a historically significant cemetery," said Tony O'Loughlin, president and founder of the Irish club. The Celtic Cross will be unveiled and blessed during an interdenominational service on Sunday, 10 March 2002. The annual St. Patrick's Day parade will follow. (Prepared with contributions from Stewart Fyfe, Bill Fittell, and Tony O'Loughlin).

NEXT MEETING: KHS AGM, ELECTION OF OFFICERS, SHOW AND TELL

The **KHS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** will be held on 20 February 2002. As noted in the January *Limelight*, the Society's Nominating Committee has presented the following slate of candidates to the membership:

Executive: President (Brian Osborne); Vice-President (Carl Bray); General Secretary (Doug Petty); Treasurer (Desmond O'Meara); Past President (Warren Everett).

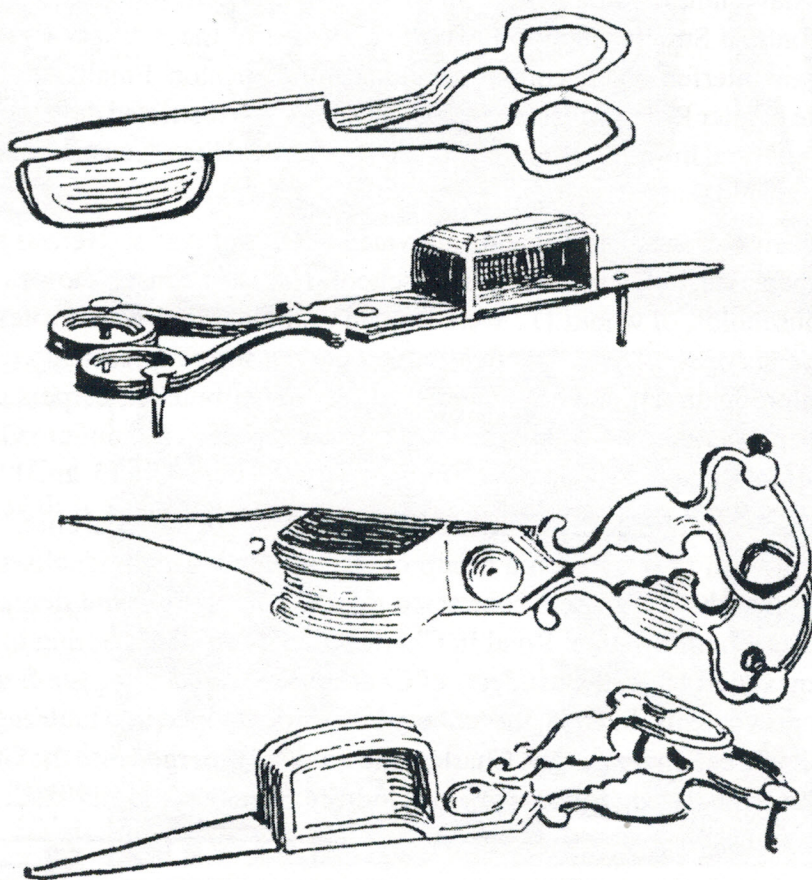
Council: Linda Cyr; Jack Pike; Barbara Snyder; Louis Grimshaw; Alan MacLachlan; Sarah Meharg; Robert Andrews.

As specified in the Constitution, the new Council will appoint the following: Editor of *Historic Kingston*, Editor of the KHS newsletter (*Limelight*), Chair of the Murney Tower Committee. These appointees will also serve as members of Council. Council will also appoint Chairs of other Society committees. The Nominating Committee encourages members who may be interested in serving on any of the Society's committees to identify themselves to Council. In particular, Council would welcome a volunteer to assist in the production of *Limelight*.

Any member of the Society in good standing may nominate any other member of the Society in good standing for any office. Incumbents may be nominated for an additional term, and nominations may be submitted for any or all of the positions to be filled. Volunteers may nominate themselves for any office. Submission of a nomination carries the assumption that the nominee is willing to stand for election and serve, and that this has been verified by the nominator. Members wishing to nominate a candidate for any position as a member of the Executive or Council may do so from the floor at the AGM, or else by completing the enclosed Nomination Form which may be mailed to Desmond O'Meara, 106 Yonge St., Kingston, K7M 1E7, or handed to any member of the present Executive and Council.

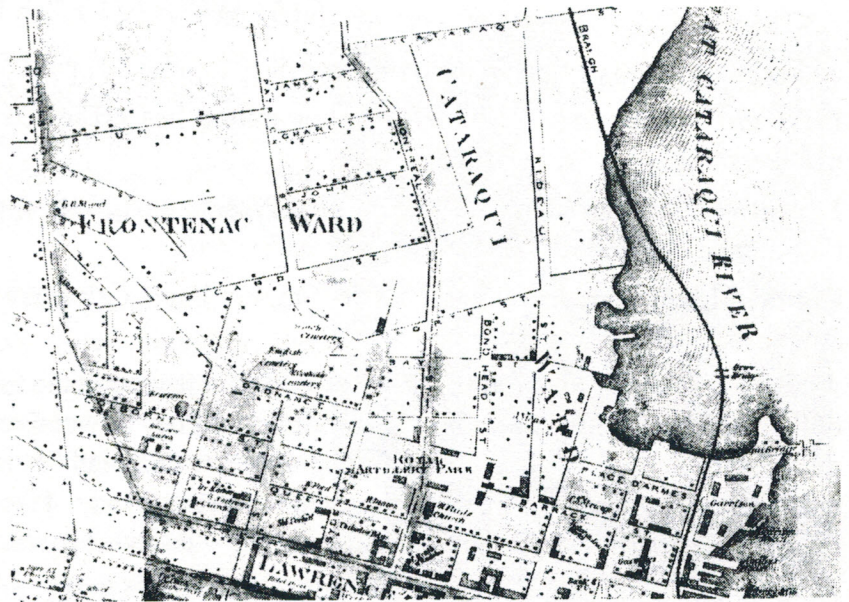
Please participate in this extremely important activity to ensure the continuing health and efficiency of the Society. (Desmond O'Meara, Past President and Chair, Nominating Committee).

ALSO, please note that the annual **SHOW AND TELL** will take place following the elections. KHS members are encouraged to bring along historical artifacts that concern not only the history of Kingston but also the history of Canada. Each exhibitor will be given two minutes to explain the significance of their chosen piece. Exhibitors are encouraged to come a little early to set up their pieces. There will also be an opportunity to discuss the materials on display as we all enjoy the refreshments. Please contact Alan MacLachlan at 549-8841 to indicate that you are bringing an artifact. This will enable us to have the appropriate table space available.



IMAGES OF KINGSTON: CHARLESVILLE

Great cities are made up of villages that were buried beneath urban expansion. New York has its Bronx and Chelsea, London its Soho and Westminster. Montreal has Westmont and Verdun, while Torontonians come from Rosedale and the Annex. Kingston also buried villages as it expanded. We have seen places like Portsmouth, Barriefield, and Cataraqui become part of the City of Kingston, but we still think of them as separate and distinct places. However, there have been other hamlets that have been all but forgotten.



For example, there is Charlesville. It was built on land ceded to Magdalene Ferguson in 1801. Mrs. Ferguson, who married a British Army officer, was one of Molly Brant's daughters. Charles Stuart purchased 60 acres of the Ferguson land in the 1820s. After his death, his brother, George O'Kill Stuart, and Allan McLean developed a subdivision on the land by creating fifty building lots of 1/4 and 1/5 of an acre each. The streets were named after the Stuart Brothers, James, Charles, John, and George. Montreal Street also runs through the area en route to Montreal via the lowest bridging-point of the Cataraqui River at Kingston Mills.

Several factors served to make Charlesville a separate place. A tannery was established to the south and this seems to have inhibited development there that would have linked the village with the city. Also, for many years, Montreal Street swung to the north and west of the Artillery Reserve (the site of the present Armories) which again interfered with communications with Kingston. Finally, the "House of Industry" or "Work House" (on the site of later Rideaucrest Home for the Aged) also restricted development to the north. These factors, together with the natural limestone escarpment along Montreal Street, ensured that the village was separated from the city to the south and east of it.

Because of this, Charlesville cultivated a sense of distinctiveness and developed its own services such as inns, a shoemaker, butcher, grocer, and a school. The 1861 census shows a total population of some 253 individuals in 55 households, of whom 117 were Roman Catholics, 105 were Protestants and 31 were of unknown denomination. The occupations listed were as varied as they were representative of the times: laborer, stonecutter, shoemaker, sailor, boatman, innkeeper, clerk, tailor, waiter, butcher, carpenter, farmer, blacksmith, widows, and spinsters. There was even one individual who listed himself as a "gentleman." One can still see the stone cottages built by the stone cutters who lived at Numbers 95, 99, 101, 105, 113, and 143 Charles Street.

Clearly, the citizens of Charlesville were not part of the local elite, but nor were they poor or downtrodden. In fact, they seem to have been a group of strong-minded individualists. During the 1840s, they complained to City Council that the carters contracted to haul "night-soil" and debris from Kingston were dumping their noxious loads along Montreal Road in Charlesville rather than hauling it into the open countryside. After the area was annexed in 1851, the residents of Charlesville were among the first and most persistent citizens requesting local improvements. In 1888, the tannery lot was developed into building lots and a Catholic School was established on John Street. Increasingly, Charlesville gradually merged into the City of Kingston. (Prepared by Stewart Renfrew who acknowledges the work of Godfrey Spragge and his students from the School of Urban and Regional Planning).

LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES: THE CLOSING OF THE EMBASSY RESTAURANT

On Sunday morning, 2 April 1989, I went to paint the Embassy Restaurant. It sat on the west side of Princess Street, just above Clergy Street between the Medicine Shop and Bob Hillier's barber-shop.

I was really excited about doing it. It brought back fond memories for me when it had been the Silver Grill! In my early teens, I used to go there with my girlfriends on Sunday afternoons. We would sit there the whole afternoon sipping our cherry cokes. It was a KCVI hangout and we loved to watch the boys come in.

I can picture it in my mind. A colourful jukebox stood in the middle of the room in front of three rows of booths. Each booth had its own wall box with a great selection of popular tunes. We did a lot of giggling and the place would get really noisy. The proprietor had a special switch behind the counter to adjust the juke box volume. I don't know why he put up with us!

I wanted to paint the interior of our old hang-out and record all those memories. But it was too late. The Embassy Restaurant had been sold and an auction had taken place the previous day. It was only open that day

to be cleaned and to allow people to pick up items that had been sold off. It was so sad to see customers turn up only to find that their favourite eatery had closed its doors. One poor, elderly gentleman arrived in a cab, only to be disappointed.

Michael and Frank Argiris, the proprietors, came over to see my painting. I learned that in 1915 the establishment had originally been Peter Dafnas' New York Candy Store and Soda Fountain. In the early 1930s, Mike Johnson opened up The Silver Grill. It became the Embassy Restaurant when Gus and Chris Nikos took it over. Later Bill, Frank, and George Frimis ran it. Michael and Frank became the proprietors in 1974.

I found out that the owner of the building had asked them to leave. He no longer wanted a restaurant there because he was afraid of a possible fire. The Asian Market moved in shortly after. Ironically, the owner's efforts were to no avail: on 1 May 1999, both the Medicine Shop and the Asian Market burned down. But history has repeated itself. The building has been reconstructed and it has once again become a place for a new generation of Kingstonians to meet and eat: Tim Hortons! Coffee anyone? (By Shirley Gibson-Langille)



The Closing Of The Embassy Restaurant - 1915 - 1989.

THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY GRATEFULLY
ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF OUR SPONSORS...

*Kingston's most
unique shopping
experience.*



**Good People.
Great Prices.
everyday**

Visit us on
our Website
27 Princess Street • Right in the Heart of Downtown Kingston
Store Hours: 9:30 to 9pm • Saturday 9:30 to 6pm • OPEN SUNDAY



**Graham Thomson
Real Estate**

**Terry and/or Brian
Stafford Stafford**

(613) 546-3171
For "Ultimate Service"

**Renaissance
Music** (Kingston) Limited Established 1973

1057 Midland Avenue
Kingston, ON K7P 2X8
info@renaissance-music.com (613) 384-9225
sales@renaissance-music.com Fax (613) 384-9227
http://www.renaissance-music.com Toll Free (800) 561-5809

Kingston's Independent Bookstore

**NOVEL
IDEA**

Oscar Malan, Bookseller
156 Princess Street, Kingston, ON K7L 1B1
(613) 546-9799


**TARA
NATURAL
FOODS**

81 Princess Street, Kingston

61 BROCK STREET
P.O. BOX 66
KINGSTON, ONTARIO
CANADA
K7L 4V6



(613) 548-7721
1-800-576-5866
www.cookesfinefoods.com



Pan Chanco
Bakery-Catering-Take-out
"The Pig with a Peel"

RESTAURANT

68 R Princess Street
Kingston, Ont. 549-7673

70 Johnson Street
Kingston, Ont. 544-7790



**ROBERT J. REID & SONS
FUNERAL HOME**

309 Johnson Street (at Barrie) • Kingston
(613) 548-7973

"Our family serving your family"
PROUDLY CANADIAN


Old Time Quality



A Tradition of Hand-Craftsmanship
694 McKay Street, Kingston, K7M 7G2
Tel (613) 384 - 4571
Fax (613) 384 - 4655

**LOCALLY OWNED & STAFFED,
SERVING KINGSTON & AREA SINCE 1968**

- Fashion Frames
- Contact Lenses
- Special Lenses
- Artificial Eyes
- Sunglasses
- Sport Shields
- Binoculars
- Telescopes



324 King St. E. OPTICIANS LTD. 549-2020

**FREE PARKING STAMPS
BUS RIDE VOUCHERS**
MON.-THURS. 9:00AM-5:30PM, FRI. 9:00AM-7:00PM, SAT. 10:00AM-4:00PM