



LIMELIGHT


Vol. 4: No 4
April 2002

NEWSLETTER OF THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

What an inauspicious start to my role as President of KHS! I missed the first meeting of my term in office. My only excuse is that I was doing my "day job": giving a paper at a conference, "The Historic Tourist City." It was held in Bruges, Belgium, Europe's "Cultural Capital" for 2002. There is a play on words here as the dominant theme was how should historic cities "market" their "cultural capital" and the "selling of place" by the "tourist industry"? From Galway's Irish folk festivals, to Cambridge's collegial ambience, and Venice's struggle with millions of visitors a year, the issues were all the same:

- **Tourism as Economic Growth Model:** Claiming that tourism is the "silver bullet" for economic vitality in a post-industrial society, some argued for increasing the numbers of visitor-days that would stimulate tourist accommodations, employment in the "hospitality industry," and expenditures in the retail and service sectors of the economy.
- **Tourism as Self-Sustaining Enterprise:** Others demonstrated how mass-tourism had eroded the material and social infrastructure and called for an analysis of "over-capacity" and "optimal capacity" for each particular historic-tourist city.
- **Alternative Strategies for Marketing Historic-Cities:** Some called for a shift away from attracting transient day-tourists to more discerning (and affluent!) long-stay cultural visitors seeking out relaxation rather than sites and attractions. Italy's rapidly growing "League of Slow Cities" is a case in point.
- **Living Cities:** There were even some heretics who rejected tourism completely and called for the nurturing of distinctive places that attracted new, long-term residents seeking an enhanced Quality of Life.

Not only did I learn much about developments elsewhere, but I hope that I added Kingston's experiences, hopes, and expectations to the group's collective wisdom. (Brian Osborne) 

OUR NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday 17 April 2002

Place: The Wilson Room, Kingston Public Library

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Speakers:

Bea Corbett: "Robertson Davies: The Kingston Connection."

Bill Fittell: "George Williamson: The Night Watchman."

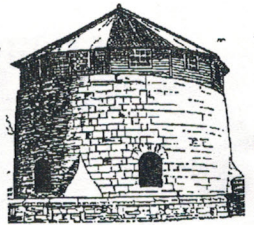
Isobel Trumpour: "The Memorial Chapel, Peace Tower, Parliament Hill."

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Kingston Historical Society

ESTABLISHED 1893 ISSN: 1488-5565



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AND ONE FROM THE EDITORS...

Numbers, numbers, numbers! There was a time when we were identified by names. We were born into families and given a personalized moniker. We lived in farms with such wonderfully distinctive toponyms as Winterbourne Down or Pendducae-Fach, and villages and towns like Winchester, Pommard, or Garmisch-Partenkirchen. The names were meaningful – that is full of meaning. Work out the cumulative story of place encoded in this place-name: Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwynndrobwlllltysilio-gogogoch!

But now we live in a world of numbers. It started when the first settlers were assigned to Concessions and Lots in Ontario. Your home was not a named place but a number: Lot 38 Concession XII. Later, the introduction of door-to-door postal service required the assignment of house-numbers. The new technology of telephones added more numbers and, if you served in the military, you acquired another never-to-be forgotten number. These were followed by all the other numbers by which we are now identified and organized: SIN and OHIP numbers, credit cards and bank accounts, marriage, driver's, and gun owner's licenses. The list goes on. Our days are numbered!

Perhaps this is why the current discussion in City Hall regarding electoral districts touches a nerve with some. Of course, parliamentarians are concerned with such matters as demographic proportions, the efficiency of Council meetings, and the representation of socio-economic diversity. But then there is the issue of identity. Many Kingstonians still harbour a strong sense of neighbourhood and community. And for these, the designation of Ward numbers doesn't cut it. Some prefer the old nomenclature such as Rideau, Victoria, St. Lawrence, and Sydenham. Then how about Barriefield, Portsmouth, and Waterloo, or even the old identifiers that Stewart Renfrew has been writing about: Williamstown, Picardville, and Stuartville?

Certainly, community identity is something to value and nurture in an ever-increasing world of sameness. Efficiency isn't everything. What do you think? Let your City Council know. Names, like buildings, are also part of our shared heritage and civic identity.



THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE: ART FOR WINDOWS

The twenty stained glass windows in the Anglican Cathedral Church of St. George, at King and Johnson in Kingston, give an interesting insight into the changing fashions of windows in the twentieth century. All of the nineteenth century windows were lost in the fire of 1 January 1899. The earliest two in the rebuilt cathedral were dedicated in 1902, and are in the style of Louis C. Tiffany, very much in fashion at the turn of the century. Among the most recent, installed in the RMC Gallery in 1979, is a window of St. George, whose banner extends up out of the main window into the lunette above – something probably not thought of a century before.

In between, are some very traditional windows, an unusual large round window in the Lady Chapel, and three Peter Haworth windows from the middle of the century. The windows in the RMC gallery are of soldier saints and so are appropriate to it. As so often in churches, there have been controversies. A mid-century dispute on the quality of the chancel windows nearly led to their removal, and did result in the breaking up of the set of three orange bordered windows, a memorial to John Watkins.

But windows in Kingston suffer from the extremes of the climate we enjoy. Especially, lead separates from glass, and the glass gets very dirty. St. George's wants to restore its windows to their original splendour, and sponsors an annual Art for Windows celebration. All



proceeds from this event,

run by the Projects group, go to the repair and restoration of needy windows. Visitors to this year's event will be able to see the St. Peter and St. Paul window newly cleaned and restored. It is the second window on the left in the nave. Its neighbour to the right, showing Jesus walking on the water, will be the next to benefit from the Art for Windows fund-raiser.

When you enter the Cathedral for Art for Windows, do so if you can from King Street. Then you will get the full effect of the many paintings lining the aisles, all for sale. You will also find sculpture, pottery, flower arrangements, and other arts and crafts items for sale. Artists, artisans, and designers from throughout the region will be showing their work, and there will also be music during Art for Windows.

The St. George's Project Group will hold the third annual Art for Windows on Friday, 10 May, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. This will be a gala reception with refreshments donated by Kingston businesses. Admission for this event is \$10, including refreshments. Tickets can be ordered by calling 548-4617, and will be available at the door. There will be another viewing on Saturday, 11 May, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., admission to this exhibition will be \$2 at the door. Just by being there, you will be helping to preserve a very important part of Kingston's heritage.

IMAGES OF KINGSTON: PICARDVILLE

Like New Orleans, Kingston once had its "French Quarter" perhaps not quite a quarter, more like an eighth or a tenth! If one walks west along Raglan Road from Charlesville to the intersection of Main Street you will find yourself in what was once known as the Hamlet of Picardville. In fact Raglan Road was called Picard Street for a while. Picardville now is essentially main-street between Raglan Road and Division Street.

Canada never succumbed to the ravages of republicanism in the late C18 and so it must have looked like a safe haven to French royalists fleeing the French Revolution. In October 1798, a group of French noblemen and royalist army officers, under the guidance of Count Joseph de Puisaye sailed from Portsmouth England to Quebec City. There they joined up with 21 French-Canadians and made their way to Kingston.



**"Bonnie Brae", at 329 Division Street, built by
George O'Kill Stuart**

The Honorable Richard Cartwright undertook to settle them in the area. He chose a spot located on part of Magdalene Ferguson's land grant, Farm Lot A, that was being developed by another Frenchman, Jean Baptiste des Trois Maisons dit Picard. It became known as "Picardville" or sometimes "The French Village." Apparently, the site did not much impress the French aristocrats as most them left Kingston for "Muddy York" -- as jaundiced Kingstonians called Toronto in those days. However, many of the French Canadians did stay and it is they who made up the French proportion of Picardville.

The subdivision at Picardville was created on a four-acre triangle of land purchased in 1810 for one hundred and fifty pounds. In all it contained twenty-two gridiron lots. Picard himself never lived on the property but by 1816 he had sold 21 of the 22 lots. Several of the purchasers bought more than one lot, one ambitious person buying six! In total, individuals of French origin bought half of the lots. The French owners, however, soon sold their lots and since the new owners were not of French origin, and with a declining French population in the area, Picardville lost its association with the French connection.

In fact, a large percentage of the owners of the property did not, themselves, live in Picardville, some of them being very much part of the local establishment. They included John A. Macdonald and George O'Kill Stuart. Those who were residents were of the working classes: labourers, grocers, masons, carpenters, quarrymen, carters, and peddlers. It is interesting to note that while the inhabitants of Charlesville often owned their residences those in Picardville seemed to have been more likely to have rented.

There are few buildings of real interest in Picardville other than the one built c.1850 at 136 York Street. The rest of the streets are lined with small houses of various periods, though there is one fine interesting looking stone house at the corner of Center Street and Raglan Road. Beyond an abortive attempt to turn the place into a "French Quarter" in 1798 there seems to be little to interest historians in the place. But since the less affluent areas of any city reflect far more abruptly the changes of its host society, it might serve some ambitious scholar well to trace the changing patterns of population and prospects for the people of Picardville.

Again, my thanks to Godfrey Spragge and his student at the School of Urban and Regional Planning, in 1983, for providing background research for this article. (Prepared by Stewart Renfrew).

BOOK SHELF

According to Anders Henriksson, his recent volume, *Non Campus Mentis: World History According to College Students* (Workman Publishing, 2001) is "the creme de la creme of student vacantness," a horrifically hilarious compendium of the ramblings of ill-prepared college students. Consider some examples culled from thousands of papers and exams: "During the Dark Ages, it was mostly dark; Hitler's instrumentality of terror was the Gespacho; Christianity was just another mystery cult until Jesus was born; the mother of Jesus was Mary, who was different from other women because of her immaculate contraption. There are even maps locating the "Kingdom of the Tarts" and the "Automaton Empire" – the Tartars and the Ottomans would not be amused!

Henriksson's volume is a collage of errors, assumptions and creative fact-making organized chronologically in 26 chapters from the "Stoned Age" to the "Age of Now"! Before we engage in our favourite chauvinist past-time of "American knocking," we should note that half of the entries are from Canada! Indeed, Henriksson's collection began when he was a teaching assistant at the University of Toronto in the late 1970s.

Here are some other examples of *Non Campus Mentis*:

"History, a record of things left behind by past generations, started in 1815. Thus, we should try to view historical times as the behind of the present. This gives incite into the anals of the past."

"Bible legend states that the trouble started after Eve ate the Golden Apple of Discord. This was the forbidding fruit. An angry God sent his wraith. Man fell from the space of grace. It was mostly downhill skiing from there."

"Civilization woozed out of the Nile about 300,000 years ago. The Nile was a river that had some water in it. Every year it would flood and irritate the land. This tended to make the people nervous."

"There was Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. Lower Egypt was actually farther up than Upper Egypt, which was, of course, lower down than the upper part. This is why we learn geography as a factor in history."

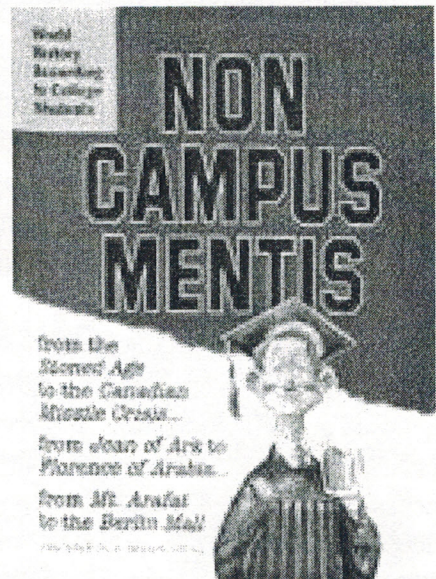
"Greek semen ruled the Agean. We know about this thanks to Homer's story about Ulysees Grant and Iliad, the painful wife he left behind. Another myth with a message was Jason's hunt for the Golden Fleas."

"Religion was polyphonic. Featured were gods such as Herod, Mars, and Juice. Persepolis was god of vegetables. Souls were believed to spend the 'here, there and after' in Ethiopia."

"Pythagasaurus fathered the triangle. Archimedes made the first steamboat and power drill."

"Finally, Europe caught the Black Death. The bubonic plague is a social disease in the sense that it can be transmitted by intercourse and other etceteras. It was spread from port to port by inflected rates. It was then passed around by midgets."

"Victims of the black death grew boobs on their necks. Death rates exceeded 100 per cent in some towns."




(Excerpts from this Vicky Smith article [c.2002 Canadian Press] by KHS member Maureen Williams. *Non Campus Mentis* is available at [The Novel Idea](#)).

AT HOME WITH THE KINGSTON SYMPHONY

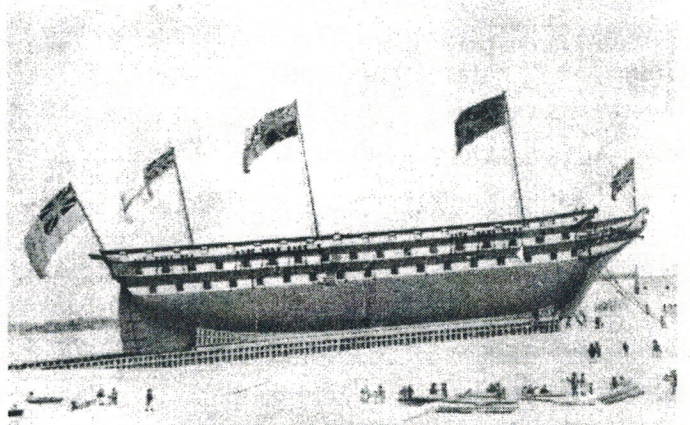
"HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS" is once again evident in the unique collection of dwellings included in Kingston's 7th **ANNUAL MUSIC LOVERS' HOUSE TOUR**, Saturday, 25 May 2002.

The Volunteer Committee of the Kingston Symphony Association is proud to present an eclectic collection of eight homes, notable for their stunning decor, unique design, and history. This year's self-guided tour includes the Commandant's residence at the Royal Military College, noted for its remarkable history. The tour begins at 10 a.m. and concludes at 4:30 p.m. during which time there is a lunch break at one of the two churches on the tour. Gifted local musicians, both professional and students, will play in the homes adding atmosphere and warmth to your visit. All visitors are eligible to enter a free draw as they tour the homes. Lunch is included in the price of the Passbook.


Award-winning artist, Shirley Hulley, created our Passbook sketches which are accompanied by researched information to inform visitors about the design and structure of the dwellings and churches. The Passbooks are considered a collectors' item and may be purchased for \$25 at the following locations: **Cornerstone Fine Arts/Fine Crafts**, 255 Ontario Street; **Expressions Fashion Boutique**, 2815 Princess Street; **Olden Green**, 78 Princess Street; **The Grand Theatre Box Office**, 218 Princess Street; the **Kingston Symphony Office**, 11 Princess Street, Suite 206. For out-of-town orders, please call 1-800-451-2453 to charge VISA or MasterCard. 

SPEAKERS' CORNER

On Wednesday, 20 March, more than 60 friends and members of the Society received a stimulating talk from Mr. Jonathan Moore with a paper on Kingston's sunken warships. Mr. Moore is a contract underwater archaeologist who is at present working for Parks Canada and has in the past worked locally for the Cataraqui Archaeological Research Centre. The presentation entitled "Another Look at Kingston's Warships" was a reassessment of the paper delivered on 30 January 1952, by Professor Richard Preston of the Royal Military College of Canada. With the use of slides Mr. Moore recounted the history of the Naval Dockyard and many of the ships that were built there. The focus of the research that was conducted in the years since Professor Preston's presentation centred on two ships: the *Prince Regent* and the *Montreal*. The new underwater archaeological techniques that have developed since 1952 were also described. An energetic question period and refreshments followed the presentation.



Our 17 April meeting will feature three KHS members, each of whom will give a short talk. Mrs. Bea Corbett will be discussing Robertson Davies and his Kingston connection. Mrs. Isobel Trumpour will be talking about the Memorial Chapel in The Peace Tower on Parliament Hill. Mr. Bill Fittell will present a talk on George Williamson, the former editor of the **Kingston Whig-Standard**, and his column, "The Town Watchman."

Also, please note that on Saturday, 27 April, there will be a tour of the former **CONGREGATIONALIST CHURCH** conducted by Jennifer McKendry. Please marshal at 1:45 p.m. at the Johnson Street entrance. The tour will commence at 2:00 p.m. It will highlight the murals of Kingston historical sites painted by the local Danish artist, Ole Jonassen, in 1959, the stain-glass windows, and the organ in the main hall of the former church. If you have ever wondered about this unique architectural landmark, this is your opportunity to gain a better understanding of its design, its interior structure and contents. (Submitted by Alan McLachlan) 

LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES

THE NANCY J: THE BOAT THAT WOULDN'T FLOAT

It was in July 1985, during my first Kingston Waterfront Art Show at the Anglin Company, that Ray Wade, the General Manager, took me for a walk around the property to show me some places and things that were soon to change.

He had told me about the tiny work-boat, the *Nancy J.*, that had been on the shore as long as he could remember. Apparently, after it was built, and immediately after they launched it, the boat tipped over and sank because the wheelhouse was too heavy. It was raised and put up on the shore where it had rested ever since.

We walked through the thicket along the narrow foot-path and into a clearing. There, I got my first glimpse of the *Nancy J.* all tangled in the undergrowth. She was beautiful: an artist's dream! I knew I wouldn't be able to paint her just yet as a homeless man was living on her deck in the daytime and sleeping on a mattress under the boat at night. I would wait and come back when it got too cold for him to stay there.



Thanks to Mr. Wade and that walk, I decided to paint another series of waterfront scenes. I had a busy summer working in the area of Willy Walker's Boat Builders and the Canada Dredge and Dock Company. I was never too far from the *Nancy J.* and I noticed that every day, a certain bag-lady would come along with some "liquid refreshments" -- along with some other characters. For sure, they always seemed to be enjoying themselves! I respected their privacy and they also did mine. I finished up the area for the season and left.

In late October, I read in the *Whig Standard* that a homeless man had been found on the water front burned to death on a mattress. I called the Canada Dredge and Dock Company. Yes, it was the same man. Poor soul: he was probably just trying to keep warm. On 10 February 1986, I went back to paint this picture. The *Nancy J.* looked so cold, sad, and lonely there with the Cotton Mill in the background. I'm glad I got to do it when I did, as she disappeared shortly after. I know that the other tugs, *J.A. Cornett* and the *Canadian Subaqueous*, went to Port Dover.

I often wonder what happened to the "NO FLOAT BOAT." I just hope her new dwelling place is a watery one! (Shirley Gibson-Langille)

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