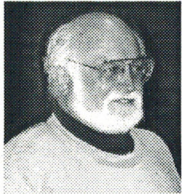
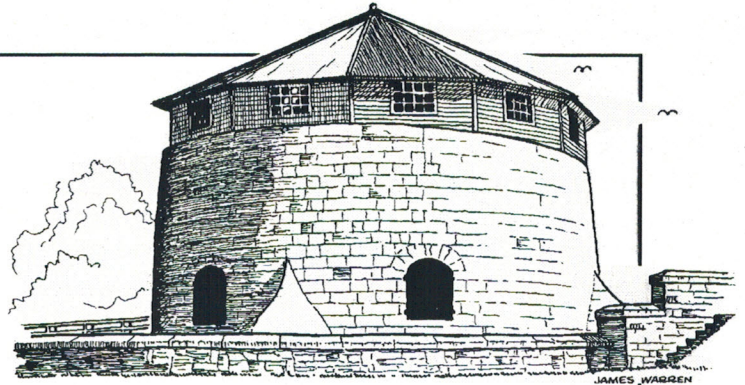


LIMELIGHT

NEWSLETTER of the
KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

vol 4 no 7 October 2002 ISSN 1488-5565



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Times are a changing. As I write this message in September, I am reminded that our First Nation, the Mississauga, called this month “*Ahtabuhgah keezis*,” the fading leaf moon. October was “*Penagueewene keezis*,” the falling leaf moon, while November was “*Kuhskuhdene keezis*,” the freezing moon. A depressing thought, but let’s concentrate on the beauty of the changing leaves.

But it’s not only the leaves that are changing. Our kindred association, the Frontenac Historic Foundation, has changed its name to the Frontenac Heritage Foundation. Their rationale was clearly stated: “We deal with the built environment of the City of Kingston and the area traditionally encompassed by the County of Frontenac – these are the buildings in which history was enacted. Heritage is perhaps a more inclusive term. We are looking at the retention of certain structures not necessarily lived in by persons who were outstanding in changing the flow of history but were part of the broad sweep of the past.” What a fine mission statement. But there was another reason: confusion with “our sister organization” The Kingston Historical Society. Certainly, the clarification is understandable but I trust KHS will continue to share so many of the interests and objectives of the FHF. To that end, if any members of KHS wish to join FHF, write to Box 27, Kingston K7L 4V6 (541-0749).

Finally, a word of welcome to new members and thanks to three new sponsors: Tango, Chien Noir, and Blake McKendry Books.








Brian S. Osborne



OUR NEXT MEETING: *see also back cover*

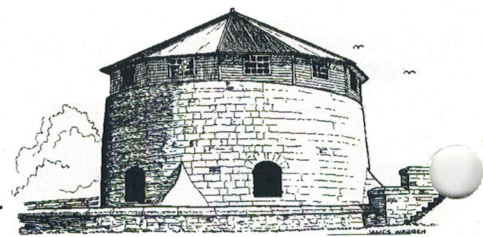
ARTHUR MILNES
“MACKENZIE, ROGERS, BENSON: GRITS IN
THE HOME OF MACDONALD”

Wednesday **16 OCTOBER at 7:30 PM**
in the Wilson Room,
Kingston Public Library, Johnson St at Bagot
all welcome! refreshments

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THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ESTABLISHED 1893



Murney Tower by James Warren

Limelight is published nine times a year - September to May. Submissions should be addressed to the **Editor**, Brian Osborne, 613-533-6042, email osborneb@qsilver.queensu.ca. *Limelight* designer, Jennifer McKendry, 613-544-9535, email mckendry@kos.net. The Kingston Historical Society (KHS) gratefully acknowledges the support of *Limelight*'s sponsors.



KHS holds monthly talks or events, usually at 7:30 PM on the third Wednesday of the month, September to May, usually in the Wilson Room of the Kingston Public Library on Johnson St at Bagot St. Special annual events include a dinner and talk honouring the birthday of Sir John A. Macdonald in January and a ceremony marking his death in June. **New members are welcome!** - individual \$35, family \$40, institutional \$40, student \$25; memberships include *Historic Kingston*, published annually by KHS, and nine issues of *Limelight*.

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Box 54, Kingston ON K7L 4V6 Canada

phone 613-544-9925
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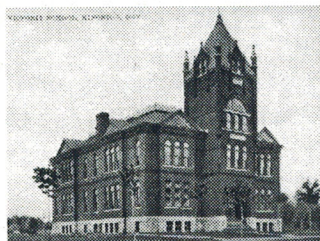
history in the making -



Over the coming weeks, the Society's Awards Committee will be considering its recommendations to Council of the **KHS AWARDS for 2002**. All members are invited to participate in this important process by nominating individuals or organizations considered to be worthy candidates. Nominations may be mailed to the Chairman of the Committee, Dr J.G. Pike, 150 Macdonnell Street, Kingston K7L 4B8 before the deadline of **31 October 2002**. The Awards Committee would appreciate it if as much information as possible be presented in support of each nomination.



Congratulations to the Queen's School of Business on the opening of **Goodes Hall**, which encompasses **Victoria School**, built in 1892 on Union Street to the designs of architect William Newlands. The Venton Group of Architects of Toronto have added a new section faced with brick to blend with the old public school and grey stone to blend with neighbouring Stauffer Library.



Victoria School on a postcard mailed in 1908. Coll. J. McKendry



Dignitaries are piped in at the opening on 12 September
Photo by J. McKendry

IN MEMORIAM: The Hon. Dr. George Francis Gillman Stanley
C.C., C.D., K.St.J., D.Phil., F.R.S.C., F.R.H.S.

born 6 July 1907



died 13 September 2002

Born in Calgary on 6 July 1907, George Stanley took his B.A. at the University of Alberta before winning a Rhodes Scholarship to study at Oxford where he earned a B.A., M.A., M.Litt. and D.Phil. He returned to Canada in 1936 as professor of history and head of the department at Mount Allison University. During World War II, Dr Stanley served with the Historical Section at the Canadian Army Headquarters in London, and was discharged with the rank of Lt. Col. in January 1947. His ensuing academic career was marked by a series of "firsts." In 1947, he joined the department of history at UBC as the first full-time professor of Canadian history in Canada. In 1949, Dr Stanley moved to RMC where he was the first Dean of Arts (1962-69) and where he taught the first undergraduate course in military history ever given in Canada. After twenty years at RMC, Dr Stanley returned to Mt Allison to set up the first undergraduate programme in Canadian Studies at a Canadian university.

One of the doyens of Canadian history, Dr Stanley's scholarly contribution has been prodigious, with a score of volumes and many scores of articles and reviews. But no mere ivory-tower academic, Dr Stanley was also involved with the Ontario Historic Sites Board, was elected President of the Canadian Historical Association, and was a member of the Advisory Boards on Canadian Military Colleges and the Canadian War Museum. He served as Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick from 1982 to 1987.

Dr Stanley received numerous honours in recognition of his academic and public service: Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada; recipient of that society's Tyrrell Medal for history; Fellow of the Company of Military Historians; Fellow of the Heraldry Society of Canada; Officer of the Order of Canada (1976); Companion of the Order of Canada

(1995); and recipient of twelve honorary degrees. Dr Stanley was Professor Emeritus at both RMC and Mount Allison, as well as Honorary Ex-Cadet No. H8899 of the Royal Military College.

The KHS Connection

During Dr Stanley's years in Kingston, he served as secretary and president of the Kingston Historical Society and edited *Historic Kingston* for several years. He was president of the Arts Society, and director of the Art Collection Society, served on various committees working to save Kingston's architecture, and was president of the St Andrew's Society. It was during Dr Stanley's Kingston years that he performed perhaps his most visible role for Canada: his suggestion of the basic design for the Canadian flag which was adopted on 15 February 1965.

In recognition of these many good services, in January 1994, Dr Stanley was awarded a special certificate of merit by the Kingston Historical Society. The award marked the 100th anniversary of the Society and the citation dated 10 November 1993 read, "*Throughout his long residence in, and continuing contact with, Kingston, this distinguished Canadian scholar has been unstinting in his labours to develop a public awareness of the richness of the region's history heritage. His enthusiasm, leadership and wisdom were vital elements in the postwar re-emergence of the Kingston Historical Society as an institution providing an historical sensibility within our community.*"



After a long and rich life of public service, Dr Stanley will most certainly be remembered for his scholarship, sense of duty, wise counsel and leadership, and a life-time commitment to enhancing our collective imagination of Canada.





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IMAGES OF KINGSTON: WILLIAMSVILLE by Stewart Renfrew

THE AREA THAT ONCE MADE UP Williamsville followed Princess Street, from Alfred Street to the old traffic circle at the junction of Princess Street, Concession Street, and the Bath Road. The then-hamlet was strung out along Princess Street and was, at best, only a couple of blocks wide.

At the western end of the village there was a toll-booth at the junction of the Montreal Road, Concession Street, and the York Road which later became Highway Two (Outer Princess Street). In the early years, a few houses were located at the western end of the village, the main residential area being concentrated around Victoria Street. North of Princess Street, the village extended to Bartlett Street and, to the south, it went to Park Street. Actually, it was generally considered that any one who lived west of Alfred Street came from Williamsville.

The early settlers at Williamsville were workers on local farms. After 1850, two rope-walks were established and these attracted a number of Scottish rope-makers, both establishments being plainly visible in the Brosius map of 1875. In 1861, about sixteen percent of the inhabitants were of Scottish descent, most of the rest being of English or Irish origin.

Separated from Kingston, the village developed its own industries and shops, including a bakery, grocery, and a carriage-maker. In the 1860s, there were also tailors, carpenters, butchers, farmers, a barber, gardener, broom-maker, shoemaker, and even a hatter. Some carried on their businesses at home while others went as far as Market Square to find employment. In the 1840s, there was a school, which by 1859 had two teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Dugdale.

The religious affiliations were predominantly either Anglican or Methodist. Princess Street United Church found its origins in the Williamsville Methodist Church, which John Counter played a leading role in founding. Located on the west side of Victoria Street south of Park Street in 1849, it was later abandoned, but was revived in 1875 and was flourishing by 1883. In 1865, a small Anglican mission was established on the north side of Princess Street across from Regent Street. The mission did not succeed although the building itself was not torn down until 1937. In 1882, a new Anglican congregation

was established and, in 1890, they laid the cornerstone of St. Luke's Anglican Church on Nelson Street just north of Princess.

If you are driving through the area today you can still see some of the buildings. The "Book Market" at about 649 Princess Street was originally Thomas McCrea's carriage-making establishment and, across the street at 668-70, was Carnovsky's bread and biscuit bakery and grocery. There was another grocer, James Allen, at 641. The larger rope-walk ran north from Johnson Street between Nelson and Victoria. The small one was along the side of McDonnell Street, between Park and Princess streets. The grand stone house that now houses the CNIB at 826 Princess Street was the home of James H. Metcalf, auctioneer and MP. The Metcalfs were said to have had the finest stable of carriage-horses in town.



The grandest house of all (*above*) belonged to Thomas Briggs, a prominent insurance agent. He lived at Hedgelawn on the west side of Regent Street, just south of Princess Street. There was a small orchard at Princess Street where Harvey's now stands. A drive-way swept up to the spacious limestone house, set in suitably impressive grounds, through stone gateposts (*below*). These are all that remain of the estate today as

the house was demolished some years ago and has been replaced by a typical apartment building.



With thanks to Godfrey Spragg's students and Marjory Simmons

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The Smiths Falls Bascule Bridge



ON 11 AUGUST 2002, several members of KHS attended the unveiling of a Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada plaque commemorating the national historic significance of the Smiths Falls Bascule Bridge.

The Scherzer rolling lift bascule bridge was erected across the Rideau Canal between 1912-1913 by the Canadian Northern Railway Company, during the construction of the Toronto Ottawa section of its mainline. Introduced in 1895 by William Scherzer, a Chicago-based engineer, the Scherzer rolling lift system of operation represented a novel design principle for bridge building in North America.

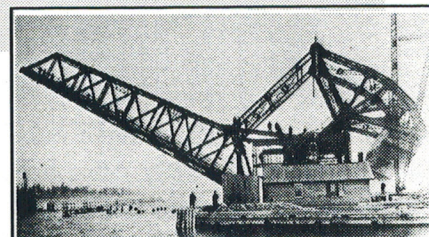
Derived from the French word *bascule*, meaning see-saw, the lift span of the bridge is balanced in a teeter-totter fashion. The rolling lift action of the bridge virtually eliminated friction and, by counterbalancing the lift span during its movement, very little power was required to raise or lower it. As a result, in its original design, the bascule bridge could be operated either electrically or manually.

Of the numerous bascule bridges constructed since 1910, the Smiths Falls Bascule Bridge is the oldest of the remaining fourteen to be found in Canada. It is one of two bascule bridges extant along the Rideau Canal.

Created in 1919, the Historic Sites and

Monuments Board of Canada advises the Minister of Canadian

Heritage regarding the national historic significance of places, persons, and events that have marked Canada's history. The placement of a commemorative plaque represents an official recognition of historic value. It is one means of informing the public about the richness of our cultural heritage which must be preserved for present and future generations. The Smiths Falls Bascule Bridge has been designated as remarkable engineering accomplishment and a significant architectural structure.



bascule bridge, Kingston, 1917
NAC 12143



Bill Lesurf and Doug Stewart unveiling the plaque
Photo Parks Canada

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LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES

THE GHOST OF AMELIA ALLISON

by Shirley Gibson-Langille

At all my art shows, I look for a ghost to bring back ideas from the past. But when I did my "Town of Greater Napanee" show, the ghost found me!

When I was exploring Adolphustown in 1998, I found the Loyalist Cultural Centre in the historic Allison House that had been built in 1876. I walked inside and immediately felt a chill and a presence. A pleasant young man greeted me and gave me permission to look around and take some pictures. Upstairs, at the front of the house, was a small bright room with an antique sewing machine and an old rocking chair. Here I felt the presence more strongly! I took a picture of the room.

I left the house thinking it was probably my imagination. However, every time I looked at the photo of that room it haunted me! I still might have forgotten it if I hadn't met Kathy Staples, then the curator of the Loyalist Cultural Centre.

It was strange how I came to meet her. I had gone to Napanee to attend the Lennox and Addington Historical Society meeting. I was early so I took a walk along the main street. All the stores were closed for the day. When I got to the "Picturesque Gallery," something made me try the door. I told the lady inside about putting in time before the meeting. She said she was doing the same thing and that she was Kathy Staples, the speaker for the meeting. I then asked her if the Allison House was haunted.

She told me that the ghost was Amelia Elizabeth Membery Allison, the lady of the house. She was born in 1853 in Adolphustown. At the age of

23 she married David Wright Allison, a prominent merchant in the area, and moved to "The Brick," as Allison House was affectionately called, as a bride. The mother of four children, she lived to be 87, dying in 1940.

Kathy told me of some startling, eerie happenings in the house. One story was of a couple from Elderhostel who stayed late to finish up some genealogy in the archival room (formerly the master bedroom). She told them not to worry if they heard strange noises; that it would only be the ghost of Amelia. They thought she was kidding. The next day they came back still in shock. It seems they had indeed heard a strange noise and looked down the hall to a small room. The noise was the movement of the rocking chair!

I quickly cut in and asked, "Is that the rocking chair that's beside the sewing machine?"

"Oh yes," she said, "that was the Sewing Room, Amelia's favourite place."

I knew then without a doubt that I wasn't imagining her presence and I really felt she wanted to be remembered - in the limelight, so to speak! So I painted *The Ghost of Amelia Allison*. When Kathy saw it she

marveled that I had painted Amelia outside on a balcony that used to be there. She told me it had been a popular lookout for Amelia. Now that's really hair-raising!

At my art show in the fall of 2000, I was very fortunate to have Peggy Allison, Amelia's granddaughter-in-law, play her part in the rocking chair and Kathy Staples tell the ghost stories. It really was a remarkable happening. It was meant to be, I'm sure!



forthcoming: successful Liberals in Kingston, a Tory stronghold

On Wednesday, 18 September, the Society was addressed by the authors of the recently published *A Sense of Place*, a history of the Aykroyd family. **Peter Aykroyd** and his sister, **Judy Harvie**, engrossed over 70 members and friends with their talk "On Structuring a Family History." Peter indicated the urgency that many feel, including himself, in chronicling one's family history before "it becomes too late." He emphasized the need to go beyond the genealogies and the "begats," but in so doing, there are difficulties and, more importantly, rewards in digging into one's family history. One will find plots and characters when establishing the "sense of place," the "person specific" situations, and the contexts in which one's ancestors lived. In illustrating the above, Peter smiled as he revealed that he discovered that his Upper Canada ancestors were not owners of slaves. He exuded pride in discovering that his ancestor, Henry Aykroyd, had gone to Toronto and was the manufacturer of over 200 dinghies, undoubtedly a result of the boat building that occurred in Kingston during the 1800s. Our appetites to discover more about the Aykroyd family were whetted with his revelation that, at the turn of the century, one of his ancestors was not only a local dentist but also a spiritualist. These examples illustrated clearly the joy, pride, and satisfaction that one receives in researching a family history.

Judy Harvie addressed the difficulties of researching the "distaff" side of families. Frequently, women were illiterate and, in lieu of the documentary record, one has to recapture their pasts by means of their artifacts that have survived around the family farms and homesteads. Judy became a detective in researching the "invisible moving spirit that nurtured and enabled the public acts of the Aykroyd men." By

examining these artifacts and putting them into context, a fuller understanding of the past role of women is achieved. Judy illustrated her point with an unusual source of historical information: cookbooks. Referring to several Aykroyd family examples, she demonstrated that they contain not just the culinary tastes of a family, but frequently the names of friends, sayings, and other non-cooking information scribbled on sides or tops of pages: they constitute an unusual, but most revealing, historical source.

Peter Aykroyd and Judy Harvie presented KHS with a copy of Dr Kathryn Bindon's doctoral thesis, "Kingston: A Social History, 1785 - 1830" (1979), which will become part of the Kingston Research Resources held in the Queen's University Archives Reading Room.

October's presentation

On 6 October, **Arthur Milnes** will speak at 7:30 PM on Mackenzie, Rogers, and Benson: Grits in the home of Macdonald." His focus will be on the successful Liberals in Kingston, a Tory stronghold: Alexander Mackenzie, Canada's second Prime Minister; Norman Rogers, private secretary to Mackenzie King; and finally Edgar Benson, Trudeau's first Finance Minister. Arthur Milnes is a graduate of Queen's and Ryerson, and a former tour-guide at our Murney Tower. A former political assistant at Queen's Park, he has been a reporter since 1993 having worked in the Parliamentary Press Gallery, the Northwest Territories, and now the *Kingston Whig-Standard* since 1999. He also writes a regular column on political history for the *Hill Times* on Parliament Hill in Ottawa.

Judy Harvie illustrated her point with an unusual source of historical information: cookbooks



September's guest speakers
Photo by Sarah Meharg