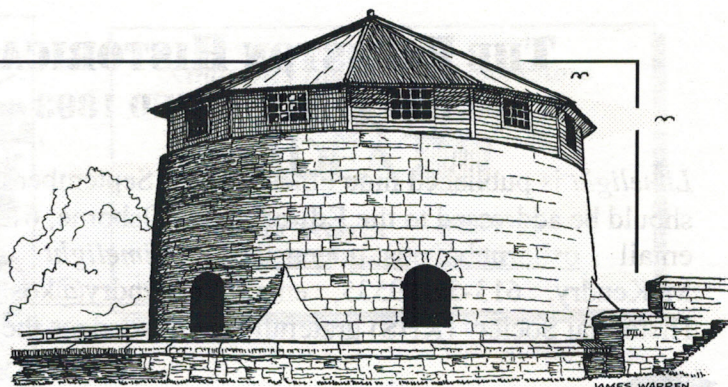


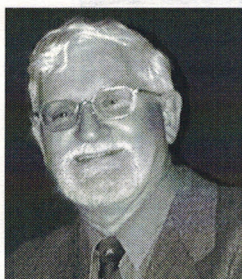
LIMELIGHT

NEWSLETTER of the
KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



I recently had the pleasure of reading our Society's founding minutes. Hand-written - as you might expect - for document created well over 100 years ago, the Minute Book matches every bibliophile's dream of what it should be -

tattered at the edges, heavy to lift and with pages that are beautiful to look at. The text is reassuring yet a little disquieting, and that brings to mind a somewhat shop-worn phrase, but still apt, "continuity and change." An AGM has passed and your Council team has, with regret, lost a few members, while others have joined or taken on fresh responsibilities. As a new President, I like the idea of a Council that values experience while welcoming the circulation of new ideas.

And that, of course, leads me to my distinguished predecessor, **Brian Osborne**. Quite frankly the "distinguished" - in terms of his scholarly achievements and administrative experience at Queen's University and other places -

would easily consume the entire content of *Limelight* and more. So I will let that be. Search the web by key words "Brian Osborne Kingston" and you will see what I mean. I like to think it is significant he arrived at Queen's in 1967, a year commemorating Confederation. He champions the cause of Canadian history, especially at the regional level. He has a strong belief in the role of the academic as a public scholar. He is a very understanding guy and patient in achieving his objective. At the AGM, when I confused his love of rugby as a player with another game called soccer, he merely docked me a class and sent me back to some kind of sports 101. No doubt, 500 lines on the blackboard will follow. He has been and continues to be tireless in advancing the cause of the Society. There is a passion there we will not lose since, as Past President and editor of this newsletter, he will continue to serve on the Council.

Maurice Smith

THIS MONTH'S MEETING:

WEDNESDAY, **16 MARCH** at 7:30PM

Steve Lukits

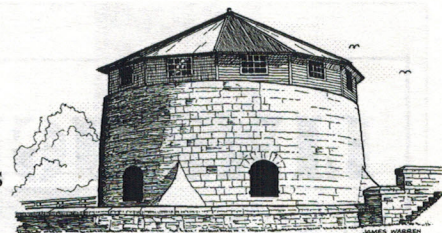
"The Kingston Whig Standard at the Turn of the 21st Century: a Personal History."

Wilson Room, **Kingston Public Library**, Johnson 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@post.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.

Kingston Historical Society
Box 54, Kingston ON K7L 4V6

website www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca

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Gordon Sinclair, *Treasurer*

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Robert Andrews
Jane Errington
Warren Everett
John Fielding

Heather Home
Ted Huber
Marc Létourneau
Douglas Petty
Jack Pike



YOUR NEW COUNCIL:

front, left to right: Jack Pike, Marc Létourneau, John Fielding, Heather Home, Ted Huber, Doug Petty, Bob Andrews, John Abbott.

back, left to right: Maurice Smith, Ed Grenda, Warren Everett, Brian Osborne, Gordon Sinclair, Alan MacLachlan (missing—Jane Errington)

photo by Jennifer McKendry

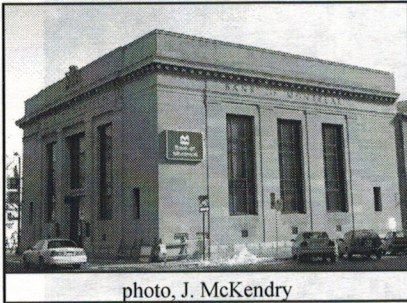
THE SCRIBBLER

J.W. (Bill) Fittsell



At last month's AGM, because of an interest in installing a historic plaque, **Joyce Waddell-Townsend** asked the building date of Kingston's main branch of the Bank of Montreal on King St E. at Market and Clarence Streets. In response to an earlier inquiry, a bank employee cited 1817, the year recorded on a bronze plaque

on the exterior of the imposing building. One KHS member guessed "the 1930s" and KHS councillor **Jack Pike** reported that site was formerly occupied by a drug store.

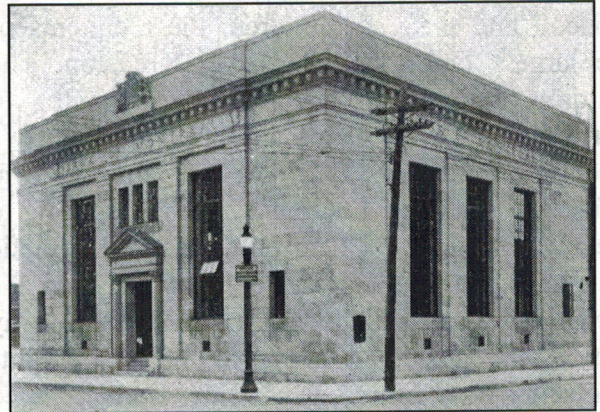


photo, J. McKendry

The query sent me to *Heritage Kingston*, one of the books that went for a song under the auctioneering of outgoing secretary **Doug Petty** (with the sometimes silent bidding of past president **Warren Everett**). I recalled that the buildings on Market Street were prominently displayed in various illustrations with some showing the drug store of J. George King on the Market Street corner. Jennifer McKendry's *With Our Past before Us: 19th Century Architecture in the Kingston Area* supplies the information that this was built as Palmer's Drugstore in 1855 to the designs of architect William Coverdale.

My "bank" file revealed that Canada's first bank, founded in Montreal in 1817, established its first Ontario branch (and the second in Canada) in Kingston at another location, possibly at Brock and Ontario streets, in June 1818. In 1845, shortly after the Town of Kingston was incorporated, the Bank of Montreal constructed its first permanent establishment here. Located at King East and William, it is a handsome,

limestone, three-storey, building, designed by architect Edward Crane (McKendry, 104). In 1906, when the Bank of Montreal absorbed several banks, the building was sold to the Frontenac Club and now is a bed and breakfast, The Frontenac Club Inn.



Kingston and Its Vicinity [c1924]

The current main branch (above c1924), which launched the discussion, was designed in Italian renaissance style and constructed of Indiana sandstone in 1924. Waddell-Townsend who sparked this search, was impressed, however, by an interior feature of the building. A *Whig-Standard* story covering the renovations made in 1986, confirmed her thoughts. "When you walk into the newly remodelled main branch...you can't help but look up at the ceiling (left). Much has changed in the latest round of renovations...but the reminders of earlier days have been carefully and lovingly retained. The beauty of the intricately moulded plaster decorations and the ceiling has been enhanced by replacing the fluorescent lighting with mercury-haloid lighting which casts the ceiling and the bank hall in a crisp, clean light."

So patrons, "look up" and enjoy the view and its history—"Established in 1818, Constructed in 1924."

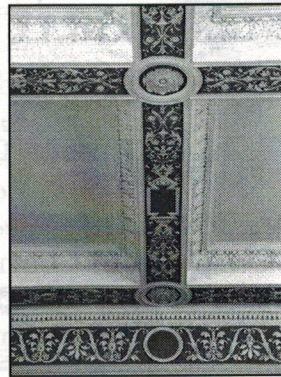
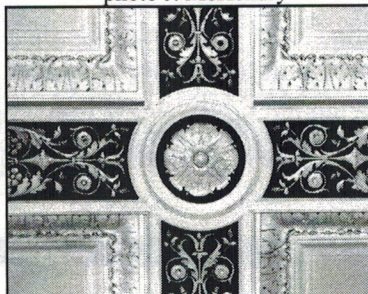


photo J. McKendry



Uncle Louis makes a friend in Kingston

by Robert McGeachy

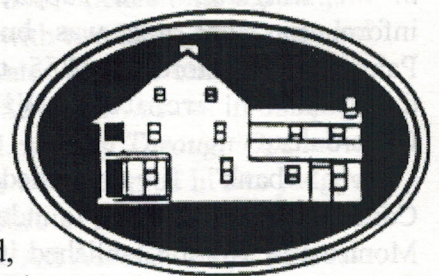
With one notable exception, Kingstonians enthusiastically greeted Prime Minister Louis St Laurent during his 18 June 1949 election campaign stop. Following his City Hall visit, the Prime Minister, accompanied by his wife, went by a PWOR-led procession to Megaffin Stadium to deliver a speech. Afterwards, he met Mr and Mrs Driscoll and their six children, the recipients of the largest family allowance in Kingston. The children, ranging in age from six months to thirteen years, were happy to meet their country's leader, except for four-year-old Jimmy who refused to shake St. Laurent's hand. According to the *Whig Standard*, Uncle Louis was "diplomatic as usual" and "smiled and did not insist on the privilege." Later, at the Montreal Street railway station, the Driscoll family bid the St Laurents farewell. With Jimmy at her side, Barbara, aged three, presented red roses to Mrs St Laurent. The young man's opinion of the Prime Minister had changed as he "bowed with beautiful finesse." Pleased that he won a new supporter, Uncle Louis, "returned the gesture," almost certainly with equal finesse. The visit was a success. Jimmy "was back in the fold." Nine days later, the Liberals won the riding.



George Lilley Photographic Fond, Queen's University
Archives V25.6 20-13

FAIRFIELD HOUSE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION'S SPRING SEASON

- Saturday, **30 April**, 7:30 PM: Meet and hear, **Charlotte Gray**, one of Canada's most exciting historical authors (*Sisters of the Wilderness*, *Flint and Feathers*, *The Museum Called Canada*), at the Briargate Retirement Living Centre, 4567 Bath Road, Amherstview. Tickets: \$20 per person or Friends of Fairfield \$18. Please contact Johanna MacKinnon 352-7453 millerseedfarm@sympatico.ca
- Saturday, **14 May**, 9 AM to 12 PM: FHHA Annual **Plant Sale**, Fairfield House, Information: Cecelia Campbell 634-9024
- Sunday, **15 May**, 3:30 to 5 PM: FHHA Annual Friends of Fairfield **Reception**: Members can tour the house, view recently exhibited artifacts and hear about exciting plans for the future of Fairfield House! RSVP Johanna MacKinnon 352-7453 millerseedfarm@sympatico.ca



Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

In reading over my *Limelight* vol. 4 no. 9 (December 2002), I have found an error, which needs correcting, so that future researchers, using *Limelight* as a reference source, will not perpetuate it.

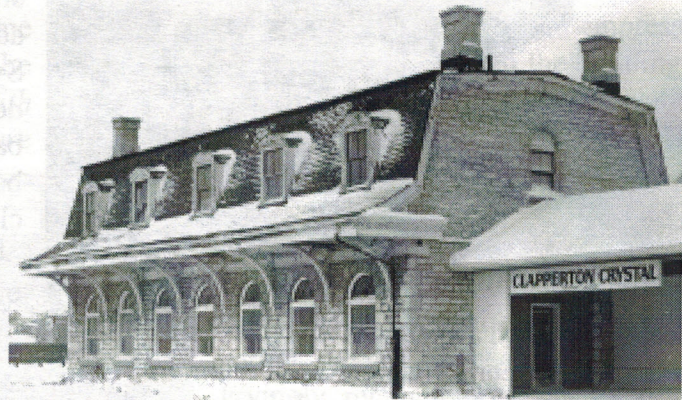
In his fine article, "Images of Kingston: The Railway Village," Stewart Renfrew comments about the Outer Station on Montreal Street, on page 4: "Later [in 1895], this building was replaced by a long low brick structure to the east of the station. Many Kingstonians remember this building as the passenger terminal; the 1856 stone building then became the freight depot." However, my research has established that, at no time, was the stone building of 1856 used for a freight depot.

Initially, in 1856, the Outer Station included a stone passenger-depot, a frame dining-building, and a separate freight-shed. With the commencement of World War II in 1939, the heavy volume of Armed Forces personnel training at Camp Barriefield and the airport at LeMoine's Point, required that the larger 1895 brick building become the main passenger depot and the smaller 1856 stone building be utilized mainly for baggage and passenger overflow. In later years, the first floor of

the 1856 stone building was used for baggage, while the second floor became CNR offices. With the amalgamation of the CN Express and CN Freight in the late 1960s, they relocated from downtown to the Outer Station and moved into a new metal-clad Express/Freight building located west of the old 1856 building. When the new VIA passenger station was opened in 1974 at its present location in Cataraqui Village, the former 1856 building was used for various CNR departments, and eventually was leased out to various commercial tenants.

The 1856 stone building now stands fire-damaged, vacant, and for sale.

Gordon Smithson



Name That Artefact

The Museum of Health Care at Kingston presents its 5th annual "Name That Artefact" Game Show Night. Try to identify weird and wonderful items from the Museum's collection or just watch the fun! Prizes for knowledge and creativity! Thursday, **3 March** at 7PM, B143 Botterell Hall, Queen's University. Free. For more info, email museum@kgh.kari.net or call 548-2419, or visit www.museumofhealthcare.ca.

LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES

Through Open and Closed Doors

by Shirley Gibson-Langille



I recently finished a sketch of this limestone building at 134 Earl Street on the corner of Sydenham Street. A plaque stands in front of the building. It reads:

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD
Father of Confederation
First Prime Minister of Canada
134 Earl Street, built 1866

In 1878, Sir John A. Macdonald rented this house for his widowed brother-in-law, Professor

James Williamson, and his sister, Louisa Macdonald. Louisa died here in 1888. While he was Member of Parliament for Kingston, this was Macdonald's legal residence until 1889.

In 1962, long before the plaque, my father, Angus McGregor, of Wil Mac Construction, bought this building to make over into bachelor apartment units. When it was finished, he took me on a tour. He opened up Apartment No. 2 on the main floor and told me this was a unit that he wouldn't be renting and that I could have it for a



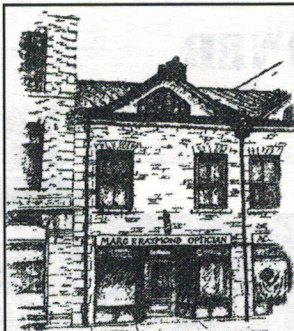
studio. I was so thrilled! It was the brick addition at the back of the building on Sydenham Street. It had a room and a pantry downstairs and, upstairs, there was a room and a bathroom with an old fashioned claw-footed bathtub. A back door opened onto a small, closed-in porch with two more doors: one led out to a tiny private yard; the other opened out onto Sydenham Street. It was out in this porch that I did this oil painting *Through Open and Closed Doors*. It was accepted in two judged exhibitions: Québec's "Exposition Provinciale" and the Kingston Art Association's "Annual Spring Exhibition" at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre.

Having a place to work away from home without a phone, allowed me to produce some fine paintings. Unfortunately, life moves on. After a year or so, the building was sold and all these doors were closed to me. Although my history in this building will never merit a plaque as Sir John's residence there did, I'll treasure my fond memories of my dear "Dad-studio" forever.

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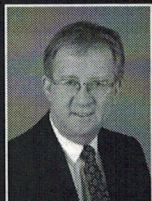
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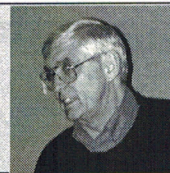


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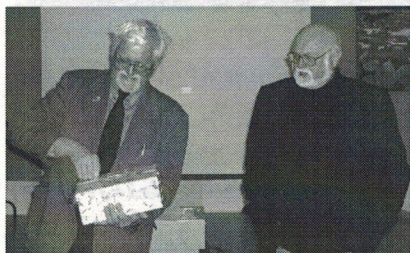
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SPEAKERS' CORNER

with Alan MacLachlan. Photos by Jennifer McKendry



The AGM was well attended with over 60 members of the Society present. The annual reports were presented, explained and passed unanimously. For our new council and executive, please see p.2. Outgoing president, **Brian Osborne**,



presented a mysterious, gift-wrapped box to incoming president, **Maurice Smith**. Soon to be revealed in triumph was the Society's official seal.



Following the AGM, the society enjoyed refreshments, as they assessed the various items soon to be offered in the Silent Auction. Under the astute and observant eyes of our resident auctioneer,

Doug Petty, over \$1,100 was added to the KHS coffers! Included in the treasure trove of historical artifacts were a typewriter of unknown vintage; a turn-of-the-century photo print of a nude cupid;



flapper meets the queen



numerous prints of the Royal Family; spurs and riding crop; a pair of early, paneled, "window reveals" (left) from a demolished house at the foot of North Street; a crystal biscuit-jar in mint condition; a set of scales; and wonderful and rare books such as Preston's *Kingston Before the War of 1812*, the city by-laws in 1883, and a Canadian Directory for 1851-2. The generosity of the members and friends was spurred on by a bidding war between **John Grenville** and **Jennifer McKendry** for several objects, and Doug's shameless exploitation of the generosity of **Warren Everett** (above, on the left). Our thanks to all those present for making the AGM a very enjoyable evening.

colour photos:
www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca

On 16 March at 7:30PM, our guest speaker will be **Steve Lukits** of the RMC English Department on "The Kingston Whig Standard at the Turn of the 21st Century: a Personal History."