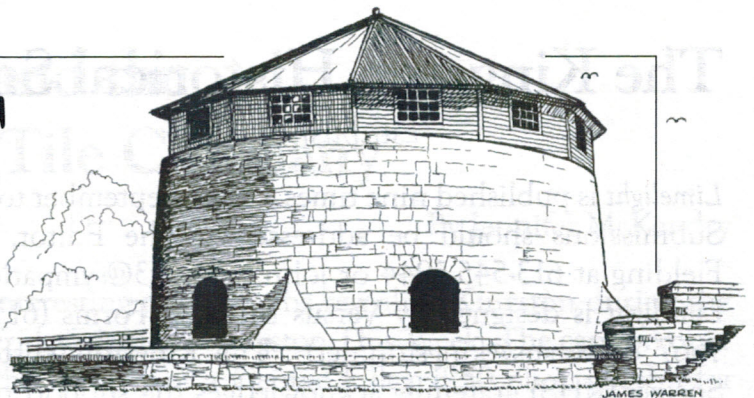


# LIMELIGHT

Newsletter of the  
Kingston Historical Society

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

**T**he Society's 2008 AGM was held on February 20th with about 50 members present. Each member received a 26 page AGM booklet containing reports from executive members and committee chairs. The meeting was relatively short and to the point.

Several salient themes emerged: the Society's strong financial position; the Society's continuing extensive outreach programme throughout the year; and the successful operation of the Murney Tower National Historic Site, now a part of a World Heritage Site. Doubtless these are respectable accomplishments.

Gracing the proceedings were four of the Society's Past Presidents: Isobel Trumpour, Bill Fitsell, Louis Grimshaw, and Desmond O'Meara. Isobel Trumpour was the second female President who served two, two year terms a decade apart (1980-82 and 1990-92). A former columnist with the Whig-Standard, Bill Fitsell, was the President in 1974-76. Bill, "The Scribbler", has produced a stream of papers on local history and has published three authoritative books on Canada's national winter game, hockey. Louis Grimshaw assumed the Presidency in 1997-98 and

was instrumental in having the Society's Council hold its meetings during the 1990's in Kingston's acknowledged cradle, Fort Frontenac. The Presidency of Desmond O'Meara (1998-2000) spanned the 20th and 21st centuries. Each contributed substantially to the Society's development in his and her own way.



Just a few days prior to the AGM one of the Society's most versatile and productive members, Margaret Angus, passed away. She left us three months shy of her hundredth birthday. In addition to her illuminating articles, books, and lectures, Margaret Angus was the first female President of the Society. (More on Margaret Angus appears in subsequent pages of this edition).

Personally, I look forward to another enjoyable year in the Chair and will endeavour again to meet as many of the members as I possibly can.

*Edward R. Grenda*

### THIS MONTH'S MEETING Wednesday, 19 MARCH, 7:30PM

#### The History of Beth Israel Synagogue in Kingston

Dr. Gordon Dueck

Wilson Room, Kingston Public Library, Johnson St. at Bagot

Refreshments    All Welcome

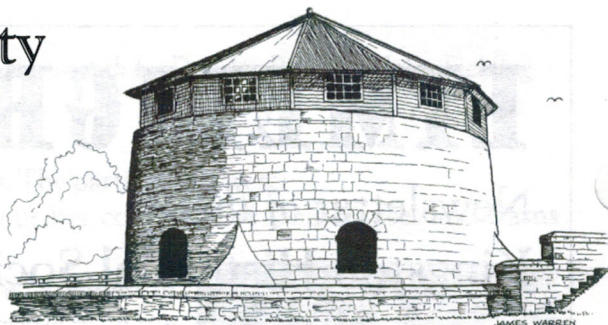
### CONTENTS

President's Message, 1  
Masthead, 2  
The Richardson Family and  
Frontenac Floor & Wall Tile, 3  
In Memorium, 4 & 5  
Items of Historic Interest, 6  
Our sponsors, 7  
Speakers' Corner, 8

# The Kingston Historical Society

established 1893

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Murney Tower by James Warren

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 Street at Bagot Street. 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!** Membership rates are \$40 individual, \$50 family, \$50 institutional or \$25 student. Memberships include *Historic Kingston*, published annually by The Kingston Historical Society.

## Kingston Historical Society

Box 54, Kingston, ON K7L 4V6  
www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca

### Executive

Edward Grenda, *President*  
Maurice Smith, *Past President*  
Alan MacLachlan, *Vice President*  
Marc Létourneau, *Secretary*  
Gordon Sinclair, *Treasurer*

### Councillors

Robert Andrews	Heather Home
Paul Banfield	Ted Huber
Ellie Deir	Douglas Petty
Warren Everett	David St Onge
John Fielding	Carol White



The 2008 KHS Council members who were present at the AGM are pictured here. Back row from left to right: Douglas Petty, Gordon Sinclair, Vice President Alan MacLachlan, Robert Andrews, Secretary Ted Huber. Front row, from left to right: John Fielding, President Edward Grenda, Ellie Deir, Betty Andrews, Treasurer Walter Knott. (Absent from the photograph: Carole White, Heather Home, Paul Banfield, Warren Everett, and Past President Maurice Smith.)

# The Richardson Family and the Frontenac Floor & Wall Tile Company

By Jennifer McKendry

Queen's University Archives is placing interesting photographs revealing Kingston during the later 19th and 20th centuries in each Friday's issue of Kingston This Week. The caption on 1 February included an inquiry about the identity of a George Lilley 1950 photograph of a factory's burnt ruins; this resulted a week later in the publication of a pre-fire image of the Frontenac Floor & Wall Tile Company north of Hickson Avenue and west of Montreal Street. In one of those strange but happy twists of fate, Charles Brownell – a friend whom many readers will recall from his teaching days in the Art History department at Queen's University in the early 1980s kindly sent me in late January a history (to 1943) of this company. He discovered it during his research as a professor at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia.

Written in May 1943 in the Bulletin of the American Ceramic Society by Everett Townsend as part of a history of the American tile industry, the author included the Kingston company because he was the Vice President and Chairman of the Board of Directors. The idea of founding a plant to produce ceramic mosaic floor tile was conceived in 1914 by George Richardson (after whom the Richardson Bath House in Macdonald Park is named) whose uncle Senator Henry W. Richardson (after whom Richardson Laboratories at KGH is named) was half-owner of a fine quality feldspar mine 25 miles north of Kingston. Sadly, George was killed a year later in World War One and his uncle died in 1917, the year the ceramics plant failed. George's brother, James A. (after whom Richardson Stadium at Queen's is named), decided to revive the production in 1920 in part to repay the original investors which he did in full. It was at this time that Everett Townsend came to the city to act as the company's General Manager. He built a feldspar grinding plant to complement the ceramic production. In 1932 white and coloured wall tiles were added to the production of floor tiles. The plant had expanded when they began grinding feldspar, again in 1935 and once more in 1941 when art pottery was added to the line.

Well known for their promotion and ownership of grain shipping, the link of the Richardson family to local feldspar mining and tile production is now better known thanks to Virginia Commonwealth University, Queen's University Archives and Kingston This Week.

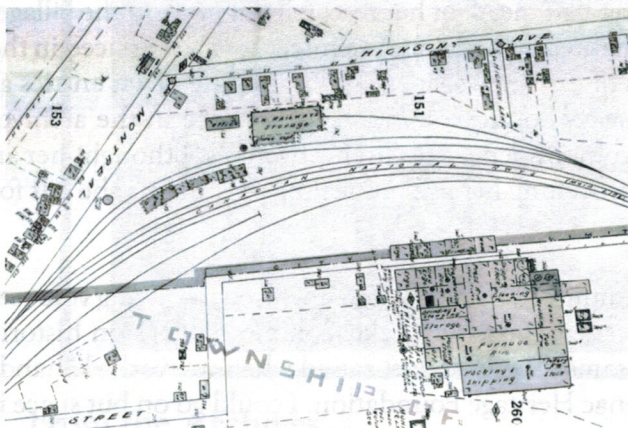


Photo of Frontenac Floor & Wall Tile Co. pre fire of 1950; collection of Queen's University Archives, Kingston Chamber of Commerce VO65

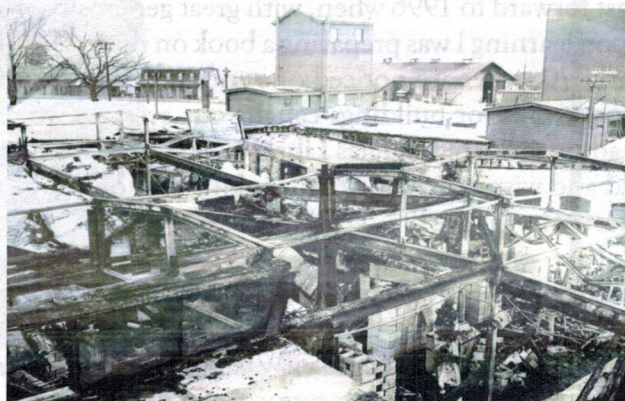


Photo by George Lilley of ruins of Frontenac Floor & Wall Tile Co. after fire of February 1950; collection of Queen's University Archives, George Lilley Fonds V25.5 11-162.1

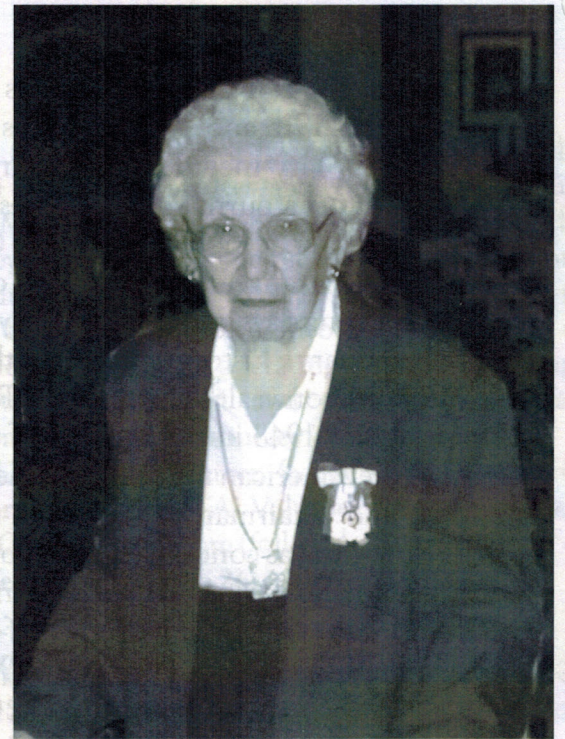
# IN MEMORIAM

MARGARET ANGUS 1908-2008

President of the Kingston Historical Society 1972-1974

While published death notices sensibly place in orderly sequence the main determining factors in a person's life, recollections by friends and family can be a collage of memories moving in and out of sequence. Let us first record the facts as provided in the newspaper:

Passed peacefully on 15 February, in her 100th year. Born 23 May 1908 in Chinook, Montana to parents U.S. Grant Sharp and Cora Krause. Predeceased by her husband in 1996, Professor William Angus [editor of *Historic Kingston* 1976-86]. She is survived by her children, Barbara Morgan and James Angus, as well as grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Margaret attended the University of Montana at Missoula, where she met and married William, a young drama professor. In 1937, they came to Queen's, where she fell in love with Kingston's history and architecture. For 55 years, Margaret (Peg to her friends) researched, lectured and wrote about its history. She spearheaded architectural heritage initiatives and initiated the heritage clothing collection at Agnes Etherington Art Centre (AEAC). Her most popular work, *The Old Stones of Kingston* (1966), is just one of several significant publications. She had a close working relationship with many of the region's institutions including Queen's, AEAC, St. Lawrence College and KGH. She held leadership positions in many organizations including local, provincial and national heritage societies. Widely recognized, she received numerous honours including the Jaycee Citizen of the Year in 1967, the Order of Canada in 1992 [and an award from KHS in 1995], as well as honorary degrees from Queen's in 1973 and from St. Lawrence College in 2005.



Now I am looking at the notes I wrote during a presentation she gave on 20 September 1972 (published in vol. 21 *Historic Kingston*) to KHS in City Hall. I had only recently moved to Kingston into a stone house in Portsmouth Village and was thrilled to learn a talk on the its history was being given by the author of *The Old Stones of Kingston*. Fast forward to 1996 when, with great generosity of spirit, Margaret lent me all of her research material on the village, upon learning I was preparing a book on the subject. Our common interest in regional architecture had surfaced in the early '70s when we noticed one another slowly turning the pages of early newspapers and scribbling down entries as tender calls for buildings caught our eyes. As we returned the heavy bound volumes to their place in the archives reading room of Douglas Library, we started to compare notes. From my perspective in my twenties, I thought her an old and wise woman ~ little thinking that one day I would be approaching her age but feeling as young as she felt for most of her active life.

With her support and encouragement, I joined the municipal committee when they were involved in writing volumes 2 and 3 describing building of architectural and historic significance, started a weekly column in 1971 on historic architecture in the *Kingston Whig-Standard* and choked on the same clouds of dust raised when we worked "hands on" during the 1973 restoration of 665 King St W. for the Frontenac Heritage Foundation. I could go on but space is limited and the memories of the last 35 years almost limitless.

Rest easy, Margaret, we miss you.

by Jennifer McKendry



**JACK MacINTOSH ERCKHOLDT GRENVILLE, 1923-2008.**

Jack Grenville, who died peacefully in his sleep at home on Jan. 26, was one of those solid members who did his service to KHS and community quietly and cheerfully in partnership with his wife, Joyce, who died Aug. 29, 2007. "He was a kind, gentle, happy, thoughtful and committed person...his passion was his friends," said son John Grenville in a thoughtful eulogy delivered Jan. 29 at St. James Church, where his father faithfully served for more than 60 years. "A veteran of the RCAF, Jack taught at Sharbot Lake and Queen Elizabeth secondary schools. He enjoyed reading, camping, loved to travel and to refinish furniture and make treasure chests. Even after passing, Jack Grenville contributed a gem to our Society. At the AGM "Show and Tell" on Feb. 20, son John displayed and described two drawings~from his father's collection~of the unique Westmount homes, built by Allan Lumber Co. on Victoria Street, in the 1920s.

by J.W. (Bill) Fittsell

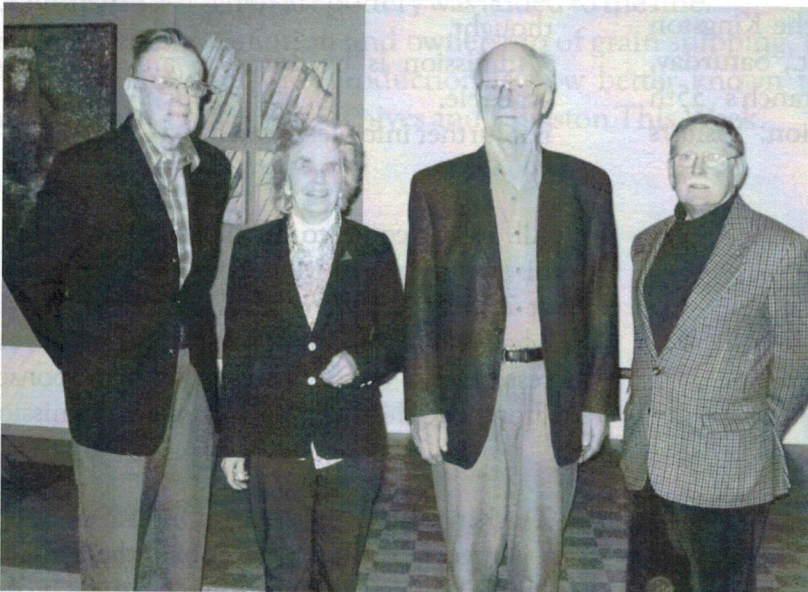


Photo of former presidents taken at the recent AGM.

The Past Presidents from left to right are: William "Bill" Fittsell, Isobel Trumpour, Desmond O'Meara, and Louis Grimshaw

### From the Archives....

Members of the Public Utilities Commission were horrified to discover that the Kingston Historical Society only issued them one invitation for a posh dinner. They were further aghast to learn from Mayor Mills that 10 invitations were being issued to the local Progressive Conservative Association and only six to the Liberals. *Kingston Whig-Standard*, 22 December 1964

# Calendar of events

## History Related Events Calendar for March/April 2008

Cataraqui Archaeological Research Foundation and the Frontenac Heritage Foundation present, Susan (Sue) M. Bazely, Executive Director/Senior Archaeologist of CARF who will speak on "Archaeology: The Foundation for Good Restoration" **Tuesday March 11, 2008, 7:30 p.m.**, City Hall NHS Memorial Hall, Refreshments to be served afterward. This is the 1st Lecture in a Series, In Celebration of the 25th Anniversary of Cataraqui Archaeological Research Foundation.

For more information visit [www.carf.info](http://www.carf.info) or [www.heritagekingston.com](http://www.heritagekingston.com)

The Kingston Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society will meet in the Wilson Room of the Kingston Frontenac Public Library, 130 Johnson St., **Saturday, March 15, 2008 at 10 a.m.** It's the Branch's 35th Anniversary Celebration and Silent Auction. Visitors welcome.

### THIS MONTH'S MEETING Wednesday, 19 MARCH, 7:30PM

#### The History of Beth Israel Synagogue in Kingston

Dr. Gordon Dueck

Wilson Room, Kingston Public Library, Johnson St. at Bagot

Refreshments All Welcome

You and a guest are cordially invited to attend the Cataraqui Archaeological Research Foundation Annual General Meeting. A brief business meeting will be followed by other festivities and refreshments. This is your opportunity to celebrate 25 years of Archaeology in Kingston 1983-2008 and to get involved in the future of CARF one of the longest operating non-profit heritage organizations in Kingston and one of the longest operating archaeological resources in the province.

Where: 120 Clarence Street (corner of Clarence & Wellington), suite 274 - A Volunteer & Information Kingston Community Room (follow the signs)

When: **Wednesday, March 26, 2008 at 7:00 PM**

Colin Lake, Marine Biologist at the Glenora MNR Research Station, is the Marine Museum speaker on **Sunday, March 30, 2008 at 2 p.m.** He will be discussing what's going on "beneath the waves" with the Great Lakes and how it affects us.

This is a subject not just for environmentalists, but for us all. He will no doubt provide us with much food for thought.

Admission is by donation and refreshments will be available.

For further info please call 613-542-2261.

All are welcome to an illustrated talk by architectural historian Jennifer McKendry on **Tuesday, 8 April, 2008 at 7:30PM**, in Memorial Hall, City Hall, on "Who did what when? Looking at selected properties as examples of researching architectural history." Sponsored by the Frontenac Heritage Foundation, no admission charge.

The Kingston Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society will meet in the Wilson Room of the Kingston Frontenac Public Library, 130 Johnson St., **Saturday, April 19, 2008 at 10 a.m.** Ineta Skepple will speak on "Publishing My Family History".

Visitors welcome.

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# SPEAKERS' CORNER

Prepared this month by Douglas Petty and John Fielding

This year's AGM featured a return of our Show and Tell presentations. The participants were:

**Jennifer McKendry** who used a power point presentation to show us her collection of Doll Houses and Barns (1880-1910) with a scale model Doll House and a Quebec Pig Farm.

**Rick Neilson** described the life and times of William M. Hawkins, a Kingston tavern owner. Rick centered his presentation around a pottery beer bottle from the 1850's with Hawkin's name debossed in the clay.

**Edward Grenda** used his collection of Martello Tower Logo paraphernalia to illustrate how this symbol has been used by not only Kingston community groups, especially sports teams, but even a few national organizations.

**Peter Gower's** presentation was complete with an illustrated display, entitled "A unique Canadian Flag." (With detailed reference to St. George's Cathedral).

**Leslie MacPherson's** show and tell was Sir John A. Macdonald's signature from the collection of Parks Canada's Bellevue House. Three examples of this historic signature were displayed and examined in historical context.



**Donna Ivey and Norma Kelly** featured, "Treasures from Sir John A. MacDonald's Home on Rideau Street".

**John Grenville** presented an early surveyor's drawing and building plans for Victoria Street, and vicinity, with discussion of the Allen Lumber Yard.

**Paul Fritz** spoke about Black History and Slavery with an examination of "leg irons and bill of sale" for an individual known to us as "James". Reference was also made to the book *I've Got A Home In Glory Land*.

**Joyce Waddell-Townsend** commented on the current issue of "The Beaver Magazine". She pointed out the error of Jacques Lacoursiere, the co-editor, when he referred to Quebec City as "The Old Capital" the site chosen by Ottawa as the capital of the United Province of Canada. Of course, it wasn't Ottawa but London that did the choosing and it was Kingston not Quebec City that was the first capital of the United Provinces of Canada.

**Lou Grimshaw** used his carved wooden picture frame from the World War One internment camp at Fort Henry to talk about "Prisoner of War Art from Fort Henry". (Attributed to the ownership of the Hon. William Folger Nickle).

**Alan MacLachlan** showed and described a 1953 empty bottle of HAIG and HAIG PINCH blended Scotch whisky which today is just called "The Dimple" or simply "Haig". The advertising slogan after World War II was "The world's most famous bottle" and likely the only bottle that cannot roll off a table when on its side.

**Howard Stone** examined an 1830's wooden case clock, directing our attention to the questionable marketing techniques employed by some of the trades people of the time.

**Vivian Stone** told us about her fine Limoges China featuring an extremely rare wash basin set, complete with family history.

**Jim Pritchard** spoke briefly on the future of transcontinental air travel as conceived in 1920. He showed a photograph of modern comfortable wicker chairs, placed one on each side of an aircraft cabin, an aircraft of the future. This was taken from *Flying the Atlantic in Sixteen Hours* by Sir Arthur Whitten Brown. The year before, he and Sir John Alcott, DSC, had been the first to fly across the Atlantic.

**Shirley-Gibson Langille** spoke of her travels in Germany as she showed us her "tramp-art what-not shelf", often used to house correspondence and notes.



\*\*\*A special thank you to Jeremy Hale for his technical support.