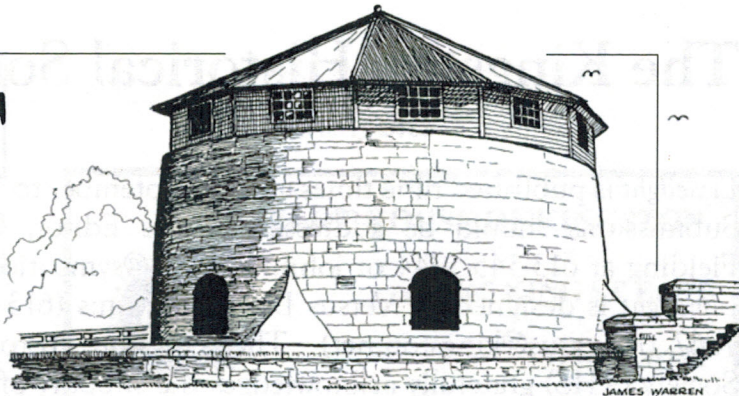


# LIMELIGHT

Newsletter of the  
Kingston Historical Society

vol 11 no 1 January 2009 ISSN 1488-5565



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Biography is a captivating element in historical study largely because of its human interest component. While usually focusing on a single individual, biography gives rise to a story or even a series of stories that commingles tragedy, comedy, successes and failures of the human condition. It engages our emotions and curiosity. The predominant challenge of biography is the accurate depiction of an individual's personality which is enormously complex and easily subject to misjudgment and misinterpretation. The biographer is not sure whether the core of the individual being written about is adequately captured.

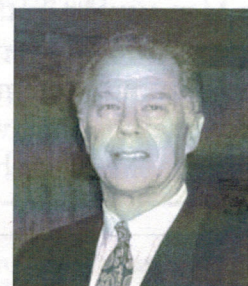
One of the more penetrating and helpful insights into biography was made by the American writer, Oliver Wendell Holmes in his book, *The Autocrat at the Breakfast Table* published in 1854. He argued that an individual, for purposes of discussion he called John, has three disparate personalities. First, there is the real John who is only known by his Maker. The second is John's idea of himself which is invariably idealized and self-serving. The third personality is the idea of John held by others, the world. With regard to the first, if one is a believer in

a superior being, there is no direct access to this privileged knowledge, and if one is not a believer, the notion is irrelevant. However, Holmes contended that the second and third personalities of the individual hardly ever correspond with each other.

Perhaps these three distinctions are a shade overdrawn. But they do have a persuasive quality about them. Suffice it to say, the best a biographer can do is to attain a rough and ready approximation to the truth about the individual who is the focus of the biography.

Once again, I wish to extend the Society's congratulations to Henk Wevers, Peter Gower and Ken Watson who are the 2008 recipients of the Society's Award for their outstanding contributions over the years to our understanding of our local history.

I hope to see many of you at the Sir John A. Macdonald Anniversary Dinner on January 11, 2009 at the Senior Staff Mess at the Royal Military College. What better way to start the New Year!



*Edward R. Grenda*

### THIS MONTH'S MEETING Wednesday, 21 JANUARY, 7:30PM HISTORY OF THE RCHA IN KINGSTON

Speaker - Mike Boese  
Brigade Historian for the RCHA  
Wilson Room, Kingston Public Library  
Johnson St. at Bagot  
Refreshments All Welcome

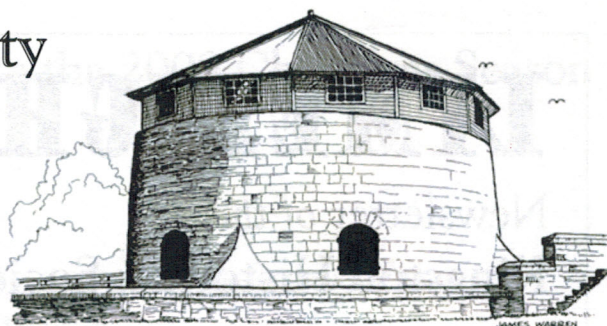
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# The Kingston Historical Society

established 1893

*Limelight* is published nine times a year - September to May. Submissions should be addressed to the Editor, John Fielding at 613-545-5944 or john.fielding3@sympatico.ca. *Limelight* is designed by Versus Business Forms (613-507-7667 or versus@kingston.net) The Kingston Historical Society (KHS) gratefully acknowledges the support of our sponsors in the production of *Limelight*.



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

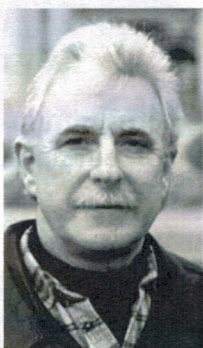
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## From the Editor

First and foremost, thank you to everyone who has contributed to *Limelight* over the past year. This newsletter depends upon the cooperation and assistance of you, the KHS members. From time to time in my rush to get *Limelight* out to you my editing is less than perfect andpellings or error occurs grammatically. I take responsibility for those errors and will do my very best to make sure you don't have to see too many of them.

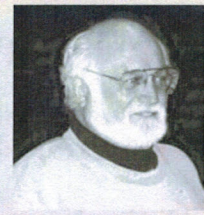
This month I am pleased to introduce a new column provided by Peter Ginn. On page 4 Peter introduces a series of articles taken from Carl Fechter's *Special Number* to *The Daily Whig* of December 1886. The first of the series deals with Princess Street. In future *Limelights* you will find similar stories featuring Brock, Wellington and Ontario streets as well as Fechter's stories on Old Time Citizens, Handsome Residences, The Grocery Trade, etc. We hope you enjoy reading about Kingston as described by the mysterious Carl Fechter in the 40 or so years leading up to 1886. If you like this series or have ideas about what you would like to see in *Limelight* please let me know.

*John Fielding*

### Announcement:

The Kingston Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society will meet in the Wilson Room of Kingston Frontenac Public Library, 130 Johnson St., on Saturday, January 17, 2009 at 10 a.m. "Using Legacy Family Tree Software" - Nancy Cutway will demonstrate features of this genealogy program. Visitors welcome. For further information, visit our website [www.ogs.on.ca/kingston](http://www.ogs.on.ca/kingston)

# ROUND AND ABOUT: Life on Middle Road in the 1930's



Text & photos by Brian S. Osborne

I like diaries and have read a great many of them. In her study, *Mapping Ourselves: Canadian Women's Autobiography* (1993), Helen Buss called them a "healthily eclectic genre" consisting of prosaic log-books, travel accounts, as well as rich reflections on people, events, and self." Kate O'Brien's perusal of *English Diaries and Journals* (1944) convinced her that "the best diaries are written by bores...persons that mention everything." In a similar vein, William Matthews concluded that his *American Diaries* (1959) were "the most immediate, truthful, and revealing documents available to the historian." These comments came to the fore when, as editor of the Champlain Society, I worked with Robin and Terry Harris on the *The Eldon House Diaries: Five Women's Views of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (1994). In their Introduction to this rich collection, they establish the rationale for their use of this evidence:

## Dufferin Days - The Thirties



A compilation of Diary Entries  
of Lillian (McClement) Clarke  
and Notes of Explanation  
by Phyllis (Clarke) Vanhorne  
Additional information by Irene (Clarke) Curtis,  
Jean (Clarke) McLean, and Grace (Clarke) Leakey

Edited by Olly (Olive Vanhorne) Chuchryk

Often, it is the repetitive multitude of details about daily thoughts, emotions, and actions which would carefully be pruned out in the careful topiary of biographical writing. Pepys gives details of his sex life and bowel movements, other diarists comment critically on the social and political realms. Some diarists regularly report on the weather, while others concern themselves with more existential problems of life (xix-xx).

A particularly rich local example is the diary of Pittsburgh Township's John Bennet Marks. From 1824 to 1828, Marks kept a detailed journal of his farming activities and social regimen and Bill Patterson put it to good use in his chapter on "Pioneering Farming in Pittsburgh" in *Lilacs and Limestone: An Illustrated History of Pittsburg Township, 1787-1987* (1989, pp.56-67). But if Marks' diary is a "rich historical legacy," he is outdone by one John Collins Clarke of Ernestown. His obituary on 4 February 1864 recorded that "From December 1831-January 1864, he kept a daily record of the weather and events social, political and religious." That is, some 12,000 entries monitoring the details of his life in terms of climate, travel, family events, and socio-political developments.

And now we have another addition to our local collection of "dear diarists": *Dufferin Days The Thirties: A compilation of Diary Entries of Lillian (McClement) Clarke, Olly (Olive Vanhorne) Chuchryk* (Ed.). In her Introduction, the editor, tells us of the origin and history of this volume. Lillian Agnes May (McClement) Clarke kept a daily record from February 1934 until the 1980s. It documents her life with her husband, Percy, and their family on their 100 acre dairy and crop farm on the north side of Middle Road in a district of Pittsburgh Township known as "Dufferin." These often curt entries (14 February 1934: "Cold. Valentine Party at school"; 12 July 1936: "Orange service") have been transcribed by her daughters, Phyllis, Irene, Jean, and Grace, and they have "added details as they recall times from their youth." Taken together, the diary and commentary, document one family's part of times gone by. As Olive puts it, "Times were very different in the thirties, with no electricity, radio or television, nor telephone. No running water, cars or tractors. People were friendlier and visited each other often. ... The food was good and plentiful, and all homemade including the bread. The meat, eggs, milk, butter, vegetables most all the food was produced on the farm."

But there is a major problem with this self-published volume: only a hundred were produced. If you rush, you may be lucky to get one of the last copies available at Novel Idea. But then, perhaps our Society's Publication Committee might wish to explore with Phyllis and Olive whether a second run is possible, and whether they might cooperate in producing volumes covering other decades.

What do you think?

# The Daily Whig Special Number December 1886

In December 1886, *The Daily Whig* produced a two section, eight page Special Feature. It was well-illustrated with wood engraving and "plume". The author's true identity is a mystery. In a paper presented to the Kingston Historical Society in March 1963 (Historical Society of the City of Kingston, Ontario, 1963, p. 10).

Prior to Carl Fechter's arrival on the scene in October 1886, Gundy notes that "Turning over the files of the *Daily Whig* for the past few years, I was directed away from national and parochial affairs to Home Rule for Ireland, the Bulgarian crisis, the scandalous behavior of the Emperor of the world the Statute of Liberty, officially unveiled on October 28<sup>th</sup>." Fechter changed this with the appearance of his column.

Sangster was born at Point Frederick in 1822 where his father was employed as a shipwright in the navy yard. He grew up and later joined the *Daily News*. In 1868 he obtained a civil service appointment in the Post Office in Ottawa where he stayed until 1886. Fechter produced in *The Whig* from October to December 1886.

This month we will give you a small taste of the Fechter features with an edited version of his description of Princess Street. We will go behind the businesses and residents of the street as he remembered them. At each location he identifies the current establishment.

The challenge for today's readers is to place the descriptions that Fechter makes into today's streetscape.

## A CHANGE IN YEARS

### A GLOWING DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY AS IT WAS IN '46-50

Landmarks Gradually Disappearing - The Remarkable Changes Which Have Occurred Within a Couple of Generations  
-Pioneering Experience in the Past.

It occurred to me that, as a means to an end - in order to show most clearly the great changes that have occurred in the business community - some description should be given of the principal streets and those trading upon them as late as 1846-50. I knew these changes are numerous, but I had no idea that they were so significant. Let the reader, mentally, walk with me up Princess street, beginning at Ontario, and note (1) the stands of present business men and firms, and (2) those who occupied them at the remote dates heretofore stated:

Stevenson's piano factory ~ Formerly Hale's auction rooms, founded by Edward Hale, who while parliament sat here, built cottages on King street west nearly opposite to Morton's distillery.

Mrs. Glassup's residence ~ The savings bank of the late Thomas Glassup, and the post office prior to its removal to the city buildings, north end, in the present police court.

Quigley's flour store ~ The grocery of Hendry & Blacklock, the senior member of the firm being the father of the Hendry brothers, now numbered among the most successful of our wholesale and retail merchants.

G.M Weber & Co's piano factory ~ The headquarters for the midland district of the old Commercial bank. Its manager was F. A. Harper, who lived in the house (Lady of the Lake) now used by the nuns for school purposes. Mr. Harper was, after leaving the bank, appointed the commissioner of the Trust & Loan company. His successor as the bank manager was Charles S. Ross, who was head of the institution for some time before and after it was removed to the handsome building erected for it on the corner of King and William streets.

Patterson's grocery store (corner of King & Princess streets) ~ The former dry good store of W.J. Godieve. a leading light in the masonic order.

McNaughton & Co's ~ The large dry goods of Bryce, Ferguson & Co. Mr. Ferguson is now a resident of Napanee, and his sons are prospering in the hardware trade.

Carnovsky's cigar store and over it ~ The law offices of Sir Alexander Campbell, afterwards of Campbell & Mowat.

R. Newlands' cigar store ~ The barber shop and fancy goods shop of Bowne, and Englishman

Jackson & Co's. bottling establishment ~ The drug store of J.W. Brent, whose brother formerly preached on Barriefield, and is now located at Newcastle. Mr. Brent sold out to Dr. Baker, and he, in turn, disposed of the business to Dr. Skinner.

Muckleston & Co. ~ The business carried on so ably by John Watkins, of whose firm the late Samuel Muckleston was a member.

Shanahan's restaurant ~ E. & A. Chown's first business stand. They served their apprenticeship with James Powell, father of the photographer of the same name.

gs and the price was only five cents. The paper was largely the work of a Carl Fechter. Carl Fechter, however, was a "nom de Kingston Vol. 12), H.P. Gundy made compelling arguments that Carl Fechter was, in fact, Kingston poet Charles Sangster.

86 one is struck by the preponderance of British and American over native Canadian news. The minds of the readers were l Lonsdale and his glamorous stage mistress, the American carpet baggers, the extravagance of Jay Gould, and the 9<sup>th</sup> wonder in October 1886. But just as quickly he disappeared after the "Special Number" two months later.

orked in Kingston before moving briefly to Amherstburg. He returned to Kingston where he served as sub-editor of *The Whig* til his retirement, at which time he returned to Kingston. Sangster's intimate knowledge of Kingston fits well with the stories

he original, Fechter takes the reader the length of the developed section of Princess Street and provides insights and gossip nt (1886) and discusses the history of the site since the 1840's.

by Peter C. Ginn

Orange hall ~ Mr. Fair's boot and shoe store, and the barber shop of Mr. W. Taylor, who long afterwards, removed next to the Carson estate, and died there.

Galloway's fur store ~ Dickinson removed here about 1850. In his old stand Dunlop & Gibson opened a grocery store. Mr. Gibson is still to the front a few doors west of St. Andrew's church; and near where he now is was E. R. Welch's marble works, where for a number of years he did business and was the most noted chiseller (of marble) in Kingston. He is the senior partner of E.R. Welch & Son. After Dickinson died Arthur Chichester, a relative of the Platt family, of Hay Bay, kept a dry good store in Galloway's. His sister, I think, taught a private school in the city. He did not remain in business long on account of ill health.

W. Middleton's book store ~ Here A. & D. (Col.) Shaw did a dry goods' trade. They concentrated their business afterwards at the Ontario hall (in the market building). At Middleton's also Dr. D. C. Hickey commenced business in the dry goods line in company with a son of Mr. Sellars the Queen street veteran. The firm was known as Sellars, Hickey & Co. It did not long remain in business. Sellars went to Chicago and the doctor studied for his profession.

James Gowdy's ~ Here in the old Macauley building, Dr. H. Yates had his surgery, and here he attended to the wants of his patients prior to his leaving for the West Indies for the benefit of his health.

M.W. Drennan's (old building) ~ A military hospital for the line regiment. When abandoned by the military the wing, facing the street, was used as the Mechanics' Institute and Sons of Temperance hall; in the wing in the rear the public and Mr. O'Donnell's schools was conducted.

Near the corner, on the site of Waddell's saddlery and McCormack's liquor store ~ The harness shop of C. Wilkinson and the confectionery of John Elmer.

F. Shaw's store ~ the old Glasgow warehouse (same building) ~ Macnee & Waddell dry-goods store, and close to it (but not started till later) the store of J. Hickey.

Dunbar's corner (new) ~ The salon of T. Willing and the tinsmith shop of Mrs. Ross (afterwards Rowe, the name of her second husband), a story and a half high, with gables to the street. Willing built the stores on Wellington street occupied by Mr. Johnston, jeweller, and Vandewater, piano and insurance agent, and moved to one of them himself. He was succeeded on the corner by W. Smith (father of the watchmakers) and next door R.M. Horsey, who had only commenced business.

....

James Reid's cabinet shop ~ Known as Edinburg castle. Where the wooden buildings were on fire a day or two ago, next to Mrs. Brannigan, there was a blacksmith shop, kept by R. Forsythe.

Mrs. Stratford's store ~ On the site of the old T. Overend residence, surrounded by a very conspicuous verandah.

K. R. Welch's marble yard ~ John Greenwood tailor, had a shop here, and also Smith, father of the Smith Bros., watchmakers, and extending from Princess street to Brock street, ran a row of cottages, the property of E. Horsey. On the Brock street corner Mr. McManus kept a saloon, and "kept the best liquor under the sun." ~CARL FECHTER

# Kingston Historical Society

## 2008 Award Citations

photos by Peter Ginn

### KEN W. WATSON

After his career as a geologist, Ken Watson moved to the Rideau area in 1995 and soon became absorbed in the history and technology of the Rideau Canal. His painstaking research and study have resulted in several significant publications, each providing valuable insights into the history and construction of the Canal. These include *A History of the Rideau Lockstations*; *Engineered Landscapes: The Rideau Canal's Transformation of a Wilderness Waterway*; *The Rideau Route: Exploring the Pre-Canal Waterway*; and *The Sweeney Diary: the 1839 to 1850 Journal of Rideau Lockmaster Peter Sweeney*. In addition to producing formally published works, Ken serves as web-master, on a volunteer basis, for eleven organizations, including the Kingston Historical Society, and maintains [www.rideau-info.com](http://www.rideau-info.com), the definitive web-site related to the canal. The Kingston Historical Society is pleased to honour a man whose contributions to the understanding of our local heritage span printed and electronic mediums as well as organizational service.



### HENK W. WEVERS

The 48 foot pleasure steam launch *Phoebe* was built by Davis Dry Dock Co. Ltd., Kingston, in 1914. In 1998, Henk Wevers, a professor of mechanical engineering, recruited three volunteers to begin restoration of this classic wooden vessel, then owned by the City of Kingston and in a state of advanced disrepair. Under his encouragement and direction, this group grew to include a dozen members, who collectively contributed 17,000 hours toward restoration of *Phoebe's* hull, upperworks, engine and boiler. Through the publication of newsletters and by exploiting personal contacts, Dr. Wevers acquired funds and gifts in kind sufficient to facilitate the restoration. To protect *Phoebe*, he designed a shelter, which was built by students from Queen Elizabeth Collegiate and Vocational Institute. He also designed the trailer upon which she is now displayed at the Kingston Pump House Steam Museum. The Kingston Historical Society is pleased to honour Henk Wevers for his unstinting commitment and leadership in returning this unique example of Kingston's marine, manufacturing and social heritage to her former glory.



### PETER GOWER

Educated in his native England at a school and university, each of which has existed for four centuries, it is not surprising that Peter Gower's would develop a fascination with the history of Kingston, his retirement home. As a volunteer guide at St George's Cathedral, Peter became aware that little information was readily available relating to the wartime fatalities whose names are recorded on the memorial plaques in the Cathedral. He soon realized that similar conditions existed with many of the war memorials in our community. Determined to rectify this situation, Peter embarked on a five year labour which culminated in the recent publication of *Kingston Volunteers: The Thing To Do*. The book identifies over five hundred individuals from the Kingston area who gave their lives during the Great War and it includes biographical material and photographs. This work is an outstanding contribution to the preservation and interpretation of an important element of Kingston history. It has already stimulated an increased interest in research about the citizens of Kingston and area who served King and Country. The Kingston Historical Society is proud to mark Peter Gower's singular achievement with this award.



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## Society Members Celebrate the 2008 Christmas Season



We gathered on December 9<sup>th</sup> at the Fort Frontenac Officers' Mess. Chin wags and libations were enjoyed.



Around 7:00 Gilda DiCola Mills, Elaine Bailey, Gordon Sinclair, Phillip Rogers (left to right) with Sandra Sinclair in the background at the piano entertained us with Christmas music.



Three worthy individuals were presented with the KHS awards thanks to the thoughtful deliberations of Bob Andrews and his hard-working committee. (See citations on page 6)



The formal part of the evening ended with the launch of Peter Gower's book, *Kingston Volunteers: The Thing to Do*.