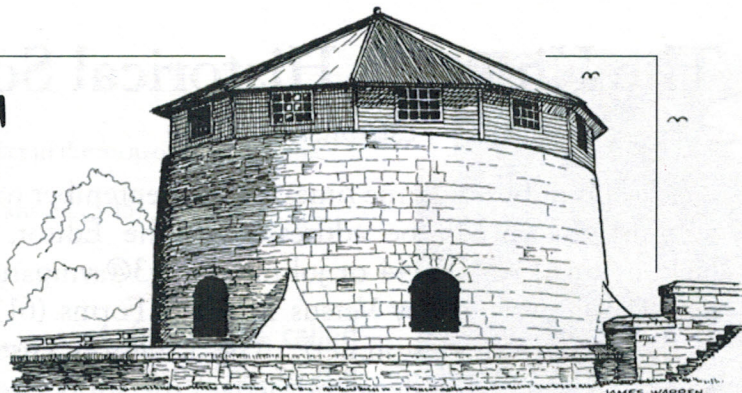


# LIMELIGHT

Newsletter of the  
Kingston Historical Society

vol 11 no 4 April 2009 ISSN 1488-5565



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



"You must give some time to your fellow men. Even if it's a little thing, do something for others - something for which you get no pay but the privilege of doing it." These words by Albert Schweitzer (1875 -1965) well reflect the spirit that exists in the KHS

Council; however, the privilege is actually a reciprocal arrangement as we are privileged recipients of their volunteering. On behalf of the Society and its Council I extend to the departing council members, Ellie Deir, Carol White and Heather Home, our sincere appreciation and gratitude for their time energy and commitment to our endeavours. Ellie Deir has assisted John Fielding in producing our *Limelight*. Carol White has been our liaison with the Historica Fair and she has been the mainstay in the production of our new KHS pamphlet. Heather Home has been a driving force as the Program Chair arranging for our guest speakers and closely involved with the planning and organizing of many other events provided for you, our members, during the year. My predecessor, Edward Grenda, has done yeoman service for the Society over the years especially serving on the Murney Tower committee, assisting and directing our applications for government grants and then as President. He has now not only become the past President but is taking on the

crucial role of Program Chair -thank you very much Ed.

Kingston and area is very well served with over 20 museums dedicated to preserving our past. On Saturday, March 14, the Cataraqui Archaeological Research Foundation officially opened its new Kingston Archaeology Centre with much fanfare. The new location is on the corner of Princess and Albert streets in the middle of 'Williamsville' or 'midtown' Kingston. CARF has travelled a very bumpy road since its inception 25 years ago having experienced various 'digs' including L.C.V.I., the Tett Centre, Duncan MacArthur School, and now its very own 'digs' at 611 Princess Street. This facility offers archives, library, an interpretive centre, a large collections area, a laboratory and offices for the archaeology staff. The Kingston Historical Society extends its congratulations to CARF on its new facility and encourages our members and friends to visit the NEW Kingston Archaeological Centre.

A final note: please mark Saturday, June 6 on your calendars for our annual Commemoration of Sir John A. Macdonald's death which is held at the Cataraqui Cemetery. This year our guest speaker is Dr. Ged Martin, formerly the Head of Canadian Studies at the University of Edinburgh, who will be speaking on "Sir John A Macdonald and the Electoral Politics of Kingston: 1841- 1891". Also a special thanks to Brian Osborne for arranging to have Professor Emeritus Martin as our guest speaker.

*Alan MacLachlan*

### THIS MONTH'S MEETING

Wednesday, 15 APRIL, 7:30PM

D'Arcy Jenish

Author & Journalist

"St. Lawrence Seaway: Fifty Years and Counting"

Wilson Room, Kingston Public Library  
Johnson St. at Bagot

Refreshments All Welcome

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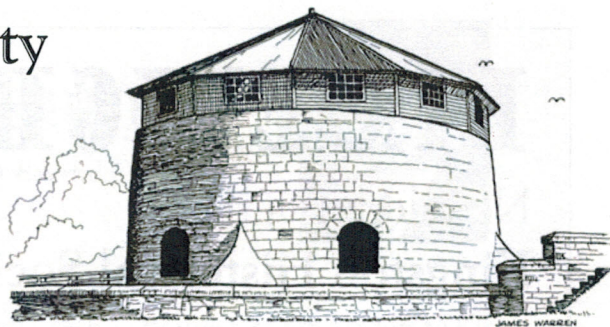
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# The Kingston Historical Society

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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www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca

## Executive

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## From the Editor

**Lost Statistics** In last month's *Limelight* we mentioned that Fechter supplies some interesting statistics showing the growth of the city through its property assessment, taxable income and population growth over the previous ten years. Unfortunately that section was cut off, so here it is - Interesting figures when we think of today's values.

*John Fielding*

## Progress the City Has Made.

An idea of the progress the city has made is furnished in the following summary of assessment:

	Real Estate	Pers'al Prop'ty	Tax'ble Inc'me	Total
1878	\$4,375,395	932,541	178,208	5,411,881
1879	4,421,567	854,283	196,929	5,551,037
1880	4,432,271	882,970	180,440	5,401,681
1881	4,447,845	848,895	208,802	5,505,542
1882	4,555,445	980,710	258,376	5,794,631
1883	4,698,835	1,042,720	285,875	6,027,430
1884	4,836,465	1,096,900	352,850	6,286,215
1885	4,950,380	1,114,050	397,575	6,472,005
1886	5,080,790	1,151,200	411,450	6,645,440
1887	5,359,285	1,098,900	465,890	6,924,075

## Population in Ten Years.

1878.....	14,078
1879.....	14,358
1880.....	13,929
1881.....	13,621
1882.....	14,009
1883.....	14,611
1884.....	15,297
1885.....	15,237
1886.....	15,109
1887.....	15,827

## CONGRATULATIONS

TO: J.W. (Bill) Fittell (former KHS President (1994-1996) on his election to the Kingston and District Sports Hall of Fame as a Builder (Hockey Historian) who over a period of thirty years held a variety of executive positions from President to Secretary and is currently the Museum's Historian. He was the first President of the Society for International Hockey Research in 1991.

TO: Paul Banfield (currently member of the KHS Council and Editor of *HISTORIC KINGSTON*) on his recent appointment as President of the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) for a two year term. The ACA represents the interests of Canada's archivists and provides a strong and diversified professional leadership and support to the Canadian archival community.



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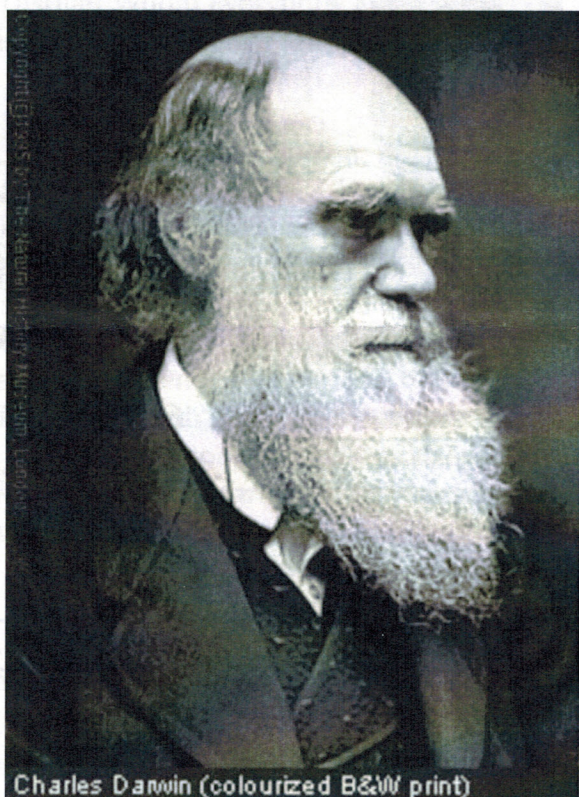
# AROUND AND ABOUT US

by Brian S. Osborne



## Round and About Kingston: Local Connections to Charles Darwin

This year, the world is commemorating the bi-centenary of the birth of Charles Darwin in Shrewsbury, Shropshire, in 1809. His life-work and iconic scientific contribution, the theory of evolution, transcended biology and had a major influence in the fields of anthropology, history, and social evolution. And there is an eastern Ontario connection to Darwin's work, albeit a tenuous one.



Charles Darwin (colourized B&W print)

Five years ago, Donald Forsdyke presented a most provocative and entertaining paper to the KHS: "Grant Allen, George Romanes, Stephen Jay Gould and the Evolution Establishments of their Times...And who was the Kingston Lady" (HK Vol. 52, 2004, 95-103). He introduced us to one, George John Romanes, the son of George Romanes, a Scottish Presbyterian minister. And the story starts in Smiths Falls. The good Reverend's background is well developed by another writer, Mabel Ringereide in her article, "Romanes Father and Son" (The Bulletin: Archives and History of United Church of Canada, 1979, 28, 35-46.).

In doing so, Ringereide notes in June 1975, a plaque honouring the Reverend George Romanes was unveiled in Smiths Falls' Westminster United Church. The connection is that the Westminster Church had been established by the 1913 union of the first church in Smiths Falls, St. Andrew's Kirk of Scotland (1834) and the St. Paul's United Secession Church (1846). George Romanes served as minister at St. Andrew's from 1834 until he left in 1846 to play an active role in the first decade of the history of Queen's College in Kingston. In that year, at the age

of thirty-nine, Rev. Romanes was appointed Interim Professor of Classical Literature, although he was allowed the princely sum of £30 to arrange for someone to occupy his pulpit at Smiths Falls. His new position also included the duties of Professor of Moral Philosophy, Secretary of the Senate, and a College Trustee.

But of importance to this story is that, the good Reverend's son, George John Romanes was born in Kingston on 19 May 1848. According to Kingston's premier architectural historian, Jennifer McKendry birthplace was probably at 213-215 William St., at the corner with Barrie St., in a building owned by James Morton. He was then baptized at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church on 13 June 1848.



But while we've established George Romanes' link with Kingston, what's his connection with Charles Darwin? In 1850, Romanes senior resigned his Professorship at Queen's, returned to England, and settled near Regent's park in London. While offered a Fellowship in Law in Queen's in 1865, he never returned and his son's career was henceforth grounded in England.

After a brief sojourn in Oxford, George Romanes Jr. attended Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where he experienced an intellectual odyssey from religion, to medicine, to biology. He graduated in 1871 and his presence is commemorated by a stained glass window in the chapel there. Following his graduation, Romanes became associated with the new Cambridge School of Physiology where he met, and was befriended by, Charles Darwin who directed his research into the biological transmission of intelligent behaviour. A disciple of Darwin and defender and advocate of his evolutionary views, Romanes became a prominent member of London's academic circles. Indeed, an editorial in the London Times identified George Romanes as "the biological investigator upon whom in England the mantle of Mr. Darwin has most conspicuously descended." George Romanes died in 1894 at the age of 44, and was interred in Holywell Cemetery, Oxford.



In 2009, in the bicentenary of Charles Darwin's death, it is worth remembering the Smiths Falls, Queen's University, and Kingston connection with George John Romanes, the scientist who, for a while at least, had inherited "the mantle of Mr. Darwin." But who was the "Kingston lady" that Donald Forsdyke referred to in his KHS paper? She was the one who exposed Romanes' one-time dalliance with spiritualism and the correspondence that elicited Darwin's incredulity and displeasure. Could this other Kingston connection between Charles and George have been Agnes Maule Machar? After all, she moved in the right circles!

*Photos supplied by Brian S. Osborne*



# The Daily Whig Special Number December 1886

In this months *Limelight*, I have transcribed an article from the first page of Carl Fechter's Special Number to the Daily Whig of December 1886. This article deals with a number of prominent Kingstonians. The article first appeared in the Daily Whig on Nov.1, 1886. It has been reproduced here as it appeared in the paper complete with the spelling and grammatical errors that were made.

Jennifer McKendry has once again kindly provided photos to illustrate this piece, in this case James Morton's home and distillery. - Peter C. Ginn

## OLD TIME CITIZENS.

### MEN WHO ROSE TO GREAT PROMINENCE IN KINGSTON.

The Distiller Whom Everybody Knows -- The Enterprise in Which He Engaged -- The Great Livery Man His Rise and Decline -- The Late Chief of Police.

Who has not heard of James Morton, the distiller, the maker of a proof whiskey that had a world-wide reputation? He came to Kingston a young man, and for a time was engaged as a clerk by Thomas Molson, whose distillery was on the property bearing his name, now belonging to Mr. Carruthers, excepting the corner recently sold to J.A. Hendry. About 1830 he was about to leave the city for Perth, there to become a brewer on his own account; but some friends induced him to remain in Kingston and start business modestly and unpretentiously, on the site of what afterwards became the largest establishment of the kind in America. Mr. Drummond was the virtual owner of the property, and when he died of cholera in 1834 the place was leased from the estate by Cormack & Morton. The firm afterwards became Hunt & Morton, and then Morton alone. In 1844 he made a big push for success. Before that date he had been paying 35c per bush. for rye, 12½ c per bush. for oats, and 30c per bush. for barley; then he issued a circular announcing that he would pay for rye 60c per bush.; for barley 50c per bush.; and for oats 25c per bush. The supply of grain was ample, and in the course of time the business swelled until there were consumed annually 200,000 bush. of grain. There was employment for over one hundred men, and the heads of the departments were: J. Meager, financier; A. McCormack, salesman; W. Nickle, superintendent of works; P.R. Henderson, accountant. In connection with the distillery were the barns, capable of

containing from 1,000 to 1,200 fattening cattle, and leased to J.& W. Breden. There was also a mineral spring of which many drank, especially on the early Sunday mornings. Morton in 1851 built a saw mill on an island on the Bay of Quinte, near Trenton; in 1854-55 he was one of those who acquired the control of the locomotive works; he also got the charter of the Canada Southern railway (now Vanderbilt's) and sunk half a million of money to no purpose. He made considerable by the building of the city branch of the Grand Trunk railway, but in all probability spent it all, and more too, in his successful contestation of the county against the late Sir Henry Smyth. In 1858 or 1859 he lost the distillery. It was run by William Nickle and then by McCormack for a while, and finally closed forever. Morton was a man of generous impulses; the number of persons dependent upon his bounty was an evidence of this. Had he been as careful as he was vigorous and progressive, had he husbanded his resources and left contracting alone, he would have retired a wealthy man. He died in 1862. All the members of his staff located here excepting Dr. White, the eastern representative of the firm, originally brought to Canada by Lord Sydenham and engaged in the arrangement of the excise department.



Morton's distillery is now the Tett Centre on King West.  
Photograph Jennifer McKendry



Dr James Sampson's (1788-1861) grave marker in the form of an monolithic obelisk, Cataragui Cemetery (illustrated in J. McKendry, Into the Silent Land, fig. 3-45).



Among the first tonsorial artists to commence business was William Johnson, of Johnson street. His toilet rooms were on the north side of the market square at first, I think, but for many years they were on Johnson street. Mr. Johnson was held in very high esteem, and well he might, as he was a good citizen, very loyal and public spirited. His son possesses many of his traits, but he is decidedly more of a politician and enjoys the reputation of being Sir John Macdonald's favourite hair-dresser.

Another important personage of the past was George Mink, who, before the days of railways and fast trains, ran stages between Kingston and Toronto and Kingston and Montreal. He was a portly gentleman, to whom colour was no bar to popular favour, and with whom some of the blueblooded of the city delighted to hob-nob. No man was a better judge of champagne, and was more apt to put up a bottle of it when no met his friends. His family floated about he the top wave of society and enjoyed all the luxuries which money could purchase. But there came a time when the stages usefulness was gone, and Mink's business collapsed. With the change in his circumstances came a change of public feeling towards him, and the old man and his dependants dropped out of sight. The men who guzzled his wine hadn't the decency to bid him good-bye.



In 1853, James Morton acquired the neighbouring house, St Helen's, which he renamed Mortonwood (now Corrections Canada, 440 King St. West). It was built in 1836 by Thomas Kirkpatrick and has been attributed to architect William Coverdale by J. McKendry. Photograph of the south view by Jennifer McKendry

A friend has called my attention to the fact I have overlooked, in my "Memoirs" of Wellington street merchants, the late Robert Chanonhouse. He kept a saddlery about where Nuget & Taylor have their tin shop and for Ontario ward sat in the council in 1846-47-48-49. In 1850 he retired from business in order to accept of headship of the police department. In person he was very martial, his moustaches being stifly waxed out, giving him the air of a dignified French general. Mr. Chanonhouse was, in his earlier days, an active police captain, and made himself, some of the most important arrests. He had four sons. Two of them became physicians, graduating from the college here. Dr. John Chanonhouse settled at Eganville, and his son is a student at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, having decided to adopt the profession of his father.

Kingston has had a number of distinguished physicians. The man who towered head and shoulders above them all was James Sampson, magnificent in appearance, very clever if abrupt, very kind if very blunt. He first practiced on Ontario street then in the present residence of Dr. Saunders. He had three daughters, one of whom married Dr. Maitland, of the 83rd regiment, another Mr. Hale (of lower Canada), the third Rev. Prof. Fenwick. The doctor was mayor in 1839-40-44, collector of inland revenues for many years, and surgeon to the penitentiary from the time of its establishment until his death. Dr. Murray, graduate of the Dublin college, practiced in the surgery now occupied by Dr. Irwin, a bachelor and a friend of the poor. Dr. Spillsbury was attached to the navy, and an able man. Dr. Armstrong was a realtive of Dr. Ryerson, superintendent of the public schools, and left this city about the time of the rebellion and ended his career in Rochester.



## SPEAKERS' CORNER

with Edward Grenda



Photos by Peter Ginn

The presenter of the paper, "Agreeably surprised and more than pleased: The Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph, the Hotel Dieu Hospital, and Regiopolis College" delivered at the Society's March meeting was Rodney

Carter, Archivist (St. Joseph Region, Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph) based in Amherstview, Ontario.

Mr. Carter began his presentation by emphasizing the pivotal role The Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph (RHSJ) have played in providing social services to the Kingston community since their arrival in 1845. This religious order has been and still is dedicated to the mission of serving the poor, the sick, and the needy.

The Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph were formed in a town, La Fleche, located the Loire Valley of France in 1636. It was co-founded by a tax collector, Jerome Le Royer de la Dauversiere and Marie de la Ferre, a nun and the first superior of the order. The Daughters of St. Joseph were officially established when the Bishop of Angers gave his approval of the order in 1643.

It was Le Royer's plan to develop a colony in the Island of Montreal and to convert the native population. A crucial element of Le Royer's vision was the establishment of a hospital. Le Royer met Jeanne Mance in France in 1641 and indicated her wish to travel to New France to assist in the colonization process. She eventually became administrator of the Hotel Dieu Hospital in Montreal until her death in 1673. By the mid 1800s the Hospitallers and the Hotel Dieu Hospital in Montreal were firmly established and served as a model for other cities and Catholic organizations in Canada.

In 1841, Bishop Remi Gaulin requested the Bishop of

Montreal, Bishop Bourget, to send sisters to Kingston to attend to the sick, poor and homeless. After Bishop Bourget visited Kingston he asked the Sisters of RHSJ to provide the needed assistance. But limited financial resources prevented anything substantial to be undertaken until 1845.

In September 1845, the Hospitallers were able to establish themselves in Kingston. In late October 1845, the sisters organized their monastery and hospital in two re-furnished limestone buildings on Brock Street (now 227 and 233 Brock Street), the former is now known as Sydenham Apartments). The monastery for the Sisters was located at the 233 address and the now 227 Brock address was converted from a residence to a hospital. Needless to add, space became a perpetual problem for the hospital's operations and the Hospitallers ecclesiastical requirements and responsibilities.

Across the street (on Brock) from the Hospitallers's buildings in the area then known as Selma Park, Regiopolis College operated from 1842 to 1869 as a seminary to develop priests for the Kingston area. Because of acute financial difficulties, the college closed its doors in 1869. In their unceasing quest for more space, the Hospitallers engaged in a series of negotiations off and on for a period of twenty years to secure the old Regiopolis College building for their hospital. Finally, in Sept. 1892, the Hospitallers took over the Regiopolis building and undertook the necessary renovations and repairs to convert it into a hospital. The Hotel Dieu Hospital, as it was then known, became operational toward the end of December 1892.

Doubtless the limitations of space necessitated continued renovations and expansion of the Hospital's physical structures during the past century. The problem of financial resources of the Hospital are as acute now as it was when the Hospital first opened.

On behalf of the Society. Reverend Bruce Cossar commemorated the presentation which he considered superb and presented Mr. Carter with the Society's pewter pin.