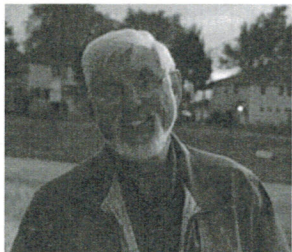
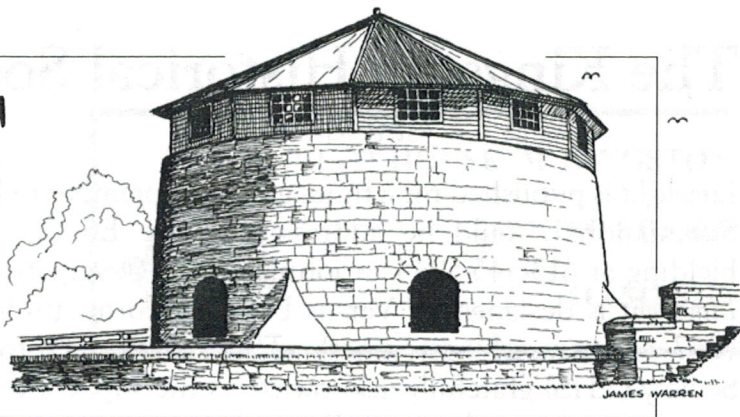


LIMELIGHT

Newsletter of the
Kingston Historical Society

vol 11 no 5 May 2009 ISSN 1488-5565



A KINGSTON MUSEUM:

A Dream

The Kingston of 1967, my time of arrival, has changed dramatically to what we experience today. The

streetscapes and the political and geographical expansion, the Wolfe Island view now with wind turbines, and the "student ghetto" are visuals of the NEW Kingston. The social, cultural, ethnic and religious composition has had a metamorphosis. The industrial base, with the disappearance of the grain elevators, Alcan, the Locomotive Works and Northern Telecom, reveals an economic remodelling. These are but a few examples of how my Kingston of the 1950s and 60s has changed to what we see and experience today. Then again, the Cataraqui and Kingston of the French and Loyalist periods and the century and a half following the War of 1812 are no more. Yes, Kingston is a dynamic community with a constantly changing fabric. Yet where does one go to discover the vibrant past that Kingston has experienced?

Perusing a pamphlet from 2008 titled Museums, Art Galleries & Historic Sites of Kingston garnered at the Tourist Information Office, one is immediately astonished at the large number of museums and related historic venues that are open to the public, primarily during the May to October tourist season. There are 25 sites, detailed in the pamphlet, that specialize in the preservation of Kingston's history. Bits and pieces of our political and social past are found in some. The military, medical, sports, geological and archaeological are in others. The Rideau Canal and Kingston Fortifications as a UNESCO World Heritage Site is another excellent example of the preservation of our past. However as James Warren stated in *Historic Kingston*, 1993,

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Volume 41, "Despite the profusion of specialized Museums in Kingston, ... nowhere may we see the full extent of Kingston's history revealed in dramatic sequence, and presented in a way that stimulates the imagination."

Despite the presence of 25 museums, there are many gaps in presenting our history to our citizens and to our visitors. The economic history of Kingston as a transshipment point, an industrial centre, and a governmental centre over the years are not to be found. Where can one discover the changing social fabric over the past three centuries? Where are Kingston's religious make-up and its evolution narrated? What of Kingston's educational past with its many levels (elementary, secondary, and post-secondary) and how has the narrative of these institutions shaped the character and development of our community? What of our cultural past and the stages and venues for which these were presented? For all of the above and for other aspects of our past, there is no central location to have these presented and to view their interplay.

Yet again, there are in our community and elsewhere, artefacts, documents, letters, diaries and other items that reveal our history. Where will these items reside in the years to come? Some would be found in university and government archives and museums no doubt, others in attics and garages, and still others to be recycled or in dust bins and dumpsters. And yet... if there was a Kingston Museum it would/should have the capability of preserving, restoring, maintaining and displaying them with a fully equipped archives and well trained staff and archivists.

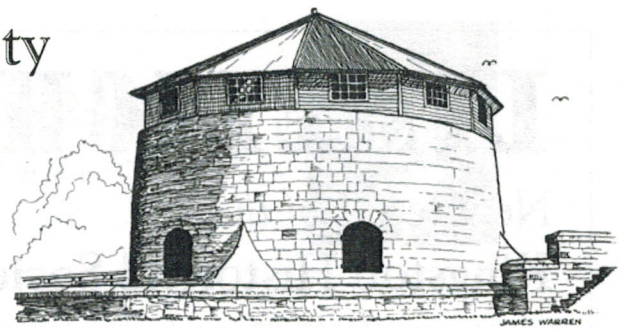
Then again, all of this may be a dream.

Alan MacLachlan

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

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THIS MONTH'S MEETING

Wednesday, 20 MAY, 7:30PM

Jamie Linton Professor - Department of Geography, Queen's University

"The Life & Death of Public Water in Kingston"

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

Refreshments All Welcome

The Kingston Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society will meet in the Wilson Room of Kingston Frontenac Public Library, 130 Johnson St., Saturday, May 23, 2009 at 10 a.m. There will be a Silent Auction of books, newsletters and other materials of genealogical interest. Visitors welcome. For further information, please visit our website www.ogs.on.ca/kingston

THE MYSTERY OF 47 WELLINGTON STREET

by Shirley Gibson_Langille

When I was a child, 47 Wellington Street was abandoned and known to be haunted!

One day, a couple of kids and I had quite an adventure. We got up the courage to go visit it and found a way into the basement. It was very scary in there as scattered among[st] the rubble were all these blood spattered, old fashioned, stiff white collars and cuffs.

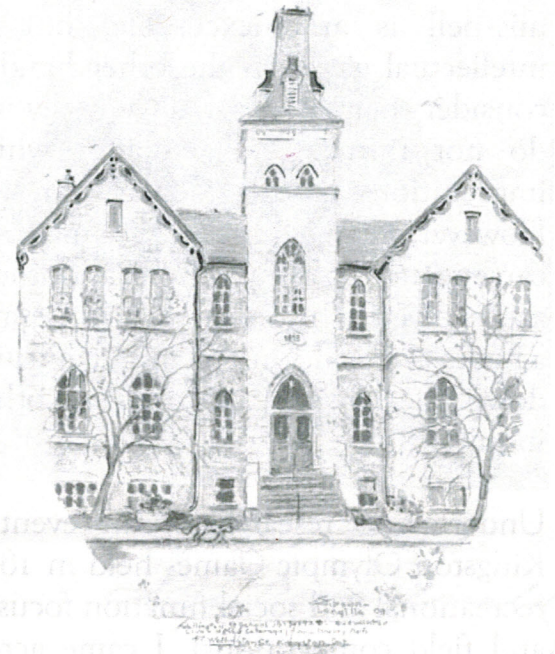
Nervously, we climbed a flight of stairs to the 1st floor and, in the middle of all this grimy, cobwebbed emptiness, we made an astonishing discovery! A beautiful, polished, grand-piano!

Then we ventured up to; the 2nd floor. We were in the middle of exploring it when all of a sudden we heard this haunting music being played on the piano downstairs. Can you imagine! I was so terrified that I jumped out of the 2nd floor window. Did I get hurt? Yes I did. My ankle was badly sprained but, needless to say, I never told my Mom the truth about how I did it!

In 2009, I painted the building as part of my series "We're High on Kingston" for an exhibition to be held in the Kingston Frontenac Public Library on Johnson Street in August 2009.

Before framing it, I decided to research the building. I found out it had been the Wellington Street School built in 1873 and that John Power was the architect. In 1927, the school merged with Sydenham Street School and the building was sold to the local Badminton Club. It later housed HMCS Cataraqui for a time, then an engineering laboratory, and now it has-been converted into luxury apartments.

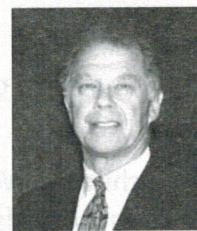
But after all these years, I still ponder the mystery of all those



"WE'RE HIGH ON KINGSTON"
AN EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS
OF DOMES, SPIRES, TOWERS AND TURRETS IN THE
KINGSTON LANDSCAPE
BY: SHIRLEY GIBSON-LANGILLE
IN THE WILSON ROOM OF THE KINGSTON FRONTENAC
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AUGUST 4TH - AUGUST 28TH, 2009

Macdonald?, McDonald?, MacDonald?

by Edward Grenda



Those who are adept at spelling are unrelentingly insistent that all words, especially the names of individuals, must be spelled properly, and to misspell is an inexcusable, but correctable, intellectual vice. On the other hand, those who consider themselves as congenitally inept spellers do not think it is a matter which requires imprecations to rain down from the heavens. However, misspelling of the names of individuals can engender painful complications for those who are involved in historical research. A misspelling of a name can lead a historian into a fruitless pursuit down the wrong path or close other paths of inquiry.

Undertaking research of an event called the Kingston Olympic Games held in 1844 (largely a recreational and social function focusing on track and field competitions), I came across a list of stewards for the event. One of the names I noticed was J.A. McDonald. Initially, I did not give much thought to the potential significance of the name. After a while, it dawned upon me that this could be Sir John A. Macdonald, and that this could be the first public reference to Sir John A. being involved in a sporting event.

I checked the City of Kingston records listing the Council members of the Town of Kingston from 1838 to 1846. For the years 1843, 1844 and 1845, Sir John A's name, as Alderman for Ward Four, is spelled "Macdonald". However, in the 1846 listing, Sir John A's name is spelled "McDonald". I then reviewed the minutes of each Kingston City Council meeting held in 1843 and 1844. Interestingly, Sir John A's name was consistently misspelled throughout 1843. Sir John A's name was spelled "Macdonald" and "Mcdonald"

without any consistent pattern. It is noteworthy that on April 3, 1843, there were two City Council meetings (at 10:00 a.m. and 7:0 p.m.). At the morning meeting, Sir John A took the oath of office for Alderman. In the Council minutes describing Sir John A's taking the oath his name is spelled "Macdonald". But at the evening meeting on the same day, Sir John A's name is "McDonald."

In various articles in the *British-Whig and The Chronicle Gazette*, during this period, the references to Sir John A's surname are more often than not spelled correctly.

I concluded that perhaps because of Sir John A's youth and lack of public profile, the City Clerk and newspaper writers were a shade sloppy in the performance of their duties as scribes. Also, this allowed me to conclude that I found the first public reference to Sir John A as a sportsman.

Another possible explanation for these variant spellings of Sir John A's name emerges from an interview with Sir John A. Macdonald's nephew Hugh Angus McDonald (note the spelling) which appeared in *The Whig-Standard* on July 1, 1967. At the time of the interview, McDonald, a retired CPR engineer, was 91 years of age and living in White Rock, B.C. He claimed that the proper spelling of the family name was "MacDonald", not "Macdonald". Interestingly, Hugh Angus, the nephew, changed his name to "McDonald". Also, he claimed that Sir John A "was meant" to be called Alexander John, not John Alexander because he did not like the name Alexander. Therefore, he switched the names around. I was not able to secure independent corroborable evidence for these claims when I examined documents and books.

referring to Sir John's family and early youth. It could be conjectured that if these claims are true and if some Kingstonians in the 1840's knew about these surname changes, the different public spellings of Sir John A's surname caused confusion when Sir John A's activities were recorded and written about.

Given that Sir John A's surname was firmly established as "Macdonald", it was disappointing to see in Hansard of March 5, 2009 that Sir John A's surname was spelled "MacDonald!"



JOHN A. MACDONALD,

ATTORNEY, &c.

HAS opened his office, in the brick building belonging to Mr. Collar, opposite the Shop of D. Prentiss, Esq., Quarry Street, where he will attend to all the duties of the profession.

Kingston, 24th August, 1835.

17cw

Yours Truly
John A Macdonald

Photo provided by Jennifer McKendry - It is the frontispiece in G. Mercer Adam, *Canada's Patriot Statesman, the Life and Career of the Right Honourable Sir John A. Macdonald* (Toronto 1891).

From the collection of Jennifer McKendry

The KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY invites you to remember Sir John A. Macdonald on Saturday, 6 June 2009 with an event that combines commemoration, pageantry, history, and conviviality in a special outdoor setting.

Please join us on Saturday, 6 June, at 1:30 p.m. in Kingston's Cataraqui Cemetery to remember Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, who died on this day in 1891.

This annual commemorative ceremony features members of the Fort Henry Guard, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, local schools, Bellevue House staff in period dress, as well as many dignitaries and representatives of local organizations who will lay wreathes at the grave. The guest speaker for this, the 118th graveside ceremony commemorating the death of Sir John A. Macdonald will be the historian, Dr Ged Martin whose illustrious academic career include such highlights as: Director of the Centre of Canadian Studies at the University of Edinburgh, Reader in History, and in 1996 received the United Kingdom's first Permanent Chair in Canadian Studies. He has published such articles as 'Sir John EH! Macdonald' and 'John A Macdonald: Provincial Premier'. *Sir John A. Macdonald and the Electoral Politics of Kingston: 1841-1891* is the working title of his soon to be released book.

Before and after the ceremony, all visitors are welcome to tour the historic and picturesque Cataraqui Cemetery (972 Purdy Mills Road, off Counter Street). Refreshments will be served in the outdoors chapel following the ceremony. We look forward to seeing you, your family, and your organization or group.

NOTE: In case of severe weather conditions, the event will take place in Christ Church Parish Centre, 990 Sydenham Road (parking available).



AROUND AND ABOUT US

by Brian S. Osborne

Where Was Samuel Champlain In The Winter Of 1615?

However important the St. Lawrence is in the modern Canadian imagination, during the French Regime, the main route west was via the Ottawa River to the Mattawa River-Lake Nipissing-French River crossing to the upper Great Lakes. To be sure, there were exploratory probes by missionaries and the military and, in 1673, the French established an outpost at the junction of the St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario - Cataraqui (Kingston). Nevertheless, while the Lower St. Lawrence played an iconic role in French Canadian identity, the Upper St. Lawrence did not.

But, as always, there are provocative counter-narratives. One is posed by a question: Did Samuel Champlain come into contact with the Upper St. Lawrence during his much acclaimed explorations during his years in Canada? In seeking an answer, I turn to three specialized authorities: historians, ornithologists, and canoeists. That is, authorities on data, birds, and portages.

First, what do the historical authorities say? For the early doyen on Champlain, W.L. Grant who wrote *Voyages of Samuel de Champlain 1604-1618* (1907), the story line is simple. Champlain was wounded in an abortive attack on an Onondaga fort, south of Lake Onondaga. In retreat, his Indian allies refused to take him back to Quebec immediately and, after crossing from an island at the eastern end of Lake Ontario, they entered a river "some twelve leagues in extent."

Several subsequent authorities have concluded that this was the Great Cataraqui River and that Champlain and his party traveled up it to Loughborough Lake in October. There, the party hunted deer by driving them into a complex palisade, killing some 120 in thirty-eight days. In this interpretation, Champlain's party then moved to west and that somewhere in the vicinity of Tamworth on the Salmon River the good explorer got lost for four days. He had been tracking a mysterious bird that had the beak of a parrot, was the size of a hen, and was coloured yellow with a red head and blue wings. However justified Champlain's scientific curiosity might have been, his Indian friends never let him out alone again! By December, they were back in their villages; by June, Champlain was back in Quebec; and by July, he had sailed for France.

What attracted the attention of the ornithologists is that Grant's account of Champlain's peregrinations lists of all those exciting and novel feathered friends he encountered on his wanderings throughout this "bird-spotter's" heaven of collectibles: Swans, White Cranes, Outardes, Ducks, Teal,

Song Thrush, Larks, Snipe, Geese, and "several other kinds of fowl too numerous to mention." No mere Renaissance-Enlightenment man of science, Champlain declared, "Of these I killed a great number which stood us in good stead while waiting for the capture of a deer." And this is what attracted the attention of the ornithologists and two prominent ones in particular. Both Helen R. Quilliam's *History of the Birds of Kingston, Ontario* (1965) and Charles MacNamara's, "Champlain as a Naturalist" (1926) also argue that Champlain skirted the eastern end of Lake Ontario, traveled up the Cataraqui, and gradually paddled home via Loughborough Lake, and Tamworth.

But Queen's University Professor emeritus, Dugald Carmichael, is an accomplished student of the local terrain as experienced at water level by paddling and portaging through Kingston's back-country. He has a different perspective. He notes that a dozen or more historians have fallen, for the Cataraqui River (or Napanee, or Salmon, or Moira) entry into the back-country and that the "lake of birds" is Loughborough Lake (or Hay Bay, or Varty Lake, or Camden Lake). But the good professor disagrees. As he puts it, "What a feeble grasp of geography! What an astonishing ignorance of the intensity of paddlers' hatred of portaging." For him, Champlain's actual route back to Huronia in that October-December 1615 travail was nowhere near the mouth of the Upper St. Lawrence at the eastern end of Lake Ontario. Rather, Champlain traveled back to Huronia via the Trent-Crow-North river system to Carmichael's preferred "lake of the birds," Stoney Lake, and then home via Eels Creek and Big Cedar Lake.

So, back to the historians and David H. Fischer's scholarly and definitive study, *Champlain's Dream* (2008). But it doesn't help me. Rich in details of Champlain's four-month sojourn in the woods of Eastern Ontario in that winter of 1615, he communicates our hero's reflection on his enforced situation: "I had leisure enough to study their country, their manners, customs, modes of life, the form of their assemblies, and other things which I should like to describe." Great stuff, Sam, but where exactly were you?



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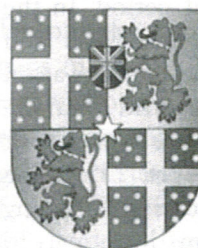
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SPEAKERS' CORNER

with Edward Grenda



The St. Lawrence Seaway: 50 Years and Counting

presented by D'Arcy Jenish (April 15, 2009)

During the 16th to the 18th centuries, the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes constituted the principal transportation route to the heart of the North American continent and, in consequence, was considered to be a crucially significant geographical complex for explorers, fur traders, and colonizers during that period. In the mid-nineteenth century, the St. Lawrence River and selected areas of the Great Lakes system were once again the focal point of governments and marine transportation concerns. The St. Lawrence Seaway, as it came to be known, was opened in April 1959. The Seaway is a system of rivers, locks, canals, shipping channels, and bridges ranging from Montreal to Iroquois, Ontario, not to mention canals and channels located in the Great Lakes region. The Seaway permitted ocean-going vessels to travel halfway into the North American continent, from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Thunder Bay up the west on Lake Superior, a distance of approximately 3700 kilometres. The Seaway enabled ships to travel from sea level to a height of 180 metres, roughly the height of a sixty storey building. So vast and prodigious was the project that Lionel Chevrier, the first president of the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority proclaimed without exaggeration that "The seaway was one of the most ambitious and effective man-made alterations to the face of the earth ever completed."

Author and Journalist, D'Arcy Jenish, was invited by the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation to write a book on the Seaway to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of its opening. When he accepted the commission, Jenish thought it would be appropriate to experience the Seaway and its operations first hand by sailing from Montreal to Thunder Bay. Thus in July 2007, Jenish and his son boarded the *Algomarine*, a 730 foot ship, in Montreal and completed the 370 kilometre voyage in 108 hours. The observations Jenish recorded and experiences he underwent on this voyage along with his remarks, formed the basis of his book on the Seaway and his presentation.

Undoubtedly, the opening of the Seaway enormously transformed the marine transportation system in Canada. The seaway improved the transportation of grain from the inner continent to trans-Atlantic ships

and the shipment of ore and manufactured goods to cities in the Great Lakes region. The advent of the Seaway eliminated the necessity of having two types of ships plying the Seaway waters - the canallers and lakers removed from service. As well, the trans-shipment points such as Kingston, Prescott and Toronto were rendered redundant and caused some economic decline in these cities, especially in Prescott and Kingston.

Jenish pointed out that shipping traffic in the Seaway during its first decade was substantial to the point of being overburdened. However, during the 1980's there was a marked decline of shipping traffic. This was largely caused by an increase of exports to arise via the port of Vancouver. The Seaway Management Corporation is currently attempting to reverse this trend by marketing the Seaway as an environmentally friendly mode of transport and calling it "Highway H2O" to entice business operations to use the route. He mentioned the work that was undertaken in 1966 on the bottleneck located on the Welland Canal. Sections of the canal were widened to enable two ships to pass through without major incident.

Jenish concluded that the Seaway, a remarkable engineering feat and one of the most reliable waterways in the world, is still facing challenges. The most recent in this regard is the swelling of the locks in the eastern section of the Seaway. Apparently, the alkaline substances in the aggregate has reacted with the cement

and has caused the lock walls to expand and reduced the width of the canals, the results of which play havoc with the huge freighters passing through the canals.

Still and all, the St. Lawrence Seaway has been an engineering and transportation success.

Professor James Pritchard thanked Mr. Jenish for his talk and presented him with the Society's pin featuring the Murney Tower, an enduring Kingston fixture and symbol on the Seaway.

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.

