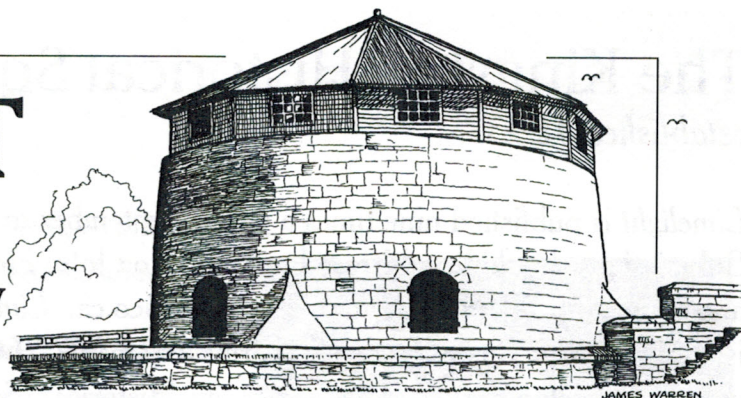


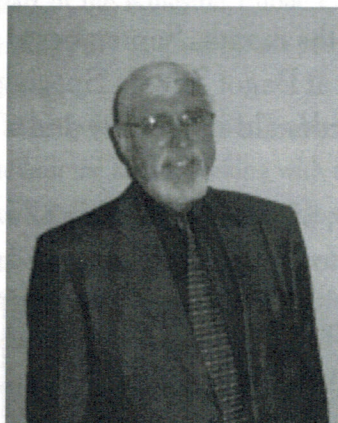
LIMELIGHT

Newsletter of the
Kingston Historical Society

vol 11 no 9 November 2009 ISSN 1488-5565



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



"The Torch be yours to hold it high
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields. "

Dr. John Macrae, R.C.M.A.C. (1872-1918)

November 11 is not far in the offing. In Kingston, Ottawa and across Canada there will be parades, ceremonies and the laying of wreaths as we remember Kingstonians and Canadians who have made the supreme sacrifice for our Canadian institutions and culture. As one meanders the streets and buildings of Kingston in the downtown core, the memorials for our fallen are not far from us. In Kingston City Hall, a perpetual monument of 12 stained glass windows stand as a testament to those who fought and died in the Great War. The Memorial Centre, several blocks away, was dedicated to those who served and died "for freedom's sake" in the two World Wars and the Korean conflict.

In City Park along West Street, the Twenty-first Canadian Infantry created the memorial with a Canadian soldier on top, dedicated to those who died in the Great War and listing the battles in which Canadians were involved. At the opposite end, is the memorial erected by the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery for those who fell in the Great War and in World War Two. Crossing King Street and near Murney Tower, the Kingston Chapter of the I.O.D.E. has a memorial to those who died in the conflicts of 1914-18, 1939-1945 and 1950-1953. Also in City Park the Burma Star Association has placed a memorial to those who served in the Far East and Pacific Theatres of War (1941-1945).

In front of The Admiralty Place on Ontario Street, one finds Navy Memorial Park established by the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service Association of Kingston and dedicated in 2003. And in front of the dry dock stands the memorial to the men and women who served in the Royal Canadian Navy and the Merchant Navy.

The above are but some of Kingston's memorials and testimonies to those who have fought and died for all that we cherish and hold dear.

Kingston has not broken the faith: The TORCH IS HELD HIGH!!

Alan MacLachlan

THIS MONTH'S MEETING

Wednesday, 18 November, 7:30 PM

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

Refreshments All Welcome

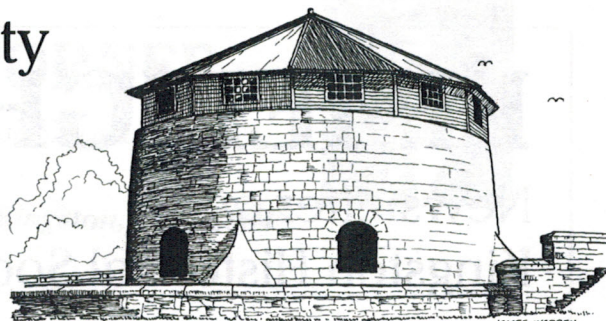
"Scenes of Early Kingston"

Paul Banfield et al

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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In this issue...

President's Report	1
Masthead	2
Annual Sir John A Dinner	3
Island Wandering	4 & 5
A Short History of Remembering	6
Memories of George Vosper	7
Speakers' Corner	8

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Annual Sir John A. Macdonald Dinner



This year's Sir John A. Macdonald Anniversary Dinner will be held on Monday, 11 January, 2010 at the Senior Staff Mess, RMC. We will gather at 6:00pm for dinner at 7:00pm. Our guest speaker will be Charlotte Gray, notable Canadian author. Her topic: **"Sir John A's Women"**

Cost for this year's dinner will be \$45 for members and \$50 for non-members. A vegetarian meal is available. The Reservation form will be in the November and December Issues of *Limelight*.

Please note, the dinner will be limited to 96 members and guests.

Menu

Chef's Salad
Cream of Garden Vegetable Soup
Chicken Breast Alain
Oven Baked Stuffed Potatoes
Mixed Vegetables
Caramel Chocolate Cake
Tea and Coffee



Sir John A. Macdonald Anniversary Dinner, Monday January 11, 2010

Name(s): _____

Member(s) _____ Non-Member(s) _____

Phone Number: _____ email: _____

Food Allergies: _____ Vegetarian: _____

Remarks: _____

Amount enclosed: _____

Mail Reservations & Cheque to:

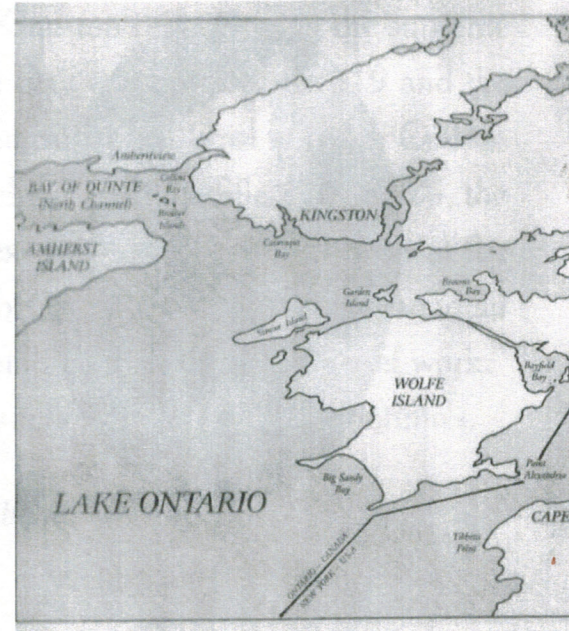
Sir John A Dinner, 253 Willingdon Ave, Kingston, ON, K7L 4J2

Island Wandering

What does the average landlubber know about Kingston's watery doorstep to the south? Unless one is an islander, a river rat, a yacht or ferry captain, I doubt, if one's special knowledge of this admirable archipelago extends very far.

That's the thought that enveloped me in September after Toronto author and journalist D'Arcy Jenish addressed the Society under the tantalizing title of "Why Wolfe Island is in Canada."

Despite experience as a seagoing writer in wartime and having lived 12 years overlooking the Admiralty Islands at Gananoque, this landlubber hadn't given much thought to where-is-what south of our city or where the largest of "Les Mille Isles" was located. Of course, Wolfe Island—since Day One, through the French and British periods—has always been regarded as being on the Canadian side of the border, but why the quandary?



This led to consulting the latest book, Dundurn's *Wolfe Island – A Legacy in Stone*, an engaging story by Barbara Wall LaRocque told through the eyes of her father. "It has always been part of Canada," she said, "and the people have remained true to the Canadian tradition." There were maps to show that "le Grande Isle" was closer to U.S. soil than to Kingston but no mention of explorer David Thompson's successful efforts in creating the international border south of Wolfe.

I turned to *1000 Islands*, a gorgeous coffee table book by John De Visser and Patricia (Patsy) Fleming which included a fine map (see inset) that shows the international boundary jutting through watery channels, sharing the islands north and south and slicing between Canada's Hill Island and New York State's Wellesley, which has been linked by a short stone bridge for 70 years.

Switching channels, I was enticed by a 19th century report from Murney Point of a massive shinny game played on Kingston harbour ice from Deadman's Bay to Grove Point Inn and Snake Island. Puzzled by the location of the latter two sites, I checked out the valuable charts at the Bosun's Locker in Vandervort's and found the uninhabited Snake.



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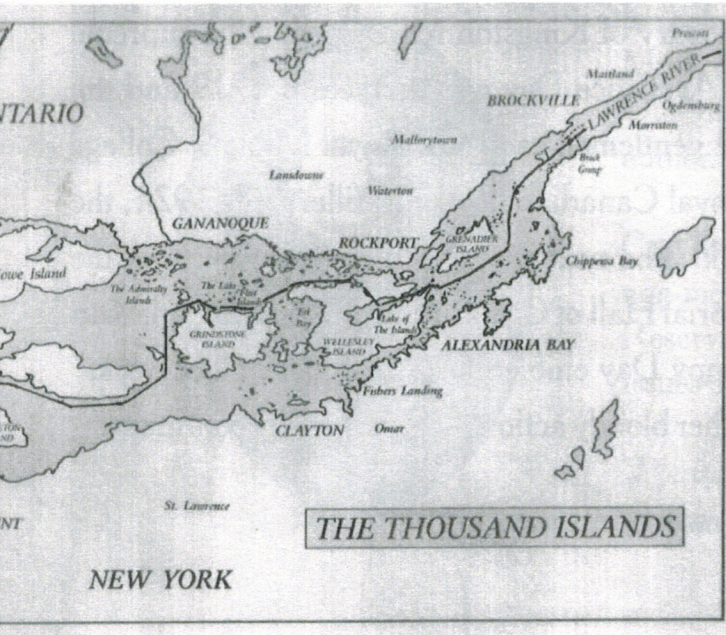


THE PILOT HOUSE OF KINGSTON

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by *The Scribbler*
Bill Fittell



Then it was on to the Museum of the Great Lakes where I found a treasure, a surplus copy of the 1963 publication, *Great Lakes Pilot*, that laid out the locations and descriptions of Snake, Garden, Simcoe, Horseshoe, Bayfield, Amherst and Wolfe, plus lights, buoys, shoals and other marine hazards and markers.

There was little reference to the International boundary, but chapter one led off with the answer to another question about Kingston, which is often referred to as being located at the confluence of the Cataraqui and St. Lawrence rivers and Lake Ontario. Where does one stop and the other end?

This was answered by a 1924 decision of the Geographic Board of Canada, thusly: The boundary between Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River is a line from Everett Point, Frontenac County to Ninemile Point, Simcoe Island and thence to southwest point of Horseshoe Island: a line from the north point of Horseshoe Island to Staley Point, Wolfe Island; and, a line from Bear Point, Wolfe Island, to Tibbetts Point, New York State.

Does this make sense, even though Frontenac County no longer exists? I've heard of lines being drawn in sand, but rarely in water, although 1000 Island tour boat wags used to invite passengers to peer over the gunwale and see the international boundary below. It's "marked" the same as the line that divides Wolfe Island from the St. Lawrence and Cataraqui rivers. Problem solved!

Gordon Smithson of Kingston is pleased to announce the arrival of his latest publication, "*Bath Road – Kingston West An Illustrated History*" ISBN 978-0-9694916-5-1
The book is on sale only at Novel Idea Book Store, Princess at Bagot Street Kingston.

The 134 page soft cover book covers the Bath Road westward from Palace Road to Gardiners Road, Kingston. In addition to the early history of the Collins Bay Penitentiary, other information relates to early Kingston Township families such as Day, Friend, and Mouldey, to name a few.



A Short History of Remembering

Wednesday, November 11th, 2009, is the 70th anniversary of Kingston remembering the supreme sacrifices made during the First World War. The first Armistice Day was marked in 1919 and the second was held at the Cricket Field. Then as now the gentlemen cadets of Royal Military College were on parade, joined by A and B Batteries of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery. By 1924, the IODE had established a cenotaph in Macdonald Park. The next year the laying of wreaths at the cenotaph was augmented by an evening service in Memorial Hall of City Hall. In 1929, the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League sold Poppy Day emblems "to help their relief work." Seventy years later—after two world wars and several other bloody actions—the tradition continues.

"At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them."

J.W. (Bill) Fittsell,

Oct. 28, 2009.

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Memories of George Vosper

by Bea Corbett

A man of 100 talents, ideas and deeds, many of these have been chronicled with such a person, but more facts continue to rise to the surface of his sea of accomplishments – whether looking at historic buildings or airports of the future.

I have several portraits of George – juxtapositioned in time. The first – described by a friend – shows him outside the Bishop's house at Johnson and Bagot Streets where he is overseeing it boarded up against vandalism. Efforts to save it led to its inclusion as part of the Kingston Public Library. Society members would do well to read the historic plaque hard by this place to learn how far back its roots go in Upper Canada History.

Then I see George standing by his bicycle at Princess and King about 1990, and he is telling me about working with my father, Leroy Grant when in the late fifties, these two Sydenham Ward Aldermen, a generation apart, were determined to restore the portico at the entrance to City Hall. Vosper was a third generation Kingstonian, but Grant had been here for only 55 years so was a newcomer.

As a founding member of the Frontenac Heritage Foundation, George was instrumental in creating an association which protected and preserved Kingston buildings of historical and architectural significance and developed public awareness of them. As an engineering instructor at Queen's he was able to pass to another generation this awareness and appreciation.

George Vosper was a naval veteran and a stalwart member of HMCS Cataraqui Association and was on parade many times on Battle of the Atlantic Sunday and Remembrance Day.

And then there's his affinity with Marine Museum of the Great Lakes. Maurice Smith reminded me that George was an early advocate of the establishment of the Museum when many others were saying "Nay" to it. Later, when the Grant Macdonald portrait collection became available George was a major donor in the Museum's acquisition of what is the largest portrait collection of Canadian naval personnel of the Second World War – including some members of the Navy show.

Such achievements and the Vosper presence on many committees during and after his term as alderman, led to him receiving a Kingston Historical Society Award in 2004 at the annual presentation at Fort Frontenac.

It was on that evening that I was struck by a recollection of George Vosper thatn goes back to kindergarten at Victoria School. George sat at a table of boys just behind ours. One morning we were given plasticine to mould. In a moment of awkward exuberance, George managed to get his white plasticine in my dark hair. Soon after he was given a table to himself where he could give his creative talents full sway.

The last time I saw George, he and Velma were attending the dedication service for Audrey Waugh Memorial in Navy Park. Having been invited, the Vospers were greeted by many old friends.

The Vosper home on Earl street, built in 1873-74 with its art and furnishings of Canadian origin, was home to many guests over the years. But many places in Kingston, public or private, were also home to this "Old Stone".



The Kingston Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society will meet in the Wilson Room of Kingston Frontenac Public Library, 130 Johnson St., Saturday, November 21, 2009 at 10 a.m. Paul Juniper will speak on "My Grandfather was a Buffalo" - how lodge and benevolent society records can help genealogists. Visitors welcome. For further information, visit our website www.ogs.on.ca/kingston

SPEAKERS' CORNER

with Edward Grenda



"Energy, Shrewdness and Integrity: Robert Drummond in Kingston, 1820-1834"

by Reverend Bruce Cossar

It is uncanny that fate can impart a cruel twist to the reputations of certain individuals who have contributed much to their communities such that they have been consigned to perpetual obscurity and totally ignored by succeeding generations. Such has been the case of Robert Drummond in Kingston. But it is Reverend Cossar's intention in his paper to resurrect Drummond's reputation and rescue him from falling deeper into history's memory hole. Robert Drummond was an accomplished businessman and concentrated his efforts in shipping, shipbuilding, in construction as a contractor, not to mention his work as a astute landowner and financier. Also, he was a community spirited person whose activities augmented social life in Kingston during his relatively brief time in the city.

Robert Drummond was born in 1791 in Scotland. He followed his older brother, George Drummond, by training in the areas of construction and architecture. Coming to adulthood during the Napoleonic wars, he managed to escape the clutches of the British Navy's press gangs and the Army's conscription measures. He settled in Montreal with his wife in 1820.

In May 1821, he became a shareholder in the construction of two steamboats that sailed on Lake St. Louis to the St. Anne Rapids where a transshipment point was created for shipping up the Ottawa River. He undertook the construction of a lock that circumvented the St. Anne Rapids and enabled steamships to sail directly up the Ottawa River from Montreal. On the basis of his work in the Montreal area, Drummond became involved in 1827 in the construction of a bridge over the Ottawa River connecting the islands at Chaudiere Falls. He was responsible for the construction of three of seven spans starting from the south side of the Ottawa River.

In May 1827, Colonel John By began to award contracts for the construction of the Rideau Canal, connecting what is now Ottawa with Kingston. Drummond was given the Kingston Mills contract. However, when construction was initially underway, the work of several contracts was viewed as unsatisfactory. Colonel By reassigned the work on the Cataragui sections south of Chaffey's Locks to Drummond.

Interestingly, in 1827-28, Drummond was involved in two major projects at once – the supervision of the continuing bridge work at Chaudiere on the Ottawa River and the construction of the locks at Kingston Mills. Work on the Cataragui section proved to be inordinately difficult. During the summer, interminable battles with mosquitoes and black flies were waged in hot and humid conditions with the ubiquitous prospect of malaria hovering over the workers. In consequence, work was undertaken during the winter months when conditions permitted it.

Drummond moved to Kingston in early 1828 and instituted measures to take advantage of the commercial potential he saw in Kingston. He purchased Cartwright's shipyard at Mississauga Point and built several ships there within two years. A significant accomplishment was the construction of the ship "Pumper". In 1833, it was used for Colonel By's first passage to Bytown from Kingston. Subsequently, the "Pumper" commenced regular sailings to Bytown from Kingston.

In 1830, the Rideau and Ottawa Steamboat Forwarding Company was established. Drummond was the major stakeholder and Kingston agent. This allowed for freight and passenger traffic between Montreal and Kingston via the Rideau Canal. Drummond prospered handsomely because he had a monopoly on the St. Anne's Lock and charged steeply for the passage of other boats.

In 1830, Drummond began accumulating land holdings on the Kingston waterfront. The land was either rented out to others or used for his business interests. In 1831, Drummond and James Morton formed a partnership to operate a brewery and distillery in Kingston. Drummond served as the principal financier of the enterprise.

His community involvement was substantial. He attended St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, was a hospital subscriber, a director of the Commercial Bank in Kingston, and director of the Midland District Agricultural Society. His aspiration to become a politician was cut short by his sudden and premature death caused by cholera in 1834. He was buried in the graveyard area which is now known as McBurney Park.



On behalf of the Society, Professor James Pritchard responded and thanked Reverend Cossar for his presentation calling it well organized and charmingly told.

Detail of a painting c1830 by Thomas Burrowes (Ontario Archives) of Robert Drummond's Kingston Mills with the masonry of three lower locks completed and the steamboat Pumper at the lock entrance. During the construction of this section of the Rideau Canal, Drummond lived in one of the buildings portrayed in this watercolour.

- photo and caption provided by Jennifer McKendry