



LIMELIGHT

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2000

NEWSLETTER OF THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

In December, we enjoyed our last meeting of the year and of the century, and -- by popular reckoning, at least -- we are beginning a new millennium. It was our usual Christmas gathering held in the impressive setting of City Hall's Memorial Hall and it was judged to be a special occasion on several accounts.

First, two very worthy KHS Award recipients were honoured by an appreciative gathering of friends and associates. Second, we were

entertained and informed by a fine presentation on the new face and function of the **British Whig** building. Third, we were given a preview of the **Plaque Committee's** volume which it is anticipated will be launched in February 2000. And, finally, it was gratifying that some eighty fellow members and friends enjoyed this very congenial event. I congratulate the various persons who worked to



make the evening a success and, on behalf of KHS, thank them for their labours.

January is also an important month for the Society. The Annual General Meeting is scheduled for January 27th and that is the occasion when I, as President, and the Executive must account for our handling of affairs. Of even greater importance, a new President and Council will be elected. I hope that we shall have a good turn-out at that important meeting so that the new Executive and Council can feel confident that they have the support of the membership as they undertake to lead KHS into another period of its long history.

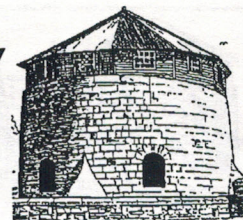
Best wishes for a Happy and Prosperous New Year to one and all. (Desmond O'Meara)

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Kingston Historical Society

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Editor: Dr. Brian Osborne (interim) - Phone (613) 533-6042

AND ONE FROM THE EDITOR...


The prospect of the departure of our President, Desmond O'Meara, prompted the inclusion of the cartoon featured on our cover-page. It marks another great transition. On 29 March 1890, the London **Punch** carried Tenniel's famous cartoon, "Dropping the Pilot." The pilot, of course, was Prussia's Chancellor, Otto von Bismark, leaving the ship of state in the hands of Kaiser Wilhelm II.

Given Desmond O'Meara's nautical preferences, it is an appropriate image. He has served KHS well over the last two years, having stepped into the breach at a critical time and devoted himself to the affairs of the society unstintingly. Thank you, Desmond, for your many good services and -- good sailing!

If the local visibility of KHS is any indication of the vitality of our organization then Desmond will be handing over a going concern. In recent weeks, three members of KHS have been in

the forefront of issues to do with the preservation of Kingston's built heritage.

At the December meeting of City Council, new KHS member Carl Bray spoke eloquently and cogently in favour of maintaining the County Court House as a living part of Kingston's townscape. In the **Kingston Whig-Standard** of 28 December, Jennifer McKendry - long-time KHS member and author of **With Our Past Before Us** -- argued for the preservation of the two-storey triplex at 217-221 Stuart Street that is facing demolition by Queen's University's expansion in the area. The next day's issue of the **KWS** featured a fine piece by KHS's George Dillon drawing attention to the fate of one of Kingston's other historical landmarks, the "outer" station on Montreal Street.


While all three acted as individuals, we should take considerable pride in the fact that they are members of our organization and demonstrating their expertise in an area central to the mission of KHS. — 

NEW MEMBERS, OLD RESPONSIBILITIES

1999 was a sterling year for attracting new members and Margaret Burdsall has provided us with an impressive list of 20 individual and family memberships:

Mr. Gordon Bale; Dr. Carl Bray; Professor Frederick and Mrs. Nancy Fairman; Professor Peter G. Goheen; Professor David L.A. Gordon; Mr. John A. Hickman; Mr. Richard and Wendy Johnston (Orillia); Mr. David C. Kasserra; Mr. Alan MacLachlan; Mr. David and Diana McGill; Ms. Sarah Meharg and Mr. John McLean; Ms. Janet Miller; Mr. Ian Moore; Mr. Marc Raymond; Professor James and Mrs. Suzanne Pritchard; Mr. Gerald and Marion Roney; Mr. Paul Ross; Mr. Douglas R.G. Smith; Mr. Ed and Marilyn Smith Tyerman; Mr. Paul and Maureen Williams. Welcome all!

Members of the "old guard" are requested to renew their membership for the year 2000 as soon as possible.

Also, they are reminded that if anyone wishes to add a donation to their membership fee, they will receive a receipt for taxation purposes. — 


KHS AWARDS, 1999

The following citations prepared by the KHS Awards Committee were approved by Council and read at the December meeting at which the following recipients were honoured by the Society.

J. William Fittsell

Surely, few individuals in Kingston are unaware of J. William Fittsell's passionate interest in the history of this community. Throughout his many years as a journalist, he has drawn attention to the human activities and concerns which lie at the heart of community identity. A long involvement in the sport of hockey has included fundamental contributions to the founding and growth of the International Hockey Hall of Fame and Museum in Kingston and to the historic hockey series played each year on the harbour ice. His book, **Captains, Colonels and Kings**, remains the definitive account of the origins of Canada's national sport. Finally, Mr. Fittsell's leadership during his tenure as President of the Kingston Historical Society, his unwavering support of **Historic Kingston**, and his unique fundraising skills have been major assets of the Society's activities during recent years. It is with gratitude and admiration that this Kingston Historical Society Award is presented to J.W. "Bill" Fittsell.

Gordon D. Smithson

Gordon Smithson's dedication to the study and preservation of local history over the past thirty years has been outstanding. Founding president of the Pittsburgh Historical Society, he has been active in several other heritage organizations, including the Kingston Historical Society. He has also produced a series of vignettes for local cable television and is the author of **Old Cataraqui Village**. Mr. Smithson's articles and presentations on subjects as diverse as genealogy, cemeteries, transportation, and industry have charmed and edified many local audiences. His investigations of the lives and work of ordinary people and, particularly, his capturing of the oral reminiscences of long term residents have created a valuable record of the routine but ever-changing nature of our community. The Kingston Historical Society is proud to recognize the achievement of Mr. Gordon D. Smithson by the presentation of this award. 

IN MEMORIAM: MATT COHEN


On 3 December 1999, only sixteen days after winning the Governor General's Award for English-language fiction for his most recent novel, **Elizabeth and After**, Matt Cohen died at his home in Toronto.

Born in Montreal and raised in Kingston, the 56 year-old writer owned a 177-acre property in the rock-bush-lake landscape

north of the "Limestone City." The author of a score or more books, essays, and short stories, it is this eastern Ontario land and society that stirred his imagination. In



a quartet of novels, Matt Cohen created his mythopoetic place, Salem: **The Disinherited** (1974); **The Colours of War** (1977); **The Sweet Second Summer of Kitty Malone** (1979); **Flowers of Darkness** (1981). Salem was where he sought out "a secret landscape hidden behind the everyday." And it was to this region that he returned in **Elizabeth and After** because of -- as he put it -- "some sub-verbal pull...I don't know what to say -- it's the place where I feel most at home." For Matt Cohen, it was in this country that he could explore the relationship between individuals and their environment, between memory and place, in a setting "whose character and landscape have imprinted my writing life."

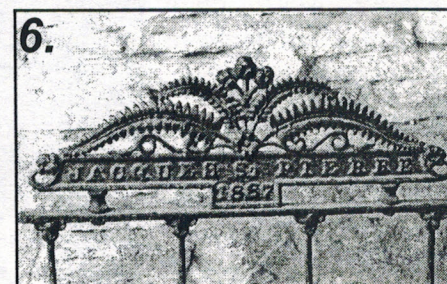
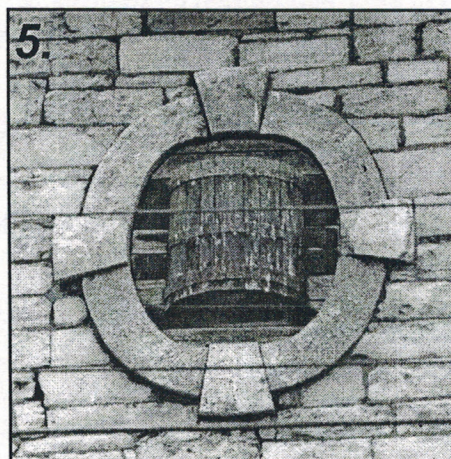
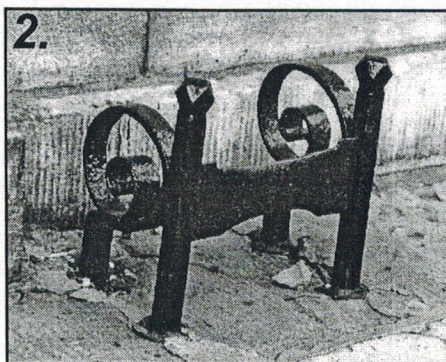
Canada has lost one of its brightest literary lights, but Matt Cohen has bequeathed a rich lore of insights into the essence of our region and its rural society. 

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Kingston Historical Society Annual General Meeting will be held at 7.30 p.m., Thursday 27 January 2000, in the Wilson Room of the Kingston Public Library.

The first item of business is a vote on the motion, already moved and seconded, to adopt the revised Constitution and By-laws as amended at the November meeting. This will be followed by reports by the Society's officers and the election of the Executive and Council for 2000.

Following the business part of the meeting, members may wish to participate in a "Know your Kingston" photo-quiz. Bring your **Limelight** to the meeting and identify and locate the six "mystery" images included below. Prizes will be awarded to the winners.

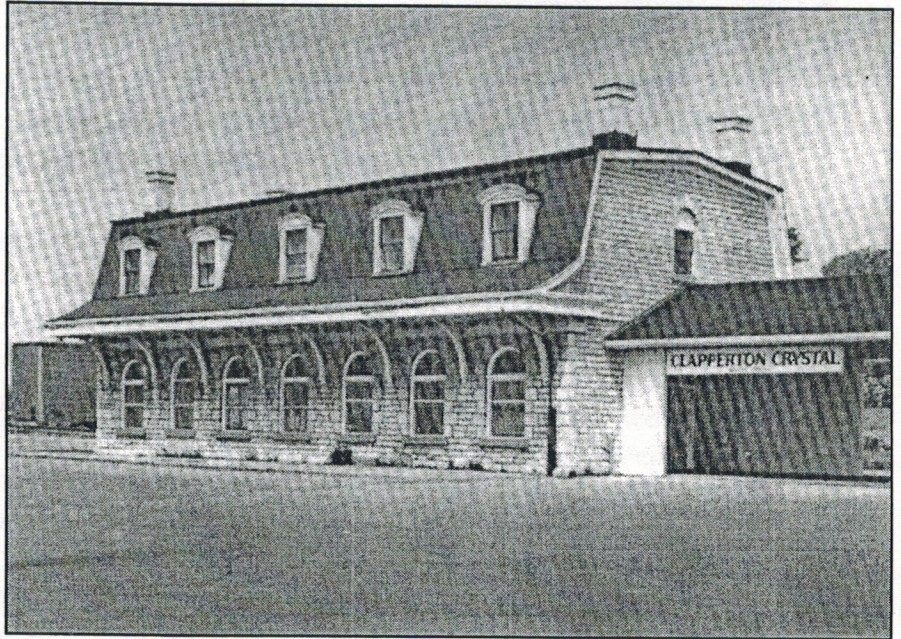


THE 'OUTER' STATION

Here I sit, forlorn and virtually abandoned, my roof damaged by a fire set by vandals some years ago. I was built in 1855-6 by the Grand Trunk Railway (GTR) to serve as Kingston's station, but I was a long way from the downtown area. Some complained about this but the Grand Trunk had wanted to avoid the expense of purchasing the right-of-way through built-up lands. However, in the early 1860's, the GTR finally capitulated to public pressure and built a branch line connecting me with downtown. Starting near Elliot Avenue, it followed the shore of the Cataraqui until it crossed Anglin Bay on a trestle and lift bridge, and then ran along Ontario Street to a small station at the foot of Johnson Street. It came to be known as the "Hanley Station" after its first stationmaster. Others called it the "Inner Station" to differentiate it from me, the main, "Outer Station."

Like all GTR stations built in the 1850's, I was constructed to a common design. I have a Mansard-style roof with four chimneys, one at each corner. There are seven arched windows on the main floor and five dormers on the second. I originally had a common waiting room, a separate area for ladies, a ticket office, telegraph office, and a baggage and storage room. Once I was open for business, a number of houses and buildings sprang up around me and came to be known as the Kingston Station Village. But now, only a row of well-restored limestone houses on Montreal Street are all that remain of my former neighbours.

As traffic increased, the Grand Trunk added a brick extension in 1895-8 that originally served as a restaurant but was later converted to a ticket office and waiting room. We were connected by a roofed walkway in 1939 and my original structure was downgraded to a mere baggage and storage area. But all of this changed shortly after World War II. A west bound freight-train failed to negotiate the tight curved approach and the engine ended up on its side on my platform. Luckily, there were no passengers waiting there, but the engineer and fireman were killed.

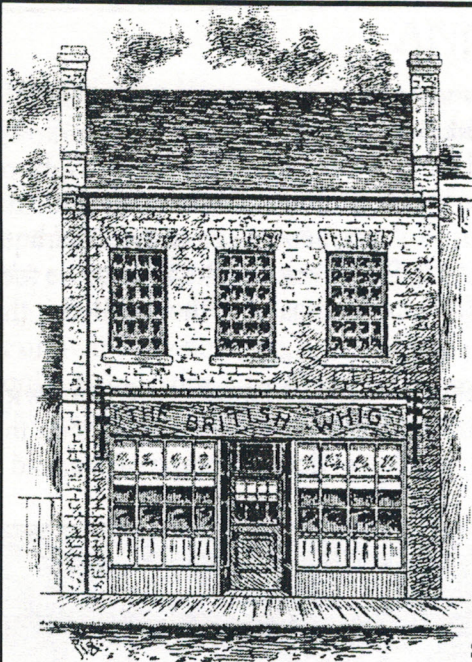


That accident foreshadowed my end as a railway station. In the early 1970's, CN dug a large cut to reduce the curve so trains could run at speed through the area. I was closed down, the connection to the downtown terminated, and a brand-new, one storey "Outer Station" was officially opened on Counter Street October 25, 1974. My rails are gone, my out-buildings removed, and I stand alone, listening to the sounds of the trains passing me by. Only memories remain.

So what is my future? In 1994, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada designated me as a heritage railway station because of my historical and architectural significance. But what is my fate. It's ironic that my lesser sister stations "downtown" have survived to serve other purposes while I, the historic station, which served most the train-travelling public of this community for over a century have been forgotten and abandoned.

Negotiations between CN and Kingston for my transfer or sale seem to have stalled at present. But perhaps there is hope. A tarpaulin has been placed over my damaged roof. Also, I am hoping that some of Kingston's numerous architects and preservationists might give their time and expertise to my restoration. I know that funding for my restoration is available. Perhaps some civic-minded volunteer agency or club might be interested in using me for their activities. I hope something is done before I disintegrate or become demolished!

(Prepared by George Dillon, with assistance from Jennifer McKendry, William Thomson, Tom Wash, and Christopher Smith)



Bagot St., 1834-75

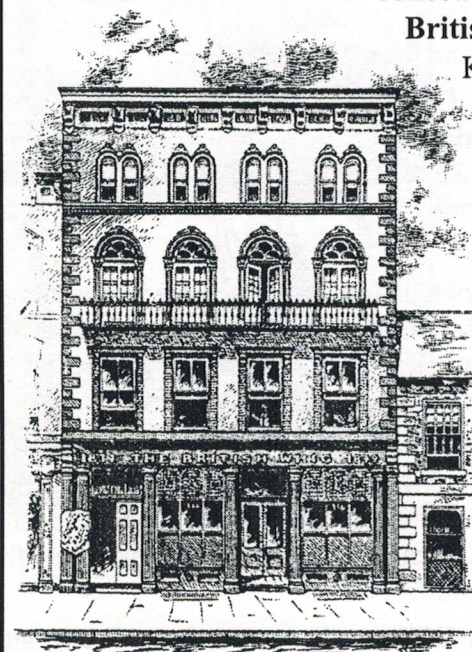
DECEMBER MEETING

As commented on by the President, the December meeting of KHS offered a fine blend of socializing and intellectualizing.

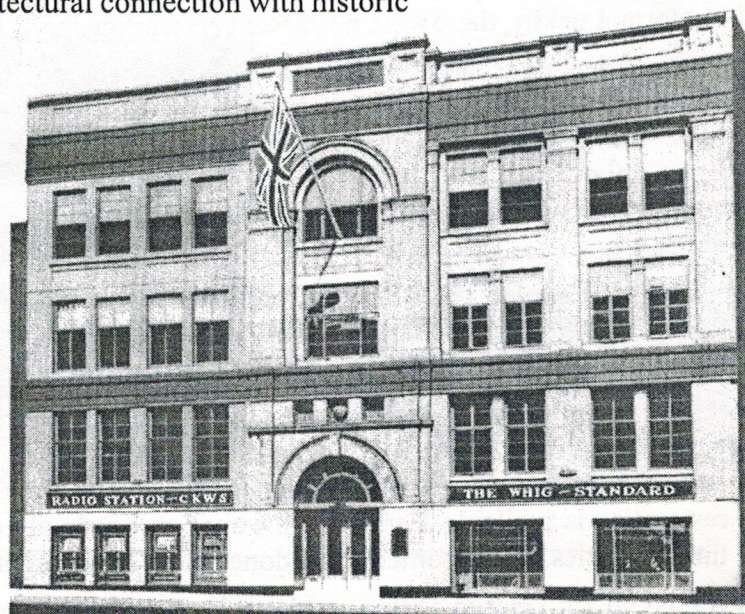
There was good food, good cheer, and good news for those interested in the future of Kingston's streetscapes. Messrs. Andrew Dobson and Kim Donovan presented a well-illustrated historical summary of the British Whig Building and an architectural prospect of its restoration and refurbishment as a dominant element of the Market Square complex. They must be complimented on their efficient and forthright presentation that allowed us to share their excitement and commitment to such a fine project. Prompted by this meeting, Gord Smithson has offered us the following items from his personal collection that throw further light onto the evolution of the **British Whig's** architectural connection with historic Kingston.



79 Brock St., 1875-82



334-6 King St. E., 1882-95



306 King St. E., 1895-1997

MILLENNIUM PROJECT of the KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO
MONUMENTS, MEMORIALS & MARKERS
IN THE KINGSTON AREA**

The KHS Plaque Committee - John Grenville, David Kasserra, Jennifer McKendry, Bill Patterson, and Ted Storey - is hard at work on the final editing for this book - with design help from Peter Dorn. It commemorates the new millennium by publishing the texts of more than 180 plaques, monuments, and memorials erected by various sponsors including the Kingston Historical Society. The markers are grouped geographically for ease in touring, assisted by helpful maps. More than 180 interesting illustrations are found throughout the *Guide*. The release date is projected as spring 2000: look for it at KHS meetings and in bookstores, as well as by mail order. Here is the entry for

KINGSTON PENITENTIARY

Opened on 1 June 1835 Kingston Penitentiary is Canada's oldest reformatory prison. Its layout - an imposing front gate leading to a cross-shaped cellblock with workshops to the rear - was the model for other federal prisons for more than a century. Its main structures constitute an impressive grouping of inmate-built 19th-century classical architecture in local stone. Kingston Penitentiary represented a significant departure from the way society had dealt with its criminals. Previously, jails were used primarily as places to hold convicts awaiting execution, banishment or public humiliation. The penitentiary imposed a severe regime designed to reform the inmate through reflection, hard work and the fear of punishment. "KP" employed the congregate system first developed at Auburn, New York, where inmates lived in small cells but worked together from dawn to dusk all under a rigidly enforced rule of silence. Kingston Penitentiary stands as a powerful symbol of this country's commitment to the maintenance of law and order.

Location: East of main entrance, 555 King St W at Sir John A. Macdonald Blvd

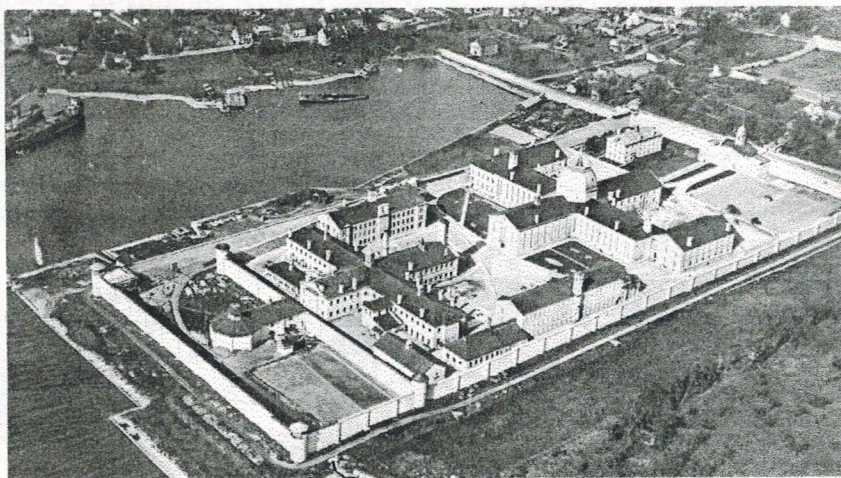
Type: Three bronze panels on concrete base

Sponsor: Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada

Date Erected: 1997

Readings: Edmison 1954; Curtis 1985; McKendry 1989; Patterson 1992; McKendry 1995b, 1996

Additional Information: The north gateway was built 1840-5 by convicts under the guidance of William Coverdale (1801-65) who acted as penitentiary architect from 1834 to 1846, when he was replaced by Edward Horsey (1809-69). The stone gate design in the Tuscan Order is modelled on a Roman triumphal arch symbolizing society's triumph over those who betray its values.



In this aerial view of 1919 a new south perimeter wall is being built next to the shore. The gasworks and the old south wall were later demolished when the wing of the workshop was extended. Corrections Canada Museum

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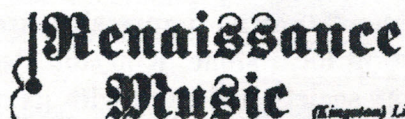
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