

LIMELIGHT

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NEWSLETTER OF THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Twenty five years ago, the third Monday in February was set aside as Heritage Day as an opportunity for Canadians to celebrate their heritage. This event appeared to pass largely unnoticed in Kingston except as a civic holiday and a squabble about garbage pick-up.

In view of the Kingston Cultural Initiative, a partnership of the Kingston Economic Development Corporation and the Kingston Regional Arts Council, it is curious that little was done. This initiative recognizes that art, culture, and heritage are at the centre of the economies of downtown cores and that tourism plays a significant aspect in this success. While the term heritage is used in conjunction with tourism, the strategic goals of the cultural initiative make no mention of heritage. The emphasis is on the fine arts, including cultural events and festivals, music, and nature.

Heritage may not have slipped through the cracks, but it has not been afforded the emphasis that it is due, particularly given the abundance of heritage in the Kingston area. Our constitution mandates that one of our objectives is to maintain interest in the history and heritage of Kingston and its environs. Implicit in this objective is the responsibility of the Society to ensure that heritage is promoted as an asset to the Kingston area. We need to ensure that history and heritage are maintained in the public forum. We need to ensure that we participate in public debates where necessary and appropriate.

The proactive stance on Heritage issues, such as that taken by the Society on the Courthouse issue, was fitting and productive. There may be occasion in the future to do so again. (Warren Everett).

NOTE: MARCH MEETING

The next meeting of KHS will be at 7.30, Wednesday, 15 March, in the Wilson Room, Kingston Public Library.

Speaker: Sue Bazely, Cataraqui Archaeological Research Foundation.

Topic: The History Beneath Our Feet: Exploring Kingston's Archaeological Past.

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Kingston Historical Society

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AND ONE FROM THE EDITORS...

While we agree with that old adage about not "fixin'" things if they're not "broke," does anyone have ideas for exciting new initiatives for KHS? Some have been mooted already.

How about a Sir John A. Macdonald dinner to mark his birthday on 11 January. Since 1892, Kingstonians have commemorated Sir John A on the anniversary of his death on 6 June. But what why not celebrate his birthday too? January would be a good month to get out to a nice formal dinner somewhere. And no speeches! Why not establish the practice of short toasts that JAM would have given, would have

liked to have given, or would have liked to have heard. We're sure the wits among us would come up with some dandy ones.

Others have an interest in getting out and about and seeing history in place. The idea of field



trips is a good one and our colleagues across the Cataraqui have organized their annual outing for Saturday, 3 June. We could do the same. Indeed, given George Dillon's expert knowledge of the Cataraqui Trail and the former route of the old Bay of Quinte Railroad, he could lead one. Imagine it: "An afternoon with George," strolling along one of the more interesting sections of the abandoned right of way.

Any other ideas? _____

LETTERBOX

Dear Editors:

Thank you for including Sr. Gayle Desarmia's article "The Sisters of Providence Preserve their Heritage" in the February issue of *Limelight*. The Kingston Historical Society is providing an invaluable community service through its commitment to telling the stories of important local groups -- in this case a pioneering group of women and their contribution to the fabric of Kingston life.

Also, for a research project, I am trying to find out when the first woman served on a jury in Kingston. I have contacted the Law Society of Upper Canada's archives and am still waiting to hear when the first woman served on an Ontario jury, but I am most interested in the local angle. Anyone with information about this subject can contact me at the address below.

Therese Greenwood
Box 1631, Kingston,
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IN SEARCH OF THE CATARAQUI TRAIL: THE PAST

The Cataraqui Trail was briefly part of the Canadian Northern Railroad, the "third" national railway in Canada. Started by William Mackenzie and Donald Mann with the purchase of a charter for a 125 mile railroad in Manitoba, by 1917 it was a major railroad stretching from Vancouver through to Montreal.



Where possible, these two entrepreneurs bought out and stitched together existing short-line railroads. One of these was the Bay of Quinte Railroad (originally known as the Napanee and Tamworth Railroad 1879 -- more colloquially as "Nip and Tuck") which was incorporated on the 21 March 1881. This line extended originally from Napanee through Newburgh, Camden East, and Yarker to Tamworth. Saved from insolvency by the Rathbun Company of Deseronto, the railway was completed and operating by 1881. By December 1889, the line had been pushed across the Napanee River to Harrowsmith where it made use of running rights to Kingston over the tracks of the Kingston & Pembroke Railroad -- the "Kick and Push" -- that had opened in 1879. The four-mile extension to Sydenham was opened in late 1893.

The main purpose of this railroad was to haul logs and minerals from the hinterland to the mills at Deseronto. By the first decade of the 20th century, most of the valuable timber had been cut and the mineral deposits were no longer profitable. In 1909, the Canadian Northern purchased the Bay of Quinte Railroad. By 1914, the line had been extended from Sydenham northeastward through Perth Road Village, Chaffey's Locks, Elgin, Forfar, Portland, and Lombardy to Smiths Falls and Ottawa.

WWI resulted in the bankruptcy of every major railroad in Canada with the exception of the CPR and, by 1923, the Canadian Northern had been merged with the other bankrupt railroads to form the Canadian National Railways. The line between Napanee and Ottawa remained in use because it was the only direct access that the CNR had between Ottawa and Toronto.

In the 1930's, passenger service on the line was much reduced with the decision of the CN and CP to "pool" their passenger service between Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal. CN passengers now travelled as far as Brockville before heading north on the CP line. Most freight service along the line disappeared because many of the small towns had actually shrunk with the collapse of their local industries. In 1978, the Federal Government created VIA Rail which took over passenger service from both the CNR and CPR. Within two years, VIA made a decision to abandon its two over-night passenger trains between Ottawa and Toronto. The Smiths Falls-Strathcona section of the line was virtually abandoned, though the tracks remained as authorities considered the possibility of a high-speed Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal connection along the route.

By the mid 1990's, the tracks had been removed and the local "South-Eastern Ontario Rails-to-Trails Alliance" purchased the right-of-way from CNR for the nominal sum of one dollar. With the approval of the local communities, the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA), became the official owner and manager of what came to be known as the Cataraqui Trail. Designated for recreational use by snowmobiles, skiers, bicyclists, walkers, and horseback riders, ATVs and other four-wheeled-drive vehicles are banned. (Prepared by George Dillon with the assistance of Neil Payne, Tom Wash, Kelly West, and Doug Knapp.)

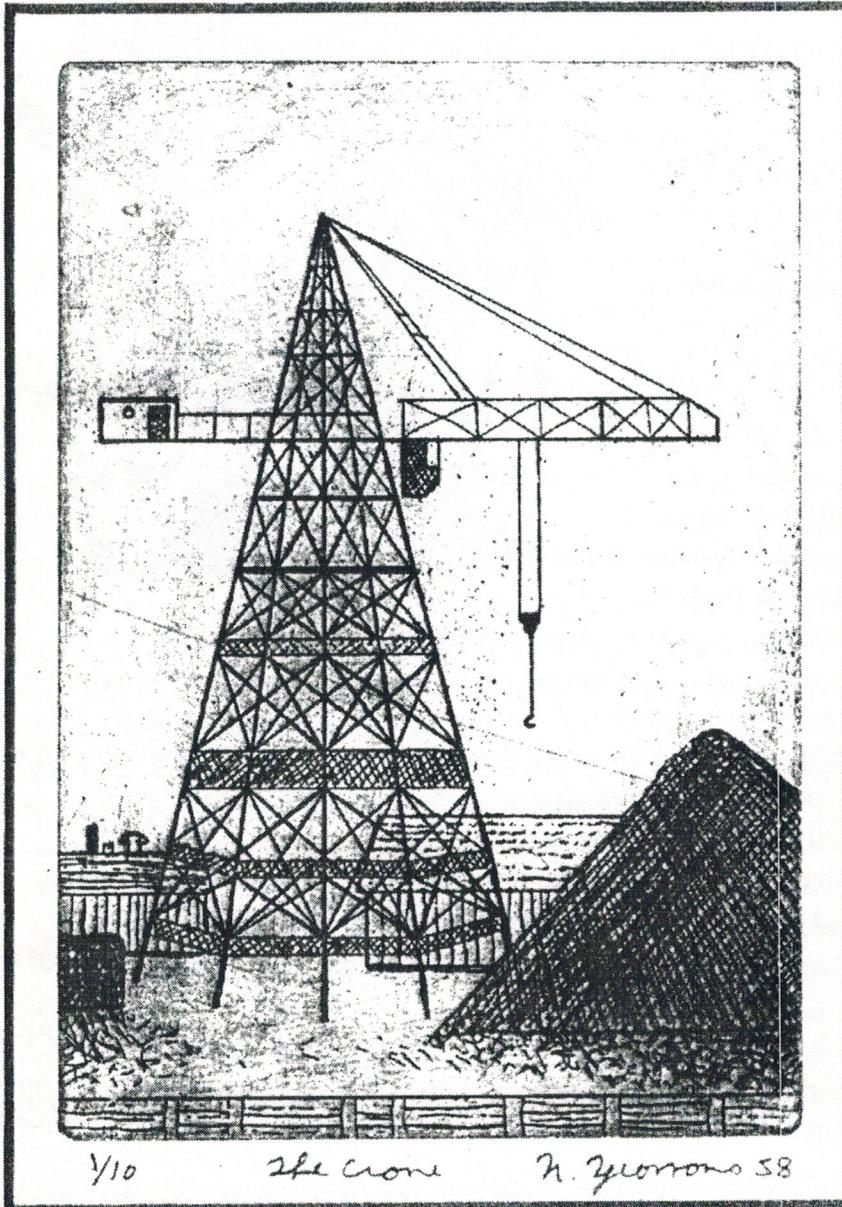
NAN YEOMANS: A RETROSPECTIVE

Nan Yeomans, a longtime member of our Society recently held a retrospective of 50 years of her work as an artist in the Kingston area. It provided a feast for both art lovers and historians alike. Painted in her early student days, her pen and wash sketches of old boat houses around Portsmouth Olympic harbour are a priceless record of the former port, especially for those who know it only in its current concrete manifestation. Small etchings of cranes, and the copper plate upon which they had been etched, remind us that Kingston once had a vibrant shipbuilding industry.

If Nan's chronological career has been long, her scope has been equally wide. She works in many media. Two large watercolours -- "Maple Sugar Bush in Spring" and "Maple Sugar Bush in Autumn" -- demonstrate her ability in this genre. But her exhibits also include etchings, collographs, many mixed media work, and a single emboss, "The Lone Pine Tree." It is in her less conventional works that her unique abilities shine. "Pick Your Own" is a wonderful multi-layered piece in which no less than thirty-five different etching techniques were used, so demonstrating Nan's skill as a printmaker. Good explanatory notes accompany most of the works.

There is nothing of the trendy or of the merely fashionable about Nan's collection. It reflects an honest, often humorous, almost innocent look at the world around her. As is evident from the works exhibited, these qualities have been a consistent thread throughout her fifty years as an artist.

For those who missed this show or who would like to see more of her work, her studio will be included in the Kingston "Interconnected Art Studio Tour" to be held on the second weekend of May. (Prepared by Margaret Moore O'Meara)



SPEAKERS' CORNER

At our February meeting, Professor James Pritchard of the Queen's History department gave an engrossing talk about the Kingston Dockyard with the primary focus on the "Dockyard Gate." With excellent photographs, both past and present, he traced the history of the dry-dock system, with particular emphasis on the dock-gate. Professor Pritchard entertained excellent questions from an audience of about 120 who were deeply interested in the restoration of this significant element of Kingston's nautical history and contemporary heritage landscape. At the 15 March meeting of KHS, Sue Bazely (Cataraqui Archaeological Research Foundation) will speak on "The History Beneath Our Feet: Exploring Kingston's Archaeological Past." (Submitted by Alan MacLachlan)

CATARAQUI CEMETERY'S SESQUICENTENNIAL

Of all the cemeteries across Canada, Cataraqui Cemetery at Kingston holds unique distinction as the burial site of Canada's first Prime Minister. Moreover, this year the Cataraqui Cemetery Company will celebrate its 150th Anniversary as an incorporated company.

Established at the beginning of the nineteenth century as a village burial ground, the Charter of the Cataraqui Cemetery Company was handed down on 10 August 1850, by the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada. It was developed as a rural garden cemetery after the pattern of Mount Auburn in Boston, and Mount Hope in Rochester, New York, with winding roadways through rolling terrain, and ponds and watercourses throughout the 100 acres of ground filled with ancient trees. It became the final resting place for people of all ethnic and religious origins, including noted civic leaders, authors, inventors, and explorers.

The earliest list of lot-holders is a veritable Who's Who of Kingston, and includes Sir John Alexander Macdonald, Thomas Kirkpatrick, and John Counter, first mayors of the Town and City of Kingston, and Sir Alexander Campbell, a Father of Confederation and a former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. Accordingly, the Cataraqui Cemetery should be thought of as one of Kingston's famed institutions, as much a part of its past as its forts, churches, jails, and other historical features. Its importance has kept pace with the study growth and development of Kingston.



The modern Sir John A. Macdonald Chapel, located next to the Office, features a dramatic stained glass window. It was commissioned in 1891 in memory of Sir John, installed in a tiny church at Redan, north of Brockville, and donated to this Cemetery in 1980 when this Chapel was built.

The Anniversary Year will be marked by regular and special events:

- ✦ On 6 June, the Kingston Historical Society will observe its annual commemoration ceremony to honour Sir John A. Macdonald's life and achievements, with a distinguished speaker, an Honour Guard of Fort Henry cadets, and wreath laying by several organizations;
- ✦ On 17 June, the Kingston Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society presents its annual Genealogical Cemetery Picnic, when members and the public are invited to use the Cemetery's extensive records for ancestral searches;
- ✦ On 10 November, the Veterans' Service will be observed at the large Military Plot, purchased in 1865 by the War Department of Great Britain, and now an honoured member of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission;
- ✦ In addition, there will be a variety of Walking Tours, and a Plot Restoration Program.

The Highlight of the Anniversary celebrations will take place on 12 August with the opening of an Open Air Chapel on Chapel Hill near the main gates at the entrance to the Cemetery.

Planning for this highlight event is incomplete, but will welcome distinguished guests to greet the public, appropriate musical background, and informal discussions on historical features as they blend into the future. More information on this Summer of Anniversary Events may be obtained from Cataraqui Cemetery Company, 927 Purdy Mills Road, Kingston, Ontario K7M 3N1; Tel: 613-546-6545. (Submitted by Marjorie Simmons) —

HERITAGE WEEK: TEA AND TALK

On Saturday, 19 February 2000, a round-table discussion brought together representatives of southern Lennox and Addington County organizations with activities promoting the discovery, preservation, and enjoyment of the region's heritage. The Loyalist Township Heritage Committee organized the meeting with the assistance of the Wilton Women's Institute, which provided its hall (the former Wesleyan Methodist Church), as well as the home-baked treats and the tea and coffee.

Thirty participants shared the challenges, successful programs, and future projects of about fifteen working groups. Talk of activities, products, services, and programs filled the two hours. The range of interests included preservation of buildings and local landscapes, research for genealogical and local history questions; sharing information through the internet, lecture series, walking tours, driving tours, museums, publications, plaques, and sustained interaction between a public school and a seniors group.

Of course, fund-raising haunts all of these undertakings by not-for-profit, volunteer organizations. In fact, the afternoon tea closed as the Institute women reset their big table for a fund-raiser country-style supper. By five o'clock, the hall was filled with the aroma of chicken stew to greet the diners. Over the past four years, the Wilton's Women's Institute has been vigorously raising funds for repairs to the limestone church, constructed in 1874 by the Saul Brothers, well known regional masons. The building was the first designated by the LACAC of Ernestown Township. In 1999, Loyalist Township was able to assist the Institute for work on the tower through its own replacement of the lost provincial designated property grants.

Groups represented: Loyalist Township Heritage Committee; Loyalist Township Council and Planning Staff; Loyalist Parkway Association; Lake Ontario Waterfront Trails; Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, Bay of Quinte Branch; Bay of Quinte Branch of UELA; Loyalist Cultural Centre St Albans Church; Hay Bay Church; L&A County Historical Society; South Fredericksburg Historical Society; Fairfield-Gutzeit Society, Bath; Bath Museum; Fairfield Homestead Heritage Association; Odessa's "Our Community: From Generation to Generation"; Wilton Women's Institute. (Submitted by Barbara Snyder)



ANOTHER CAPITAL QUESTION

When Colonel John Graves Simcoe stood on the steps of St. George's Church on 8 July 1792 and read the proclamation of government for the new Province of Upper Canada, he made no mention of Kingston as its capital. The people were disappointed. They knew that if Sir John Johnson had been appointed lieutenant-governor -- as recommended by Governor Haldimand and as expected by his Loyalist followers in the settlements along the upper St. Lawrence and the Bay of Quinte -- he would have made Kingston the seat of government. After all, he owned 20 acres of land in the town with a house at the junction of present-day Brock and Montreal Streets.

But Colonel Simcoe had different ideas. Before setting out for Canada from his home in lovely Devon, he had studied assiduously all the maps and charts he could find and laid detailed plans for the new colony. He had marked a dot in the wilderness for his capital; that dot was the spot on the map where the city of London now stands. After three weeks in Kingston he set out with his retinue to establish his temporary capital in Newark, the name he gave present-day Niagara-on-the-Lake. (Submitted by Earle Thomas)



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 - are in the process of the last-minute work involved in sending this book to the printers. We hope to have the book launch in early May - please look for the details on when and where in next month's newsletter. More than 190 plaques, monuments, and memorials are recorded with relevant illustrations and maps. Subject to last-minute adjustments, the committee is recommending \$24.95 as the price - a great bargain for a book (8.5 x 11 inches) of more than 250 pages with a colour cover. This subsidized price is possible because of grants, donations and volunteers' time. Warren Everett, Doug Petty and Brian Osborne are undertaking the important work of publicizing and distributing the book. Here is the entry for

HILLCROFT 1853

Built in 1853 by a mayor of Kingston, Francis Hill, this house, during the 1860s and 1870s was the residence of Alexander Campbell (1822-1892). A member of the Legislative Council of the Province of Canada and delegate to the Quebec Conference, which led to Confederation, he was a life-long political associate of the Dominion's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald. Campbell held several cabinet posts after Confederation, was knighted in 1879 and, from 1887 to 1892, was Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario.

Location: 26 Hillcroft Drive

Type: Aluminum plaque on post

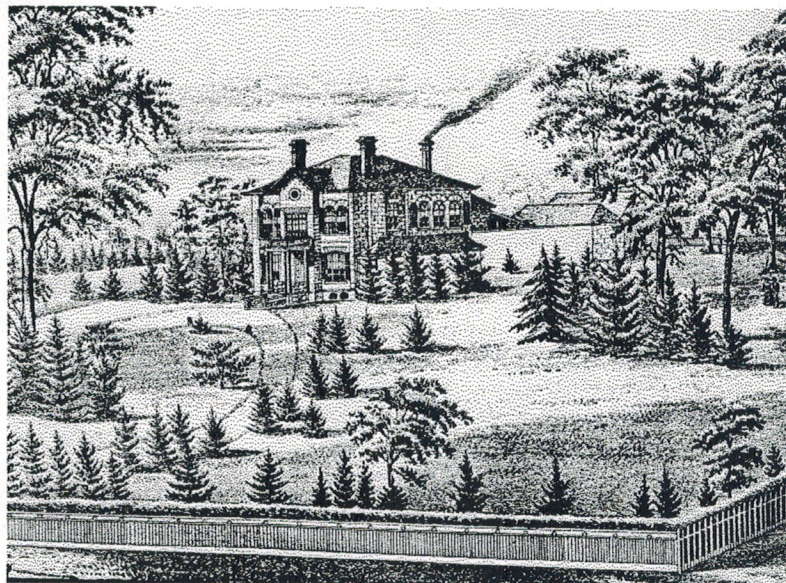
Sponsor: Ontario Heritage Foundation

Date Erected: 1957

Additional Information: On 17 August 1852 Francis M. Hill paid architect William Coverdale (1801-65) £ 62 for the plans and specifications of a limestone house later described as a "neat antique villa" and "a very delightful suburban residence" (City Directory 1857-58). It is typical of a number of Coverdale's houses with round windows and tall round arched windows in pairs or triplets. Campbell is buried in Section C, Cataraqui Cemetery, near Sir John A. Macdonald's gravesite.

Readings: Angus 1966;
McKendry 1995b.

Hillcroft in 1878
(Meacham Atlas)



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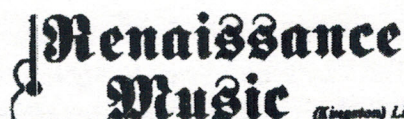
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