

LIMELIGHT

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NEWSLETTER OF THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I mentioned at the last general meeting, the millennium book project has been an unqualified success. The first run of 400 volumes is now sold out, bringing in sales of \$6866.24. This, combined with the millennium grant, means that the project is in the black. An additional 100 volumes have been ordered and these will be available for the 15 November meeting.

I would also like to remind you that 15 November is a special day for the Society. It marks the first time that there has been a combined KHS and Ontario Historical Society presentation. If you haven't already responded to the treasurer, please do so. The cost is \$10.00 for the light meal between the OHS presentation and the regular KHS meeting. If you only intend to attend the regular meeting, there is no charge.

The council is reviewing the idea of the formation of an umbrella group of local historical societies -- with KHS acting as the lead agency -- to work as a forum for heritage issues in the area. Carl Bray is heading up this initiative. Possible roles of the umbrella group could include being an advocate for historical matters, physical assets, and the coordination of the separate historical associations and organizations in the Kingston region. Early ideas worth pursuing include adding heritage groups to the KHS web site, and developing an early warning system for endangered properties. Combined with this initiative, Sarah Meharg has been investigating possible locations as potential permanent quarters for the society. Interest in establishing a store front office for our Society has been expressed by other groups.

Society members will be interested to know that we have secured the services of one of our members to act as manager of our web-page. We welcome and encourage suggestions as to how we can continue to improve our web site [www.heritagekingston.org] as well as other aspects of our communications programme such as *Limelight* and *Historic Kingston*.

A preliminary reminder -- our annual Christmas Meeting and reception will be held on 13 December at Memorial Hall, City Hall. Look for more details in the December *Limelight*.

(Warren Everett)



OUR NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of KHS will be 4.30-8.45, Wednesday, 15 November, the Wilson Room, Kingston Public Library.

4.30-6.00: "Celebrating One Thousand Years of Ontario's History":

Dorothy Duncan and Robert Levery

6.00-7.00: Dinner

7.00-7.45: "New Roots in Cataraqui Township #2": **Barbara Snyder**

8.00-8.45: "Kingston's Monuments, memorials and Markers: A Look at the Book": **The KHS Plaque Committee**

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Kingston Historical Society

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Memberships: Individual, \$35; Family, \$40; Institutional, \$40; Student, \$25.

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KHS Web Site: <http://www.heritagekingston.org/khs>

AND ONE FROM THE EDITORS...

November is the month of Remembrance. This year -- as Canadians have done for eighty years -- at the 11th hour of the 11th day of this 11th month, many of us will pause and remember those who died in "The Great War", in the "Second" and in conflict subsequently. It is the one time of the year that we collectively honour the men and women who served and continue to serve those of us who stay home. And sometimes, we wonder about the lives lost, or about the lives of those who "came" home.

But this month, as we look back -- we will also be looking forward. In this first November of the new millennium we, like Kingstonians for the last 160 years, will have the opportunity to shape our future - first, in the upcoming municipal election and then, in a national election. Certainly, Kingston in 2000 would be unrecognizable to those residents who publicly declared their preferred candidate in 1840. And those who came home in 1918 too would have been bewildered by a city that sprawled from Joyceville to beyond Collins Bay and in which residents debated how best to develop its waterfront, the utility of bicycle paths and the upgrade of water and sewers.

And yet, Kingstonians in the mid 19th century and women and men at the end of the "First" war of the 20th would recognize and applaud us as we debate, consider, and finally cast our ballot -- to continue to shape our future. So as we look back, we also urge you to look forward --and honour the past by helping to shape the future.



MEMBERSHIP 2001

Dear 2000 KHS Member:

Your next year's KHS memberships begin on 1 January 2001. We hope you'll be renewing your membership and, for your convenience, we are enclosing a renewal form and envelope addressed to the Society.

As you know, KHS members receive the Society's annual *Historic Kingston*. From September through May, the KHS newsletter, *Limelight*, informs you about Society activities and other topics related to Kingston's history and regional heritage related activities. Also, as a member, you and your guests have free admission to Murney Tower National Historic Site. Perhaps you would consider giving a gift membership to someone who would enjoy these benefits.

Finally, even if you are not continuing your membership, remember everyone is welcome to join us for the monthly public programmes. We hope you'll attend any that spark your interest. But, if you're not renewing, please let us know so we will not trouble you with further mailings. (Barbara Snyder: Membership).

SPEAKER'S CORNER



The speaker for KHS's October meeting was **Carmen J. Nielson Varty** who spoke on "**Reassessing our image of St. George's: A second look at Kingston's first church, 1792-1826.**" In a logical, well researched, and well illustrated presentation, Ms. Varty examined contemporary accounts of the form and fabric of the first St. George's Church, built in 1792. She also shared with us a new image of St. George's which suggests the influence of vernacular colonial American church styles. This was followed by a systematic analysis of the social and cultural origins of the congregation. The paper proved to be of interest to KHS Anglicans, Catholics, Presbyterians, and Methodists alike be they lapsed or active! -- and a lively discussion ensued.

On Wednesday, 15 November 2000, KHS will be hosting a meeting of the Ontario Historical Society, "Celebrating One Thousand Years of Ontario's History." The meeting will be held at our usual venue, Kingston Public Library's Wilson Room, and a full program is planned:

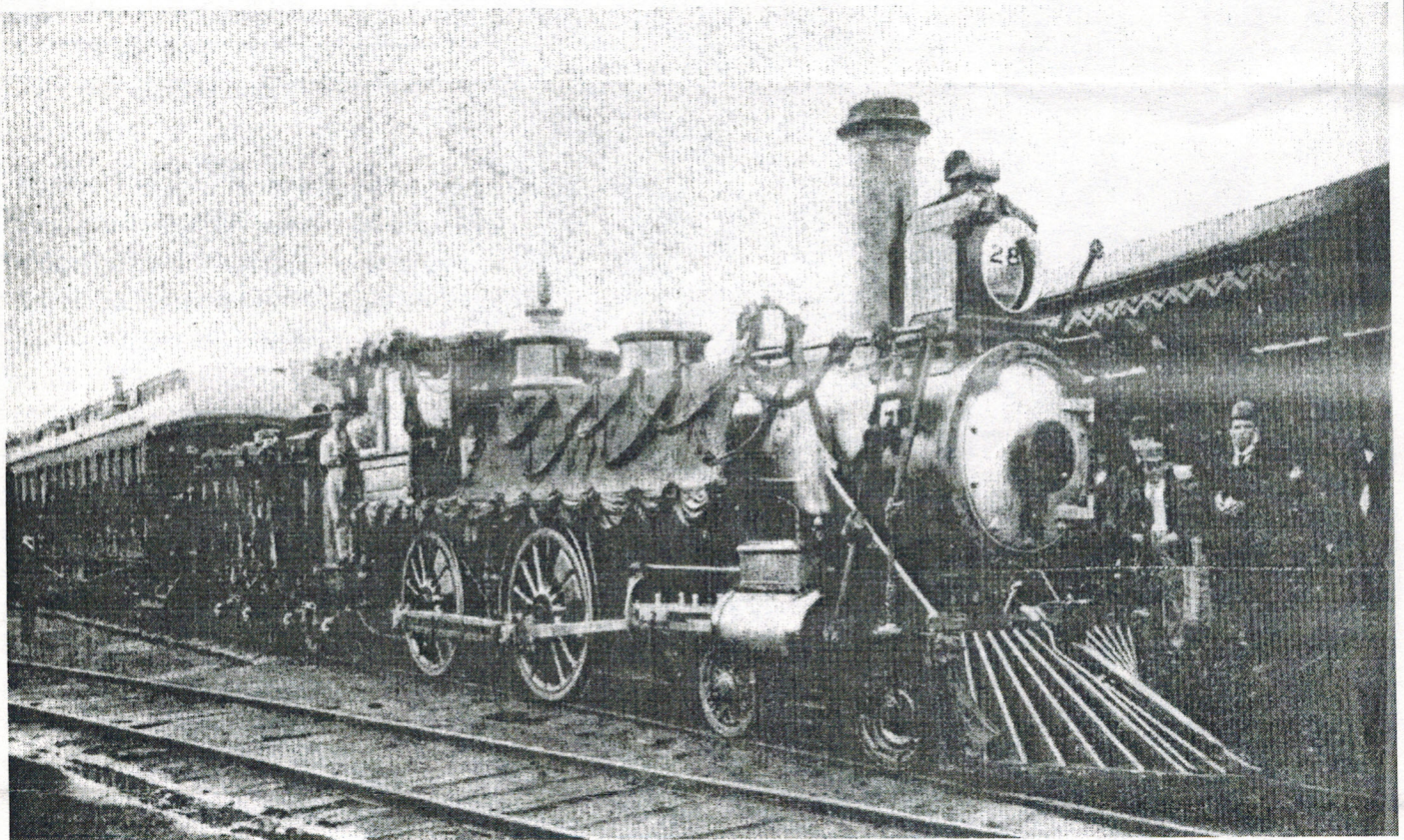
- 4.30-6.00: "Celebrating One Thousand Years of Ontario's History": **Dorothy Duncan and Robert Leverty**
6.00-7.00: Light Dinner
7.00-7.45: "New Roots in Cataraqui Township #2": **Barbara Snyder**
8.00-8.45: "Kingston's Monuments, Memorials and Markers: A Look at the Book": **The KHS Plaque Committee**

The \$10 registration fee is to cover the cost of the dinner. To register, please contact Stewart Renfrew (545 1953) and Alan MacLachlan (549 8841). For those wishing to attend the evening session only, there will be no charge.

TRAINS IN LANDSCAPES

Early last October, the Trudeau funeral train slipped through the eastern Ontario countryside on its way from Ottawa to Montreal. In the sunny, Indian-summer morning light, the streamlined train gleamed against the background pattern of fields, hedgerows, and bush touched with fall colour. Also caught for TV viewers by the helicopter-borne camera were knots of people at level-crossings watching for this train, as were crowds at the stations of the few small towns on the route. Recognizing the impromptu outpouring of public respect, the train finally slowed to a respectful crawl through this piece of Canada.

Compare this with the picture we can form of the Sir John A. Macdonald funeral train of seven cars that travelled to Kingston on 10 June 1891. A reporter for the *Kingston Daily British Whig* gathered these observations in an article entitled "Enroute to the City" with the train that left Ottawa's C.P.R. station at 4:20 that afternoon:

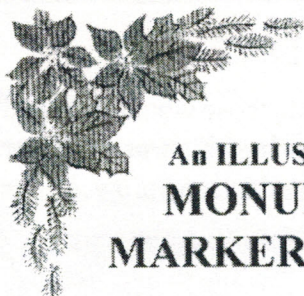


The locomotive and all the cars were heavily draped with black, as were also all stations along the line. At every station crowds were gathered, and in many fields farmers stopped at their work to stand, hat in hand, with bowed heads, while the funeral train passed. . . . (*KDBW*: 11 June 1891, p. 1, col. 3)

At Sharbot Lake, a Kingston & Pembroke steam locomotive, also heavily draped in black, became the head of the train. According to the *KDBW*'s report,

The funeral train was run in slowly from Sharbot Lake to Kingston. At Harrowsmith...a halt was made and the funeral car was placed next to the two locomotives for the convenience in shunting upon its arrival in Kingston.

It was in this configuration that the K.&P. engineer, R. Emmett, brought the train into the lights around Kingston's station at 10:20 that night (*Ottawa Evening Journal*, 11 June 1891, p. 1, col 8). Sir John A. had returned for a final visit to his home and friends.



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BOOK SHELF

On the title page of *At The Bend In The Road - Kingston*, the author, KHS's own Gordon D. Smithson, presents the focus of his rich volume: "The Grand Trunk Railway and Canadian National Railways ... are highlighted in a blended collection of historical notes, personal interviews, and photographs." Reference is also made to schools, churches, businesses, and what the author intriguingly calls "a village history along Montreal Street." Gordon Smithson constantly pricks our memory of Kingston with images of things as they were, of sites that have been so dramatically changed, and provocatively different perspectives on familiar places. One particularly powerful image is the hand-drawn map of the families and general lay-out of "Grand Truck Village" by Dorothea Druce. And everywhere there are people staring out at you at work, in family groups, arriving by train -- and leaving on honeymoon.

In its 237 pages and eighteen chapters, the *Bend in the Road* deals with transport and society in Kingston before rail, the construction of the Grand Trunk Railway and its branch line, the subsequent operations of the CNR and the grain elevator, strikes, the Depression, circuses, and community life in general. As he has done so often before in his public presentations and displays, Gordon Smithson has served us well by his insights into his remarkable collection of memories and records of this distinctive place, Kingston.

At The Bend In The Road is available for \$35 at the KEDC Visitor Centre, 209 Ontario Street (the former K&P Passenger Depot) or for \$40 (post included) from Gordon Smithson, 466 Coronation Blvd., Amherstview, K7M 5P9 (613 634 0362; gsmithson@home.com).

At The Bend In The Road Kingston



Gordon D. Smithson

ONE SOLDIER'S ARMISTICE DAY

On 11 November 1918, the Great War ended and on that day we commemorate those who fought and died in both World Wars. Shortly before he died in 1976, my father, Leroy Grant, told me how his war ended, on 25 October 1918, in France.

He was an officer in the Canadian Overseas Railway Construction Corps, and that day, for the first time in weeks, the colonel granted an afternoon's leave to several officers. Major Grant, Major Mackenzie, and Captain Vaughan decided to drive to Lille. At the last minute they were asked to take a war correspondent who had just arrived in camp. His name was Robert Service.



The four Canadians were filled with excitement. After four muddy, bloody years, the war was almost over, and certainly won. When they reached Lille they found the Germans had left three hours before and had blown the gate. Slowly the Canadians drove down the main street, and the people of Lille could hardly believe their eyes. The truck stopped, the Canadians got out and were pulled by welcoming hands and hoisted on shoulders, and carried back to the gate. Women threw garlands round their necks, children clasped them round the knees, there was cheering and shouting and tears on both sides. At the gate, the Canadians were put down, speeches were made, and they were taken into homes and given food and wine that had been saved. It was late afternoon when they set out on the return journey, mindful of the colonel's words that the British were on the way and THEY had to get the credit for relieving Lille. "It was one of the happiest days of my life," my father said, his voice echoing the excitement of that long ago day.

When we went through his things several weeks later, we found a photograph, and on the back he had written:

"At the Bethune Gate of Lille, France, about Oct. 25, 1918. The 4 in British [sic] uniform from L. to R. are L.F.G., Major Ian MacKenzie (some years later to be Minister of National Defence), R.W.Service (speaking in French), the poet and author and then a war correspondent, and Capt. Vaughan, Paymaster 5th Canadian Railway Troops. The gate had been blown by the Germans only three hours before. We were the first friendly uniforms except for prisoners that the Lillians had seen since 1914. Shortly after this the Commander and a lot of high-priced help from Army H.Q. arrived to make a formal entry. We withdrew with mingled haste and dignity."

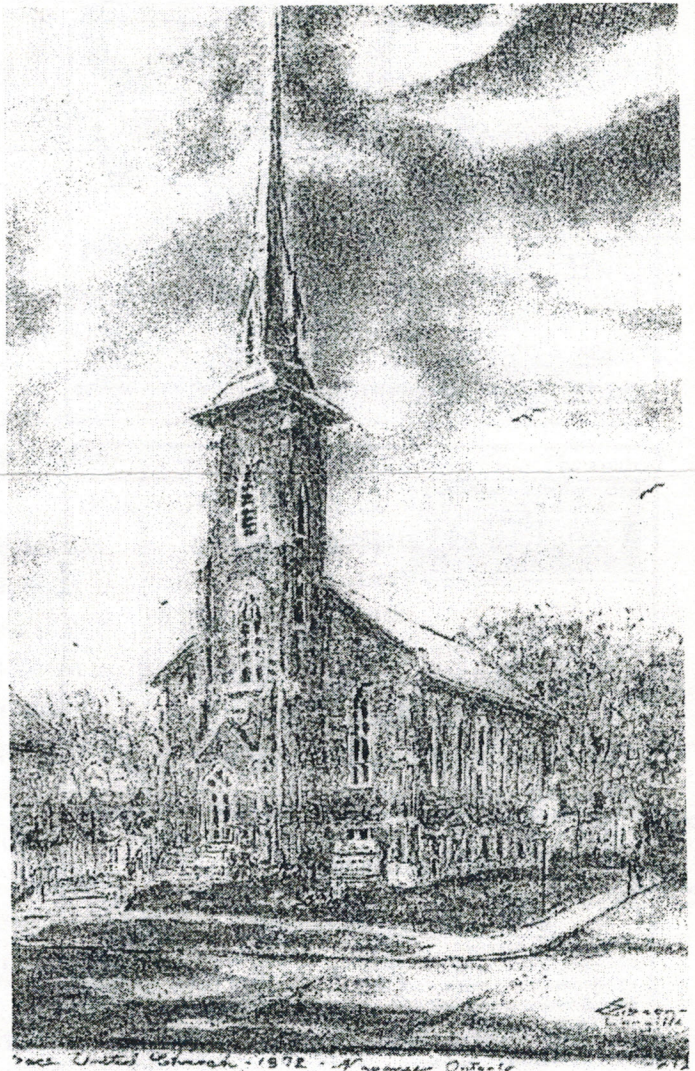
Note: Lt. Col. Leroy F. Grant lived in Kingston from 1920-72. He was a graduate of RMC (class of '04) and taught Civil Engineering at RMC from 1920 to 1940. He died in Toronto in 1976. (Prepared by B.M.B. Corbett).

ONCE UPON A TIME IN GREATER NAPANEE

Kingston Historical Society members show talent in abundance, particularly in the field of art. Nowhere has this been better illustrated than in the recent event held in the North Fredricksburg Hall, near Napanee. An Art History and Music Fest weekend was opened by the Mayor, with musicians, a historian outlining the history of the region, a teller of ghost stories, and a ghost. There were games and refreshments and music of all kinds. There was an exhibition of old kitchen equipment and a number of most ingenious early clothes washers. On the Sunday there was an antique car show. It was a busy, exciting, fun filled weekend.

But the centrepiece of the event was a week long exhibition of paintings by K.H.S. member, Shirley Gibson-Langille. All four walls of the hall were hung with her paintings, which were arranged geographically and labelled under the names of the five townships of the Greater Napanee area. She tells a most remarkable story starting with the landing of the United Empire Loyalists at Adolphustown in 1784. It was sad in that so many of the buildings depicted have disappeared, often through lack of conservation funding.

All the work is thoroughly historically researched. Shirley spent two years exploring every highway and byway in the area. But it is not just buildings, the homes, the churches that she portrays so beautifully but also derelicts of all kinds: abandoned outhouses, old washing machines, rusted out cars and trucks, and gas pumps that will never pump gas again.



Shirley is a Romantic Painter with a remarkably delicate touch --even her stone buildings show this quality. She paints directly on location (not from photographs or slides). Her love and her feeling for her subject shines through in every frame. Even her derelicts she treats with respect and affection. She works in watercolours, pen and ink, some pastel, and there is one delightful little sketch, "Last Milestone Before Kingston," in pencil.

Shirley, though Toronto born, has lived most of her life in Kingston apart from a few years in Germany, and her interests are largely in this area. She has studied art at St. Lawrence College, Queen's University Summer School of Fine Arts, and the Mary Schneider School of Fine Arts, and she has also studied in Germany. She has worked under many distinguished painters. Her works hang in collections world-wide.

It was not until after the event that I came to realise that it was not only the art that was Shirley's production, but so was the entire event. It was her concept from the beginning and it was she who produced the entire weekend. Most importantly, the proceeds of the weekend and a percentage of the sale of the art will go to establish an art scholarship for the Napanee District Secondary School. Shirley had already done this in Ernestown, and produced an Art Scholarship for the Ernestown Secondary School.

What generosity of spirit, what prodigious talent we have in our midst. (Prepared by Margaret Moore O'Meara).

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