



# LIMELIGHT

Vol. 3: No 7  
October 2001

## NEWSLETTER OF THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT


I am pleased to announce that the Society's millennium project, *Monuments, Memorials and Markers in the Kingston Area*, is proceeding to phase two.

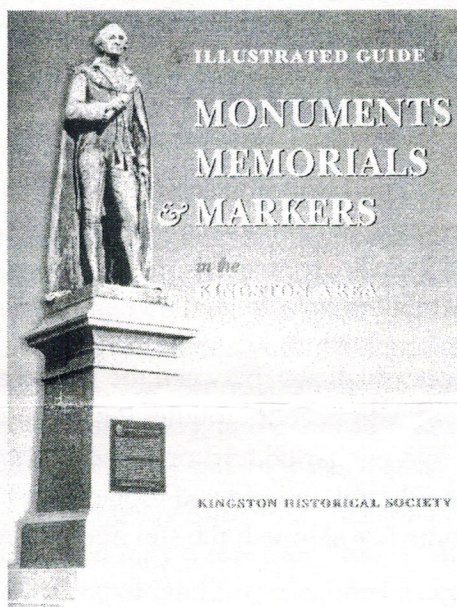
From the outset it was planned to have the data in the book available on our web site ([www.heritagekingston.org](http://www.heritagekingston.org)); however, time did not permit. This type of medium will provide widespread access to the information on Kingston's monuments, memorials, and markers, especially for schools, libraries, and the general internet user interested in historical research. As well, it will have a far wider impact, which will help promote one of the Society's fundamental goals: "to disseminate factual information relating to the history of Kingston."

It is important to note, however, that the web site will not contain all of the information that is in the book.

Specifically, for each marker, the web site entry would provide: title, plaque text and location, type of marker, sponsor, and date erected. The web site will also contain additional items of historical interest from the post-World War II period that were not included in the original book. Once the data is in a format suitable for the internet, it will be relatively easy to

reproduce it in CD format which the Society could distribute. The committee anticipates that the web-site will be up and running by the spring of 2002.

I would enjoy feedback on your experiences with our web-site and others of this nature. As Jack Pike demonstrates on page five, there is a trend to more and more use of the web as a vehicle for societies like ours. Your thoughts? (Warren Everett) — 



### OUR NEXT MEETING

**Date:** Wednesday, 17 October 2001  
**Place:** The Wilson Room, Kingston Public Library  
**Time:** 7.30 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Bill Patterson  
**Title:** The History of KP4W: Kingston's Prison for Women

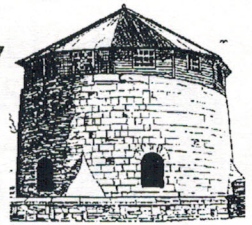
### CONTENTS

- PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
- EDITORIAL
- MASONIC TEMPLE
- GETTING STEAM UP
- SPEAKERS' CORNER
- WEB SITINGS
- THE RANKIN HOUSE
- LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES
- SPONSORS



# Kingston Historical Society

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

## AND ONE FROM THE EDITORS...

One of the attractions of studying history -- and especially local history -- is the sense of security and familiarity in the past. Sometimes, we are driven there by the stresses of our everyday lives. Certainly, much seems to have changed in our world since the last *Limelight*. The events of 11 September 2001-- thanks to the ever-present media -- have bombarded our senses and sensibilities.

We in Kingston have long had an ambivalent relationship with our neighbours "across the line." For many in our community, our Loyalist roots are south of the border. Our historical landscape is a material record of forts and towers and place-names that are testimony to a century of feared conflict and military readiness. Our piers and docks were once lined with vessels moving commodities and people north and south across lake and river. And in recent years, our marinas and streets have been full of American tourists vacationing here with us.

All of these connections -- as well as the incomprehensible horror experienced by New York and Washington D.C. -- have compelled us to share in our neighbours' grief. Arthur Neal has commented on events such as these in *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Major Events in the American Century* (1998):

the borders and boundaries between order and chaos, between the sacred and the profane, between good and evil, between life and death become fragile. People both individually and collectively see themselves as moving into uncharted territory. The central hopes and aspirations of personal lives are temporarily put on hold and replaced by the darkest of fears and anxieties. Symbolically, ordinary time has stopped: the sun does not shine, the birds do not sing, and the flowers do not bloom.

The World Trade Center and much of Lower Manhattan has now become what Kenneth Foote's *America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy* (1997) identifies as a "shadowed ground" that may be sanctified, designated as such for posterity, restored to former conditions, or permanently elided from the landscape in an attempt at preventing remembrance. Only time will tell what will happen. But, in the meanwhile, we must continue on with our lives as we move into this "uncharted territory" and be prepared to hear the birds sing and see more flowers bloom.



## KINGSTON'S MASONIC TEMPLE

On 15 September, twenty members of the Kingston Historical Society were treated to a tour of the Kingston Masonic Temple located on the corner of Wellington and Johnson streets. Our guide was Brother Donald Patterson of the Cataraqui Lodge of the Masonic Temple. Brother Patterson took us through the major rooms and halls of the former Congregational Church, which includes the dining room, the major banquet hall, the basement and, finally, the large meeting hall.

In 1822, the Union Church Society acquired the property and built a wooden frame church on the corner. In 1864, John Power directed the construction of a "neo-gothic" building fronting onto Wellington Street. Twenty years later, an extension was added to the rear to accommodate the Sunday School. Following a severe fire in 1891, the building was repaired and a new traction-model pipe organ was installed, "one of the finest pipe organs in the country." As we heard during our tour, it is still functional. The Congregationalists occupied the building until 1921.

At that time, the property was purchased from the Canadian Congregational Missionary Society by the members of the five Masonic Lodges of Kingston. Their new home was dedicated on 12 December 1923 by the Most Worshipful Brother, W. J. Drope, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the province of Ontario, Most Worshipful Brother, W.N. Ponton, Past Grand Master, and many other Grand Lodge officers. A banquet was held in Ontario Hall (the present Council Chamber in City Hall), the guest speaker being Brother, the Hon. W.R. Nickle, Attorney General of the Province of Ontario.

In 1947, following a fire in the dining room, the interior of the former church was remodeled, changes were made to the present stairway, and the original high arch ceiling was replaced by the present beam ceiling. The small stone caretaker's cottage located at 113 Johnson Street next to the Temple was previously part of the property, but it was sold on 28 December 1995.

The Banquet Hall is decorated by nine large paintings rendered in 1959 by Mr. Ole Jonassen, a Danish artist, then living in Sydenham. They depict several historic sites throughout Kingston: the old frame house in which the first legislative Assembly of Upper Canada met; the 1835 Kingston General Hospital; the old

Swing Bridge of 1829; the last gas lamp on the corner of King and Lower Union; the original Masonic Temple; the Golden Lion Building; the First Congregationalist Church; City Hall; and the Market Battery of 1846. The Grand Hall, or former worship area of the church, features a high cathedral ceiling and is dominated by impressive stained glass windows.

The Kingston Historical Association thanks the Kingston Masonic lodges for allowing us the privilege of visiting this most interesting element of Kingston's history. (Prepared by Alan MacLaghlan, photographs by Jennifer McKendry).

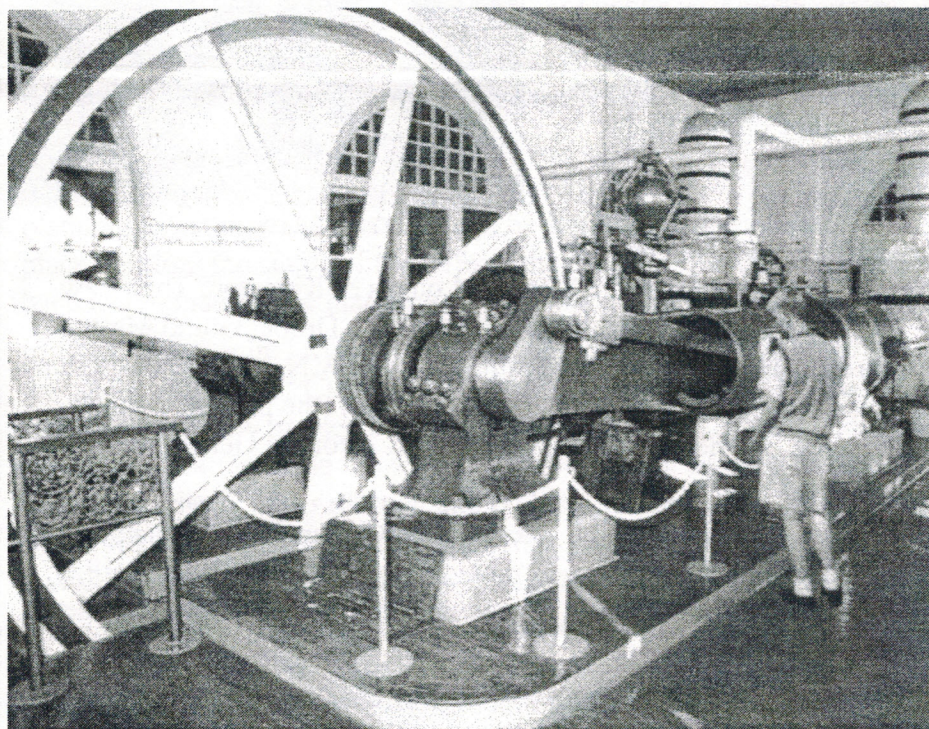




## GETTING STEAM UP

Steam is up! Enter another world, a world of the nineteenth century. A steam water pump chuffs away on the front lawn. Listen to the blast of the whistle. Inside, feel the heat rising as two large water pumping engines and some 25 other steam-operated engines, pumps, and generators work away. Listen to the hiss of the exhaust, the clack of the valve gear as the slide-valves reverse direction. Imagine the telegraph clicking as someone pulled the fire alarm on the outskirts of the city: stokers rise in the middle of the night to fuel the boilers, to speed the pumps, to increase water pressure in the mains, ready for the horse-drawn pumpers and ladder-trucks racing to the scene of the fire. You are in Kingston's Pumphouse Steam Museum.

During World War II, Kingston built a new Water Purification plant at the foot of Collingwood Street to replace the original pumping station at the corner of Ontario and West Streets. The old neo-Romanesque, red brick edifice was reduced to a back-up role. Around 1950, the City declared the old station redundant and looked to demolition.



But, when the tenders were received for removing this masterpiece of nineteenth century technology, the City was shocked at the cost. Apparently there was no money to be made in selling scrap steel. City Councillors reconsidered their position. No decision was made and the building and equipment were allowed to slowly deteriorate. In this way, two of the three remaining steam-driven water pumping engines in Ontario were accidentally saved from destruction.

Enter Jack Telgmann and his friends, many of them retired steam engineers who had served on the lake freighters. Under his

leadership, these individuals, trained in the intricacies of steam generation and engine operation, convinced the City to turn the abandoned Pump House into an operating museum. As qualified steam engineers, they could fire the boilers to provide the motive power to turn the steam pumps.

For several years, this group laboured on in obscurity. They repaired the two large pumping engines. The maple floors in the pump room were sanded and varnished. In addition, they collected many smaller engines from ships that were being scrapped: steering mechanisms; steam electric generators; bilge pumps; triple expansion engines; and donkey engines. Somewhere they found two horse-drawn steam engines. A *Whig-Standard* picture from the 1970's shows Jack and another volunteer riding one being drawn by a pair of horses. Unfortunately, the wooden spokes have all rotted away. Does anyone have four thousand dollars for the rebuilding of four wheels?


By the 1980's, the original group of steam volunteers were disappearing from the scene. In order to preserve a record of their efforts, the City made a video tape of the museum in operation with Jack Telgmann explaining its operation. Eventually, the Parks Department had to hire a stationary engineer to fire the boiler and



## GETTING STEAM UP (CONT'D)


maintain the equipment but the cost of running the museum became too much for the City to bear and the steam operations ceased.

The operation of the Pump House as a museum was then transferred to the Marine Museum. For several years, the chief attractions were the model trains maintained by volunteers from the Kingston Division of the Canadian Railroad Historical Society. Three years ago, however, limited steam operation was restored to the Pump House on Canada Day, the Civic Holiday in August, and either Labour Day or Queen's Homecoming weekend. These steam weekends have certainly proved to be very popular.

So, if you have time, do visit the Museum. It is open every day from the end of June until the Labour Day weekend. In particular, do try to come when "steam is up." Keep in mind that if you live in the city, this is part of your nineteenth century heritage -- that only survived by chance. (Prepared by George Dillon). — 

## SPEAKERS' CORNER

National history is often local history writ large. Certainly, this was the case with the second Métis uprising of 1885, the "Northwest Rebellion" and Patsy Flemming made the point well in our September meeting, the first of the 2001-2002 season. Taking as her title, "Kingston and the Northwest Rebellion," our speaker connected this Canada-making military campaign to local military units and local people -- several of whom were related to Patsy. While disclaiming any connection with the two principal figures in her story (John A. Macdonald and Louis Riel), two of Patsy's great uncles were present at Batoche with Kingston's "A" Battery, Royal Canadian Artillery: Major Charles J. Short, who subsequently died heroically fighting the Quebec fire in 1889; and Captain Robert Rutherford who produced a superb artistic record of the campaign. Vividly illustrated by paintings, lithographs, memorabilia, Patsy's talk captured the human side of the continental odyssey of men and matériel from eastern Canada, and related it to the big-story of the building of Canada.


Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, 17 October 2001, in the Wilson Room, Kingston Public Library, at 7.30 p.m.. The speaker will be the well known local historian and author, **Bill Patterson**, who will address the Society on, **The History of KP4W: Kingston's Prison for Women**. — 

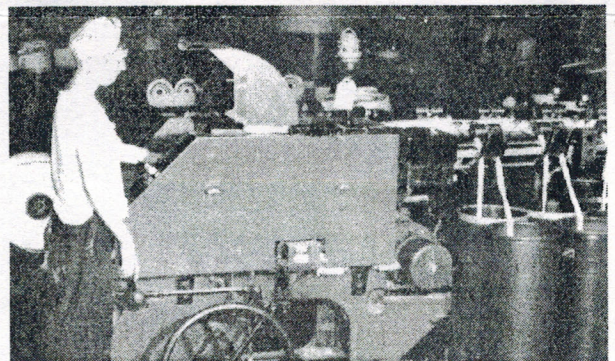
## WEB SITINGS

Current consideration of the inclusion of the material from the KHS *Monuments, Memorials and Markers* on the society web site prompts me to bring what I consider to be a very fine example of local history on the web to the attention of *Limelight* readers.

The site in question may be found at:

**<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/industrial/20cent.htm>**. It presents a driving, walking, public transport or simply browsing guide to the city of Hamilton's industrial history. Those of you who are aware of my Hamilton origins may be tempted to dismiss these remarks as yet another example of my partisan horn blowing. However, in spite of this, much less the fact that the guide and the site owe their existence to the enterprise of a former schoolmate, everyone who can should visit the site to experience how simply, yet vividly, local flavour can be portrayed by use of the web.

I find it exciting to speculate that a glimpse of the Kingston scene will become available in this form under the auspices of the KHS. (Submitted by Jack Pike) — 





## IMAGES OF KINGSTON: THE RANKIN HOUSE

When I first started to gather pictures of Collins Bay, I was offered the chance to copy a batch of privately owned photographs. The two referred to here, though apparently quite different, are actually the same property: the "Rankin House" at 4111 Bath Road. The image at the foot of this page is probably very familiar to anyone who drives frequently through the village of Collins Bay. However, its connection to the structure at the top of the page is not so well known.



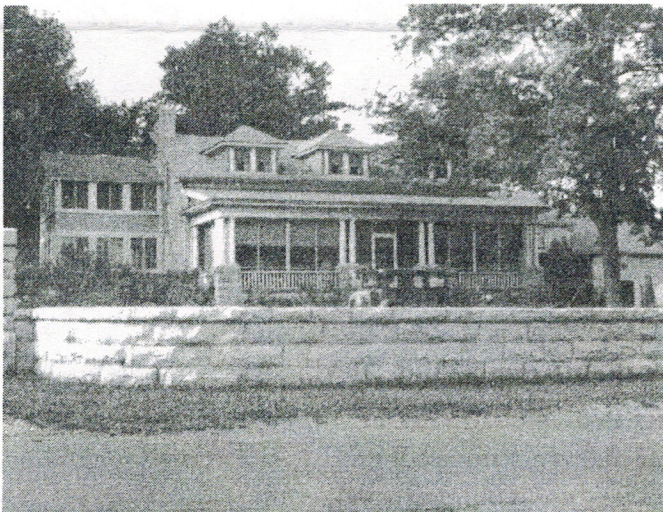
One family, the McGuin's, has bulked large in the history of Collins Bay, especially with its connections to such other well-known names as Rankin, Clark, Kennedy and Day. Some of these

families still occupy the stone houses their ancestors built for them in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The house at 4111 Bath Road is one of these houses.

In 1852, Anthony McGuin Jr., the eldest son of "Squire" McGuin, as Anthony McGuin Sr. was known -- was planning to get married. Accordingly, he started to build a house at 4111 Bath Road. It was to be a grand place befitting the status of the wife of the eldest son of the local "Squire"! But, for some reason that has been lost to history, the marriage never happened and the house remained unfinished.

In 1853, old "Squire" McGuin died leaving his home at 4085 Bath Road, (many members will remember this as the restaurant "Clark's by the Bay"), to another son, Harim. As Anthony Jr. had been living with his father, he was now in need of a house of his own. He turned to his as-yet unfinished house at 4111 Bath Road. In 1854, he made it his residence, building a drive-shed on the property in 1864 and adding a cottage in 1870. Anthony never married and on his death he willed his property to a nephew, David John Rankin, who lived at 4097 Bath Road. Since this house was much bigger than his uncle's at 4111 Bath Road, and as David Rankin had a family, he did not move and, eventually, his uncle's home was sold out of the family.

Some years later, Mrs. Jennie Rankin, the wife of Dr. Rankin of New York and a wealthy woman in her own right, purchased the 4111 Bath Road property. Dr. Rankin was David John Rankin's son and Mrs. Rankin decided to bring the house back into the family and turn it into a summer retreat for the Rankins. The major changes to the house took place around 1912. When you approach the house from the east side, you can see



that the ornate archway shown in the first picture has been moved to the side or kitchen entrance. The family continued to use the house as a summer vacation and retirement home until the death of the Rankin's son, Mr. Reid Rankin, who left the house to Mrs. Dianne Kennedy.

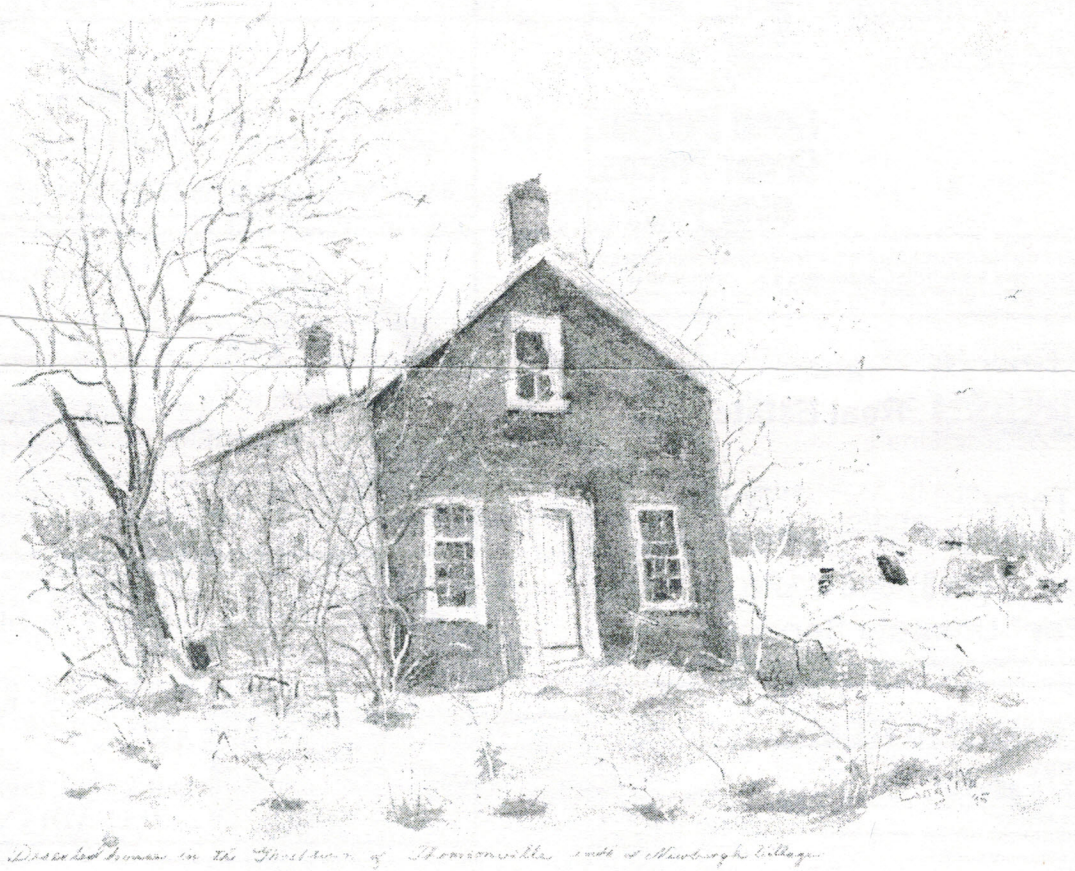
While living in the house, the Rankins, together with their many cousins in the area, took an active interest in the community and local church. The Edith Rankin United Church in Collins Bay is named after Dr. and Mrs. Rankin's other child, Edith, who died in an accident in 1940. (Prepared by Stewart Renfrew).





## LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES: THE MYSTERY BUILDING

In 1879, the Thomson brothers erected the Thomson Paper Mill east of Newburgh. It was operated by various owners until it was dismantled in 1932. During that time, many homes and a couple of boarding houses were built to house the employees and their families. This community was called Thomsonville. When the mill closed, it became a ghost town.



*Deserted house in the ghost town of Thomsonville, east of Newburgh village.*

In February 1995, I decided to go and see if any of it still remained. I met James Hinch who owned the property. He walked me down to the ruins of the mill. All that remained above ground was one stone structure: it was where the women had counted the paper. The rest was underground and very scary. A decaying concrete floor full of holes lay over a very deep basement. Looking down through the holes, you could see parts of the old machinery. Further downstream along the Napanee river were other reminders of the mill's past: a dam, a dried up sluice-way, and a pier of a former railway bridge. The paper produced by the Thomson Paper Mill had been shipped out on the Napanee-Tamworth & Quebec Railway.

Climbing back towards the road, James pointed to a grassy patch under a huge tree. This was the former community's graveyard. It contained only a few tombstones. However, a man had witched for bodies and had found many more graves. This piece of land had remained a sacred place. It had been left undisturbed while the land around it had been cultivated.

James then left me to explore what was left of Thomsonville. I found a large barn, a backhouse, sheds, an old milk van, some cooking utensils, broken china and bottles. The only significant reminder was a solitary deserted house. When I was painting it, I felt it echoed the faded laughter and sorrow from the ghosts of the past.

Today, nothing remains of Thomsonville except a grassy cemetery and this painting. (By Shirley Gibson-Langille)





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