



LIMELIGHT

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NEWSLETTER OF THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The annual Sir John A. Macdonald dinner will take place on Friday, 11 January 2002, at the Senior Staff Mess, Royal Military College. Last year, the evening was a tremendous success with nearly 100 members and guests in attendance. We will follow the same format as last year: dinner followed by toasts to Sir John the Kingstonian, the Scot, and the Canadian. The guest speaker will be the Honourable Peter Milliken, Speaker of the House of Commons, M.P. for our riding, and a long-time member of the Society.

Make sure to mark your calendars for one of the Society's premier events of the season. Details regarding tickets and reservations will appear in next month's **Limelight**.

In October's **Limelight**, I was pleased to announce that the Society's millennium project, **Monuments, Memorials and Markers in the Kingston Area**, would be proceeding to the second phase, a website. This process is now well under way and a software contractor has been engaged.

However, I was remiss in that I did not mention the enormous support we receive from the staff at Bellevue House. John Grenville has put the resources of his office solidly behind this project, as he did for the original publication of the millennium book project. Kim Burke, an intern at Bellevue will be devoting a significant amount of her time solely to the website construction. Dressed in period costume, the staff also participates every year at the annual Sir John A. grave-site ceremony handing out the programmes, assisting visitors, and generally adding much to the ambience of the occasion. The leadership John has provided as chair of the Plaque Committee, to the publication of the millennium book, and now the website has been significant and has in no small part accounted for the success of these various activities. On behalf of the Society, my thanks to John Grenville and the staff at Bellevue House for their enthusiastic support of the Society's goals. (Warren Everett)

OUR NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday, 21 November 2001

Place: The Wilson Room, Kingston Public Library

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Speaker: Maureen Garvie

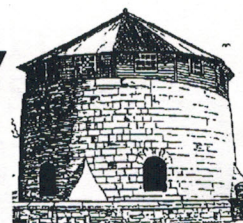
Title: "George Johnson's War"

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Kingston Historical Society

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AND ONE FROM THE EDITORS...

Kingston has always been -- and is still very much -- a military town. It is fitting, therefore, that on 11 November the sound of marching feet and bugles, and the respectful contemplation and remembering in silence will again be acted out at the city's several sites of remembrance.

In the nation's capital, there are two new war memorials. In May last year, the memorial to the "*Unknown Soldier/Le Soldat Inconnu*" was dedicated in a moving ceremony. Intended to commemorate the sacrifices of the 110,000 Canadians who have died in Canada's wars, and the 27,000 who lie in unknown graves, the monument consists of a plain granite sarcophagus modelled after the alter at Vimy, with a sculpted lid decorated by a helmet, maple leaves, and a laurel wreath.



The Alderville monument

The other new monument was unveiled nearby, on Elgin Street, with less ceremony. On 21 June, Aboriginal Day, an impressive memorial to honour the high participation rates and contributions of Canada's native peoples in Canada's wars was unveiled. Designed by the Plains Cree sculptor, Lloyd Pinay, it is a 10 metre high monument in marble and bronze depicting the figures of a wolf, bear, elk, and cougar, four aboriginal figures, and topped by an eagle symbolising the Creator.

It is significant that the war-time record of Kingston's native peoples was recognized early. On 25 September 1927, a 17 metre high monument was unveiled at Alderville, the home of the former Kingston Mississauga. At the ceremony attended by officers and men of the Northumberland Regiment and some 3,000 people, much was made of the remarkable fact that of a total of 66 eligible men, 33 had enlisted and nine had never returned. Another testimony to the military service of the Mississauga is to be found in the sprinkling of military headstones in the historic graveyard a kilometre or so down the road. In many ways, the white columns and chain-link compound commemorating the sacrifices of the Mississauga at Alderville is also part of Kingston's landscapes of remembrance.



RIDEAU WATERWAY: CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVER

On 22 September 2001, the Honourable Sheila Copps, Minister of Canadian Heritage, and the Honourable John Snobelen, Ontario Minister of Natural Resources, announced the unveiling of a plaque commemorating the designation of the Rideau Waterway as a Canadian Heritage River.

The ceremony was held at Molly Brant Park on Kingston's inner harbour, with local MP Peter Milliken, MPP John Gerretsen and Kingston Mayor Isabel Turner, Professor Brian Osborne of the Kingston Historical Society, and Mr. Cam McNeil of the Rideau Waterway Nominating Committee. Also through the thespian services of Jeff Sullivan, Colonel By was also in attendance.



The plaque drew attention to the Rideau Waterway's uniqueness in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System in that it is the first waterway based on a heritage canal to be recognized as a Canadian Heritage River.

"The Rideau Waterway is a cultural living landscape of villages, farms, cottages and cities, all of which contribute to its wide appeal and unmistakable cachet", said Minister Copps. "From our Parliament Buildings to the very base at Lake Ontario, the Rideau's natural environment is the backdrop for recreation and heritage appreciation."

"The Rideau Waterway is a fine example to the people of Ontario of how heritage can be preserved and at the same time play a strong role in the economy of the area," said Minister Snobelen. "The Province of Ontario is pleased to have assisted in the designation process of this waterway."

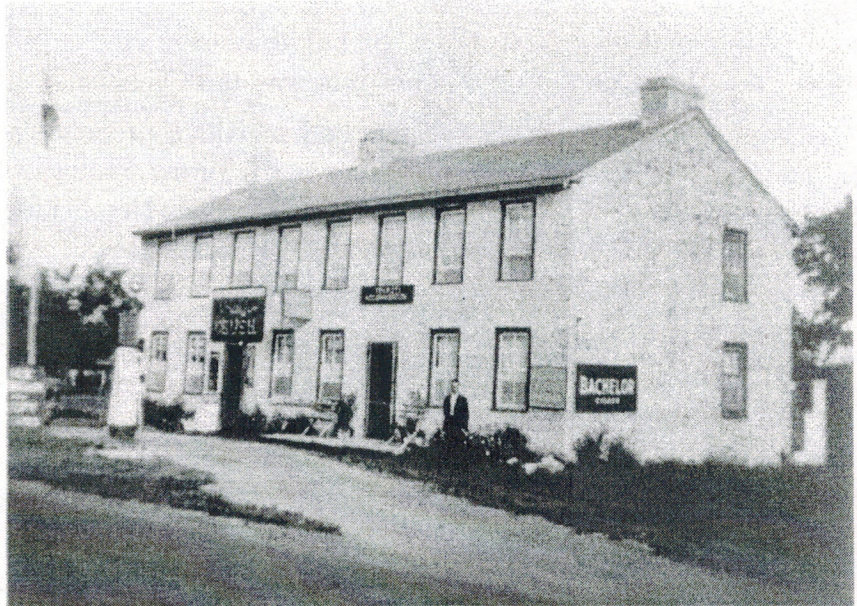
The Canadian Heritage Rivers System was established in 1984 by the federal, provincial, and territorial governments as a means of conserving, celebrating, and showcasing Canada's rich river heritage. People from any province or territory may suggest rivers of outstanding natural, cultural and/or recreational value for nomination, in order to enhance their significant heritage values for the long-term benefit and enjoyment of all Canadians.

This designation is the culmination of the efforts of the Rideau Waterway Coordinating Committee and of citizens committed to protecting the waterway's heritage values.

IMAGES OF KINGSTON: THE STORY OF A HOTEL

For years I tried to find a good photograph of the hotel that once stood at 4030 Bath Road, now the site of a Legion hall at Collins Bay. A few years ago, Mr. John Burleigh provided me with this one. I am still looking for one of Wise's Store that replaced the old hotel building.

The hotel and its builder, have an interesting story that needs to be told. This building replaced a hostelry that was described by a late resident of the village as "that of Mrs. Woodard, who lived successfully like unto the Witch of Ender, spoken of Samuel in the Holy Bible, in the cool shades of refinement and in the fear of the neighborhood, to practice her nefarious art." [See Samuel I, c.28, v.7-35]



Mr. Prentis Fitch was an American who came to the area to build a mill near the village of Westbrooke. But the milling trade had been cornered by the McGuinns of Collins Bay so he built a hotel. Fitch married a Herchmer of Lemoine's Point and they had three children. However, Mrs. Fitch died early and tragically, as did one of their sons who drowned while skating on Collins Bay. Their daughter was a cripple and Mr. Fitch established the first school in the area so she could study with the village children. The building remained standing across from the hotel until well into the 1900s. The second son, Grant Fitch went to England to study medicine and, depending on the narrative, either died there or returned a lunatic. As Mr. Fitch's will provided for both children's care, one is inclined to accept the second version! These tragic events must have overshadowed his considerable business successes.

Over the years, the hotel had a number of owners, and as the need for a hotel in the village declined so did its fortunes. A **Whig Standard** article of 10 August 1930 reported that "James Oliver of Collins Bay was fined \$100. and costs. Police testified that they had found two men drinking at a small table in a rear room at Oliver's hotel at Collins Bay. Oliver claimed that 'two fellows in a Chevy car fetched it here'. He swore that the beer was definitely not his. W. H. Herrington, K.C., acting as prosecutor, noted that the accused lived a few doors from his residence in Collins Bay and declared, 'I can testify to his excellent standing in the community.'"

A letter to the **Whig Standard**, probably from the late 1930s or early 1940s, reports on "Sunday Frolicking" in Collins Bay. The author reports on a visit to what was most likely the hotel:

"Three couples shuffled aimlessly around the polished floor to the muffled strains of '*I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire*.' This song has, of course, been adopted as the war chant of the incendiaries and may indicate a substantial gathering of Fifth Columnists in the Locality. This is, however, uncertain." Fifth Columnists in Collins Bay no less! What was the world coming to?

In 1941, Mr. George Wise and his mother bought the hotel and used it as a store. The original stone building burned to the ground in 1944 and was immediately rebuilt. George Wise ran the store until 1963-4 when J. Earl McEwan purchased it, later selling it to the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 631 in 1979. (Prepared by Stewart Renfrew).

SPEAKERS' CORNER

On 17 October, the Society was given a very enlightening talk on the History of Female Inmates in the Kingston Penitentiary and The Prison for Women. Over 75 members and friends were engrossed by Mr. Bill Patterson's presentation of the conditions that existed in the penitentiary system in Kingston for female inmates from 1835 to 1972. Mr. Patterson has had close ties with the penitentiary as his father was a farm instructor for the inmates and Bill was raised in close proximity to the institution. The living conditions, treatment, and gradual changes were detailed with the assistance of diagrams and photographs throughout the various periods. The thrust of the talk was the control of the female inmates by male administrators and that this did not truly change until the 1970s. This was followed by a very active question and answer period and refreshments.



George Johnson

On 21 November, the well-known local author Maureen Garvie, will speak to the Society on the topic of her new book, **George Johnson's War** (co-authored with Mary Beaty). George's pedigree was impressive. He was the son of Sir William Johnson, one of the richest, most powerful men in colonial North America. His mother was Molly Brant, the step-daughter of a Mohawk chief and sister of the famous Native leader, Joseph Brant. This paper will follow the life of young George Johnson as he leaves the affluence and culturally rich life of Johnson Hall and becomes embroiled in the horrors and excitement of the American War of Independence.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome back to Richard Pierce, a new year-2002 member, but previously a KHS member a number of years ago. This is a good time to renew memberships, which run by the calendar year. Take advantage of the form and envelope provided with this *Limelight* and mail your renewal. We'll get your 2002 membership card to you.

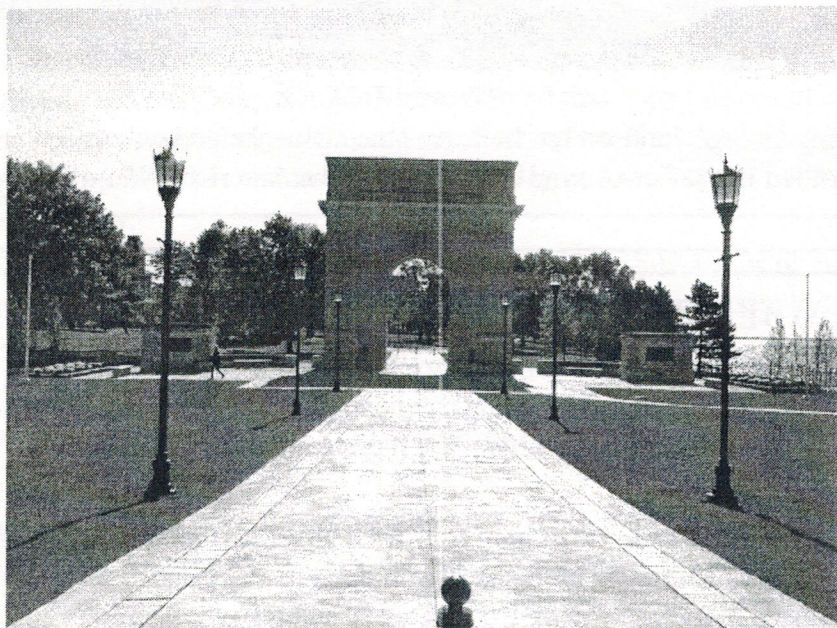
Membership renewals can always be made at the meetings. It will help confirm addresses if you bring along the completed renewal form. We'll recycle the KHS addressed envelope if you don't use it. Finally, remember that financial donations beyond your membership fee will be recognized by a tax receipt.

LEST WE FORGET: THE BEAUTY OF COMMITMENT

This autumn, Kingstonians may have noticed a bustle of construction and landscaping work at R.M.C.'s Memorial Arch. After some eight decades, it is undergoing a well-deserved face-lift, a project which, in line with its history, is being funded solely by donations from former R.M.C. cadets.

Designed by Canadian artist John Lyle, this beautiful beaux-arts Romanesque arch was erected 78 years ago with monies raised by veterans and former cadets. Between 1919 and 1924, they had been urged to dig deep into their pockets and contribute \$50. For veterans attempting to return to civilian life in a time of economic recession, this was no small amount. Indeed, some wit suggested that a second Arch be constructed to commemorate "the graduates who gave up everything to go overseas, came back to bankruptcy and have had the guts to make good again in civil life." Still, despite these hardships, some \$60,000 was eventually forthcoming for the construction of the Memorial Arch.

Not merely a monumental element of the college landscape, the Arch plays an important role in R.M.C.'s ritual and culture. It stands as a symbolic link between civilian and military worlds. When cadets first arrive at the college, they enter the world of military duty and doctrine by marching through the vault of the arch. Four years later, cadets pass through the Arch again, this time as graduated officers dedicated to the values expressed by the R.M.C. motto, carved on the south face of the Arch: "Truth-Duty-Valour." It is a commitment that was honoured by the 156 cadets who fell in World War I and whose names are sculpted in bronze on the inside of the vault of the Arch.



Clearly, the Memorial Arch is central to the very life and purpose of R.M.C. However, following the establishment of a new main entrance 500 metres to the east, the Arch was somewhat marginalized. Thanks to members of the R.M.C. Club, the Arch is part of a general programme of beautifying the grounds. Not since the initial raising of funds for the construction of the Arch in 1923, has such an enthusiastic contribution been made by ex-cadets to enrich their college, and serves to underscore how R.M.C.'s Memorial Arch continues to be a cherished symbol of the life-commitment taken by all cadets, past, present -- and future. (Bob Huish)

LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES: A MOUSE WITH EARS -- AND CRAYONS!

Many times when painting historical places, I have wished I could have been a mouse under a table, seeing and hearing what had gone on in the past. The closest I ever came to this was on 26 April 1989.

On that day, the venerable "Livingston's Men's Wear" on Brock Street was closing its doors for the last time after 142 years of service. The business had been started by Charles Livingston in 1847, was taken over by Ross Livingston in 1918, and was operated from 1947 by Ross's daughter's husband, Dick McIlquham. I wanted to capture an image of this historic store before it closed its doors for good and so I stationed myself behind a counter and got to work. It proved to be a good choice because I could see and hear everyone that came in but they couldn't see me!

At first, there was just Dick and me. As I worked away at my drawing, a childhood vision flashed into my mind of my visiting the store with my Mom and Dad. Dad was tall and he always came to Livingston's to have his suits tailor made. They would take his measurements and he would choose a medium grey suiting material from the many samples on display. Then my Mom would pick out a shirt and tie to go with it.

My reveries were interrupted as many friends and business associates started to enter the store to extend their best wishes. If you remember, "McCallum's China and Gifts," the "Brock Street Gallery," and "McKay's Furs" were all near by. And as the day progressed, old customers started to arrive. I remember one elderly, well-dressed man in particular. He talked about the first time he had bought a suit there over sixty years ago; how the styles and prices had changed over the years; and how much he was going to miss the store! Then Mr. and Mrs. Lockett came in. I was really moved. It was obvious that Mr. Lockett wasn't well, but he had made the effort to come and pay his respects. For many years he had run "Lockett's Shoe Store" on Wellington Street the site of "Walkwel Shoes" today. He



recalled how hard he had had to work, of the long hours, of how he missed his old customers, and of his many funny experiences over the years. Though everyone seemed to be laughing, I sensed a great sadness and tears and some of them were my own!

After everyone had left, I packed up my things, gave my thanks and best wishes to Dick, and left the store. As I walked away with my drawings and memories, I was filled with a warm and wonderful sense of the past in my heart and felt blessed for the experience of being a little mouse under the table. Ha! (By Shirley Gibson-Langille)

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