



LIMELIGHT

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NEWSLETTER OF THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

In last month's *Limelight*, I mentioned that the guest speaker at the Sir John A Macdonald birthday dinner on 11 January 2002 would be Peter Milliken. Regrettably, Peter is unable to attend as an overseas conference has been rescheduled creating a conflict with the dinner. Peter sends his regrets and looks forward to next year's celebration.

However, we have been most fortunate to have Flora Macdonald agree to be our Guest of Honour at this important event in our Society calendar. I'm sure Sir John would appreciate the symmetry of having a fellow Conservative who shares the same surname speaking at his dinner.

In other news, the Society has been most fortunate in receiving two grants for the creation of our new website on the book *Monuments, Memorials and Markers in the Kingston Area*. Generous contributions from the Community Foundation of Greater Kingston (\$1500) and the Davies Foundation (\$1000) will ensure the production of a high quality web-site to enhance the awareness of Kingston's Historical Heritage.

The busy holiday season will soon be upon us and in the midst of this is our annual Christmas meeting and social. It will be held on Wednesday, 12 December, in Currie Hall, Royal Military College, beginning at 7:00 pm. Each year we hold this event as an occasion not only to gather together in a relaxed atmosphere and share the holiday spirit, but also to present the Kingston Historical Society Awards to those who have given long and exemplary service in support of historical heritage in the Kingston area. Also, Jack Pike and Ross Mackenzie will guide us through the history of RMC and Currie Hall.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our members a Merry Christmas and look forward to seeing many of you at the party. (Warren Everett)



OUR NEXT MEETING

Date:	Wednesday, 12 December 2001
Place:	Currie Hall, Royal Military College
Time:	7.00 p.m.
Speakers:	Jack Pike and Ross Mackenzie
Title:	A history of RMC and Currie Hall

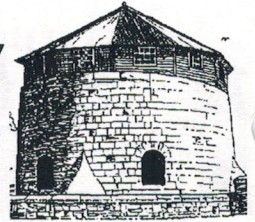
CONTENTS

- PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
- EDITORIAL
- CHRISTMAS PARTY
- ST. GEORGE'S ROOF
- IN MEMORIAM
- SCHOOL CADET CORPS
- IMAGES OF KINGSTON
- SPEAKERS' CORNER
- LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES
- SPONSORS

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

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AND ONE FROM THE EDITORS...

On 7 June 2001, a front-page article in the *Kingston Whig-Standard* declared, "Old mining hub edges Kingston as Ontario's most historic town." TV Ontario's panel of experts decided that the three most historical places in Ontario were -- in order of importance -- Cobalt, Kingston, and Petrolia. It raises an interesting question: How do you define the **MOST** historic place in Ontario? Residents and visitors alike enjoy Kingston's distinctive ambiance and sense of place, but does it qualify as Ontario's **MOST** historic place?

Certainly, the sheer weight of history is in our favour. When the French arrived to establish their first permanent military outpost here in 1673, the First Nations had long considered this place to be their home. And, with the arrival of the British Loyalists in 1783, the construction of King's Town introduced one of the earliest nodes out of which Upper Canada, Canada West, and, eventually, Ontario, was to emerge. So, Kingston is an **OLD** place.

But history is more than chronology. It is also narrative, chronicle, the stories of people and their role in making distinctive places. Certainly, Kingston has a long list of people and events that can be said to have been "makers" of history: Frontenac, La Salle, Molly Brant, Simcoe, By, Sydenham, Sir John A., Oliver Mowat, Charles Sangster, George Grant, A.M. Machar, Robertson Davies...the list goes on. And then there's the stuff of history -- the events that have centred on Kingston: the origins of government in Ontario; the naval campaigns of the 1812 War; the construction of Fort Henry and the Rideau Canal; the first capital of the United Canadas; the commercial entrepot in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence trade; a major institutional centre with Queen's University, the Provincial Penitentiary, and Canada's Royal Military College. These make Kingston a **STORIED** place.

And so much of the existing material fabric of Kingston serves to remind residents and visitors alike of this rich history. No mere paper record, Kingston's history can be read by walking its streets and encountering the national, institutional, and domestic heritage in the stone and brick structures that connect the present directly to the past. It follows that Kingston has a strong sense of its rich historical patrimony. Its long-standing Historical Society, the oldest in Ontario, is but one element of a powerful alliance of heritage organizations, all striving to ensure that Kingston's history is protected and celebrated well into the future. Kingston is a **CELEBRATED** place.

Perhaps we should present a stronger case in 2002 or else we might lose out again to Hamilton or Timmins?

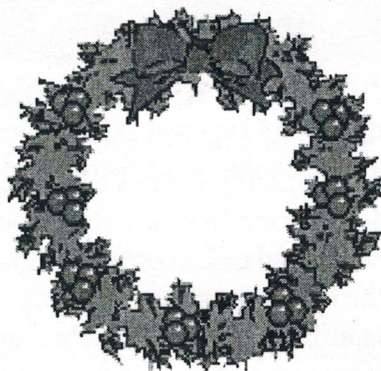


2001 CHRISTMAS MEETING

12 DECEMBER, 7:00 PM



The KHS Christmas meeting will be held this year in the Sir Arthur Currie Hall at the Royal Military College of Canada. Following the traditional serving of wine and cheese, the evening's events will include the presentation of the 2001 Kingston Historical Society Awards, an illustrated talk on the development of RMC by Ross McKenzie and an explanation of the heraldic decoration of Currie Hall by Jack Pike. Good fellowship and conversation will accompany the ensuing refreshment period.



The recent imposition of more stringent security procedures at Canadian military establishments will complicate our evening somewhat. However, permission to park on the parade square has been arranged. Drivers should follow the route indicated by the heavy black line on the enclosed map. Cars will be brought to a stop at the main guardhouse, item 46 on the map, and occupants will be asked to show photographic identification (driving licence, OHIP card, etc.). A commissioner will be present near the boathouse, item 13, who will direct drivers to take the next turn right onto the parade square. Vehicles should be parked on the Square, immediately in front of the Currie Building, item 9. Entrance to the Building is via the main door (beneath the stone carving of the Canadian Coat of Arms) which faces the Parade Square.

Those requiring transportation should contact Desmond O'Meara at 546-5439.

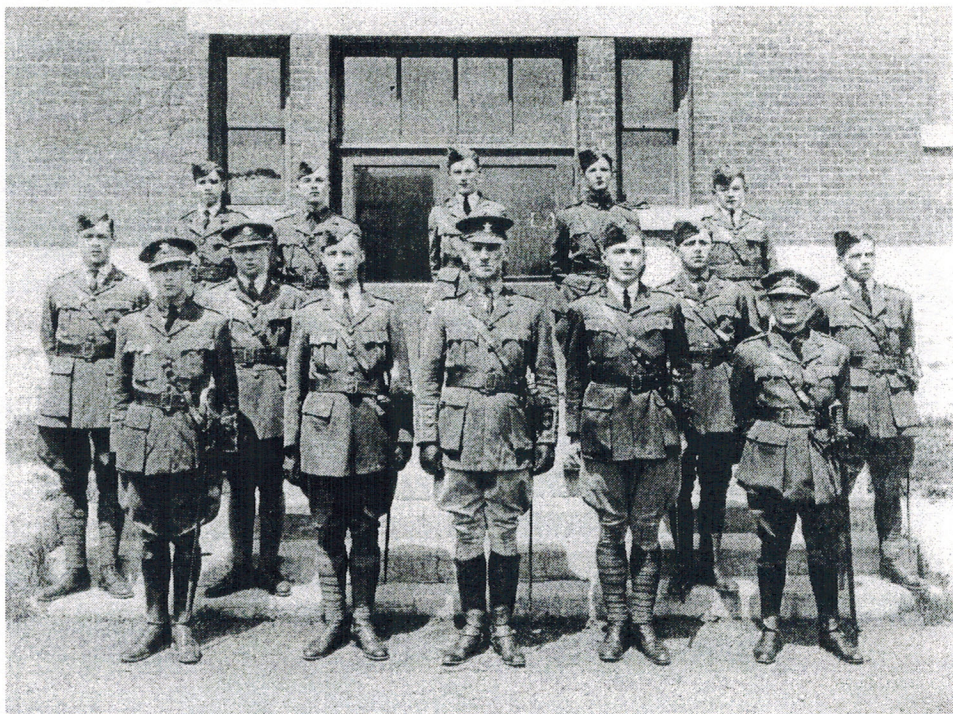
Alan MacLachlan will be on hand during the evening to take reservations for the Sir John A. Macdonald anniversary dinner to be held on 11 January.



LOOKING BACK: HIGH SCHOOL CADETS

The state of the Canadian military is much in the news these days. Do you remember the high school cadet corps?

In the 1890s across Canada, high schools were invited to establish high school cadet corps. Once approved by the local Boards of Education, they were to be supported by the nearest local militia or reserve unit. In Ontario, the Department of Education mandated that "drill" be taught as part of all boys' physical education programs in grades 9 and 10. Besides the basic parade square drill, cadets were usually taught some rudimentary arms training, map reading, leadership



Officers of Kingston Collegiate Cadet Battalion, 1926

skills, signaling, first aid, and outdoor camping and survival skills. Those who were interested could attend the six-week long summer cadet camp, all expenses being paid by the armed forces, and even return with a small stipend to boot.

Two of the city high schools, KCVI and QECVI, had cadet corps. LCVI, opened in 1963, never had a cadet corps although a rifle range was provided for in the initial construction plans. About 1966, the Ontario Department of Education changed its philosophy regarding military education. While high schools were not forced to close their cadet corps, the removal of "drill" as part of the Grade 9 and 10 curriculum led many schools to discontinue them in short order. Of course, other factors affecting the decision were the growing anti-militarism associated with the Vietnam War, as well as the government's policy of downsizing the Canadian military. Some cadet corps do still exist: in private high schools and in Kingston, as elsewhere, there are army, naval, and air force cadet corps associated with the local military units.

On reflection, I think the cadet corps helped develop a respect for one's country, gave a certain sense of self-discipline, and allowed access to outdoor activities that were otherwise beyond the reach of many students. Unfortunately, girls were not allowed to participate. Even though there was never any direct attempt to pressure high school cadets to pursue a career in the military, one wonders what effect their survival would have had on current attitudes to the Canadian military.

Would cadet corps have provided more potential recruits for the Canadian military? Likely not, as government policy since the 1960's has been to deliberately decrease the role of the Canadian armed forces to a state of near impotence. It is difficult to maintain an interest in the military as a career when one hears nothing but comments about downsizing and stories of soldiers in the lower ranks turning to food-banks and second jobs to maintain a proper standard of living.

Could high school cadet corps be reinstated? The Ministry of Education would have to mandate their return and the federal government would have to provide the funds.

Should cadet corps be reinstated? Probably, but the politicians and the public will have to first reconsider the roles of the military in Canadian society. (Prepared by George Dillon)




SLATE TILES OR HERITAGE ROOFTOP ART?

After one hundred years of service on the rooftop of St. George's Cathedral, the slate tiles have been removed and are being replaced as part of the building restoration project currently underway. Ever vigilant for fund-raising opportunities in support of the Cathedral, the Projects Group salvaged approximately three dozen of the better preserved tiles and provided them to an equal number of the area's finest artists to serve as their "canvas" for Rooftop Art. For the last month to six weeks, the artists have been busy transforming the slate tiles into fine works of art using oils, acrylics or other media.




Bill Lenox, Valerie Dalton, and Bob Blenderman holding rooftop art.

Members of the public will have the opportunity to purchase these pieces of Kingston's heritage when the Rooftop Art is auctioned for sale on Saturday, 12 January 2002. The auction will be conducted by well known auctioneer, Alicia Gordon, and will be held in City Hall's Memorial Hall. Beginning in early January, some of the works will be displayed in the windows of downtown merchants, giving the public a chance to enjoy a sneak preview.

On 12 January, the doors of Memorial Hall will open at 7:00 p.m. and the auction will begin at 7:30 p.m. The first half hour will be reserved for attendees to view the Rooftop Art prior to the auction and meet some of the participating artists. There will also be displays featuring information about the building restoration work and a Cathedral official will be present to answer questions about the project. Light refreshments will be served. The \$10.00 admission fee as well as all proceeds from the sale of the Rooftop Art will be directed to the cost of restoring and maintaining the fabric of the Cathedral. Tickets may be purchased at the Church Bookstore (90 Johnson Street, 544-1013), at the Cathedral Office (548-4617), or at the door. 

WEB SITINGS

The Guelph Public Library Archives is pleased to announce the launch of its new archival images database. Presently, the database holds approximately 1000 images that document the history of the City of Guelph. See: <http://www.library.guelph.on.ca>

Also, there's a new National Archives Web-site, "The Canadian West Web-Site," which was officially launched by the National Archivist, Ian E. Wilson on 20 October 2001 at the "Giving The Future A Past" history and education conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It contains over 200 National Archives documents and describes the rich and varied pattern of settlement in the Canadian West from 1540 to the 1920's. The documents on the site include sketchbooks, diaries, immigration posters, photos, maps and land deeds. "Technology is finally enabling us to do what archivists have wanted to do for decades: to share the genuine records and authentic voices of our past with a broad public," said Mr. Wilson. Please visit the web site at the following address: http://www.archives.ca/05/0529_e.html 

IN MEMORIAM

Kingston artists have had a fine influence on KHS over the years--note Shirley-Gibson Langille's artistic contributions to this publication and Nan Yeoman's delightful mini-papers during the AGM show-and-tells. Back in October, 1993, when our Society celebrated its Centennial with a week-long Art 100 exhibit in the Wilson Room, another Kingston artist was a valuable contributor and supporter. It was **Irene Embla McKim**, a member of KHS Council that year.

On 19 August 2001, Irene died -- without a bang or a whimper -- just the routine death notice in the local media. She had lost her brief battle with bone cancer, but she left behind a living legacy of fine art, including several historical scenes, and a host of international friends.



Irene McKim

Kingston-born and educated at Notre Dame Convent, Irene (Turcotte) McKim studied under Andre Bieler and Ralph Allen. She also studied at the Art Students League in New York and later exhibited there at the Ryan Gallery. Over the years, her paintings ranged from still life and children to quilted art and scenes of the Limestone City she loved. For several years, she operated an art gallery in Kingston. Her last exhibit was at Kingston Public Library in 1999. Her remaining paintings are lovingly cared for by a niece, Christine McCoppin of Kingston, and her sister, Frances Cormier of London, Ont. The collection cries out for a well-deserved retrospective show in her memory. Her husband, James (Jim) McKim, has been incapacitated at St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital for some months. (Prepared by Bill Fittell, Past-President)

Some members of the Society may also remember **Roger Joseph Flynn** who passed away on 18 November 2001. Most recently, a resident of Oakville, Roger Flynn also had Kingston connections. His father, Colonel Louis Flynn, served as President of KHS, 1962-71.

SPEAKERS' CORNER

On the 21st of November, the Society was privileged to hear several excerpts from a new book to be published early in the new year. Maureen Garvie, a resident Kingston author, read from several sections of her ***George Johnson's War***, an historical novel co-authored with Mary Beaty.

Maureen Garvie, has a background in children's literature and is currently director of the Queen's University Writing Centre, as well as being an editor with McGill-Queen's University Press. Previously, Maureen was the book-review editor of the ***Kingston Whig-Standard***.

George Johnson was the son of Sir William Johnson and Molly Brant. The readings gave insights into the life of George who was raised in a colonial European society prior to the American Revolution, as well as aspects of his life during the war. Maureen's descriptions take us into the mind of George to experience what it would have been like to have lived on the edge of two societies in the late 1700s when the North American frontier was in great flux politically, militarily and socially.

Ms. Garvie followed her presentation with an engaging question and answer session with the more than 50 members and friends who attended.

George Johnson's War is being published by Groundwood Spring and is scheduled to be on the shelves in March, 2002. It is classed as "Historical fiction for ages 12 and up."

LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES: THE TALE THAT WAS DESTINED TO BE TOLD

In 1996, while working in Storrington Township, I discovered some forgotten history. It all started when I met John and Jenny Cousineau who had commissioned me to make a painting of their Sunbury home for their 60th wedding anniversary. John told me that his great-grandfather had once lived near the Rideau Canal in a house that had been moved to Washburn Road. He also told me that there used to be a brickworks down on the Canal run by a man from Ottawa. Periodically, a steam boat and barge would come by and load up bricks and tiles to deliver to Ottawa and Kingston.



Perfect Tile & Brick Company on Rideau Canal circa 1908 - Office above - Storrington Township

Intrigued, I arranged to go and explore the site. I found the road down beside the old house, some ruins, and a small square building still standing there. The owner of the property, Mr. Campbell, told me that in 1908 the works had been called "The Perfect Tile and Brick Company" and pointed out the one surviving structure, the former business "office." Another source, Ron Mundell of Joyceville, told me that "The Perfect Tile and Brick Company" had been a thriving business until a batch of "less than perfect tile" was made! The company lost business; it stopped paying its workers; one disgruntled employee was said to have thrown mud into the machinery. That was the end of "The Perfect Tile and Brick Company."

When I went to paint the "office," I took along my country-born friend, Eleanor. I and set myself up to work near some placidly grazing cows, but Eleanor stayed in the car. I thought it was strange that she wouldn't come out. She didn't even join me to eat lunch. What she knew -- and I didn't! -- was that lying down in the middle of all the cows near me was a huge bull!

You'd have thought Eleanor should have warned me. But then, if she had, I wouldn't have finished the painting. Nor would I have this story to tell. On the other hand, I'm lucky to be alive to tell the tale. Ha! (By Shirley Gibson-Langille)

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