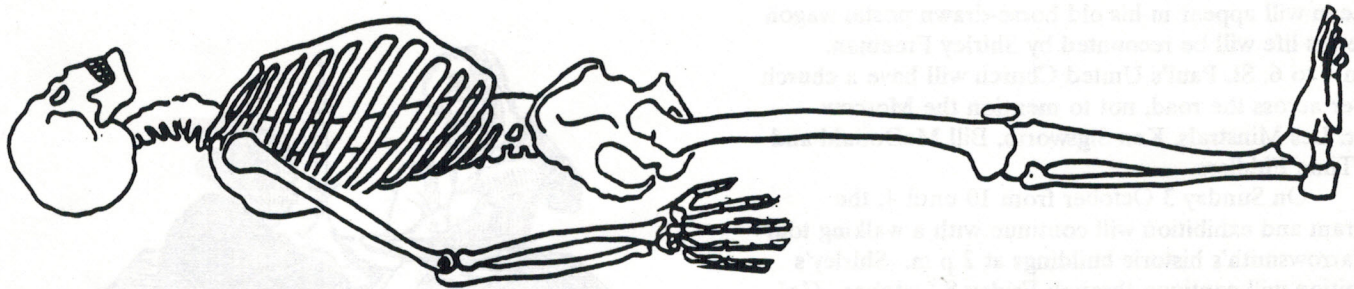




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SKELETONS IN THE PARK

To celebrate the first meeting of a new season, we welcome Stephen Ross as our guest speaker. An archaeologist and specialist in cemetery records, he will bring us up to date on what was called Cemetery Park.

Back in the days when cholera epidemics decimated the Kingston population, many were laid to rest in the burying grounds on Ordnance Street and Cemetery Lane. In time they were forgotten, trees grew among them and a park was created. Then a ditch was dug for a gas line. It revealed bones and broken tombstones. But let Mr. Ross tell you the story on Wednesday 15 September 1993 in the Wilson Room above the Kingston Public Library at 130 Johnson Street, at 7:30 p.m. Come early and visit the library which has moved its audio-visuals to the main floor with a new display of videos.

SENSE OF HISTORY

A few months before she died in 1989, novelist Daphne du Maurier completed a delightful illustrated book of reminiscences with the title *Enchanted Cornwall*. In it she described the curious way in which her discovery of old English houses and forests triggered an almost metaphysical awareness of the history of the place and the characters who later peopled her novels. Her idea of history is worth repeating:

"In Cornwall I discovered especially a sense of timelessness barely glimpsed before. A sense of continuity with ancient times, and more than this, a present which resonated with past and future - a sense indeed that past, present and future are not isolated milestones in time, to be feared, longed for, and finally met, but they are one, each part of a whole, existing side by side."

ARCHAEOLOGISTS IN THE HOLE

The Cataraqui Archaeological Research Foundation was formed in 1984 with a mixture of volunteer and professional people determined to preserve what survived from historic and prehistoric sites in Kingston and beyond.

In 1986 they received a grant from the provincial Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation of \$212,857. to further this cause. They signed a twenty year lease with the City of Kingston to set up their Cataraqui Archaeological Research Centre at 370 King Street, in the Tett Creativity Complex.

Their contribution to our knowledge of our early history is considerable, including the uncovering of the foundations of the French Fort Frontenac. Each dig is, of course, documented, artifacts are identified and stored and a report is prepared. The Centre has a small but informative display about aboriginal cultures and early Kingston history.

Lamentably, all of this is threatened by structural failure in their building. In July, CARF was given ninety days to move out. The city does not want another collapsed building during the winter snows, as happened on lower Queen Street last year.

CARF is in a desperate situation. Already strapped financially, they must find new quarters and pay for moving their collections and equipment. Moreover, the province's grant was contingent on their lease and continued existence. The province could demand that all or part of their grant be repayed.

As I write, CARF is appealing to City Council for help, considering the city's broken lease agreement. If you can suggest a solution or lend support call the Cataraqui Archaeological Research Foundation at 542-34853. Stay tuned.

PICTURES OF PORTLAND

Shirley Gibson-Langille announces an exhibition of her charming paintings of historic Portland Township to be held in the Masonic Hall on Highway 38 in Harrowsmith. On Saturday 2 October, Bill Patterson will lead at 11 a.m. with a history of the township. The ghost of Wes McLean will appear in his old horse-drawn postal wagon while his life will be recounted by Shirley Freeman. From 4 to 6, St. Paul's United Church will have a church supper across the road, not to mention the Moscow Piper, Les Minstrals, Ken Sigsworth, Bill McDonald and Old Time Fiddlers.

On Sunday 3 October from 10 until 4, the program and exhibition will continue with a walking tour of Harrowsmith's historic buildings at 2 p.m. Shirley's exhibition will continue through Friday 8 October. Go! Enjoy! Buy a picture! Some of the proceeds will aid Kingston's hospitals.

CIVIL WAR ANYONE?

A group called Civil War Round Table Associates invites us to join them with the battle cry, "Secede at any time!" Founded in 1968, the organization is made up of groups and individuals who choose to study, re-evaluate and preserve Civil War historic sites and the events which Union or Confederate soldiers took part in. Round Tables have already appeared in Ottawa, West Vancouver, Calgary and Burlington. Will Kingston be next? Call Evelyn Bishop at 548-4119.

PRINCE EDWARD REPORTS

Exploring Prince Edward County on a historical mission, your intrepid editor met Ron Malseed in Bloomfield who owns a gift shop, and edits the newsletter of the Prince Edward Historical Society on their Macintosh computer. (I was jealous. My goose quill pen is almost beyond repair.) The County is well favoured with historians and volunteers. The county archives are housed in the old jail behind the Registry Office at 1 Pitt Street in Picton, K0K 2T0. Their number is (1) 476-6100. Also here is the office of the Prince Edward Historical Society, P.O. Box 1078, Picton, K0K 2T0, President David Taylor.

From here I learned of the Seventh Town Historical Society in Ameliasburg and of their Museum and historic outbuildings. With a population of about 150 people, they have a volunteer roster of 150 drawn, admittedly, from surrounding villages, Belleville and Trenton. Their museum building is the old Methodist Church (1868), with displays of a chapel, school room, kitchen, parlour, bedroom, showcases for artifacts and a lively gift and book shop. Outbuildings include a blacksmith shop and forge, bird and animal compounds, a

windmill, a carpenter's shop, a weaver's cottage, bakery, an engine house for their gigantic 1910 Goldie Corliss steam engine and many others.

It seems curious that a hamlet's 150 citizens largely through their own volunteer physical work, are able to accomplish what Kingston cannot, a lively civic museum.



HISTORICAL VIGNETTES

We are deeply indebted to Queen's University Archives, the Public Archives of Canada, Mika Publishing Company, and McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, for allowing us to reproduce pictures from their collections. George Lilley's aerial photographs from 1984-1949 are always useful references. Three of the greatest illustrators of historical material in North America are no longer with us and we honour their memory: Charles W. Jefferys (1869-1951), Edwin Tunis (1897-1973) and Eric Sloane (1905-1985).

Our authors, many of them members of our Society, deserve special credit for making these narrative contributions to our Society's Centennial 1893-1993 and we thank them.

The vignettes are available for sale at \$1. each, which helps to defray their production cost. You may wish to purchase the complete set of 15, in which case we recommend three-hole punching to fit in a binder of your choice. A complete list of titles appears in this newsletter.

HISTORICAL VIGNETTES from the KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Aboriginal Life Around Kingston

Hugh Daechsel

Molly Brant, Mohawk Loyalist

Earle Thomas

French Nobility at Cataraqui

Wallace G. Breck

Surveying Loyalist Settlements

Joe Boucher

Rev. John Stuart, Loyalist Preacher

Sylvia Waller

Merchant Mansions

Yvonne Scott

Kingston to York by Stagecoach

Mark Mihorean

On the Kingston Waterfront

Patricia Fleming

Murney Tower

James Warren

Kingston Street Railway

Bill Thomson

Pump House Steam Museum

Colleen Rock

Canadian Locomotive Company

James Warren

Kingston Shipyards in World War II

Maurice D. Smith

British Army in Kingston 1783 - 1870

Louis E. Grimshaw

Naval Base at Kingston 1812

Richard A. Preston

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The Kingston Historical Society is delighted to welcome six new members. Two are actually Honorary Patrons of the Society: Brigadier General Michel Matte replaces Brig. Gen. Jean Guy Boyle as commandant of the Royal Military College. At Canadian Forces Base Kingston, Colonel Bill Richard has taken over as C.O. from Col. Gerry Coady. We wish the outgoing officers good fortune in their careers and invite their replacements to join us as duties permit.

Terry Lyons and Nancy Greig are known to many of us as proprietors of The Armchair General bookshop which specializes in historical and military books, original paintings and prints on military subjects. Their shop has moved to 120 Princess Street. We look forward to seeing them, along with Sharon Rudy of Kingston, who has also joined us.

Last, but certainly not least, we welcome Duncan J. Currie of Detroit who, seeking information about Kingston, was kind enough to become a member.

GHOSTS IN FAIRFIELD HOUSE

Early in June, with a band of Loyalists, I visited historic Fairfield House, along the Bath Road in Amherstview. It was a cold, grey day, a heavy rain driving against a forest of blooming lilacs that conceal the house from the west.

We explored the building once again, now two centuries old, shivered, shared a picnic lunch, and huddled in the kitchen to see a slide show about the building's history.

Afterward, I commiserated with the lecturer on the difficulty of raising funds to maintain Fairfield House. I asked whether the interior might be made more inviting by patching the plaster, painting the walls and providing furniture and pictures. This, I reasoned, might attract more visitors and gain greater support. Since money is

scarce, one room might be done at a time, perhaps with the sponsorship of a particular individual, group or company. I was not prepared for the response.

The building in its present state is a precious resource, I was told. Why would anyone want to alter the evidence of our past? How could we possibly restore the interiors using modern materials without concealing what had gone before?

I enquired whether the Fairfields, successful farmers who owned their own schooner, would be content to live in a shabby house without seeking to maintain it in a presentable state. Wallpaper, perhaps. Carpet on the floor. Pictures on the walls. Chairs before the fire. With sufficient research, I suggested, the job could be done with considerable historical accuracy. I cited the examples of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Upper Canada Village and Louisbourg. My suggestions fell on deaf ears and, as a guest, I fell silent with as much grace as possible.

Yet the question continues to plague me. If the purpose in preserving an old building is to illustrate our past, is the picture enhanced when filtered through the ravages of age and neglect? I respect the scholarly attachment to purity of style and the sanctity of original artifacts, but must we ignore the taste and lifestyle of the original occupants of the house? As historians, are we sometimes more concerned with age than content?

I am reminded of a Nova Scotian folk artist of some repute. Joe Norris had been a fisherman but retired early because of a bad heart. Using discarded boat paint and bright coloured enamel, he painted seascapes of the boats and rocky coves of the south shore and framed them with driftwood from the beach. Popular with tourists and snapped up by prestigious galleries, his paintings gave him a good living. He told me, "They looks 'em a bit rough. If there's a rusty nail or the wood's some split, they pays more for them." Joe Norris in his innocence had found the perfect balance between self-expression and the cultural establishment.

