



Vol.23 No.3
1 March 1996

James Warren
Editor

MARCH BLOWS IN

For our March meeting, a change in speaker and topic. We welcome ever-resourceful Dr. Wallace Breck who will tell us about the colourful careers of Sir Archibald Macdonell (1864-1941) An RMC cadet in 1883, he became an Inspector in the Northwest Mounted Police in 1889, joined the Canadian Mounted Rifles in the Boer War, then rejoined the mounties until World War I. He led the First Canadian Division as Major General in most of the Canadian campaigns. After the war, he became Commandant of RMC in 1919 and President of the Kingston Historical Society from 1920 to 1925 when the Society took over Murney Tower as a museum. He died in 1941 and is buried in Cataraqui Cemetery. But wait until you hear Wally's story.

The date is Wednesday 20 March at 7.30 in the Wilson Room, Central Public Library. Afterward, Florrie Warren offers cider and oat cookies.

The Executive Meeting is on Wednesday 13 March, at historic Fort Frontenac.

OUR FEBRUARY MEETING

Dr. David Lyon, Queen's Professor of Sociology, presented an amusing account of the founding and early history of St. James' Church from 1845 to the present. Its first minister, Rev. Robert Rogers, had the revolutionary idea that his church, the United Church of England and

Ireland, should be concerned with its own poor, largely Irish immigrant parishioners rather than the rituals and ornaments of the high Anglican Church. Located in Stewartville, then a slum, his was an uphill battle against the well-healed establishment. Margaret O'Meara was host with coffee and cookies.

FAX OF THE MATTER

I've never seen a fax machine, I hope I never will.

I'm happy with my crystal set, I'm happy with my quill.

I much prefer the spoken word, the letter penned by hand.

Why people call me Dinosaur, I'll never understand.

Flagrantly but gratefully borrowed from Warren Clements' column in the Globe and Mail.

GEORGE VOSPER COLLECTION

Bill Fittell and Jim Warren were the happy guests of life member George Vosper who has discovered a valuable collection of some 250 glass negatives, 5" x 7", of Kingston subjects. Though the photographer is unidentified and the pictures untitled, George was able to date one view of Vandervoort's as 1899. He offered them to our Society, but Bill had another idea. Why not send them to Queen's Archives? First, the Society would underwrite the cost of having contact prints made, which might reveal the photographer's name and other useful historical information. What a useful discovery and what a kind contribution from George Vosper. Discussions continue.

HISTORIC RENOVATIONS

We commend Downtown Kingston for its Heritage Week Awards to four beautifully transformed downtown stores. On Princess, these include The Gap, Roots and Urban Trade. On Brock Street, the art gallery displaying the work of Heather Hall. Why not show our appreciation for their efforts to preserve our historic streetscapes by going in to buy something. All carry merchandise with which any of us would be pleased.

OUR MEMBERS

Our new-member Membership Chair Ed Grenda happily informs us of another new member, Alan Campeau at 169 Earl Street. Welcome aboard! We are also pleased to extend a complimentary membership to Peter Gray and Christopher Rosser who have done such splendid work for our Murney Tower Museum. Meanwhile, Margaret Cohoe, ever young but not a new member, has undertaken a training program for guides who will conduct tours of City Hall during the current Sesquicentennial of Kingston's incorporation as a city. Beautiful building. Wonderful contribution.

Incidentally, City Hall still sells a charming illustrated booklet called Kingston City Hall, first published in 1974. For only a dollar, it provides interesting history and rare illustrations.

SCRAPBOOK CORNER

Ruth Chapman has kindly presented us with old newspaper clippings and photographs which Doug Petty has added to our archives. Thank you.

MOLLY BRANT ADVENTURES

Wally Breck has had a strange time of it, trying to interest City Council in giving official support to our attempts to honour Molly Brant. He has asked for no money, a phenomenon with which councillors appear unable to cope.

An enterprising sculptor has offered to model a likeness of Molly Brant on the site of her former house, now Rideaucrest Lodge, despite the fact that there is no known portrait of the lady.

We have been unable, so far, in persuading Mayor Bennett to officially invite Chief Maracle of the Mohawks to participate in our celebration of this distinguished matriarch.

Phil Quattrocci has offered to sponsor a flower garden at the site, overlooking the Great Cataraqui River.

Author and historian Earle Thomas is working on the book 'The Three Faces of Molly Brant'. His publisher, Quarry Press, seeks our help in pledging to buy copies when published at a special price of \$19.95. The amazing career of this leader of Six Nations women is told in six chapters: Childhood in Canajohare, Sir William's Chatelaine, Brown Lady Johnson, Secret Agent, Mohawk Refugee and Kingston Loyalist. Please make your pledges to Wally Breck at 544-4876.

I suppose the indifference of our waffling councillors is a slight improvement upon the pillaging and burning that were inflicted upon Loyalists by rebel Americans in the late revolution.

Curiously enough, the Americans today present a most dramatic exhibition of Molly Brant's and Sir William Johnson's lifestyle, as

it was before the revolution. In Johnstown, New York, a few miles north of Interstate 90, their house and outbuildings are preserved, fully furnished with British and Iroquois artifacts of the period and a costumed staff of knowledgeable and friendly interpreters. When I warned the curator that I was a Loyalist come to retrieve our property, she said, "Welcome to our house; we are all Loyalists here!" and presented Florrie and I with coffee and a well-illustrated history and plans of the property. God bless America.

PUBLICATIONS

Margaret and Bernard Burdsall have now mailed out Volume 44 of Historic Kingston to all subscribers and contributors to Historic Kingston.. Our subscribers include the British Library, eight libraries in the United States including Yale, Harvard, Cornell and St. Lawrence Universities; Fort Wayne Indiana; Portland, Oregon; Worcester, Massachusetts and Contoocook, New Hampshire. Also 28 in Canada from the University of Victoria in the west to Universite Laval in the east, 2 copies in the National Library, Ottawa, 2 in Queen's Archives and one complimentary copy to the Ontario Historical Society, of which we are a member. Two copies are also given to each author contributing to the publication.

Margaret Cohoe and Margaret Purcell, assisted by Margaret Angus and Irwin Ruttle, have prepared a most useful index to the 6 volume 'Buildings of Architectural and Historic Significance City of Kingston' published between 1971 and 1985. In addition to over 600 buildings, individuals, families, trades, professions and streets are listed. The

index is available from the Ontario Genealogical Society, Box 1394, Kingston K7L 5C6 for only \$9.50. You can also purchase a copy at the Saturday 16 March meeting of the Genealogical Society at 9.45 am at the Wilson Room of the Kingston Public Library and join them for lunch afterwards, dutch, at a local restaurant. Genealogists are quite friendly.

AWARD NOMINATION FORM

Attached to this newsletter is our Award Nomination Form. Its purpose is to give you an opportunity to suggest who should be given the Society's Award for 1997 in recognition of outstanding contributions to the preservation and interpretation of local history. Please support your nomination with reasons and send the form off to the Award Committee. The address is on the form. Thank you.

MURNEY TOWER SURVIVES

While the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation has cut all cultural budgets by 25%, our Society has decided to allot \$3000 to Murney Tower to keep it going seven days a week with a staff of three during the regular 1996 season, thanks to the success of our sesquicentennial coin project. Thanks must also go to Doug Petty, Ken Rutherford and the Museum Committee for their efforts. During 1995, 9500 visitors tread the stone floors of Murney Tower which announces that it has \$2500 in the bank.

SAVE A PICTURE

Beside its administrative function, City Hall is a repository for a large number of photographs, drawings,

paintings and miscellaneous artifacts which have been presented to the city and its officials over one hundred and fifty years. Perhaps the most dramatic are the large oil portraits of former mayors. These present an interesting visual history of faces, beards and hair styles, as well as changing fashions in the painting techniques of their artists. Sadly, many are showing signs of old age.

Councillor David Meers suggested that a worthy way of celebrating our sesquicentennial would be to have the paintings professionally restored. Back in the early seventies, when City Hall was undergoing major reconstruction, Marjorie Simmons spearheaded a drive to do just that, and to find temporary homes for the portraits. She had them photographed in black and white.

Past President Bill Fittsell sees the restoration project as an appropriate one for our support and with the approval of our Executive and Council, a cheque for \$1000 will be presented to Council on 5 March.

Councillor Meers also suggests contributions from individuals and corporations to 'Save a Picture' undertaking the restoration of picture and frame of a city official of particular interest, perhaps a distant relative. Those contributing \$1000 or more will be designated Grand Patrons.

ARTISTS WORKSHOP

Shirley Gibson-Langille advises us that there will be a retrospective exhibition of the work of the Kingston Artists Workshop in the Wilson Room of the Kingston Public Library from the 2nd to the 28th of April. To be opened by Prof. Ralph Allen at 7 pm on 2 April, there will be a brief history by Roy Holloway.

EDITOR'S DEADLINE

While contributions to this newsletter are always welcome, they are often submitted too late for relevant publication. I prepare THEN during the last week of the month. It must be delivered to the printers by the first of the following month in order to be in the hands of members before the second Wednesday. I must therefore have your copy *early* in the last week of the month if it is to get out on time. If you are late (a) your notice will not appear, and (b) dark incantations will be directed at your person by the editor. If your body is suddenly overtaken by sharp pains, don't say I didn't warn you.

SPRING IS ABOUT TO SPRING

Never mind the cold weather. Birds have appeared to herald spring! I just wish they wouldn't herald on my car.



Award

NOMINATION FORM

The Kingston Historical Society Award, inaugurated in commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Society in 1893, is presented from time to time to worthy individuals, groups and institutions in recognition of outstanding contributions to the preservation and interpretation of local history.

Members of the Society are invited to nominate recipients for the award by using this nomination form. Completed forms should be mailed to the Award Committee, Kingston Historical Society, Box 54, Kingston, Ontario K7L 4V6.

Name and Address of Nominator:

Name and Address of Nominee:

Please add your specific comments in support of your nomination:

Continue overleaf if necessary . . .