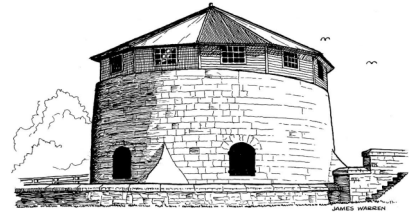


# Limelight

## Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

Kingston Ontario Canada



The Kingston Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.



Volume 22 no 7

ISSN 1488-5565

September 2020

### *Kingston Historical Society*

#### Fall 2020 Lecture Series

We regretfully announce the **cancellation** of the fall 2020 KHS lecture series. We reached this decision after long and careful deliberation. While our lecture venue in the Central Library has reopened for public use, the conditions of that access, we decided, were too onerous to facilitate enjoyable and profitable lecturing. Those attending a lecture would be obliged to wear a COVID mask throughout the proceedings and would have to sit in a socially-spaced seating plan, which by our reckoning would sustain an audience of only about 20 people. Other venues would demand the same restrictions. ZOOM lecturing seemed impersonal and not within the reach of all KHS members. Beyond these practical considerations, there is also the lurking possibility of a resurgence of the pandemic. All these realities, plus the wellbeing of our speakers, have led us to cancel – although postpone would be a better word – our lecture offering this fall.

Do not despair, however. We have a wonderful inventory of potential speakers ready to address us on topics ranging from local artists, local architecture, local museums and broader matters such as Kingston's connection with Governor-General Lord Tweedsmuir. We hope that as the COVID horizon clears we will be able to present you with an inviting lecture program for 2021. Stay tuned for news in November.

*Duncan McDowall*, KHS lecture program chair

August 2020

#### **Pittsburgh Historical Society      Meetings on hold**

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, Pittsburgh Historical Society meetings have been put on hold until our Fire Hall 3 meeting venue is able to safely open for public gatherings. Notice will be circulated as soon as we are again able to meet.

It is noted with regret the death of David Carr Baird on August 9, 2020, a long time former member of the Kingston Historical Society.

## THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Established 1893*

*LIMELIGHT is published nine times a year, September to May.*

*Please forward submissions to the Editor [betty.andrews@gmail.com](mailto:betty.andrews@gmail.com)*

*Reprinting of articles from the Limelight must be accompanied by an acknowledgment of the Society, the issue and date. Photo credits and by-lines must be retained.*

The Kingston Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of Kingston Association of Museums, Art Galleries and Historic Sites and the City of Kingston.



*The KHS gratefully acknowledges the support of its sponsors in producing Limelight.*

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### *President's Message*

*by Vincent Durant*

As a relative newcomer to Kingston (a mere 40 + years!) I am constantly impressed with the amount of time and work put into preserving the beautiful architecture of this city; an observation frequently reinforced during my five years as a volunteer tour guide at Kingston City Hall. Time and again tourists remarked on the beauty of our buildings, while often lamenting the loss of heritage in their own cities. Today the efforts of people such as the late Margaret Angus and so many others continue through the work of organizations such as KHS and the Frontenac Heritage Foundation. And this fall, if the gods of COVID cooperate, a small group of KHS and FHF executive members will meet for an informal discussion on how we may better cooperate for the good of the Kingston area. To this end, I would like to ask KHS members to offer suggestions on areas in which this cooperation may be achieved. Many of us have memberships in both organizations, and so should have good advice to offer. Please feel free to get in touch with me at [durantvj@gmail.com](mailto:durantvj@gmail.com).



While on the topic of historical preservation, kudos to Kingston City Hall for their recent online virtual tour (see link below). More and more, the creative use of technology is opening our heritage to the world. The City Hall tour is similar to the one developed for the Murney Tower Museum (another link below), and is easily navigable. This technology is what real estate agents use when advertising houses. We do live in interesting times, eh!

As you will see elsewhere in Limelight, the monthly membership meetings have been suspended until the end of 2020. We will reassess the situation in November, and hopefully may be able to resume normal operations sometime in the new year.

As always, please keep in touch, and stay safe.  
Best wishes.

*Vincent*

### **Web addresses:**

City Hall virtual tour: <http://liberty360.ca/Kingston/CityHall/text.html>

Murney Tower in 3D:

<https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=iBhN6aS9Hi6&fbclid=IwAR2emDHMnzADZmHcf9gGma4nTnDEGEFqIM-HHKPxqRjPrE3g6Cfsa4siJ8U>



*Parks Canada has done a fine job sprucing up the site of Sir John A. Macdonald's grave in Cataract Cemetery, including new plaques and work on the walkway.*

Photos by Vincent Durant



**Henry Gildersleeve**

**Old Stones of Kingston**

Henry Gildersleeve, from a ship building family of Connecticut, began his life in the Kingston area in July of 1816 when he worked on the Frontenac steam ship being built at the Finkle shipyard in Ernestown(Bath). He built several steamers in his own shipyard in Kingston for trade on Lake Ontario; he has been referred to as the Father of Steam Navigation. He captained some of his steamers himself. As well as passengers and cargo carriers, his ships were major transporters of immigrating families, who incidentally brought with them typhus fever and cholera.

He was a land developer and a railway promoter; he was the first president of the Kingston Marine Railway Company and of the Kingston Building Society. He was a friend and business associate of John Counter in the land, shipping and railway fields. In 1824 Henry married Sarah Finkle of the Finkle shipbuilding and tavern-owning family of Ernestown, and before too long began the building of his house on King Street.

Shortly after his return from a railway planning conference in Boston in late September 1851 he became unwell. He carried on with his activities but collapsed on 30 September and died the next day. The Toronto Globe in an article of 11 October 1851 stated: *...Every object he believed would advance prosperity in the town found him an able supporter. By being placed at the head of many useful undertakings he insured their prosperity.*

See *A Great Lakes' Saga* by Anna G. Young in Historic Kingston, No 14, 1966 Also her book *Great Lakes' Saga* (Owen Sound 1965) for more on Gildersleeve family.

Photo by Jennifer McKendry





## *Still Standing*

### *Looking at Regional Architecture with Jennifer McKendry*

**THE GILDERSLEEVE HOUSE:** “These old-fashioned ‘colonial’ mansions, with the residence built by Mr. Henry Gildersleeve, ...are noteworthy relics of the substantial homes of Old Kingston’s ‘limestone’ days.” -- Agnes Maule Machar, 1908

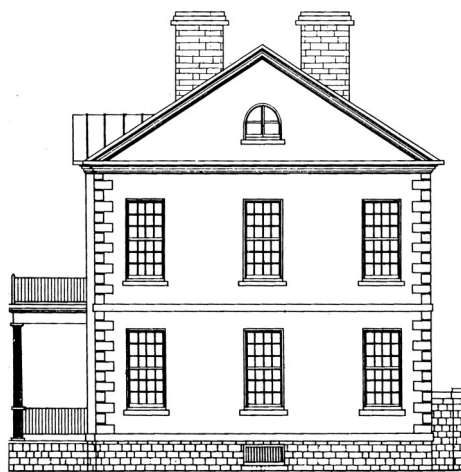
The Gildersleeve House at 264 King St E., corner of Johnson St, has been given a building date as early as 1824 and as late as 1826 in publications from 1937 to 1977. My 1995 book, *With Our Past before Us: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Architecture in the Kingston Area*, however, gives the date as c1830. Upon examining the publications proposing the earlier dating range, it is evident that one author relied upon the other—going back to the work of amateur historian E.E. Horsey in 1937 (for whom the precise building date was likely not too important). We need to look more closely at sources from the 19<sup>th</sup> century such as map evidence. Moreover, the Gildersleeve House was described as “new” in April 1831 in a newspaper item concerning sidewalks. The date of 1830 brings the house more in line with similar houses, for which the building dates are known with more certainty, such as the R.D. Cartwright House of 1832-3, the Macaulay House of 1833 by architect Thomas Rogers and the J.S. Cartwright House of 1833. Similar features include the stonework and doorways. It is possible that Thomas Rogers designed them.

Along with Charles Place, the R.D. Cartwright House and Summerhill, these 1830s houses demonstrate a significant Kingston foray into the neoclassical style with fine detailing on exteriors and interiors. The Gildersleeve House, despite the commercial uses of the last 40 years, retains a domestic air, along with a remarkable quantity of original plaster and woodwork; for example three

mantle-pieces with delicate classical mouldings are still in place. It was home for a family who played an important role in the economic history of Kingston as managers and builders of ships, as well as in its municipal history with two mayors in the family.

Provincially, the house is a fit companion to other neoclassical buildings from the second and third decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century—the McDonald House in Gananoque, the Alphaeus Jones House in Prescott, the Campbell House in Toronto and the Grange in Toronto. Exhibiting calm rationality, they feature central doorways with balancing windows placed in facades traditionally proportioned for harmony and beauty.

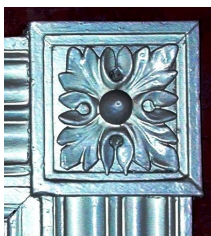
Henry Gildersleeve must have been pleased by the 1835 newspaper description of his residence as a “gentleman’s house,” in effect placing him in the company of the gentry who ran the province. His origins as an American emigrant moving into British Canada only a year after the War of 1812 was over, did not seem to stand in the way of his rise in the pro-



East elevation pre 1938, Ontario Archives

vincial shipping business to the point of being remembered as “the father of steam navigation on the Bay of Quinte and Upper St Lawrence.” Two of his sons became lawyers. His eldest daughter Lucretia, named after her maternal grandmother, Lucretia Finkle (a successful owner of a ship-building yard in Bath), inherited the Gildersleeve House in 1868 and lived in and managed the property by herself until her death in 1909. Thereafter, the house remained in the hands of one family, the Glovers (who converted two rooms for a dental practice), until taken over by

non-residents for commercial use. Restored in two campaigns during the 1990s, this building contributes significantly to the historical character of central Kingston.



Detail of interior woodwork



Photo J. McKendry 2012

## PRINCE BERTIE AND THE CHILDREN OF THE MANSE

by Eva Barnes

n the 1800s, when the Rev. Machar of St. Andrew's Kingston travelled in Europe, he sent wonderfully descriptive letters to his beloved children at home in the Manse. Agnes and John Jr. joyfully anticipated the reading of these special missives. The Reverend wrote beautifully crafted stories that interested his imaginative daughter and precocious son.

Agnes, born in 1837 when Victoria became Queen, was inspired by accounts of this tiny, regal woman of influence and substance. John delighted in hearing stories about magnificent sailing ships, big trains and brave British soldiers. Both were intrigued by Queen Victoria's children, who were of similar age. In 1848, when Agnes was 11, and her little brother was 7, the Reverend described seeing Her Majesty, Prince Albert, Princess Victoria and Prince Bertie in their carriage in Hyde Park in London.

In 1860, when the Rev. Machar was visiting Scotland, his letter to Agnes and John was one of kind consolation. Now young adults, they were quite downhearted because of a most unfortunate civic event that became a "wretched fiasco".

In September of 1860, HRH the Prince of Wales was to visit Canada. Elaborate preparations were made to welcome him to Kingston. Everyone wanted to be involved. However, local committees quickly experienced fiercely stubborn discord. There was especially acrimonious quarrelling between Kingston's Catholics, and the Protestant Irish Orange Order, including many prominent members from St. Andrew's.

Buckingham Palace had decreed that there were to be no visible religious or partisan displays. The Catholics were agreeable. The Protestant Orangemen would have none of it.

When the royal vessel moored at City Hall, the chaperoning Duke of Newcastle would not allow Prince Bertie to disembark. Thousands of exuberant Irish Orangemen, all wearing ceremonial attire and colourful sashes, waved banners and cheered boisterously from the shore. Church bells rang and steamboats whistled.

The Mayor was unable to negotiate a compromise. Hastily, the waiting choir of 500 children was hustled onto the deck of the nearby *Hercules* to offer an impromptu concert. The Orangemen held firm. After a long diplomatic pause, the Prince still did not alight, and the royal vessel departed for Belleville.

Young Agnes and John were disappointed that their stylish new clothes, a considerable household expense, would not be worn at a formal reception planned at Alwington House. Both had received personal invitations.

The Rev. Machar, a true Scottish Presbyterian, had disapproved very publicly in 1829 of "silks, satins, laces and ringlets". His staunch stance about fashionable attire had softened thirty years later for this auspicious historic occasion involving his much loved children and royalty.

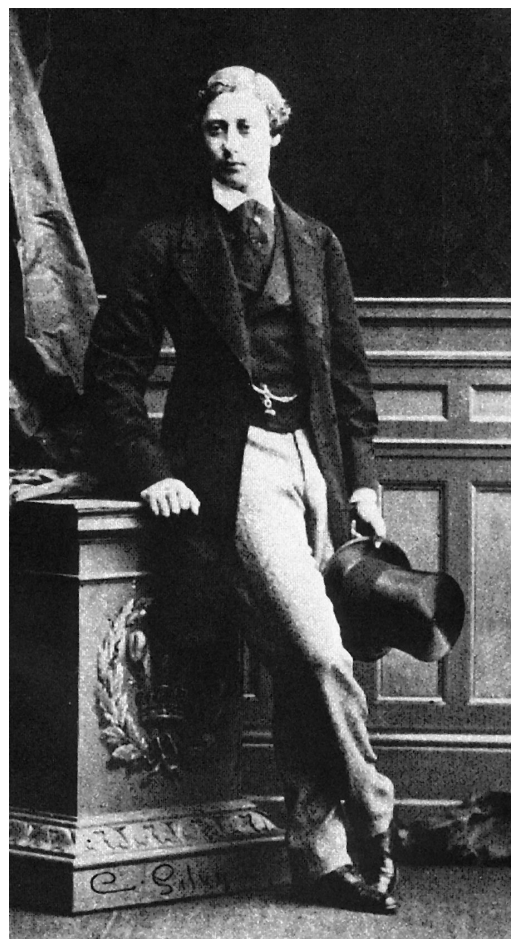
The Reverend's gentle words of warm, fatherly encouragement were received with gratitude via written correspondence ... across many miles, but close in heart.

**Albert (Bertie) Edward Wettin, Prince of Wales  
and future King Edward VII of Britain,  
1860 official portrait Royal Collection Trust, London UK**

### SOURCE REFERENCES:

Armstrong, Alvin; *Buckskin to Broadloom*, The Kingston Whig-Standard and Hanson & Edgar Ltd., Kingston, 1973.

Machar, John; *Memorials of the Life and Ministry of the Rev. John Machar, D.D., Late Minister of St. Andrew's Church, Kingston*, James Campbell & Son, Toronto 1873.





## Pump House Museum

The Pump House is Kingston's first water pumping station to provide water to Kingston homes and support fire fighting efforts.

The museum is open Wednesday – Saturday and offers 2 tours to choose from. There is an indoor site tour featuring the temporary exhibition, Collecting Histories. And for the outdoors-minded, there is the walking tour of historic Ontario Street. Each tour is private to your group of up to 9 people and is booked in advance.

Discover more and book at

<https://www.kingstonpumphouse.ca/>

The November 2016 Limelight features an article on the pumping station by Henk Wevers and a Still Standing article about the Pump House by Jennifer McKendry.



**HERITAGE DINNER UPDATE**  
**Please be advised that, regretfully,**  
**we will not be hosting**  
**the Society's Canadian Heritage**  
**Dinner in February 2021 due to**  
**COVID-19.**

From the recent past of the Kingston Historical Society's Proceedings  
>>> found in *Then* newsletter –

September 1992 – ..Authors are composing ...25 vignettes of Kingston history which will illuminate the hundredth birthday of our society in 1993.

Also: a query of the editor after results of a member survey were reviewed – *Will our society survive beyond its centennial?*



The Marine Museum is hosting its first-ever Nautical Scavenger Hunt. **Join us and explore some of the maritime heritage of the Kingston waterfront.** This event can also be completed virtually using the Google street view! Please do not hesitate to contact the Museum at [marmus@marmuseum.ca](mailto:marmus@marmuseum.ca) for any further details.

You can enter for the chance to win a virtual escape room and dinner for 6 from Sherlock Escapes and Caper's Catering - one for each version!

Follow the riddles and clues that will lead you and your shipmates along a merry adventure through local history! We have two versions for you to choose from!

1. **Cadet Training:** The first version lets you explore downtown Kingston's historic waterfront, and is designed for those Kingston trivia landlubbers (those who prefer the safety of land) and seafarers alike!
2. **Commodore's Challenge:** This version is great for those looking for a challenge and to put their Kingston maritime knowledge to the test! With more puzzles and a longer distance, this version is best completed by car, bus, or bike!

To enter the contest:

-Download your challenge worksheet from our NEW website: <http://marmuseum.ca/index.php/education/scavenger-hunt>

- Complete your worksheet and submit to [marmus@marmuseum.ca](mailto:marmus@marmuseum.ca)
- If you correctly answered 70% of the clues, you will be entered in the draw for a chance to win our prizes.
- The contest will run from **August 24 to September 7, 2020** at midnight.

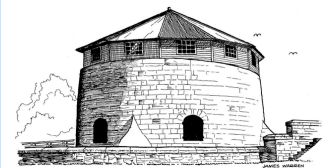
Winners will be contacted on September 11, 2020 and announced on September 14, 2020.

Solve the clues *schooner* rather later, unless you want to be left on shore!

## Murney Tower

Operated by the Kingston Historical Society

### Museum Collections: Objects in Focus



Here is a commemorative mug from our Gardiner Collection, a large collection of royal Victoriana collectibles bequeathed to the Murney Tower Museum by Miss Mary Aleda Gardiner. This antique mug dates back to 1897. It commemorates Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, her 60<sup>th</sup> year of reign on 22 June 1897.

**Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee  
commemorative mug**





*Welcome, new members*

David Platt



**PAN CHANCHO**

the pig with a peel

44 Princess St

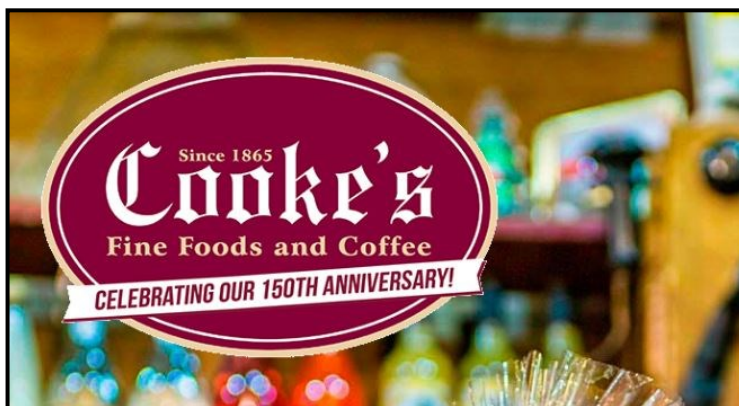
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