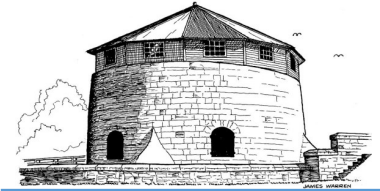


Limelight

Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

Kingston Ontario Canada

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



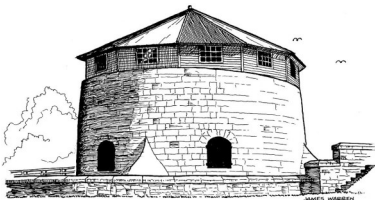
KHS Meeting Wednesday, 15 September 2021 >>>>>>> via Zoom

Napanee author: **John Immerseel**

will discuss his recent book

For a Better Life: Post-War Dutch Immigration to Canada

with special reference to the prominent Dutch community residents in Kingston.

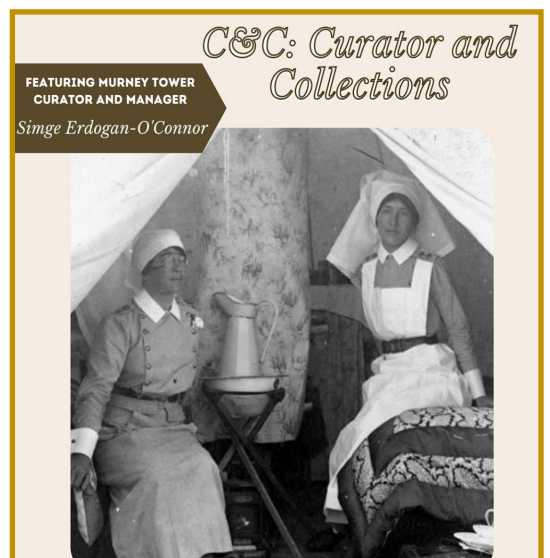


Murney Tower

Operated by the Kingston Historical Society

Murney Tower Museum Offers Virtual Program on Its Collection

One of the highlights of this summer has been a new virtual collection program, "C&C: The Curator and Collections" Series. In a monthly Zoom session, led by the Museum's Manager and Curator Simge Erdogan-O'Connor, a different artifact, theme, or episode from the museum's collection is selected to help paint a picture of Kingston's past revealing its people and hidden stories. The first session, "The People of the Tower", was held on June 9th and attended by 44 people. The second session entitled "19th-century Kingston Prints" was held on July 7th and had 33 participants. One of the main goals of this free virtual program is to make our curatorial work and research accessible to the community. The third session, "A Tale of Two Banks" will be held on September 16th and will focus on the Bank of Upper of Canada bank-note. Please email us at info@murneytower.com for more information.



THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established 1893

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Reprinting of articles from the Limelight must be accompanied by an acknowledgement 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

Welcome back!

As we're all painfully aware, since our last Limelight the statue of Sir John A. Macdonald was removed from City Park, and placed in storage by the City of Kingston. As I write this, in late August, there has been no resolution to the question about where the statue, and its granite pedestal, will eventually be relocated. Hopefully, we will learn more at the next meeting of the *Sir John A Macdonald History and Legacy Working Group*, which is scheduled for Sept. 1st. The current recommendation appears to be to place the statue in Cataraqui Cemetery. Sir John A. was one of the founding members of the Cemetery back in the mid-1800s.



Thanks to Murney Tower's hard-working staff, the Museum has reopened, and all reports indicate a very successful operation over the past few months. As well, a new website is up-and-running (); there is a lot of good information to be found there, and on the Murney Tower's Facebook page. Under the direction of Dr. Tabitha Renaud, the Tower director, and Simge Erdogan-O'Connor, the Tower's manager and curator, a very professional *strategic plan* is nearing completion. This will set the path as we move towards celebrating the 100th anniversary, in 2025, of KHS's operation of the Museum.

Lastly, I want to encourage everyone to participate in our fall series of lectures, the first of which celebrates the enormous contribution made by Dutch immigrants to the Kingston and broader Canadian communities. Once again the programming committee, under the able leadership of Dr. Duncan McDowall, has put together an outstanding lineup for the coming months. As we carefully work our way through the final stages (hopefully) of the current pandemic, your KHS Council is exploring the possibility of hosting a form of "hybrid" meetings / lectures in 2022. We should have more information on this in the next month or so.

Vincent

Speaker's Corner

with

Duncan McDowall

Putting “highly personalized history” on the Archive Shelf

For centuries, archives have served as repositories and generators of historical culture. On their shelves have rested the documentation of societies in evolution. Governments, religions, secular institutions and individuals have entrusted their legacy to archivists, and historians have, in turn, crafted archival material into personal and national narratives. Archives tend, however, to be normative organizations reflecting the mores of the societies they serve. Groups in society which find themselves in the shadow of a society's received orthodoxy have however often found the archive door closed to them, either because their cultures have precluded the production of a written record or because their values have been proscribed by the majority. Such has been the fate of Canada's LGBTQ community. (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning)

At its May lecture, the KHS learned of the concerted effort of the Kingston LGBTQ community to capture, catalogue and then celebrate its long, but often suppressed, existence. In 2010, two activists – Janice McAlpine and Renee Van Weringh – approached the Queen's University Archives with a bold proposal – will you help us to build a “community archive” that will acknowledge our coming out into Canadian society and at the same time help us to celebrate our place in the nation's increasingly inclusive society? Queen's embraced the opportunity with enthusiasm, and over the next years McAlpine and Van Weringh worked with Heather Home, the university's public service and private records specialist. McAlpine and Home lectured on how fruitful that partnership has been.

McAlpine began with a sketch of the LGBTQ community's “decades' long walk out of the dark into the light” since the civil rights awakening of the 1960s – the Stonewall Riot and Trudeau's decriminalization of homosexuality being early highlights of change. By the turn-of-the-new century, Kingston LGBTQ members had acquired a “pride” that encouraged them to see themselves openly as members of a distinct and publicly recognized group. The “community archiving” project emerged out of this ethos. Drawing on Heather's archival skills, and guided by an advisory committee, the group harvested oral histories from local gays and lesbians active in the years 1970-2010, took in donations of memorabilia – posters, buttons, t-shirts – and began fashioning them into a systematic collection at Queen's. A timeline of local and national gay rights was constructed. Much of this work culminated in 2019 when an exhibition celebrated the richness of LGBTQ life in Kingston. Heather and Janice stressed that all this was perhaps more than simply building an archival collection. It was “a political act”, a hands-on definition of the past that was constantly “alive” to the sensibilities of a community once largely invisible on the archival shelf.

The Kingston LGBTQ Community collection is available at the Queen's University Archives under locator F3004. Its finding aid is viewable on-line at the QUA website.

FYI

New Project Aims to Clean Up Inner Harbour Sediment

We recently received notification about a special project being carried out jointly by Parks Canada and Transport Canada. Over the next few years, they will be taking steps to clean up and manage toxins resulting from industrial activity near the Inner Harbour. Appropriately enough, the program is titled *Kingston Inner Harbour Sediment Management Project*, and you can find very interesting details at this website: <http://www.kihproject-projetpik.ca/Home/IndexEN>

June 6 Celebration of the Life of Sir John A. Macdonald

Canada's First Prime Minister

January 11, 1815 – June 6, 1891

By Alan MacLachlan

Photos by Eva Barnes and Peter Ginn



Entrance to National Historic Site of Canada Gravesite of Sir John A. Macdonald



Don Richardson



Christine Breunke



Canon Blair Peever



Vincent Durant



The 127th Sir John A. Macdonald Graveside Commemoration Service: A Virtual Gravesite Service

The commemorative service of 2021 on the 130th anniversary of Sir John A. Macdonald's death could likely be called "The Year of Challenges". Last year our service was cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, however, we decided to have a service in spite of the COVID virus but within the restrictions laid out by the government. We have been blessed in having in our Council very knowledgeable and creative members with a superb grasp of the new computer and internet technology and capabilities. With input from them, we decided to prerecord the service in pieces and then stitch them together. The final version was presented as a webinar with a link provided by the curator of the Murney Tower, Simge-Erdogan O'Connor, at 1:30 on 6 June 2021. It was then posted to our website to be viewed at any time.

The service began with still photos from previous services. Master of Ceremonies, Secretary Don Richardson, began with acknowledging the recent horror of the discovery of 215 unmarked graves at the Residential School for Indigenous children in Kamloops, British Columbia. He expressed the sincere grief felt and still felt by the Society.

Mr. Richardson followed with his opening

remarks with a welcome to all who would be watching, not just locally but nationally and internationally. The Canadian national anthem was played. Christine Breunke, the Secretary of the Cataraqui Cemetery Board, brought greetings and



welcome. The Reverend Canon Blair Peever of Christ Church Cataraqui gave the Scripture Reading and opening prayer. KHS President, Vincent Durant, brought words of welcome and introduced guest speaker, **The Honourable Hugh Segal.**

Mr. Segal recognized not just Sir John A. Macdonald's achievements as the primary Father of Confederation but also Sir John's failings. Further he viewed "those First Nation Chiefs as the Grandfathers of Confederation, suggesting it is high time they receive the tribute and commemoration they too deserve. Historical Societies here and elsewhere should lead the campaign for that to happen, as should the Canadian Department of Heritage. We must build real bridges that recognize our obligations to First Nations will require continued effort by our entire society and community." In closing our guest speaker stated: "this country must shoulder that debt and obligation, in respectful partnership with our First Nations brothers and sisters. And we must recognize too that Canada would not be here, would not be part of our common heritage without the efforts of the politician and former MP for Kingston who lies steps from where we stand. Commemoration is an important part of using the past, with all its victories and setbacks, to build a better future."

In the past we would usually have the laying of fourteen wreaths by representatives of our three levels of government and organizations affiliated with Sir John at his grave site. This year, given the restrictions of group size, we asked His Worship Mayor Bryan Paterson to be our sole wreath layer. The benediction was given by The Reverend Canon Blair Peever. This was followed by a moment of silence, The Lament and the Last Post. We closed with God Save The Queen. We were then treated to a series of historical photos that were taken of Sir John's 1891 funeral, his lying in state, and other photos of those who viewed various aspects of his death and burial.

The success of this first virtual Gravesite Service is the result of many hours of diligent attention to detail by the following: Donald Richardson, M.C.; Dr. Craig Pettis, Video Recorder and Producer; Paul Van Nest, Director and Assistant Producer; Simge Erodogan-O'Connor, Webinar Host; Eva Barnes and Peter Ginn, photographers; and Craig Boals, the Manager of The Cataraqui Cemetery, and its staff.



Mayor Bryan Paterson laying wreath at Sir John A. Macdonald's gravesite.

Craig Pettis (photographer). Alan MacLachlan, Mayor Bryan Paterson and Paul Van Nest viewing official Park's Canada plaque commemorating Sir John A. Macdonald's death. Don Richardson in foreground.



<https://c2cjournal.ca/2020/11/sir-john-a-macdonald-saved-more-native-lives-than-any-other-prime-minister/>



Reversal of fortune: Sir John A. Macdonald's legacy as a nation-builder has lately come under fire; Canada's first prime minister at Earnscliffe, his Ottawa residence, in 1888 (above left) and his statue in Montreal after being decapitated by a mob in August 2020 (above right). (Image credits: John Mahoney/Montreal Gazette, left, and Library and Archives Canada, right.)

Given that he died in 1891, the facts of Sir John A. Macdonald's life are unchangeable. The story of his life, however, has changed dramatically in recent years. During his life and for well over a century after his death, he was regarded as Canada's foremost founding father and one of this country's most colourful characters. Confederation was very much Macdonald's singular achievement – the product of his masterful skill at negotiation, plus plenty of patience and resolve. ***To read the article by Queen's School of Law graduate Gregory Piasetzki, based on historical research and appearing in the C2C Journal, visit the web address above.***





MONUMENT TO SIR JOHN MACDONALD TO BE UNVEILED
IN CITY PARK IN SEPTEMBER.

From Jennifer McKendry's email to the city

It is essential that the granite pedestal, now in storage, be re-united with the bronze Macdonald statue wherever it is finally located – Cataraqi Cemetery being a good location. The two were designed to be together. The sculptor George Wade was English, while the pedestal maker, E.R. Welch & Son, ran a Kingston marble business from at least 1851 to about 1918 and made many monuments in Cataraqi Cemetery. The attached drawing dates from May 1895 but is theoretical, as the unveiling was not until Oct. 23, 1895. Once at the cemetery, it becomes a death monument: respect needs to be paid to the dead. This is an art object and, in that sense, neutral.



- Also attached is a view of the statue when in city park in case you want to compare it with the 1895 drawing



HOMESTEAD

Welcome, new members

Mary Armstrong



Kingston and District Branch, United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2021, 2:00 p.m. EDT via Zoom.

Register at below address

Award-winning **Jean Rae Baxter** will speak on "WHEREAS it is Unjust" : Upper Canada's Role in the Fight to End Slavery. <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUldOuprj0vH9CK-CqPT0os9pDbQ25LwOH2>

The Rev. Dr. John Machar was St. Andrew's longest serving minister from 1827 to 1863. After graduation from Aberdeen University and before his ministry, he excelled as a private tutor for two of Scotland's most wealthy families. In appreciation, he was gifted frequently with fine collections of books. This growing personal library, later transported with great care to Kingston, became reputed as the best in Upper Canada. Kingston's prominent citizens visited the good Reverend's study regularly, including one young member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian congregation, a voracious reader and later-to-become Prime Minister, John A. Macdonald.

Agnes Maule Machar,
circa 1885, Queen's
University Archives



Rev. Machar's manse library was also a favourite retreat for his children. It was in this study that Agnes and John Jr. were schooled diligently by their classically educated father, giving them a sophisticated, intellectually demanding foundation in literature, languages, religion and science. This was a most unusual education for a young Victorian woman growing up in a rough, colonial frontier town like Kingston. Agnes took enthusiastically to her studies and demonstrated a superb gift for self-expression at an early age, especially through writing and art.

Recognizing his teenaged daughter's intellect and talents, the Rev. Machar encouraged Agnes to enrol in a finishing school in Montreal, the Ipswich Seminary for young ladies. Her favourite teacher and mentor was Miss Hannah W. Lyman, who later became the first Principal of the respected Vassar College for women in the United States.

Margaret Machar was concerned that daughter Agnes read far too many books, and spent excessive time indulging in creative writing. Such an inclination would not bode well in attracting a husband. This motherly prediction did prove to be true. Agnes never married. But what Agnes Maule Machar accomplished in her lifetime (1837 to 1927) was astonishing.

By 1900, Agnes had achieved recognition as a nationally acclaimed writer, historian, poet, social activist, humanitarian, artist and environmentalist. Inspired by Miss Lyman's ideals, Agnes envisioned creating a retreat for visiting artists, writers, intellectuals, academics and religious leaders in beautiful natural surroundings near Kingston. In 1857, with her father's help, she purchased an idyllic waterfront property in Gananoque. A uniquely designed summer chalet commanded a dramatic cliff-top view of the Thousand Islands. During the passing decades, *Ferncliff* did indeed host international figures of note, as well as many young artists and writers.

In 2018, the Government of Canada recognized *Ferncliff* as an ecological and historical treasure, ensuring its protection in perpetuity. A plaque now graces the park adjacent to Machar Woods, in a peaceful setting that captures the same breathtaking vista that Agnes' distinguished guests would have enjoyed.

