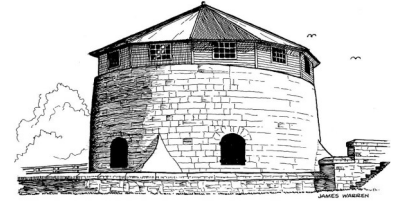


# Limelight

## Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

Kingston Ontario Canada

Volume 23 no 7 ISSN 1488-5565 [www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca](http://www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca) October 2021



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



**KHS Meeting 20 October 2021 7:00pm**

### "Local Boy Makes Good: Edward "Eddie" Peacock (QU MA 1894) Finds Fame and Fortune in London."

Speaker: **Dr. Duncan McDowall** presents an examination of the hitherto underappreciated career of Sir Edward Peacock (1871-1962), who rose to prominence as a London financier, financial advisor of the Royal family and fixture of English high society. Few Eastern Ontario-born people have risen to such stature at the centre of the Empire.

**On Zoom**



From the Baring Archive



From the recent past, taken from the Kingston Historical Society's Newsletter THEN – September 1994

...our own Jennifer McKendry, architectural historian, consultant and former board member of Frontenac Heritage Foundation has accepted the Lieutenant Governor's invitation to join the Board of Directors of the Ontario Heritage Foundation.

From the recent past : taken in September, 2014, at Charlottetown, P.E.I. Membership Chair Paul Van Nest and Sir John A. Macdonald. The statue was removed 01 June 2021.

# THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Established 1893*

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*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 acknowledgement of the Society, the issue and date. Photo credits and by-lines must be retained.*

October's Featured Sponsor

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*

Our fall lecture season got off to a great start with John Immerseel's illustrated talk on Dutch immigration to Canada following World War II. Several of my schoolmates in rural Nova Scotia were Dutch immigrants whose families, like the Immerseels, came to Canada for a better life in the 1950s. As John spoke of the terrible conditions in the Netherlands during and after the war, I couldn't help but think of what they had lived through. His combination of pictures and words brought it out in full relief. If you were not able to Zoom in for the lecture, you can catch it on the KHS YouTube channel:



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSGda\\_nEVK0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSGda_nEVK0)

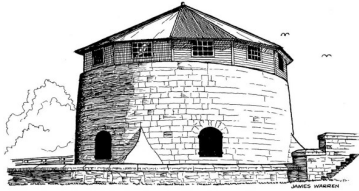
Next up in our lecture series will be a talk by Dr. Duncan McDowall regarding an almost-local (Queen's grad – close enough) boy who went on to fame and fortune in England: mark your calendar for Wednesday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. Rounding out the fall lecture season will be a talk on Norman Rogers by biographer Barry Cahill on November 17<sup>th</sup>. Details will be forthcoming on these lectures, and on the new format we hope to develop for next year. As mentioned before, we're looking into a hybrid format that will allow local participants to gather together monthly, while also allowing our growing audience outside Kingston to continue to participate in the lectures online.

Best wishes.

*Vincent*

**Please renew your  
KHS membership  
now!**





## Murney Tower

Operated by the Kingston Historical Society

*Summer Events* by Alison Dringenberg

Despite an uncertain start to the summer, Murney Tower Museum was committed to ensuring a continued engagement with our community, whether online or in-person. The museum hosted and participated in a number of events throughout the summer, including talks about our collections, a collaborative paint night with a fellow local museum, and our official reopening on July 17. Early in the summer, the museum staff signed up to participate in a booth at the Love Kingston Marketplace on behalf of the Kingston Association of Museums, Art Galleries and Historic Sites (KAM). On a sunny day in mid-July, our Historical Interpreters represented Murney Tower Museum at this booth, letting passersby know who we were and spreading the exciting news: we were reopening! Murney Tower Museum officially opened its doors to the public, after being closed the entire previous summer season and the first half of this one. The museum staff had set to work cleaning, organizing, and setting up the site to safely accommodate visitors and, on Saturday, July 17, we finally opened the doors and welcomed visitors once again into the little tower. The summer of fun did not stop there: on August 12, we enjoyed a beautiful evening collaborating with the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes as part of their Paint Night series, where participants spent the evening painting the picturesque Murney Tower on the Lake Ontario waterfront. On top of these in-person events, our manager and curator Simge Erdoğan delivered the engaging and informative C&C: Curator and Collections series throughout the summer. This speaker series, held remotely, allowed us to share the stories of our collections with the public. We're so grateful to have been able to continue to engage with locals and visitors alike this summer, both on- and off-screen, and we can't wait to host more events in the future!



## *Still Standing*

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

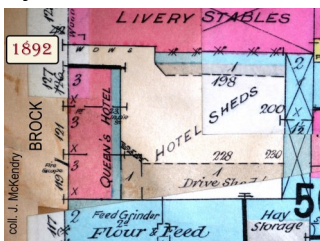
#### **STALEY'S YARD to McGOWAN HOUSE to CAMDEN HOUSE to FRONTENAC HOTEL to QUEEN'S HOTEL to QUEEN'S INN, 125 Brock Street**

In the autumn of 1838, a tantalizing notice was posted by the sheriff of a forced sale of various properties owned by Sylvester Holden, including the southeast half of lot 251 and the undivided two-thirds of lots 220 and 231 "with buildings" on Brock Street. These three were neighbouring lots – parts of 231 and 251 are where Queen's Inn, 125 Brock Street is located today. His initial purchases dated to 1829 and 1834. The family of the next owner, Martin Staley, 1801-1879, had a long term interest in the property from 1839 (part of lot 251) and 1842 (lot 231) to 1912.

The tax assessment for Staley increased significantly from 1840 to 1841, perhaps reflecting building activity. Martin Staley, a farmer on Wolfe Island, was leasing the Brock Street property to various tenants. Exactly when the brick, three-unit hotel with its stone rear wall was built and documenting the changing functions are not yet firmly established. Indeed knowing whether it was built as a hotel is a problem.

The southeast half of lot 251 was sold by Holden to Staley in 1839. The nearest neighbour was George Mink, a tenant of Samuel Moores. Mink ran a livery business on the other half of the lot, which would be convenient for the guests at Staley's hotel. It is not until 1842 that the latter acquired the adjacent property on lot 231. One cannot with certainty know whether the buildings in existence in the 1830s and '40s are the ones now forming the Queen's Inn. In the 1857-58 directory, there were labourers and a weaver living in "Staley's Yard, Brock Street."

On the 1865 Innes map, the two units closest to Bagot Street were present. Perhaps the third unit closest to Wellington Street was built shortly thereafter. In 1871, we have a reference to a tavern run by Thomas McGowan, who was charged with selling liquor on a Sunday. His yard was described as a public one, where Patrick Daley was making a drunken nuisance of himself. In the 1875 directory, Martin Staley was living on Brock Street next to McGowan, but "McGowan House" changed hands that year to W.R. Locke and was renamed "The Camden House." Renovated and refitted, it provided "good accommodations for travellers and ample room for regular boarders. Large Yard and Stables attached." The names and proprietors changed quickly, making the history complicated. A drawing in the 1875 Brosius view shows three three-storey units with a long drive-shed behind what was likely the newest unit.





## ***Dutch Treat***

In the decade and a half after World War II, a half a million citizens of the Netherlands (a nation of 8.8 million in 1945) said goodbye to their homeland and sought a new life in countries as diverse as New Zealand and Brazil. Over 200,000 (or 35% of the migration) chose Canada as their new home. At the Society's September 15<sup>th</sup> lecture, Dutch-born Napanee historian John Immerseel explained why Canada was so privileged.

Drawing on his recently published *For a Better Life: Post-War Dutch Immigration to Canada*, Immerseel set out the "push" factors behind the exodus. The Netherlands was "devastated" by the German wartime occupation and its subsequent Allied liberation: 237,000 dead and 400,000 homes destroyed. Precious polders were flooded with sea water. Post-war economic prospects for a heavily agrarian population were grim. The densely packed little country was already overpopulated. At the same time, the loss of the Dutch East Indies colonies flooded the country with expat refugees.

Desperate to ease the strain, the Dutch government adopted the unique policy of urging its citizens to emigrate to greener pastures. Subsidized travel on posh liners and cash bonuses were offered. The goal was to diet the national population in a bid to make it leaner in the post-war. Canada beckoned: it was closer and after 1947 was eager to feed its own post-war growth with able European newcomers. Thus, Canada and the Netherlands agreed on a Dutch treat: the Dutch would send their surplus citizens and Canada would spread the welcome mat for them. Many of the first arrivals were farming types, but by the 1950s professionals and urbanites followed.

Despite the smooth mechanics of the exodus, Immerseel stressed the emotional impact of leaving one's homeland, in effect, forever. Drawing on many first-hand testaments, he argued that the flight across the Atlantic was "not just a big adventure." Families were severed. The new world demanded new ways, new languages, and new skills. But the Dutch proved adaptive new Canadians, a fact attested to by the prominent Dutch-Canadian presence today in Kingston business, political and cultural life.

**John Immerseel's *For a Better Life* is available at Novel Idea and directly from the author. ([john.immerseel@gmail.com](mailto:john.immerseel@gmail.com)).**



As a result of the move from the Heritage Room at Queen's archives to a climate-controlled storage unit and the subsequent cataloging of the materials, a forgotten artifact was discovered. The artifact was the Canadian General Service Medal and clasp 1866 of Thomas Smeaton of the 9<sup>th</sup> Voltigeurs de Quebec Battalion. By now readers will be familiar with this medal, this being the third article about the Fenian Raid Medals. The Canadian General Service Medal was awarded for service in the two Fenian Raids of 1866 and 1870. However, it was not authorized until January 1899, some thirty years after the events. Almost all Canadian militia units participated to some degree in the defence of Canada from the Fenians. However, with the thirty-year gap, only 15,000 medals were eventually awarded to the local Dominion forces. As you would expect, they were all old soldiers when they received the medal.



Imperial and later Canadian Medals are more than shiny pieces of silver that mark a historical event. Behind each of these medals is a person who served and sometimes died in the service of our country. Each of these silver discs has a story, and this medal has a remarkably interesting story and connection to Kingston and the Murney Tower.

Thomas Smeaton was born in Kingston on August 11, 1842, the son of John and Catherine Smeaton. Thomas had an older brother, William, born in 1836. The family lived at 59 King Street West. His father operated a small grocery store. His father often took him to watch the Murney Tower being built just a few blocks from his home. He recounts later in a newspaper of the day, that he earned four pennies a day as a youngster cleaning up the litter of stone chips around the tower. Thomas lived most of his 92 years in Kingston. His initial employment is listed in local records as a paper maker. About 1863 he moved to the Quebec City region. While there he worked as a factory hand and met and married Alice Donaldson. Thomas, his wife Alice, and his son John, aged one year, are listed in the 1871 census of Quebec. He joined the 9<sup>th</sup> Regiment, the Voltigeurs de Quebec, and with this regiment served in the 1866 Fenian Raids.

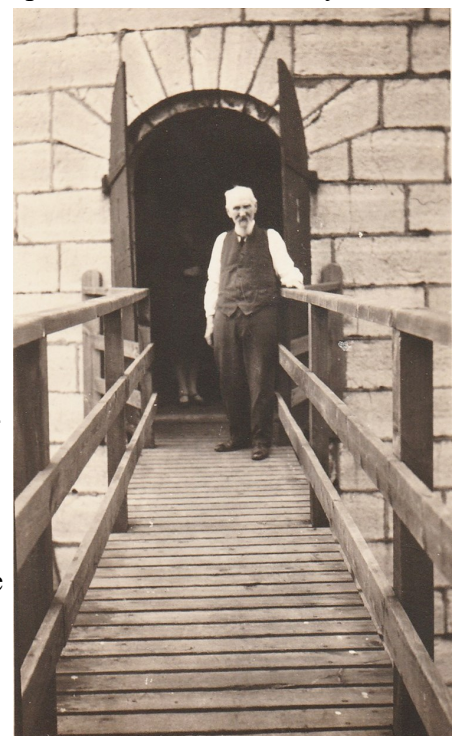
By 1877 he and his family had returned to Kingston and Thomas was working again as a paper maker. Thomas, like many of his generation, worked in several trades. In 1891 he was listed in the local directory as a tanner. By 1902 he was recorded as the Superintendent of the Orphans Home, a position he held for 14 years. Thomas played a prominent role in Kingston community life. He was a member of the Canadian Order of Foresters, Knights of Pythias, and the Ancient Order of the United Woodsmen of the World. One article in the *Whig* recalls he was Kingston's oldest baseball fan!

His connection to the Murney Tower and the Kingston Historical Society was his service as the first curator of the Murney Tower from its inception in 1925 until 1931. By then, the weight of the years compelled him to retire owing to his difficulty in climbing the stairs. He retained the post of Honorary Curator until his death.



Thomas Smeaton died on August 24, 1934, at the Kingston General Hospital. He had been ailing for a month due to injuries from a fall. His prominence in the City was demonstrated by the numerous obituaries in the *Kingston Whig*, citing him as the Grand Old Man of the Limestone City! His death was brought to the attention of readers as far away as Montreal.

**Murney Tower's First Curator: Thomas Smeaton**



**Congratulations to the Ontario Historical Society!**

The Kingston Historical Society is pleased to join with other historical societies in the province of Ontario in congratulating the Ontario Historical Society's 133 years of recording and celebrating Ontario and Canada's history. Since its initial conceptualization in 1888 and its formal incorporation in 1899, the Ontario Historical Society has become the leading historical organization in the province, concerned with preserving, interpreting, and propagating Ontario's heritage. It does this by promoting research into the province's rich history, supporting regional historical societies, communicating on historical scholarship in its journal, Ontario History, and providing educational materials and professional support for the dissemination and celebration of Ontario's history throughout the province.

The Kingston Historical Society has shared in this mission in its monthly presentations which are published in its own scholarly journal, Historic Kingston, focussing on this community's people, institutions, stories, and its role locally and nationally. While Historic Kingston has appeared annually since 1972, the society is also served by this publication, Limelight, which is produced nine times a year and keeps a finger on the pulse of Kingston Historical Society, reporting on the society's business, articles on snippets of local history, news of upcoming events, and activities of members.



Accordingly, it is appropriate that Limelight joins in the chorus of congratulation on the achievement of the Ontario Historical Society!

*Dr. Brian Osborne, the President of the Kingston Historical Society from 2002 to 2005, served on the OHS Board of Directors, 2001-2004; was OHS Vice-President, 2002-2004 and OHS President, 2004-2006*



**HOMESTEAD**



## **Please Renew Your Membership for 2022 before 31 December**

RENEWAL of Membership in the KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY: As a credit to our 2021 members for their support in a difficult year and because our expenses were lower due to COVID-19, we are discounting the fees for renewals by 25%. (Don't get used to this please.). ☐ **\$37.50 for a personal membership;** ☐ **\$45 for a family;** ☐ **\$18.75 for a student; and** ☐ **\$45 for an institution.** ☐ **\$300 for a sponsor.**

For New Members to the KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY: Dues remain unchanged: ☐ \$50 for an individual membership; ☐ \$60 for a family; ☐ \$25 for a student; ☐ \$60 for an institution; and ☐ \$300 for a sponsor.

Questions? Contact the Membership Chair Paul Van Nest, 613-544-6802 or email [pvannest@cogeco.ca](mailto:pvannest@cogeco.ca)

Membership includes the annual journal 'Historic Kingston' and 9 issues of the newsletter 'Limelight' as well as a discounted fee to selected special events. Some sponsors also offer discounts.

**Send this completed application form, along with a cheque made out to the 'Kingston Historical Society':**  
***Kingston Historical Society, Box 54, Kingston ON K7L 4V6***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Prov. \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

**I would like to receive my Limelight online** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**OR** you can pay your dues

☐ Online with Visa or MasterCard or PayPal: > Membership

or eTransfer to [treasurer@kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca](mailto:treasurer@kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca)

Additional donation: The Society would sincerely appreciate any additional donation that you may wish to make. Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Charitable receipts for amounts exceeding \$19.99)

**Please renew your  
KHS membership**

*Welcome, new members*

Pam Welbourne

Ruth Tracy



68-R Princess St

613-549-7673

