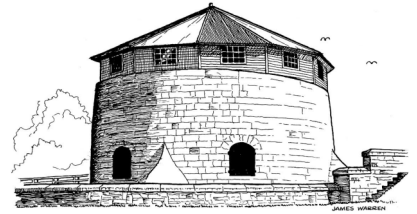


Limelight

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 24 no 2

ISSN 1488-5565

February 2022

February 16, 2022 7pm >>>>>>>>> Zoom

The Kingston Historical Society Annual General Meeting

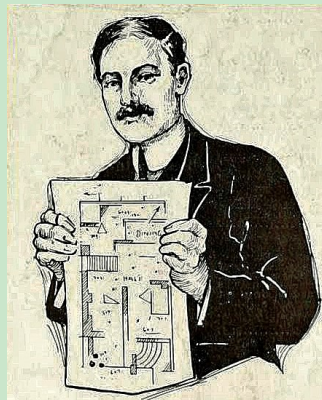
Featuring:

Dr. Jennifer McKendry

Architectural Historian

**“Architects Working in the 19th and early
20th Centuries”**

A selection of works in the Kingston region by key players in the architectural field in the 19th and early 20th centuries will be discussed.



KHS Awards TBA at the KHS AGM

The Canadian Builder
August 1912 back cover

KHS Heritage and Awards Celebration

February 27th: Heritage Tea

CANCELLED

It grieves me to report that, due to the current Covid-19 restrictions, an event and celebration which we have held for so many years, cannot take place this year.

Please rest assured that your Council remains committed to planning events like the Heritage and Awards Celebration when we will be permitted to return to an in-person format as soon as it is possible.

Stay safe everyone!

Anne Richardson

Thank you to Paul Van Nest for the great job he has done in indexing the KHS newsletters from 1992 to December 2021. In early 2020, KHS executive member Paul Van Nest tackled the work of scanning the pages of these two publications, but, without an index, he reasoned that this work would be largely unusable. And so, he set about creating an author and subject index to the back issues of Limelight and Then. He refers to this task as a “COVID-19 project”. As a result of his hard work, the indexes and back issues of the newsletters can now be found under [the Publications tab on the website of the Kingston Historical Society](#). They can also be searched directly from Digital Kingston—just click the links in the left-hand navigation pane.

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

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.

MAILING ADDRESS:

Kingston Historical Society
P.O. Box 54,
Kingston ON K7L 4V6
kingstonhs@gmail.com
www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca

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

I consider it a privilege to have served as President of the Kingston Historical Society for the past two years. A privilege and, of course, a challenge; one month after my appointment at the 2020 AGM, the world shut down, and all our best-laid plans went out the window! To quote the old Yiddish adage: "Man plans, and God laughs." Undaunted, members of Council pulled together to develop and implement a plan that allowed most of our activities to get back up and running. I have been on many boards over the years, but never before experienced the feeling of collegiality shown by the Council during the past two years; indeed, it has been a privilege!



The KHS annual meeting is slated for Wednesday, February 16 at 7 pm. You can read all about it elsewhere in this issue of Limelight. Last year we didn't have a speaker, but this year we are honoured to have Dr. Jennifer McKendry who will give a talk on Kingston's architectural history.

Finally, I would like to encourage everyone to give a warm welcome to our incoming President and Council, whom, I am sure, will do an excellent job guiding the Society in its future, hopefully post-pandemic, endeavours.

Best wishes,

Vincent

AGM motion :CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Members are advised that Council has approved 2 amendments to the constitution:

The constitution regarding **Council** now reads:

The conduct of the affairs of the Society shall be entrusted to a council constituted as follows:

- a) five executive officers, namely the president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and immediate past-president;
- b) seven elected councilors, and
- c) **four appointed councillors, namely the director of the Murney Tower committee, the editor of *Historic Kingston*, the editor of the newsletter and the Society's internet webmaster. (Amended 15 February 2017)**

2. Members of the council, with the exception of the past-president **and the appointed councillors**, are to be elected annually by the membership of the Society. (Amended 18 April 2007)

The amendments being proposed:

- a) Motion to **delete**: Constitution, Part A, III, Council, 1 (c) “ four appointed councillors, namely the director of the Murney Tower committee, the editor of *Historic Kingston*, the editor of the newsletter, and the Society's webmaster.” (Amended 15 February 2017).

Rationale: There are two reasons for this amendment. First, the total number of members of Council as currently mandated, i.e. 16, is considered to be more than is essential, and can contribute to meetings being longer than necessary. Secondly, and more importantly, it is becoming increasingly difficult to draw volunteers to sit on Council. Assigning specific roles to those 12 who do so decide, streamlines Council, avoids the scenario just mentioned, and still permits us to continue the work of Council.

- b) Motion to **delete**: Constitution, Part A, III, Council, 2, “**and the appointed councilors.**”

Kingston OGS Presentation - Saturday, February 19, 2022, at 10:30 am via Zoom

Veronica Steinberg will present **Providence Mother House History** and records held by the Archives about British Home Children.

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0rdu6spj4oGd15BosWcgsSdS2p2_sqhS2K

Battling a Pandemic: Medical Trench Warfare

The Society's January lecture was framed by irony: at a time when the Covid pandemic still held Kingston in its nasty grip obliging members to "attend" the lecture by means of Zoom, we were treated to a highly relevant lecture on the prevalence of a similar pandemic a hundred years ago. Our speaker was Dr. Robert Engen, a military historian with the Canadian Forces College in Toronto whose research focuses on health protection and disease prevention in military forces. Dr. Engen's case study was the Spanish 'Flu, a contagion that broke over the western world in three phases in 1918-19. An estimated 50 million people died in the pandemic. How, Engen wondered, did the fighting man faced with the daily horror of combat in the trenches cope with the unseen menace of a second front of disease? How did the Canadian military arm, so to speak, prepare its men for the combat against a virus?

Engen focused on the dramatic concluding months of World War I, when Canadians were at the sharp end of the so-called "hundred-day campaign" that culminated in the German surrender of November 1918. Official military history has exclusively focused on the combat waged in this campaign and the 5,500 Canadians who died in the foray. But all of this coincided as the second wave of the Spanish 'Flu swept through Europe. The German army, for instance, was said to have been devastated by the contagion and thereby weakened in the face of the Allies onslaught, but what toll did the 'flu exact on the Canadian boys?

Engen tackled this tricky investigation by devising a meticulous methodology, drawing on soldiers' service record cards, that allowed him to sort out those who died in conflict and those succumbing to the 'flu. From this, he divined that of the 5,500 dead, 350 had succumbed to the 'flu in the months of this last crucial campaign. He spotlighted this toll by singling out a local lad – Raymond Clarke Cooney of Belleville – who died that October near the Front of heart failure brought on by the 'flu, not German bullets. Despite such sorrow, Engen's conclusion was that the Canadian military did much better than other Allied armies, especially the American army, in protecting the health of its men. Strong leadership by the brass construed 'flu as a matter of *military* priority, not one of peripheral wellbeing. Rigorous sanitation protocols were imposed. The importance of segregation and quarantining were recognized and implemented. Because of this vigilance, the Canadian Corps never saw the Spanish 'Flu sweep through its trenches. Beyond this revelation, Engen provided other reflections on the nature of pandemics and how they originated and propelled themselves, advice worthy of epidemiological notice in today's hunkered down world of Covid. This utility was evident in the protracted question period that followed Dr. Engen's lecture.

From the recent past of the Kingston Historical Society's Proceedings

Taken from THEN newsletter – April 1994

KINGSTON ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

Few may be aware that representatives of Kingston's sixteen museums meet monthly to plot strategy for the year ahead and work through problems to their mutual advantage.

Desmond O'Meara and Joe Boucher represent our Murney Tower Museum. One of their current projects is to collaborate with Kingston Transit to offer visitors to the city a day pass to encourage them to soak up a little of our history. We will keep you posted as projects develop.

Still Standing

Looking at Regional Architecture with Jennifer McKendry

“a scene of unspeakable woe” – The 1847 Epidemic as Commemorated in 1894

A wave of Irish immigration came to North America to escape the Potato Famine from 1845 to 1849. After contracting typhus through infected lice, sick and dying Irish emigrants came ashore here. Local hospitals were at capacity and temporary sheds had to be built along King Street. Death carts rattled through the city streets. Disposal of the remains of the majority of emigrants was hurried and undignified. Between January 1847 and mid 1848, St Mary's records noted 1662 burials, of which 1200 or 1400 were the figures usually cited as laid in trenches south-west of Kingston General Hospital, laced with quicklime, and covered with ground until a large mound of earth was created. It was not until 1894 that a proper grave memorial was put in place.

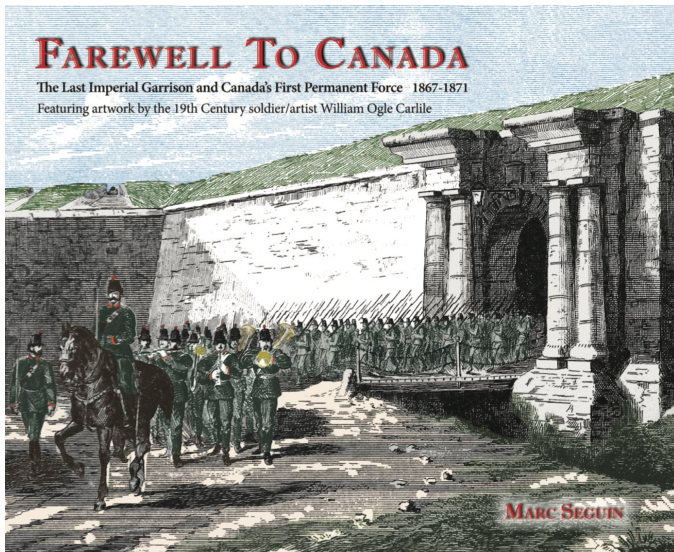
The words of the new Roman Catholic Bishop, James Cleary, recently arrived in Kingston from Ireland, captured in 1894 the horror of the scene 47 years earlier: “[The mound was] once the scene of unspeakable woe. God alone and the recording angel have kept account of the excruciating pain of body and sorrow of soul, of the tears and agonizing groans of the famine-stricken, fever-hunted children of Ireland that expired here...” He lamented the lack of a memorial on this gigantic grave. Thanks to his efforts, an impressive statue was raised upon a podium over the mound and inscribed as follows:

.... afflicted Irish compatriots nearly 1400 in number who enfeebled by famine, in 1847-1848 ventured across the ocean in unequipped sailing vessels in whose fetid holds they inhaled the germs of the pestilential ship fever and on reaching Kingston perished here, despite the assiduous attention and compassionate offices of the good citizens of Kingston....

Saved from a wrecked steamer in the West Indies, it was carved in marble and attributed to Genoese sculptor Monteverde (1837-1917). It sometimes incorrectly is known as the Angel of Mercy but the handsome figure represents the Archangel Michael, who presents the book of life recording who are the sinners and who are the saved. Given that it was within his power to send souls to the agony of hell, he was no angel of mercy but a recording angel, as described by Bishop Cleary. Angel of the Resurrection is an appropriate name. The Celtic cross, carved in relief on the front of the podium, saluted the ethnic origins of the victims.

The statue was photographed shortly after its installation by the *Daily British Whig*, May 1895. In the background were the west and south stone walls of the Nickle Wing of 1891 and beyond that the west chimney of the Main Building of 1835. Unfortunately, it became necessary to move the statue and a number of exhumed bones to the corner of Kingscourt and Kirkpatrick Streets (on the perimeter of St Mary's Cemetery) in 1966 in preparation for the addition of a ground storey on the flank of the Douglas wing.





The last Imperial garrison defending Canada departed 150 years ago, on November 11, 1871. William Ogle Carlile, a Royal Artillery officer, documented this era through his paintings and drawings which were published in news magazines of the day and in his own book of recollections of his time in Canada. This was a tumultuous time in Canadian history. The Dominion of Canada had just come into being four years earlier. With threats of invasion from the United States and unrest in the newly-acquired western territories, the departure of the British troops compelled the Canadian government to establish the country's first permanent force to support the Canadian militia. This permanent force eventually grew into the modern Canadian Army, and represented a further step toward complete independence from Great Britain and the British Empire. In order to accommodate the accurate reproduction of William Carlile's artwork, I have published the

book in a somewhat unconventional landscape format, 11"x 8.5", with a hardcover binding. While this is ideal for the 150 page book, it's also quite expensive to produce, so I'm selling the book through a number of channels, one of which I hope you might want to use to purchase it: Purchase from me, in person — \$50.00, includes applicable taxes. Purchase from me, by mail — \$60.00 — send me an eTransfer (marc@ontariohistory.ca) and I'll have the printer send you the book directly. Purchase from [Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca) — \$72.00, includes tax and shipping

The Biography of a Briefcase

By Olivia Anstess, Museum Assistant

Last summer at Murney Tower, I, one of the Museum Assistants, stumbled across this briefcase, which was purchased at the estate sale of Edith Van Straubenzee in 1973. It is believed to have belonged to Edith's father, Lieutenant Colonel Bowen Van Straubenzee, who served as Deputy Adjutant-General of the Canadian militia in Kingston from 1876 to 1881. The briefcase perfectly exemplifies the essence of the Lieutenant Colonel's position, which was centred on administrative work and required travel to nearby towns. In fact, a close inspection of this bag reveals just how much it was used. The seams appear to have been re-stitched while the bag was still in use, indicating that the Lieutenant-Colonel was highly dependent upon it for day-to-day use.

As a detail-oriented individual who cared about the wellbeing of the Canadian militia and its troops, Lieutenant Colonel Van Straubenzee appears to have been the perfect fit for the position of Deputy Adjutant General and was popular amongst the military community and the Kingston community as a whole.

Like Canada itself, however, Van Straubenzee had two sides to him. There was the side that those around him clearly saw and admired, but there was also a man who was involved in colonial campaigns. In addition to his involvement in the Sikh Wars and the North China campaign, both of which were attempts by the British to replace political and cultural structures in foreign countries with British influence, Van Straubenzee also led the Canadian infantry at the Battle of Batoche during the North-West Rebellion.

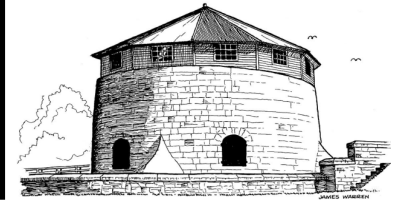


Murney Tower

Operated by the Kingston Historical Society

Featured in *Esprit de Corps*

By: Museum Assistant, Alison Dringenberg



The tales of Kingston's four Martello towers are full of both history and myth. Vanessa Chiasson tackles both in her recent article, "After 175 Years, Kingston's Martello Towers Still Fortify the City," featured in *Esprit de Corps*, a Canadian military magazine operating out of Ottawa. The magazine, founded in 1988, reports on Canada and international military issues, politics, military history, and current events.

In her engaging article, Chiasson explains how, although the four cannon-proof forts were obsolete by the time their construction was complete, the towers have proved invaluable to the city's heritage. Built in the mid-1840s under pressure from American expansionism, the towers now house art collections, artifacts, and legends aplenty. Murney Tower Museum is a "must-see local attraction" where the history comes to life, and Chiasson pays tribute to the efforts our team has put into virtual programming during this age of social distancing. Fort Frederick, part of the Royal Military College campus today, was once used as a common room for "rambunctious cadets" – until they were caught rolling cannonballs down the stairs! Cathcart Tower, on the other hand, has been clouded in tragedy since members of the work crew drowned when their boat capsized in 1847; Shoal Tower, however, remains a "photographer's dream" – and according to legend, a secret tunnel connects the tower to Kingston's nearby pubs. Today, Chiasson proclaims, the Martello Towers stand as a tribute to Kingston's place in history and our strong military heritage.

We want to thank Vanessa Chiasson for the feature and encourage you to read her article in *Esprit de Corps* at the link below.

<https://fliphtml5.com/insrc/gaig>



Murney Tower Operated by the Kingston Historical Society

By Alison Dringenberg

With a dizzying array of over 1000 domestic and military artifacts, Murney Tower Museum's collections have many curious stories to tell. Thanks to the digitization work undertaken by previous staff, last summer we were able to sift through our many artifacts, searching for the narratives lying in wait, eager to be told. We began by investigating the most recent additions to our collection, three nineteenth-century prints by illustrator William Henry Bartlett. Through the Collection Stories section on our website, we told the story of each print and of Bartlett himself, a globetrotting Englishman who travelled to the ends of the earth in

search of scenes to sketch, later to be engraved and immortalized in travel books for the world to see.

Among the other objects in the General Collection, we found stereographic cards accompanied by a stereoscope, a barometer, a letter opener – each of which inspired different stories about the realities of life in nineteenth-century Kingston.

Most recently, we focused on a small, brown, plastic disc, 2.6 centimetres in diameter, that had been found folded in the pages of some documents. This was a transportation token from Kingston's first-ever transit system: the Kingston Street Railway.

In "A Token for Your Thoughts: Uncovering the Lost Tracks of Kingston's Transit System," we told the story of this horse-drawn system and the subsequent development of Kingston's transit service until the present day.

Our artifacts have much to tell us, and these narratives are only a glimpse at the potential research and writing that awaits future Murney Tower Museum staff. We may be a small museum, but we have an abundance of stories to tell.



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now!

Welcome, new member

Craig Pettis **Carol Rogers**

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