

## Limelight

Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

Kingston Ontario Canada

Volume 24 no 4 ISSN 1488-5565 April 2022



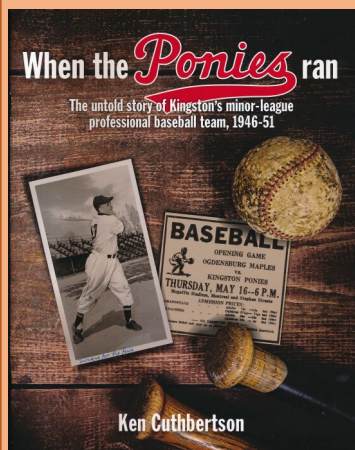
April KHS Meeting >>>>>>>> Zoom

Wednesday 20 April 2022 7pm

**Ken Cuthbertson:**

**The Kingston Ponies in the Border League**

Kingston journalist and author Ken Cuthbertson presents the story of Kingston's brief moment in professional baseball when the Kingston Ponies competed in the Border League in the 1940s.



All copies of this book were sold. Ken offers to send PDFs of the pages to anyone who provides an email. People can read them or use them to print a hard copy.

[ken.cuthbertson@sympatico.ca](mailto:ken.cuthbertson@sympatico.ca)

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



*Welcome, new members*

**Grant LeDrew    Andrea J. Gunn  
Don and Shari Beattie**

**From the recent past, taken from the Kingston Historical Society's Newsletter THEN – September 1992**

...As usual, the sound system failed to work and his gentle voice could not be heard at the back of the room. Also: *Women in the Fort Henry Guard?*

It is noted with regret, the death on 22 March 2022 of Michael Davies, a Life Member of the Kingston Historical Society.

**Ontario Genealogical Society - Kingston Branch 16 April 2022, at 10 a.m.**

**Lynn Palermo** will present: Writing Family History: Turning research into shareable Stories Known as the Armchair Genealogist, for the past 10 years Lynn has coached thousands of students through her signature writing programs in the Family History Writing Studio.

**TO REGISTER** <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwtf-2oqzkuHtyoBztsRmD756X7cJC-BEur>

## 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 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.*

### MAILING ADDRESS:

Kingston Historical Society  
P.O. Box 54,  
Kingston ON K7L 4V6  
[kingstonhs@gmail.ca](mailto:kingstonhs@gmail.ca)  
[www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca](http://www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca)

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Peter Gower, Editor of Historic Kingston, and Webmaster

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Paul Charbonneau*

My always-the-optimist Mom introduced me to the proverb "Is the glass half-full or is the glass half-empty?"; I chose half full.

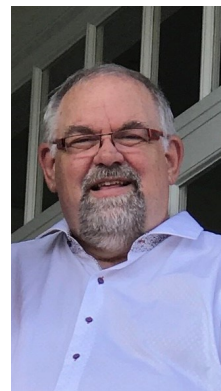
"Hope springs eternal in every human breast," from Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man*, comes to mind as we turn the equinox and eagerly welcome spring, which includes the return of baseball.

The timing is perfect for our April 20th KHS meeting's presentation, "When the Ponies Ran", with Ken Cuthbertson.

The spring of 2022 also brings renewed optimism for a return to some normalcy in our lives and opportunity to reflect on how the last two years will provide future historians with lots of material to add to the history books.

I am especially looking forward to the re-opening of the Murney Tower, operated by the KHS, for in-person tours, and the opportunity to educate Kingston residents and visitors about the rich history it contains. Our Murney Tower staff led by Director Tabitha Renaud and Curator Simge Erdogan-O'Connor participated in the March Break educational programming at the TETT Centre and the Central Library; kudos to Team Murney Tower.

Enjoy this issue of Limelight; I am amazed at the depth and breadth of the articles and a special thank you to Betty Andrews, our editor, for the heavy lifting to put this wonderful publication to press.



# HOMESTEAD

*Kings are like statues; people examine them with so minute an attention that their smallest faults, magnified by criticism, cause the most rare and genuine merits to be forgotten.*

Marquis de Custine

This is a continuation of a series I started several years ago: "If only these walls could talk." These articles link the history of Kingston through the numerous tablets and plaques that adorn the walls of St George's Cathedral. This article is about Colonel Henry Robert Smith ISO CMG. In 2017 I wrote about his father, Sir Henry Smith, Knight Bachelor of Roselawn, Kingston.

Colonel Smith's plaque, a large brass plaque with unique black and red in-filled letters, is installed under the Artillery Gallery a few feet to the right of his father's.

Henry Robert Smith was born in Kingston, Canada West, 30 December 1843, the son of the Honourable Sir Henry Smith, Knight Bachelor of Roselawn, Kingston, and Lady Mary Smith. Henry was educated at the Kingston Grammar School and upon graduation at age 16 in 1859, commenced training for the civil service. This opportunity was likely the result of a patronage appointment gained through his father who, at the time, was Solicitor General for Canada West. His father's close friend, John A. Macdonald, would have been most useful in assuring the young man's future.



Plaque in St George's Cathedral

Henry Smith's initial civil service employment was in Ottawa. While there, he began his military service and entered the Civil Service Rifle Corps. Being part of the Militia in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century was particularly useful for advancement in government circles. While a member of the Corps, he took part in the Fenian Raid operations of 1866, earning the Canadian General Service Medal (CGSM) with clasp 1866. By 1870, he was back in Kingston and was commissioned into the 47<sup>th</sup> Frontenac Battalion of Infantry and served in the Fenian Raid operations of 1870, earning a second clasp, 1870, to the CGSM. He was mentioned in dispatches for his outstanding service. During the Northwest Rebellion, Major Smith served with the Midland Provisional Battalion, so named because the companies in it were from the *Midlands* of Ontario. It was raised on Wednesday, 1 April 1885. For this service, he was awarded the Northwest Canada 1885 medal. By now he was well known in civil and the militia circles and took command of the 14th Battalion (The Princess of Wales Own Rifles) in 1886.

In 1872, at the age of 29, Smith was appointed Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms, an indication of the esteem in which he was held by the government. The Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons of Canada is a senior officer for the legislative body, appointed by Governor General-in-Council through letter patent under the Great Seal of Canada. The Sergeant-at-Arms assists the Clerk of the House of Commons as head of parliamentary precinct services, performing certain administrative and ceremonial functions, and maintaining order and security in the parliamentary buildings. Since Confederation, ten individuals have been appointed to this position. Interestingly, all appointees have held positions in either the Canadian Military or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.



Colonel Smith was appointed Sergeant-at-Arms in 1892. He continued as Sergeant-at-Arms until his death in September 1917.



Imperial Service Order



Edgar Nelson Rhodes, Speaker of the House of Commons, and Lt Col Henry Robert Smith ISO CMG, Sergeant-at-Arms. Taken c.1917 in front of the Victoria Memorial Museum Building, the temporary home for Parliament following the 1916 fire.



Order of St Michael and St George

In 1904 Colonel Smith was made a Companion of the Imperial Service Order (ISO) for his service as Sergeant-at-Arms. The medal was given for meritorious service by active members of the Civil Service. In 1911, Colonel Smith was made a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG) for distinguished service to Canada.

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Colonel Smith married Mary Barrow (nee Gurley) at St John's Portsmouth on 23 Aug 1887, Reverend FH Dobbs officiating. Mary, a widow, was previously married to Major Barrow. Major Barrow served in Kingston with the Royal Canadian Rifle Corps and was a contemporary and likely a social acquaintance of Smith. Mary died in Kingston on 31 January 1936.

Colonel Smith was well known in official circles in Ottawa and Kingston. He was an active sportsman, noted for his skill in fishing and shooting. He was a member of the Rideau Club in Ottawa and the Fourteenth Club in Kingston, a club for former and serving officers of the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion (The Princess of Wales Own Rifles) and later for officers of the Princess of Wales Own Regiment.

The article about Colonel Smith's plaque is but a brief sketch of a much fuller life of one of Kingston's distinguished families.



# FRIENDS OF THE RIDEAU

Friends of the Rideau is a non-profit organization made up of volunteers who care passionately about the Rideau Canal. Its goals are to enhance and conserve the irreplaceable charm of the Rideau Canal, to increase public

awareness and enjoyment of the Rideau Canal, and to develop strong public support for the long term well-being of the Rideau Canal.

In 1985, Friends was formed and officially incorporated as the Rideau Waterway Co-ordinating Association, a non-profit charitable organization. It was formed as a Parks Canada co-operating association, part of the former Canadian Parks Partnership group of “Friends of” parks associations. Its goals were closely aligned to Parks Canada’s mandate, to protect and present this amazing heritage site. Friends was initially headquartered at 1 Jasper Avenue, the old lockmaster’s house in Smiths Falls.



**The Depot – Merrickville**

Friends’ physical presence on the Rideau Canal is in the historic Depot (c.mid-1860s), part of Blockhouse Park in Merrickville. Friends operates this building as a Rideau Information Centre.

In the early 1990s, an objective of Friends was to set the Rideau Canal, and other world heritage canals, on the road to becoming world heritage sites. To quote an academic report, “What paved the way for the heritagization of canals on a global scale was an initiative by a Canadian NGO – the Rideau Waterway Coordinating Association, also known as the Friends of the Rideau – to promote the inclusion of Rideau Canal in Ontario, Canada, on the list of ‘outstanding universal value,’ the World Heritage List.” (Gfeller and Eisenberg, 2015). This initiative was led by Friends’ Chair, Larry Turner, and culminated in the “Heritage Transportation Canal Corridors – International Meeting of Experts”, jointly sponsored by Friends of the Rideau and Parks Canada, held at Chaffey’s Lock in 1994. The result of this was the creation of a framework for how canals and heritage corridors could become UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

The 1990s also saw Friends busy with various other initiatives. These included the Rideau Reflections tourism guide, an educational “Watch Your Wake” program, production of a Cycle Rideau-Lanark bicycle tour map, the opening of The Depot in Merrickville in 1995 as an interpretive centre and retail outlet, the publication of the “Rideau Canal Bibliography, 1972-1992”, and “Living Near the Water: Environmental Design for Shoreline Properties” to name a few. Friends went online in 1997 with a website presenting much of this information to the world. Friends was also very active in providing input into the first Rideau Canal Management Plan (1996).

The 2000s saw a flurry of activity starting with facilitating the publication of Ken Watson’s “A History of the Rideau Lockstations” in 2000. Friends then had two seminal works, Robert Legget’s “Rideau Waterway” and Robert W. Passfield’s “Building the Rideau Canal”, reprinted to make them available to the public. This was followed by the publication of three books by Ed Bebee (Pathfinders, The Guides of the Rideau, Fish Tales,

and Invisible Army) and the publication of the Sweeney Diary. Friends was also producing brochures for use at Rideau Lockstations including “How A Lock Works”, “Be Rideau Loon Aware” and “Managing Aquatic Vegetation on the Rideau Canal.” Late in the first decade of the 2000s, Friends started to digitize important Rideau research reports, several of the Parks Canada manuscript report series, making 12 of these available as “books on CD.” Friends then were also highly involved with a new Rideau Canal management plan (2005) and with the nomination of the Rideau Canal as a World Heritage Site.

In 2007, with the many events celebrating the Rideau’s designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Friends developed a portable booth to take to these events, the “Rideau Road Show”, to allow us to meet and greet the general public and answer their questions about the Rideau and to provide them with the opportunity to buy a heritage book or two.

In 2012 Friends adopted a heritage advocacy role due to Parks Canada’s reorganization of its heritage canals into a new Waterways unit. It was at that time that Parks Canada abandoned its heritage mandate for these sites and instead concentrated on running them as recreational waterways with a focus on revenue generation, a situation that remains today. Friends’ advocacy includes newsletter articles and letters to the Minister and Prime Minister as well as continued dialog with Parks Canada to encourage restoration of its legislated requirements to do heritage interpretation and public education. In 2021, Friends made an official complaint to UNESCO regarding Parks Canada’s disregard of its obligations to manage the Rideau Canal as a World Heritage Site. Friends also participated in the “consultations” for a new management plan for the Rideau Canal that took place in 2021. With the direction Parks Canada continues to follow, heritage advocacy will remain a core activity of Friends for the foreseeable future.

In 2020, Friends was forced to close the summer operations of the Depot in Merrickville due to COVID-19, but we were able to re-open for the 2021 season and we expect business as usual for 2022. Also for 2022, with the return of events on the Rideau, we are looking forward to getting back to our “road show”. Our heritage advocacy continues, including continued dialog with the Director of Ontario Waterways regarding the heritage presentation and visual character protection of the Rideau Canal. We continue to produce an informative newsletter and we are working on another new book.

We have a broad membership; the commonality is an interest in the Rideau Canal. We strive for “regional representation” with our Board of Directors. Brian Osborn for instance served for many years as our board member from Kingston. We currently do not have a board member from Kingston – if someone is interested, please contact us at [info@rideaufriends.com](mailto:info@rideaufriends.com).

For more information about Friends, see our website at [www.rideaufriends.com](http://www.rideaufriends.com)



#### Inside the Depot

Friends of the Rideau’s Chair, Hunter McGill (center right) chats with our two 2021 summer students at the beginning of the season.



## *Still Standing*

### *Looking at Regional Architecture with Dr. Jennifer McKendry, Architectural Historian Kingston Penitentiary in the 19th Century*

Over the last couple of years, much coverage has been given to the disturbing history of Kingston Penitentiary during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But its even more disturbing role during the 19<sup>th</sup> century makes K.P. a site of national and international significance and a reason to demand the preservation of all of its stone buildings.

The Kingston institution provided an opportunity for a number of planners, builders and architects to grapple with the problem of how to manifest, in appropriate physical form, social theories on morality. Despite being designed with noble aims on how to improve humanity, this complex can be judged a failure in this regard.

Seeking to reform its inmate population in order to blend them into normal society by the end of their incarceration, the penitentiary ironically confined them in a living hell of isolation and deviancy. Seeking to prevent corruption among the different levels of crime and to provide opportunities for individual meditation, the penitentiary system sadly sentenced its population to a regime of silence, which proved conducive to madness.

1873 Canadian Illustrated News July 5

The various architects of the penitentiary were the technicians who built the walls and bars in conformity to the ideas held by penal theorists and managers. In the name of reform they designed and built horrendously small cells, by their very nature lacking in sensory stimulation with no windows directly onto the outside world and containing spy-holes for the guards patrolling the hidden "Avenues of Inspection." Floor plans were not designed for the physical comfort of those forced to occupy them, but for the convenience of the staff and management. An overriding consideration in the design of the physical plant was the need for continuous surveillance of a maximum number of inmates by a minimum number of guards.



The triad of reform penitentiary values - security, salubrity and reformation - rested on a shaky foundation, built on the principles of congregation and segregation, which too frequently lead to perversions of ideals.

The institution's buildings increased in number and were altered over time from the first notations on paper in 1832 to the renovations of the 1990s. Nonetheless, the basic concept of the Greek cross plans, Classical style and choice of stone as the primary building material has survived from the 1830s. We need to acknowledge the site's importance in our nation's architectural history and to penal history.

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### “The toughest ten acres in Canada”

Kingston's history has been punctuated by memorable traumatic events: the War of 1812, the Rebellions of 1838, cholera and typhoid epidemics, a brief reign as colonial capital, and world wars, all etched into our civic psyche. The Society's March lecturer, Toronto journalist, film producer and author, Catherine Fogarty, refreshed and expanded our memory of another shock to our heritage: the 1971 Kingston Penitentiary riot which gripped both the city and the nation for four tense and ultimately brutal days. Drawing on her much-praised 2021 book **Murder on the Inside: The True Story of the 1971 Kingston Penitentiary Riot**, Catherine first sketched her motivation in tackling the story, one that in many ways Kingstonians had repressed in their memory. Like the national penal system as a whole, the riot's unpleasantness was best “kept out of sight, out of mind.” Fogarty described herself as an “accidental journalist” who stumbled on a newspaper reference to the riot and launched herself into years of archival and oral history research of the topic. Many witnesses to the event were dead. Others were reluctant to revisit the drama and horror of an event in which two inmates were bludgeoned to death by fellow prisoners at the height of the riot.

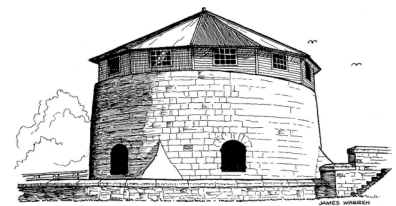
Fogarty methodically outlined the roots of the riot. Built in the 1830s as Canada's first modern jail, Kingston Penitentiary had become an overcrowded hellhole by the 1970s, widely regarded as the "toughest ten acres in Canada." Its 640 prisoners received little in the way of rehabilitation and much in the way of repression. They were known by number, not name. They feared that even worse lay ahead for them at the soon-to-be-opened "super max" prison at nearby Millhaven. The initial revolt was driven by a demand for better conditions and respect for civil rights. Six guards were taken hostage. It quickly became evident that the prison had no preordained response for such an uprising. As negotiations fumbled along, the situation inside the prison deteriorated into near anarchy. Rogue inmates brutalized "undesirable" criminals (usually sexual deviants), killing two of them mercilessly. With the army on stand-by outside, after four days the prisoners surrendered and realized their fear of being transported to Millhaven, where many of them were set upon by vengeful guards.

Fogarty rounded out her sorrowful tale by reflecting on how little the Canadian penal system has been reformed in the half century since the riot. Despite a recognition of prisoners' rights in Canada's 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms, she sadly concluded that Canada's penal system is still largely dedicated to "warehousing" rather than "rehabilitating" criminals.

## Murney Tower

Operated by the Kingston Historical Society

*Collection Work*



The museum's curator Simge Erdogan-O'Connor, collections assistant Madison Hall, and volunteer Joanna Dermenjian, have joined forces to organize the museum's new offsite storage, clean and wrap artifacts, and create a full museum inventory for 2022. As of March 2022, they had opened eight boxes, and cleaned and wrapped more than 200 artifacts. The museum's curator and staff are spending several days at the offsite storage each week, taking care of the artifacts and making new discoveries about the Murney Tower Museum's eclectic collection which consists of over 1,000 military and domestic artifacts that portray nineteenth-century life in Kingston.