

# Limelight

Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

Kingston Ontario Canada

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**May KHS Meeting >>>> Zoom**

**18 May 2022 at 7:00pm**

**Maurice Smith, Maritime historian and former director of  
the Museum of the Great Lakes, : will speak on  
“The Calvin Company Four-master Barque”  
about the construction of**

***The Garden Island, an ocean-going barque.***

**Maurice Smith is the author of *Steamboats on the Lakes:  
Two Centuries of Steamboat Travel Through Ontario's Waterways*  
James Lorimer and Company, Ltd. Toronto, 2005  
Barque2@cogeco.ca 8**

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



**Ontario Genealogical Society-Kingston Branch, 21 May 2022 at 10 a.m.**

**Jane Simpson presents : “Genealogical Implications of Cemetery Disruptions:  
A Study of St. Thomas’ Church Burial Ground”**

St. Thomas’ was the premier burial ground in Belleville’s early settler time before 1850. In 1989, St. Thomas’ Anglican Church, Belleville, began a project to dismantle part of the old burial ground next to the church.

**To register for the May 21st presentation, please click(Ctrl + Click) on this Zoom link [21 May, 2022](#)**

Peter Gower has recently been working to bring the online Historic Kingston index up to date. He has completed gathering the information for volumes 55 - 63 and has submitted it to the very busy KFPL library staff for posting. He hopes to have completed the work for volumes 64-71 by the summer of 2022. While it may not be entered on the library’s site immediately, the index for volumes 55 to 71 will be available soon on the KHS website.

**Thank you, Peter Gower!**

It is noted with regret, the death 19 March 2022 of Richard Neilson, a long-time member of the Kingston Historical Society.

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

May'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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Peter Gower, Editor of Historic Kingston, and Webmaster

## *President's Message*

*by Paul Charbonneau*

William Shakespeare is quoted: "Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, and summer's lease hath all too short a date."

As I travel around this grand city of ours, I see the beginning of budding flowers, shrubbery and trees that signal a new beginning, but I also see the waterfront bustling at our many marinas as sailors gleefully prepare for any winds that will come.

Geographically located at the intersection of three beautiful bodies of water (Lake Ontario, the St. Lawrence River and the Rideau Canal) sailing, boating, kayaking and many other water activities abound.

Our May KHS meeting will feature an insightful journey to Garden Island, located between Kingston and Wolfe Island, once home to the Calvin Shipyard. Please join us on May 18<sup>th</sup> to hear Maurice Smith discuss this little known history of Kingston.

Plans are well underway to again present a suitable "virtual" memorial for Sir John A. to coincide with the 131st anniversary of his death in 1891. The presentation will focus on Sir John A's life in Kingston as a citizen, lawyer and municipal politician. Stand by, as details will be announced soon.

I look forward to communicating with you in September's Limelight.

Enjoy summer's lease despite it being "all too short a date."



Kingston has long styled itself as a hockey town. Hockey, Kingstonians like to boast, was pioneered on the ice of their harbour. The city has long displayed its manly prowess on the ice as men with names like Gilmour, Apps, Cherry and Cashman skated to glory. But hockey is not Kingston's only athletic preoccupation. On any summer evening, local parks are full of baseball players, both young and old. This point was eloquently made by our April speaker, well-known local author and journalist Ken Cuthbertson, whose recent history of the brief life of the Kingston *Ponies* professional baseball team opens a fascinating window on an overlooked aspect of Kingston's sporting history. Baseball teams took to the field as early as the 1870s, but it took the arrival in town in the 1940s of Toronto businessman and baseball fan Nels Megaffin to bring professional ball to the city. A hotelier by trade, Megaffin believed that Kingston's wartime prosperity could be translated into a peacetime passion for professional baseball. A stadium was built out on Montreal Street and in 1946 the Kingston *Ponies* became a charter member of the Border League, a league that involved teams from upstate New York and Quebec. North America was alive with regional profes-

sional leagues and there were legions of would-be major leaguers eager to show their stuff. Pay was paltry by today's standards – an average of \$120 a month for young players.

Cuthbertson was adept at telling the story of a team that caught the local imagination. Its initial season in 1946 brought a winning record of 58 wins against 53 losses. 60,000 fans showed up that first year. Star players emerged: ace pitcher Arnie Jarrell and utility pitcher/fielder Gideon "Apples" Applegate (an American black who, like Jackie Robinson, found acceptance north of the border). Alas, Megaffin's early death, erratic coaching and the instability of the Border League pushed the Ponies into decline until in 1951 they hung up their cleats. Cuthbertson's most readable *When the Ponies Ran* is available at the KFLA Library or as a PDF directly from the author.

[kencuthbertson@sympatico.ca](mailto:kencuthbertson@sympatico.ca)

**From the recent past,  
taken from**

**31 July 1925**

**Daily British Whig p.11**

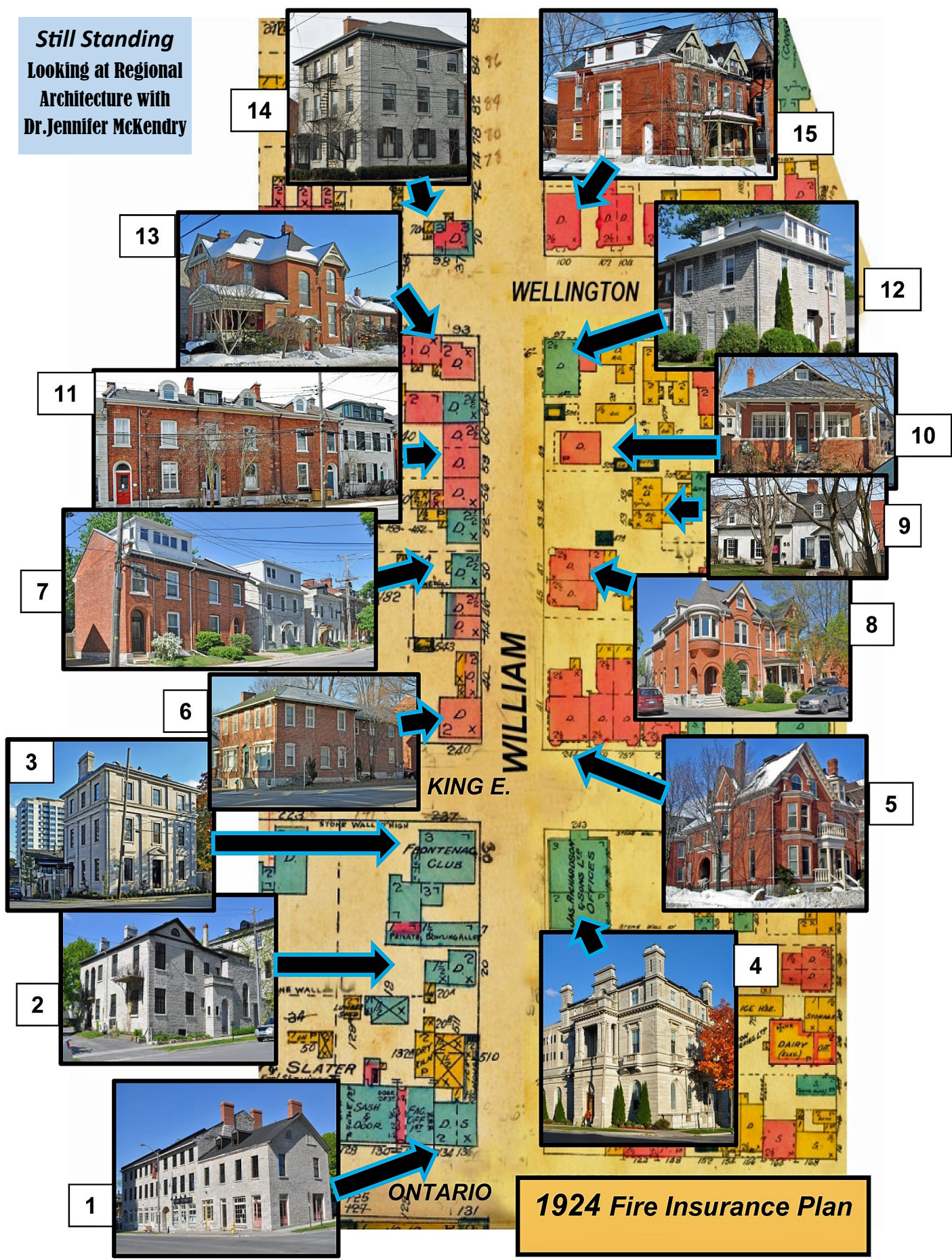
**KINGSTON  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OPENING OF THE  
MURNEY TOWER**

The Murney Tower will be  
opened as the HOME of the  
Society on  
**Saturday, Aug. 1st,  
At 4 p.m.**

by the Hon. W. F. Nickle and  
on that afternoon and during  
the whole of the day on August  
3rd, 4th and 5th, the local Chap-  
ters of the I. O. D. E. will sell  
tea, ice cream and cake within  
its walls to the general public,  
who will be admitted to inspect  
this interesting old Fort and  
the books, manuscripts and  
historical relics of the Society  
at a charge of ten cents.



**Still Standing**  
Looking at Regional  
Architecture with  
Dr. Jennifer McKendry





## *Still Standing*

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

The blocks along William Street from Ontario to Wellington have still standing a remarkable number of buildings shown on the fire insurance plan of 1924. The plan is colour coded: blue for stone, pink for brick and yellow for wood. Some street numbers used today have been modified since 1924. The numbering system below is organized to encourage strolling from Ontario to Wellington while looking at both sides of William.

1. Corner stone building, **134-136 Ontario** at William, by 1820, Neoclassical style
2. **20 William** – this was Cartwright land until sold to the Bank of Montreal in 1844
3. Built in 1845 for the Bank of Montreal, **225 King E.** at William, architect Edward Crane
4. Built in 1853 for the Bank of Commerce, **243 King E.** at William (Empire Life), architect William Hay, Renaissance Revival style
5. **41 William & 244 King E.**, 1890, architects Gillen & Gillen, note the brock arch and detailing
6. **240 King E.** at William, possibly a replacement building for an earlier brick one
7. Left to right – **44-46 William** in brick, **50 William** in stone and **52 William** in stone; the exact dates have not been established but likely the brick one dates from the 1860s and the stone ones from the 1850s, after a fire in October 1851 destroyed the buildings except the corner one on this side of William from King to Wellington
8. **45-47 William**, a handsome brick double of 1893 for James Lesslie, architect Arthur Ellis
9. **53-55 William**, a rare survivor of an early frame structure, 1843 rental owned by Henry Gildersleeve; there have been various alterations over the years such as the addition of a mansard roof on 55
10. **59 William**, a brick bungalow echoing the Arts & Crafts movement, 1924
11. Triple brick row, **56-60 William**, 1873, architect Robert Gage for Robert McCammon, a baker, and a stone house at **64 William**, said to be 1857
12. Stone, **63 William** at Wellington, 1841, owned by Sydney Scobell
13. Brick, **66-68 William** at 95 Wellington, c1880, with fine wood detailing in the gables
14. Three-storey stone, **70 William & 96 Wellington**, 1841, for Charles Burns
15. Brick, **75 William & 100 Wellington**, with attractive brick detailing



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HOMESTEAD



### New Pumphouse exhibit deep dives into 400 Years of Transportation in Kingston

The exhibit is open to the public until November 26, 2022. Guests are encouraged to book their own tour with the curators to get a fully immersive and informative guide of the vast expanse of knowledge to be gained from *On the Move*.

## Fellow Historians

### The Delta Mill Society

by Ken Watson



In 1810, William Jones and his partner, Ira Schofield, started work on a new gristmill in Delta. It was an imposing building built of stone designed to accommodate the automatic flour milling process developed by American inventor Oliver Evans. The mill produced flour up until the early 1940s and then operated as a flour and feed store until it finally closed in 1960. In 1963, owner Hastings Steele made the momentous decision to deed the mill to four trustees so that the building could be preserved and opened to the public as a museum of milling technology.

The trustees formed the core of an informal Delta Mill Society (DMS) and started to fundraise in order to do badly needed preservation work on the mill. In 1970 a milestone was achieved with the designation of the Old Stone Mill as a National Historic Site of Canada. In 1972 the DMS was incorporated as a non-profit charitable organization and the mill was deeded from the trustees to the DMS. Rescue preservation work started immediately with the stabilizing the foundations and walls to keep the building from falling down. By July 1973 work had progressed to the point of the Society's being able to open the first floor of the mill to the public.

The Old Stone Mill is a rare surviving example of an Oliver Evans automatic mill. It is a 3 ½ storey stone building, an exceptional example of Georgian industrial architecture. In 1817 it was described as *"unquestionably the best building of the kind in Upper Canada."* It was purpose-built as an automatic mill, following Evans' 1790 patented process that introduced new machines such as the elevator and conveyor to move grain and flour through the building with no manual labour. About 1861 the mill was switched from waterwheel to turbine power. Fortunately the turbines were placed in an addition to the mill, the turbine hall, preserving the original 1810 mill building.



**Old Stone Mill National Historic Site**

The building is "candle" lit during the Christmas season.

By 1983 the Delta Mill Society was able to open the building to the public for a full season, May long weekend to Labour Day, with free admission and guided tours. In 1986 Parks Canada introduced their cost-sharing program for restoration work on privately owned National Historic Sites. The DMS started to work towards raising the required society contribution as well as conducting the required ground work (archaeology, conservation report) to do a full heritage restoration of the mill. In 1992 the DMS purchased a building adjacent to the mill to use for large artifact storage. That building also contained a forge which was then used by the DMS to put on blacksmithing demonstrations. In 1994 the DMS purchased the Old Town Hall in Delta, in part for use as an office and for archival and artifact storage but also, in anticipation of the mill being closed for restoration, as a building that could be used as a museum. In early 1999 exhibits in the mill were moved to the main floor of the Old Town Hall and the mill was closed for restoration. A very large heritage restoration program was done from 1999 to 2003 with the mill reopened to the public in the spring of 2004.



The DMS was able to secure Trillium grants in the 2000s to work on new interpretation for the Old Stone Mill. That included hiring a curator and later an associate curator. This changed the heritage interpretation focus to the mill itself, which is core to DMS's mandate. Non-mill related exhibits were left in the Old Town Hall, now rebranded as a Museum of Industrial Technology, while the interpretation focus within the mill became the mill itself, its chronology and technology. Heritage research was also being done to refine the story of the mill and, in 2006, a book *"A History of Grist Milling in Delta"* by Wade Ranford was published by the DMS. Further grants allowed for improvements inside the mill such as adding a waterwheel in 2007 and, in 2010 on the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the mill, installing working millstones and a bolter.

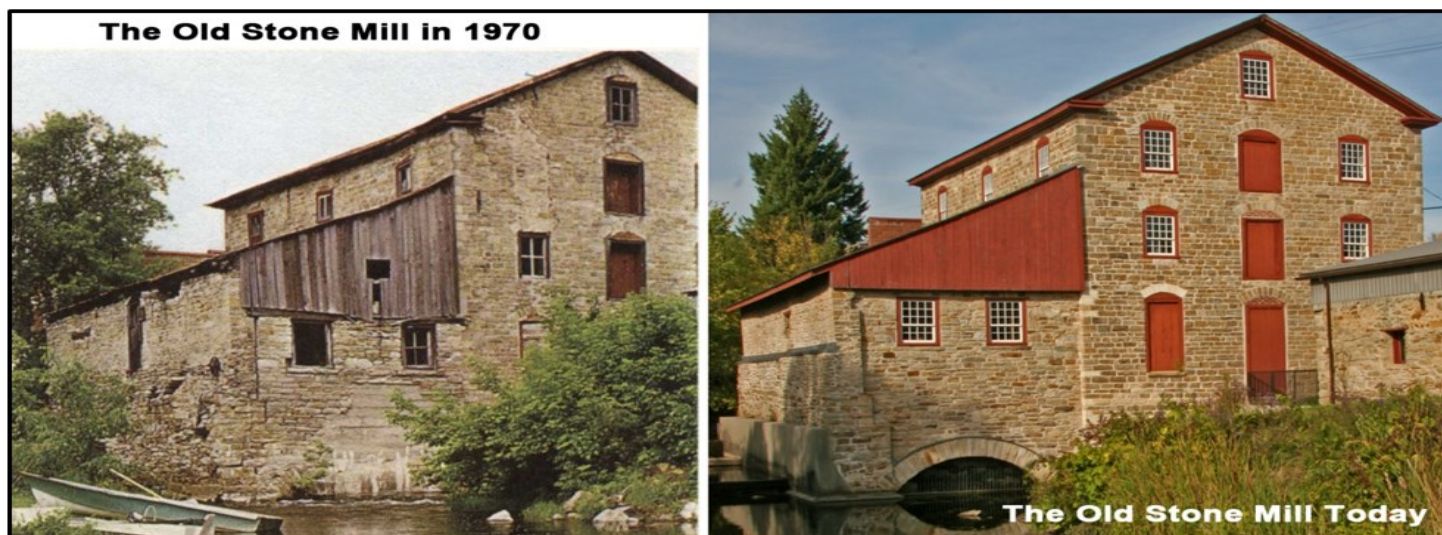
The grant well ran dry in 2011, forcing the DMS to close down the Old Town Hall as a museum and to focus on our core purpose, preserving and presenting the Old Stone Mill NHS. By 2013 the DMS had returned to being an all volunteer group since there was no funding available for staff (other than summer student staff) – a situation that remains today. With an unofficial motto of "onward and upward", the DMS picked up the pieces and moved forward. In 2017 the DMS produced the first interpretation manual and history of the mill, followed in 2018 by the book *"Building the 1810 Old Stone Mill in Delta, Ontario"* by Ken W. Watson with a second edition of both released in the spring of 2022.

COVID-19 forced the public closure of the mill for 2020 and 2021. The DMS took advantage of this closure by repurposing grant-supported summer students to do extensive work with our collections (archives & artifacts). We also hired some summer maintenance workers to work on the mill. At that time we were also working on new interpretive signage for the mill and re-jigging exhibits within the mill. In 2021 the DMS embarked on another large project, to rehabilitate the interior of the forge area of the adjacent building into a public-friendly Blacksmith's Shop. That work will be completed in 2022.

The DMS consists of an 11 member working board with a variety of skill sets – everything from building maintenance, to organizing fundraising events, to heritage research and interpretation. Owning three heritage buildings presents challenges, but the DMS has a long track record of managing these. Funding remains the greatest challenge; heritage buildings such as the Old Stone Mill NHS fall within the purview of the municipality, and Delta is in a rural municipality with few resources so we rely on grants (mostly foundation grants) and donations to meet our mandate to preserve and present the Old Stone Mill. In 2022 we plan to be open for our usual summer season, welcoming visitors to learn about this interesting part of the pioneer development of our area.

Delta is just a short hop from Kingston; for those interested in area history, the mill is well worth a visit.

**See our website at [www.deltamill.org](http://www.deltamill.org). Above books on DMS website history page as free PDF downloads.**



**On the Anniversary of the 6 June 1891 death of Sir John A. Macdonald**

**There will be a zoom presentation under the auspices of  
the Kingston Historical Society**

**Guest speaker: Queen's Chancellor Murray Sinclair**

**The first indigenous Manitoba judge, a former Canadian Senator from  
Manitoba, and the leader of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

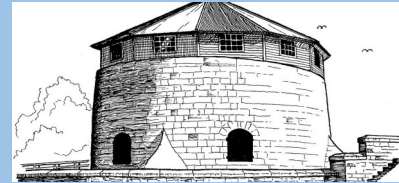
**For the zoom link go to the KHS website 1 p.m. 6 June 2022**

[www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca](http://www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca)

## **Murney Tower**

**Operated by the Kingston Historical Society**

**Kingston Regional Heritage Fair 2022**



This year the Murney Tower and the Kingston Historical Society continue to support the Kingston Regional Heritage Fair. The fair is running virtually again for a full week in May 2022. It will be reaching 20 classrooms in the Kingston region and over 500 students will be participating in fair activities with their teachers. Students are submitting virtual history projects and videos that will be judged online by the fair committee. This year a few students are doing their research projects on Murney Tower, and our museum team is providing resources to help. Judging will take place for both French and English projects and for Grades 4-8. Medals and prizes will be announced in an award ceremony video featuring local museums and students discussing the value of local history and community. Winners of the local Kingston Fair will be entered in the provincial fair to compete on behalf of our region. Some of these winners will also be treated to a field trip in June, organized by the Heritage Fair committee, to visit local treasures such as the Murney Tower Museum. Students will also participate in interactive, online workshops provided by local museums, cultural heritage organizations and cultural practitioners. Workshops are being provided by The Murney Tower Museum, the Museum of Health Care, RMC Museum, the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes, Beyond Classrooms Kingston, Lennox and Addington Museum, artist Chris Cochrane, the Archives of Ontario, Ontario Black History Society and a local Indigenous Knowledge Keeper. The fair will also include a virtual scavenger hunt with over twenty local heritage organizations participating. In past years, the fair has run on Queen's West Campus in person, but for 2021 and 2022 the fair committee is very proud to have pulled together virtual activities to be carried out in the classroom.

**The Murney Tower opens from Victoria Day to Labour Day this year from Wednesday to Sunday each week. We have three new exhibits and some new programming and presentations coming up this summer. Please stay tuned by checking [murneytower.com](http://murneytower.com). If you'd like to receive our newsletter, contact Dr. Tabitha Renaud at [director@murneytower.com](mailto:director@murneytower.com)**