

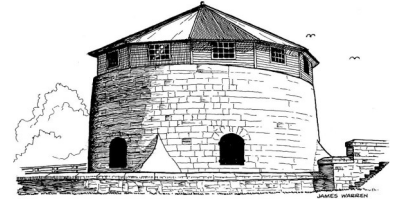
Limelight

Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

Kingston Ontario Canada

Volume 25 no 1 SSN 1488-5565

January 2023



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



Kingston Historical Society Meeting

Wednesday, January 18,

presented live at 7pm, in the theatre lounge of the
Kingsbridge Retirement Community

at 950 Centennial Drive off Princess Street
and simultaneously offered via >>>Zoom.



James Reid and Sarah Hedberg

will provide an overview of the history of

James Reid Funeral Home

and its place in Kingston business and society

since its founding in 1854.

Kingston OGS Branch zoom Meeting - 21 January 2023

“Unusual Family History – What lies beneath,” by Sherilyn Bell.

You are invited to join a meeting: Kingston Branch. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email about joining the meeting.

Below is the link to the zoom meeting.

https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/tZAucOmqqjsiHdTG7aSbDtL-4m5_hARJLVQx

Reserve the date. Our heritage event is on **Monday, February 20, 2023**

THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established 1893

MAILING ADDRESS:

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LIMELIGHT is published nine times a year, September to May.

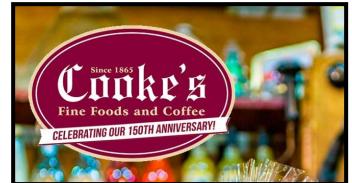
Please forward submissions to the Editor betty.andrews@gmail.com

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.

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.



President: Paul Charbonneau Vice President: Peter Gower Past President: Vincent Durant Treasurer: Peter Ginn

Secretary: Don Richardson

Councillors: Betty Andrews, Editor of Limelight; Warren Everett, Member-at-large; Alan MacLachlan, Sir John A. Macdonald Commemoration Event Chair; Duncan McDowall, Programme Chair; Tabitha Renaud, Director of Murney Tower; Paul Van Nest, Membership Chair; Peter Gower, Editor of Historic Kingston, and Webmaster

President's Message

by Paul Charbonneau

"We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year's Day."

Edith Lovejoy Pierce



The New Year is like a blank book. It has 12 chapters and 365 pages, and you are the author. The KHS's wish for you is that this year you write the most beautiful story possible for yourself; it will be the next part of your historic journey called LIFE.

2023 will mark Kingston's 350th anniversary as a community and we start off our 2023 lecture series with a presentation regarding an historic business established in 1854 and its place in Kingston business and society, the James Reid Funeral Home.

A highlight of February (mark your calendars), the Frontenac Heritage Foundation and the Kingston Historical Society will jointly host an important book launch that will feature author Dr. Robert D. Banks' new book "*Warriors and Warships: Conflict on the Great Lakes and the Legacy of Point Frederick*." The book launch will be held in the Memorial Hall of the Kingston City Hall, on Monday, February 20, 2023, at 2 p.m. Dr. Banks will make remarks, meet attendees, and be available for book signing. Light refreshments will be served.

Happy New Year

The Historical Society of Ottawa has released two new pamphlets.

"Ottawa Mobilized - A Geographic Record of the City in Wartime," by Richard Collins takes an intriguing look back at Ottawa's participation in Canada's past conflicts and visits the locations in Ottawa that were key to this history. The online version: <https://www.historicalsocietyottawa.ca/publications/bytown-pamphlets/pamphlets-available-for-download/114-ottawa-mobilized-a-geographic-record-of-the-city-in-wartime>

"Lord Elgin's Visit to Bytown And the Reminiscences of Mary Anne By Friel" by James Powell recounts Lord Elgin's 1853 vice-regal visit to Bytown, which was not only instrumental to Ottawa's choice as Canada's capital four years later, but also came only four years after Elgin's previous attempt to visit Bytown had led to 1849's violent Stony Monday Riot. The online version <https://www.historicalsocietyottawa.ca/publications/bytown-pamphlets/pamphlets-available-for-download/115-lord-elgin-s-visit-to-bytown-and-the-reminiscences-of-mary-anne-by-friel>

Historical Language Advisory prefaces the HSO list of pamphlets.

Certain parts of the HSO pamphlet series may contain historical language and content that some may consider offensive, for example, language used to refer to racial, ethnic, and cultural groups. These items, their content and descriptions, reflect the time period in which they were created and the viewpoint of their author. The items are presented with their original text to ensure that attitudes and viewpoints are not erased from the record.

Murney Tower

Operated by
the Kingston Historical Society

www.murneytower.com



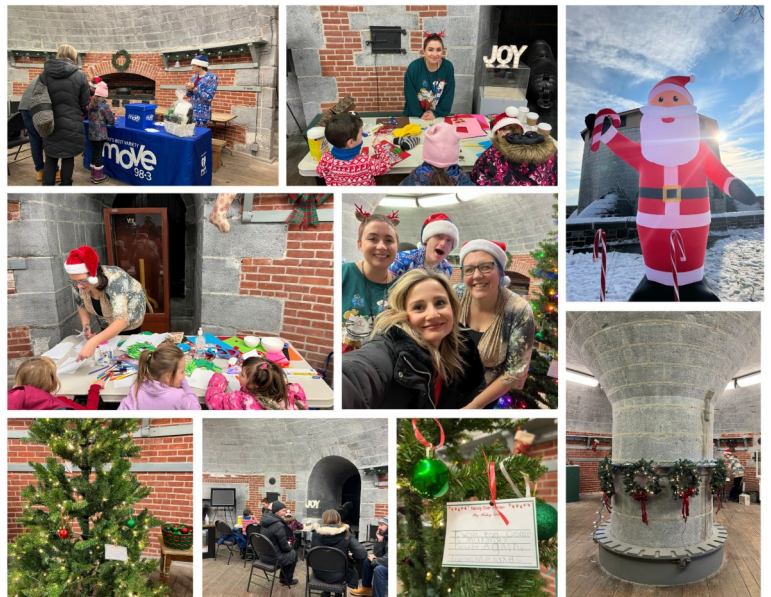
Murney Tower Museum Update

By Simge Erdogan O'Connor

This month we invited Kingstonians to come and celebrate the holiday season at Murney Tower with holiday games, music, snacks and crafts. Our special holiday-themed "Merry Murney" event took place on December 17 and included an art and craft station, a tree decorating activity and a holiday-themed treasure hunt. The tower was decorated for this special event and holiday songs filled the air. MOVE 98.3 Kingston radio station joined us onsite to play holiday songs and help us spread the holiday cheer.

We had many family and adult groups who created paper bag snowmen and window ornaments. Our event also included a holiday-themed treasure hunt that was a hit among the little participants. Our guests wrote their holiday wishes and hung them up on our Christmas tree. The holiday wish of one of our little guests made our day. Lucas's holiday wish was to visit the Murney Tower again in the future.

The event was very memorable and we had a wonderful time celebrating the holiday season with our community. We will continue hosting special events in the fall and winter seasons and announce them here.



A Kingstonian saves many lives in the American Civil War

Part 1 of 3

By Paul Van Nest

Introduction: Kingston has a relatively unknown resource, the Civil War Round Table of Greater Kingston which meets 10 months of the year, since 1993. One of our members is Dr. Cheryl Wells, a history professor and an expert on the American Civil War. She grew up in Brockville and now lives in the area. One of her achievements is a book on Dr. Francis Wafer, based on his memoirs and letters about his service as an Assistant Surgeon from March of 1863 to the end of the war, the basis for this story in three parts.



Francis Moses Wafer was born in 1830 to parents Peter and Elizabeth, of Loyalist stock, living on a 100-acre farm on the Middle Road, the next house east of what is remembered as Roy's Pet Shop. This handsome limestone house was home to him and seven siblings. Francis had aspirations of becoming a doctor so, in 1861 at the age of 31, he enrolled at the Medical School of Queen's College. The Medical School had opened in 1854. He was successful in the program up to the end of his second year: March 1863, when the academic year ended.

The American Civil War had erupted on 12 April 1861, with Pierre Gustave Toutant (PGT) Beauregard firing South Carolinian artillery at the Federal fort, Sumter, in Charleston's harbour. After almost two years, March of 1863, the casualties on both sides astounded the world and, all the while, Wafer was training to become a doctor. Perhaps facing another summer on the family farm, he was attracted to sign up as a medical assistant with the Union army. However, in his words, the reason was "to profit by the new & extensive field thrown open for the study of Practical Surgery...as well as a strong desire to see something of the reality of war."

But it wasn't that easy. He had to prove himself to the Surgeon General in Albany NY. After two successful interviews with "Censors," as they were called, he faced an examination: 16 printed questions covering all the principal branches of medicine and "a sufficiency of foolscap." After seven hours, he completed seven of them "fully" and "attempting them all." The next day, he received a recommendation addressed to the Governor of New York for an appointment as an Assistant Surgeon for the 108th New York Infantry Regiment serving with the Army of the Potomac: the Union Army in the east. There would be plenty of action that summer! The regiment had been recruited from Rochester in August 1862. It's baptism of fire occurred shortly at the Battle of Antietam where, on the 17th of September, in the bloodiest single day in the Civil War, casualties exceeded 23,000 (killed, wounded, captured and missing). The 108th attacked the sunken road, the centre of the Confederate line. Fredericksburg was the next major battle, fought on 13th December, where his regiment was in the first of 18 brigades to attack yet another sunken road. The Union casualties alone before this wall would total 7,200 men.

It would be in the following March 1863 that Wafer joined his assigned regiment, still in winter quarters in Falmouth, just north of Fredericksburg. As Assistant Surgeon, he was supervised by the division surgeon, Dr. Owen Munson and became a part of a new and developing medical system designed by a doctor, Major Jonathan Letterman. [See Barris reference] Even today, the treatment of the wounded is modelled on his creation, giving him the appellation 'Father of Battlefield Medicine.' Letterman had been appointed medical director for the Army of the Potomac during the Peninsula Campaign of June 1862. The negative experiences he witnessed there pushed his creativity and passion into developing a systematic procedure for the retrieval and treatment of the wounded. At the Battle of Fredericksburg, 13 December 1862, he put his system in-

to motion, and all were encouraged by the results.



Second Corps Field Hospital, Chancellorsville, 1863.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC

Letterman's system was anchored around an Ambulance Corps with trained corpsmen recruited from infantry units into the corps. Corpsmen would carry the wounded on litters from the field to a pre-designated field hospital established by each regiment and staffed by an Assistant Surgeon. Brigades and divisions would have established field hospitals located further away from the danger where operating tables were set up with a surgeon assigned to each table, and three designated assistants for each surgeon. Am-

bulances were designed and built and were designated to each division to carry the wounded between field hospitals or back to a major hospital such as the ones in Washington. Corpsmen were also assigned to set up the hospital, provide food, shelter, transportation and the like. In all of this, the Assistant Surgeons attached to a regiment served at the frontend of this chain: first aid and triage at their forward field hospitals. Those whom they judged might survive would be carried on stretchers or by ambulance wagons to the brigade or division hospital where the surgeons would do their work; the rest would remain with the assistant surgeon, at least until the fighting ceased. A wound to the limbs usually resulted in amputation; wounds to the chest and gut were generally deemed lethal.

Behind the scenes, the Sanitary Commission was supplying medical equipment and hospital attendants. In addition, in early 1862, the YMCA created the United States Christian Commission, in the beginning to provide chaplains for the war effort but, with the obvious need, expanded quickly into providing medical supplies and attendants in the field and to major hospitals for those recovering from their wounds. But, at the Battle of Antietam on 17th September 1862, yet another resource was tapped. A nurse named Clara Barton set up a nursing station to treat the wounded behind Joe Hooker's 1st Corps. This was the beginning of female nurses in the American Civil War, and they became part of the Medical Corps soon after. Florence Nightingale had done the same in the Crimean War less than ten years earlier.

What is not well-known is that twice as many soldiers died from disease, usually diarrhea, as died from battle wounds. And it was the treatment of those men fighting disease that fell to the assistant surgeons

daily. Wafer was himself afflicted with what appeared to be chronic infection and debilitation periodically throughout the war.

END OF PART 1.

References:

Wells, Dr. Cheryl: *"A Surgeon in the Army of the Potomac, Francis M. Wafer,"* McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008. [The primary source for this article.]

Barris, Ted: *"Rush to Danger,"* Harper Collins, 2019. [Chapter 2]

Brzezicki, Tom: editor of the Civil War Round Table newsletter: www.cwrtingston.org [Archives, search under 'doctor']

The Kingston Historical Society Award

is given to individuals, groups and institutions in recognition of their contributions to the preservation, understanding and interpretation of local Kingston history. Kingston Historical Society members are asked to nominate those that they believe meet these requirements. Please send nominations by letter to Chairperson, KHS Awards Committee, Box 54, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 4V8, or by email to Paul Charbonneau at Bearsden1017@hotmail.com and include contact information for your nominee and the reasons for your nomination. The deadline for nominations is extended to January 15, 2023. The awards will be presented at the KHS/FHF event which will be held at the Memorial Hall in City Hall on February 20, 2023.

KHS Membership Renewal for January to December 2023

Individual membership: \$50 Family membership: \$60 Student membership: \$25 Institutional membership: \$60 Sponsor fee \$300.

Any additional donation you may wish to contribute to the Society would be appreciated. Amount: \$_____ (tax receipt given if over \$20.)

Please pay in one of three ways:

- ✦ Online at: www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca > Membership (Pay Pal or Credit Card)
- ✦ By eTransfer to treasurer@kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca
- ✦ By cheque to the 'Kingston Historical Society' (Box 54, Kingston ON K7L 4V6)

Questions: Please speak to Membership Chair Paul Van Nest, 613-544-6802 or email pvannest@cogeco.ca

The newsletter **will be sent by email** unless you specify hard copy to Paul Van Nest(contact Info above)

The Kingston Historical Society offers its members annually: 9 monthly lectures; *Historic Kingston*, the journal of the Kingston Historical Society proceedings; 10 issues of *Limelight*, the newsletter, delivered electronically or in hard copy; the quarterly newsletter of the Ontario Historical Society for members who receive *Limelight* by email; some sponsor discounts.

Annual events include a Heritage gathering in February and the June 6 commemoration of the life of Sir John A. Macdonald, a Kingston resident, one of Canada's founding fathers, and its first prime minister.

The Murney Tower Museum is operated by the Kingston Historical Society.



"ISLAND ON FIRE"

Free 3-Part Saturday Morning "Book Club" Workshop

OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY MEETING ROOM -- 120 Metcalfe Street

FEBRUARY 25, MARCH 25 & APRIL 22, 2023

10:30 - 12:30

Learn the story of how the forces of literacy and revolution brought an end to slavery in the British Empire

This three-part workshop will be based on the assigned reading and analysis of Tom Zoellner's award-winning new book "Island On Fire: The Revolt That Ended Slavery in the British Empire".

We invite you and members of your organization to join us for this workshop series as part of our year-long 2023 commemoration of the 230th anniversary of the 1793 Act to Limit Slavery in Upper Canada and 190th anniversary of the 1833 Act to Abolish Slavery in the British Empire.

AN INCLUSIVE, UBUNTU-INSPIRED, SAFE SPACE COMMUNITY LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

Enrolment deadline is January 25, 2023. Please enrol early as spaces are limited. (Due to mature subject material, we request that participants be 18 years or older.)

Please contact us by email with "ISLAND ON FIRE" in the subject line for further information:
president@blackhistoryottawa.org

In partnership with:



Paul Van Nest is just finishing updating our Limelight Index to include the 2022 issues of Lime-lights; these will be available shortly on our webpage. Look under Publications > Lime-lights.

These updates will also be submitted to the Kingston Frontenac Public Library index of our Limelights and will be made available online.



James Reid
FUNERAL HOME 1854
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Welcome, new members

Brenda Bullock Diane Duttie Joey McArthur



By Council's decision, we have offered a free one-year membership to the members of the Pittsburgh Historical Society; sadly, their society has folded its doors. New members so welcomed are Brenda Bullock, Diane Duttie, and Joey McArthur. We are hoping for more.