

Limelight

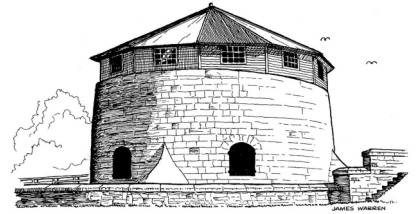
Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

Kingston Ontario Canada

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



Kingston Historical Society Meeting

17 January 2024

presented live at 7pm, in the theatre lounge of the

Kingsbridge Retirement Community

at 950 Centennial Drive

and simultaneously offered via >>>Zoom

Dr. Gordon Dueck presents:

**Barbers in Blackface? African-Canadian Musicians
in Fin-de-Siecle Kingston.**

Dr. Gordon Dueck teaches Jewish history at Queen's University. His specialties range from Holocaust studies to film history. This talk is based on material from his new course, Kingston: A Cultural History, which focuses on the contributions of minorities to the performing arts from 1830 to 1930.

Save the Date! Sunday, February 18th @ 2:00 pm in the Memorial Hall of City Hall: In conjunction with the Frontenac Heritage Foundation, the Society will celebrate Family Day/Heritage Month in Ontario with a lecture by architectural historian Dr. Jennifer McKendry. Her talk will show-case her latest book Architects Working in the Kingston Region 1920-2000. Books will be available for purchase and a high tea will be served.

AGM Reminder

Kingston Historical Society Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

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.

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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.

Kingsbridge 
Retirement Community *by Signature*

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

January is the month to focus on what you want, not what you don't want." – Tony Robbins

A new calendar is now hung on the office wall and thoughts of what 2024 will hold for you come stealing into your head.

For us at the Kingston Historical Society, we think about our new lecture series, our Heritage Month event and the "Kingston Historical Society Award" presentation, the re-opening of Bellevue House by Parks Canada, the opening of tours at the Great Lakes Muesum onboard the S.S. Keewatin and our little gem, the Murney Tower, open for another fabulous season.

Speaking of the tower, we are delighted that the winning name in the City of Kingston's "Name our Plow" is "Murney Plower", and we thank Melina Fragis for submitting the winning name and all those who voted for it.

Enjoy this month's edition of Limelight and welcome to 2024.



Still Standing

Looking at Regional Architecture with Dr. Jennifer McKendry

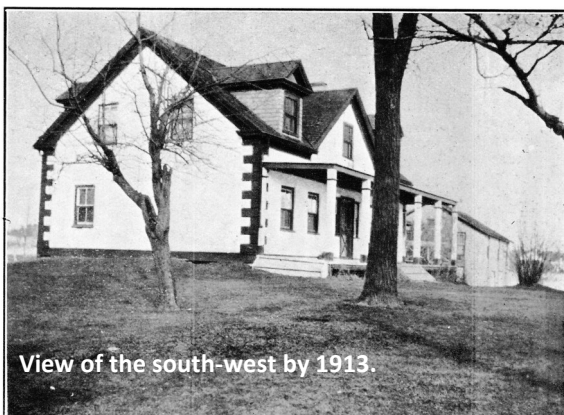
THE FAIRFIELD-GUTZEIT HOUSE IN BATH

The portion of an article of 1915 by historian Walter Herrington (volume VI of the papers of the Lennox & Addington Historical Society, p. 47-48) relevant to the Fairfield-Gutzeit House is worth quoting in full:

... [Included is] a photograph (fig. 1) of the old Fairfield residence still standing on the bay shore at Bath. It is doubtful if there is a more typical or better preserved house, of the early U.E.L. period in the province. This building was erected in 1796, and with proper care bids fair to stand for another century. The main timbers are of solid oak, the lumber entering into its construction was sawed by hand, and the nails were made by the village blacksmith. In its day it was among the handsomest houses in the district, and its beautiful location makes it still one of the most attractive homes on the shores of the bay. For generations following the event, the descendants recalled with pride the gay festivities which marked the house warming of the old building. As several of the guests came in their lumber wagons from Kingston, a distance of eighteen miles, over roads little better than a modern trail through an undrained woods, the entertainment that awaited them was worthy of the occasion. For three days the tables groaned under their burden, and for three successive nights the fiddles screamed [SIC], and the dancers made merry.

Such a specific date as 1796 suggests Herrington, born in 1860, was privy first-hand to village and family history.

The frame house at 341 Main Street is now closed due to undergoing a major renovation, but is normally open to visitors in the summer. Not surprisingly – after a life span of 228 years – its form has changed to meet different needs, such as becoming in 1882 Bay View Villa catering to summer boarders by then owner Thomas Edwards. In 1900, the Brown family of New York acquired it and made extensive improvements for use as their private summer residence. They owned the property until 1938 and the photograph referenced by Herrington in 1913 and again in 1915 shows their changes (or were they made by Edwards between 1882 and 1900?), such as an added large gable on the front facing the lake (figs. 1 & 2) and a projecting one facing Main Street (fig. 3). Although in its original form it was similar to other Bath early frame houses, a distinctive feature is the corner quoins, customarily found in stone buildings. They are an emphatic mark of the Classical style.

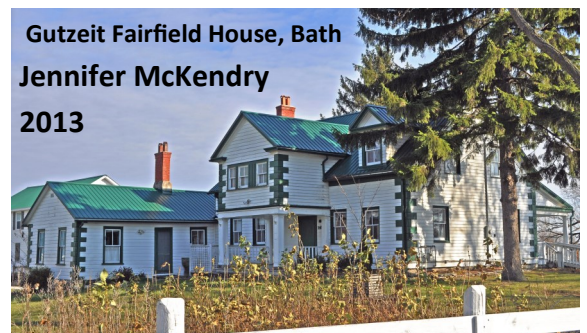


View of the south-west by 1913.

In 1938, Mabel Fairfield Gutzeit purchased, for \$3,600, the property from A. Wallace Brown and again it was in the hands of a Fairfield.



Gutzeit Fairfield House, Bath



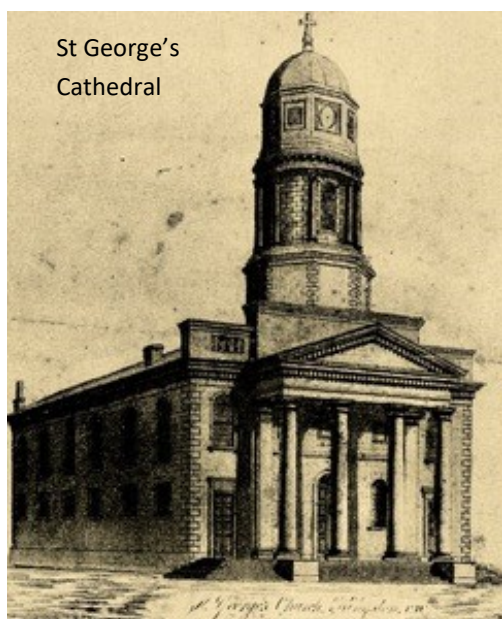
Gutzeit Fairfield House, Bath
Jennifer McKendry
2013

A question of attribution: Harriet Cartwright and the drawings!

By Vincent Durant

My interest was piqued when a recent BBC article noted that the folks at Merriam-Webster dictionary proclaimed *authentic* as their word-of-the-year for 2023; despite its being "hard to define and subject to debate." The publisher added that the popularity of the word grew during 2023 with the blurring of the line between "real" and "fake", thanks in part to the rise of Artificial Intelligence!

This got me thinking back to an authentication issue concerning a couple of historic pictures, produced some 180 years ago, each done in pen and ink and colour wash over pencil.



St George's
Cathedral



Kingston City Hall

The depictions of St. George's Cathedral and Kingston City Hall were for many years thought to perhaps be the work of Harriet Cartwright, and this attribution was "confirmed" some 50 years ago in *Heritage Kingston*, a 1973 book accompanying an ambitious exhibition "to honour the 300th anniversary of European settlement in the Kingston area."

The evidence for this attribution is fascinating:

Regarding the Cathedral picture, there is a wooden backing shingle, and on one side is handwritten: "*This picture was the work of Mrs. Cartwright mother of Sir Richard Cartwright.*" On the back of the shingle, also handwritten, we find: "*This picture of Saint George's Cathedral was given to R.R.F. Harvey by his mother, upon the occasion of his becoming organist of that Church in September 1896. It was originally given to his father by Mrs. Cartwright (Mother of Sir Richard Cartwright) in 1847. Major Harvey conducted a bible class in this church 1843-1847 when a detachment of the Royal Artillery was stationed in Kingston.*"

Attribution of the City Hall piece relies on it having been "*in the same hand*" as the Cathedral work, and the book alludes to its also having "*a contemporary ascription to Mrs. Cartwright.*"

Eighteen years after co-authoring *Heritage Kingston*, J. Douglas Stewart, a Professor of Art at Queen's University, sought to clarify his earlier assessment!

Writing in *St. George's Cathedral, Two Hundred Years of Community*, to which he contributed a chapter on the architectural heritage of St. George's, the late Professor Stewart commented:

When I catalogued these drawings for *Heritage Kingston* in 1973, I saw no reason to question the inscriptions. However, now, without doubting the information concerning the provenance of the drawings, I cannot see how they can be Harriet Cartwright's work. She was undoubtedly a fine amateur artist, but there is nothing else in her oeuvre like these drawings." (pp 56-57, 60)

After citing several instances in which the drawings contain features not incorporated within the actual structures, he concludes that "...in both cases there are small differences between the drawing and the building as executed" and therefore infers that:

These differences between the drawings and the structures as actually built indicate that the draughtsman was working from drawn conceptions of the buildings. This again leads us away from Harriet Cartwright and towards [George] Browne's office .

Professor Stewart notes that, lacking any known drawings by George Browne, it is not possible to determine if he actually drew them:

On the other hand, one can easily imagine that they were produced under his aegis, as advertisements of his work in capital Kingston. Presumably the idea of using them for engravings was dropped once the capital moved in 1844. Browne, or the unknown engraver, might then have easily given them to Harriet Cartwright.

Perhaps ... but half a century after Harriet Dobbs Cartwright was declared the originator of the artwork, and 25 years after Professor Stewart's withdrawal of his authentication, questions remain, and my interest is even more piqued!

Further reading:

St. George's Cathedral: Two Hundred Years of Community (1991): edited by Donald Swainson; Quarry Press, Inc. (Chapter 3: George Browne's Influence *The Architectural Heritage of St. George's*, by J. Douglas Stewart) *Heritage Kingston* (1973); Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University. (pages 114 and 140)



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Murney Tower

Operated by the Kingston Historical Society

www.murneytower.com



MURNEY TOWER ACTIVITY UPDATE

In November: a new podcast series was launched, “Murney Tower Museum History Podcast”, which was developed and hosted by a former team member, Cassandra Giarrusso. Each episode offers unique insights into the history of the Murney Tower; in collaboration with the Military Communications and Electronics Museum, 20 students were given a tour of the tower by Manager-Curator Dr. Simge Erdogan-O’Connor; a French version of the audio tour was created and is posted on the MT website. French-Canadian voice actors and a professional audio tour company were employed for the project; Phase 1 of a game development project was completed, and is available at the Apple Store. The second phase, which is in progress, includes the addition of sound effects, further development of the app into an educational tool and the creation of a French version of the game.

In December: “Deck the Halls” took place at the Museum of Healthcare, bringing together Murney Tower Museum, Great Lakes Museum, and the Museum of Healthcare in a holiday-themed family arts and crafts event. It was attended by about 100 people;

the crew of the Ghost Hunters of the Grand River Show filmed an episode at Murney Tower to air in the fall of 2024.

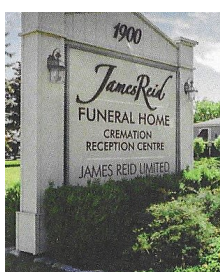
Four volunteers have been added to the committee to prepare for the 100th anniversary of the Murney Tower.

Students are being sought for winter internships through the History 212 Experiential Learning course at Queen’s.



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KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL Membership dues are as follows
(please check one) - \$40 for an individual membership - \$50 for a family membership -
\$50 for an institutional membership - \$10 for a student membership - \$300 for a sponsor.

Questions to Membership Chair Paul Van Nest 613-532-1903.

Additional donation: The Society would sincerely appreciate any additional donation you may wish to contribute to the Society. Amount: \$----

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

You can also register on-line from our webpage: www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.com > Membership

By e-Transfer to treasurer@kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca

Name: _____

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The Kingston Historical Society offers its members annually:

- ♦ 9 monthly lectures
- ♦ *Historic Kingston*, the journal of the KHS proceedings
- ♦ 10 issues of *Limelight*, the newsletter, delivered by email 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 KHS.

Murney Plower

With a nod to Kingston's Murney Tower, the public has just voted to name the city's new snowplow 'Murney Plower'. Look for it when we get snow!

Veteran's Village

Homes for Heroes Foundation, Government of Canada, Province of Ontario and the city of Kingston have combined with the efforts of many volunteers to offer transitional housing to our veterans. The new Veteran's Village consisting of twenty tiny homes at 730 King Street is almost ready for occupancy. These homes will support veterans who are living unhoused or facing crisis as they return to civilian life.

Kingston Branch Ontario Genealogical Society Meeting Saturday, January 20, 2024, 10:00 a.m. Carol Ufford, retired librarian will be telling the story of how over a thirty year period she struggled to fill in her great grandmother's story. She will also present the trial of her third great uncle William Blass. In 1837 he was represented by Sir John A. MacDonald when Mr. Blass was charged in the rape of a young girl. See kingston.oqs.on.ca for the link to the zoom meeting.

Historical Society Ottawa Meeting Saturday January 27, 2024 1:00 p.m.

Guest speaker Dave Allston will be exploring some of the dramatic alterations to Ottawa's west end waterfront made during the previous century's era of urban renewal—

'Ottawa's Shoreline...Built from Garbage?' Visit the website to pre register for the virtual zoom link <https://www.historicalsocietyottawa.ca/activities/meetings>

Members to date: Individual 30; Family 36; Student 0; Institutional 1; Life 6; Sponsors 1

