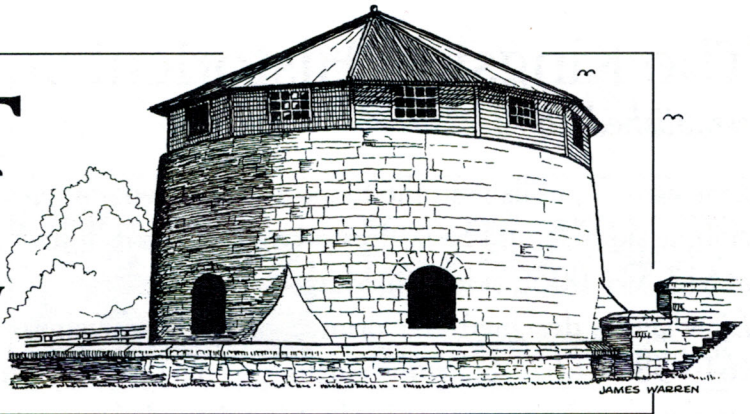


LIMELIGHT

Newsletter of the
Kingston Historical Society

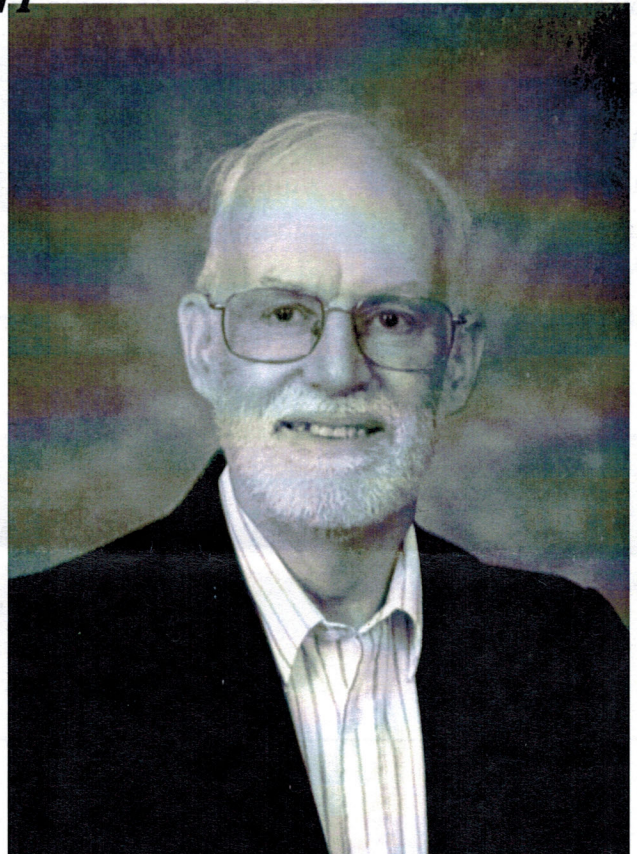
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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Firstly, best wishes to you all in 2014. May it bring you all you hope for. The year promises to bring the usual challenges and rewards to the Kingston Historical Society. We hope for good weather for the January 11th dinner, and especially for the graveside ceremonies on June 6th. We know that we will be entertained and educated by a series of good speakers on a variety of topics, starting with John Fielding on January 15th. We are also preparing for the Annual General Meeting on February 19th. There will be a couple of vacancies on Council, and if you would like to be involved in running the Society, please let Gordon Sinclair know, or email us at kingstonhs@gmail.com. Along with business on February 19th, we will have our usual Silent Auction, a good time to pass on items of an historical interest for which others would be delighted to give a new home. We are also asking for five minute presentations on items of historical interest, not necessarily Kingston related. If you have something to show us and to talk about, please let me know either at the January meeting, by emailing the above address, or by leaving a phone message at 613 546 8538. We cannot promise we have time for all, so we may have to be selective.

Peta Fowler



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The Kingston Historical Society

established 1893

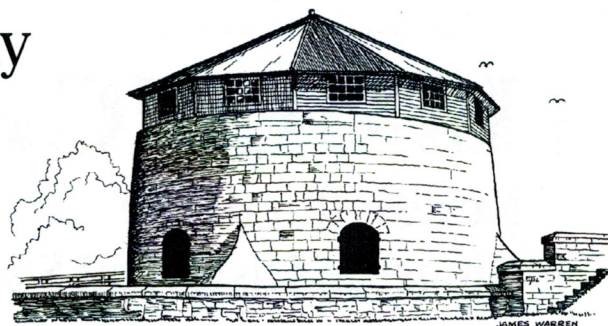
Limelight is published nine times a year - September to May. Submissions should be addressed to the Editor, John Fielding at 613-544-0086 or johnffielding@gmail.com.

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KHS holds monthly talks or events, usually at 7:30 pm on the third Wednesday of the month, September to May, usually in the Wilson Room of the Kingston Public Library on Johnson Street at Bagot Street. Special annual events include a dinner and talk honouring the birthday of Sir John A. Macdonald in January and a ceremony marking his death in June.

New members are welcome! Membership rates are \$50 individual, \$60 family, \$60 institutional or \$25 student. Memberships include *Historic Kingston*, published annually by The Kingston Historical Society.



Murney Tower by James Warren

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The Kingston Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Ministry of Culture of the Government of Ontario

**THIS
MONTH'S
MEETING**

Wednesday, 15 January, 2014 7:30 PM

"A Boy, a Company, a Town:

***The story of Batawa, the Bata Shoe Company and its People.*"**

John Fielding

Wilson Room of the Kingston Frontenac Public Library

Johnson Street, at Bagot Street

Refreshments

All Welcome

10 Years an Editor by John Fielding

Without frustration or disgruntlement I have decided to hand in my keyboard as the editor of Limelight. I think 10 years as editor is enough and perhaps Limelight needs a new look and that takes fresh eyes and probably skills I just don't have.

I began this job during the last year of President Brian Osborne's extended three year tenure. I took it on not because I had any particular skill set that qualified me but because I wanted to help by lessening the responsibilities of our President. My transition was made comfortable and easy thanks to Brian and Jennifer McKendry who had a well-established format. I thought the biggest part of the job would be the editing. I was wrong. It was rustling up sufficient and relevant content. There was also the task of sending out reminders to our regular contributors, the president and programme chair. Now that doesn't sound like a big deal but when you are tripping to Spain, Tasmania, England etc. it



could be a challenge. 10 years ago Wi-Fi was not available and I didn't have an iPad. Every excursion, outside of the three months when we don't publish, meant carting around my laptop and searching for an internet café or library where I could send and pick-up emails. Of course without my portable computer and the internet I couldn't have travelled or perhaps I wouldn't even have taken on this job.

When Jennifer McKendry decided she wanted to concentrate more on her research and writing I almost panicked. Who would do the design and layout? I actually thought, but only briefly, that I could learn how to do it. Luck again shone on me, and I am not even Irish. Thanks to Gordon Sinclair I was put in contact with Blair Fearon of Versus Business Forms. Blair has not only continued Jennifer's splendid work with the layout but also provided the printing and delivered the final product to my door – thank you Blair.

Most importantly I have thoroughly enjoyed editing Limelight. It helped me to transition from my busy, timetable regulated, and socially interactive role as a teacher at Queen's Faculty of Education to retirement. It has kept me connected to people with whom I share a love of history, who are genuinely thoughtful and considerate human beings and who have become friends.

Thank you Kingston Historical Society for the opportunity to serve.

Kingston Historical Society Awards for 2013

ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE OF CANADA MUSEUM



Committee Chair Peter Ginn presents the KHS Award to Ed Murray who accepted the award on behalf of the RMC of Canada Museum

The benefit of setting up a College museum was recognized as early as 1879. However, the thought did not become reality until 1921 when Major General Sir Archibald C. Macdonell, the then President of the Kingston Historical Society and RMC Commandant, established a museum in the Fort Frederick Martello Tower. It has continued in that location and is the oldest museum in Kingston. During the past ninety years, its collections have grown steadily and today constitute a highly significant assemblage of artifacts relating to the College, its graduates, the 1812 Royal Dockyard and, more generally, to Canadian military history. The widely acclaimed Douglas Arms Collection is of particular note. Additionally, staff members of the Museum have provided vigorous support and leadership to both local and national museum communities. Very recently, the Museum has developed a walking tour of Point

Frederick, with associated interpretive panels, that presents an understanding of the role of this important 1812 site. The Kingston Historical Society is pleased to recognize the many contributions of the RMC Museum to the preservation and interpretation of our local history.

CANADA'S PENITENTIARY MUSEUM

Founded in 1967, Canada's Penitentiary Museum has become an award winning heritage institution, drawing some 25,000 visitors annually. Since its move in 1985 to its present location, Cedarhedge, the former warden's residence built by convict labour in the early 1870s, it has expanded to offer eight exhibition rooms, while its significant, growing collection provides a research centre for scholars of Canadian penal history. During the past thirty years, the museum has been under the wise guidance of its curator, David St. Onge, whose dedication has brought the museum award-winning success. In this he was supported by the enthusiastic volunteers of the Friends of the Penitentiary Museum (founded 1998). Together they have vigorously fulfilled the museum's mandate to ? preserve and interpret the past and contemporary experience of the people and places associated with the history of corrections in Canada?. The Kingston Historical Society is pleased to recognize Canada's Penitentiary Museum for its important regional and national presence interpreting the complex history of the Canadian penal system and providing a successful focus for heritage tourism.



Peter Ginn also presented a KHS Award to David St. Onge who accepted the award on behalf of Canada's Penitentiary Museum

Photos credit Graeme Watson

Turks Used Furniture and Antiques 1901-2013

Written & Painted by Shirley Gibson-Langille



I painted this painting of Turks at 281 Princess Street from my car across the street on May 28th, 2012. It is a very unique looking building from the outside. Stepping inside Turks is like going way back in time with its original tin walls, ceilings and creaky wooden floors. It has always been full of antiques and all sorts of weird and wonderful items such as paintings, records, tapes books along with many other treasures.

I remember visiting this store first with my mother, who bought a lovely rocking chair from the 2nd floor. In later years, I enjoyed popping in looking for local history books. I always enjoyed looking at the paintings that lined the walls going upstairs. I was always expecting to see one of mine there.

They were friendly and always allowed me to put up my posters in their window. It was there that Alex Ross who was the editor of the Entertainment Section of the Whig Standard saw the Poster of my "Frontenac Islands Show" and gave it magnificent coverage.

In March 2013, I was very sad to hear that after 111 years in business, Turks would be closing. It was then I decided to do the painting of the inside as well.

I found out the business was started in 1902 by Jacob Turk and has been in the family since. Jeff Intrator is the fourth generation as his mother was a Turk. The first store was at 399 Princess Street. They moved to their present location in 1920.

Jack Baker who has enjoyed working there for 22 years said he is sad to see it end, however It was time as antiques are not in Vogue anymore and the younger people are not interested in them. Jeff said he will be missing the hustle and bustle of Downtown but mostly the people who have been so wonderful and supportive. It is Saturday, June 1st 2013, their last day of business and some of those people have been coming in to say how very much they will be missing coming there. Sadly it's an end of an era! One I will never forget!



Simpkins Sewing Machines 1863-2013

Written & Painted by Shirley Gibson-Langille

I can't believe that I never noticed the Simpkins Sewing Machine Store. It was likely because I was never interested in sewing. I can't even sew a button on properly! It wasn't until 2013 when I parked in front of the store at 181 Sydenham Street and noticed a large sign in the window reading 150th Anniversary, that I decided to come back and do a painting of the store.

When I finished the painting, I went inside the store. It had many different sewing machines, colourful spools of threads, gadgets along with some beautiful items that had been made on the machines. What really excited me however, was all the historical memorabilia and photos of the past on the walls.

I met the owner Eric Simkins. He preceded to tell me a fascinating story of how his grandfather Miles Wesley Simkins in 1862 at the age of 19 left the farm to seek fame and fortune. He saw a Toronto ad in the British Whig seeking a salesman in the Kingston area. With only \$4.50 in his pocket, and enough education to read and write his own name, he took the chance. He rode in the "hold" in the ship to Toronto as freight for \$1.50. He got the job and received a hand operated sewing machine for demonstrations. His convincing sales pitch soon made him known as "The Great Sewing Machine Man". He opened a sewing machine store at 9 Montreal Street in 1866 and later expanded to 366 Princess Street. He also opened a successful business in Newburg in 1875.

Wesley died at age 93 in 1936. His three sons continued selling and repairing sewing machines until 1957 when all three brothers split up and went their separate ways. Vernon, the second son, opened the first egg grading business in Kingston, but still repaired sewing machines at home. He sold that business and bought the two story building at 181 Sydenham Street that he operated until his death in 1979.

Eric his son "Mr. Sewing Machine Man" now conducts a positive business like his Grandfather in the computerized machines of the second millennium.

I later came back to do the drawing of the inside of the store.

I certainly learned about the captivating history of the sewing machine business but I still know nothing about how to sew.

Oh well maybe in another lifetime?! ha



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Events of Historical Interest

The Kingston Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society will meet in the Wilson Room of Kingston Frontenac Public Library, 130 Johnson St., on Saturday, January 18, 2014 at 10 a.m. sharp. Jane MacNamara from Toronto OGS will speak on "Inheritance in Ontario: Estate Files and Beyond". Visitors always welcome. Further information at www.ogs.on.ca/kingston

Kingston Historical Society Membership Application/Renewal



Membership dues are as follows (Please check one):

- \$50 for an individual membership
- \$60 for a family
- \$60 for an institutional membership
- \$25 for a student membership.

Application for membership and membership renewals should be addressed to the Membership Secretary, c/o the Kingston Historical Society, Box 54, Kingston, ON, Canada K7L 4V6.

Membership includes the annual journal, *Historic Kingston*, and 9 issues of the newsletter, *Limelight*, as well as a discounted fee to selected special events.

Name: _____

Street Address: _____ Apt: _____

City: _____ Province: _____

Postal Code: _____ Email Address: _____

Applicant Signature: _____

KHS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOTICE

At the KHS AGM on Wednesday, February 19, 2014, at 7 :30 PM, in the Wilson Room of the Kingston Public Library, the Society's Nominating Committee will present a slate of Candidates for the term of March 2014 to February 2015.

As specified in the Constitution, the new Council will appoint the following: Editor of *Historic Kingston*, Editor of the newsletter (*Limelight*), and Chair of the Murney Tower national Historic Site Committee. Further the new Council will appoint chairs of other Society committees (Finance, membership, Programme, Publications, Website, Publicity, Grants, Sir John A. 6 June Commemoration, Sir John A. Banquet, and others)

Any member in good standing may nominate any other member of the Society in good standing for any office. Incumbents may be nominated for any or all of the positions to be filled. Members wishing to nominate a candidate for any position as a member of the Executive or Council may do so from the floor at the AGM, by submitting written nominations to Gordon Sinclair, 81 Lower Union Street, Kingston, ON, or by handing them to any member of the present Executive or Council before February 5th, 2014. Submission of a nomination carries the assumption that the nominee is willing to stand for election and serve, and that this has been verified by the nominator.

Please participate in this extremely important event to ensure the continuing health and efficiency of the Society.

Gordon Sinclair
Past President & Chair, Nominating Committee