



LIMELIGHT

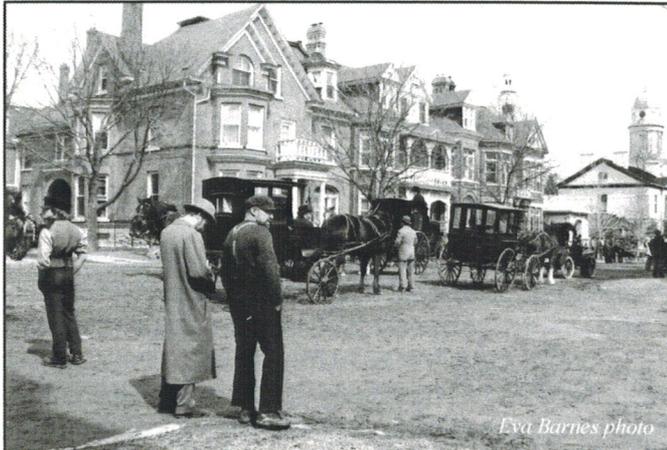
The Kingston Historical Society

Kingston, Ontario

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May 2014



Eva Barnes photo

King Street East in downtown Kingston was magically transformed into Buffalo, New York in 1901 when filming took place in April for a new romantic thriller and period piece to be released by Hollywood next year. Guillermo del Toro is the director with Mia Wasikowska in a starring role. Set preparation required a week's heavy labour. The 300 film extras, mostly Kingstonians, were on set for just a day. The final clips will be seen on screen for about 2 minutes.

MAY MEETING

The Influenza Epidemic of 1918 in Kingston

Dr. Joe Scanlon

Wednesday, May 21st, 2014

Kingston Frontenac Public Library

Wilson Room

7:30 pm

Murney Tower Ceremonial Season Opening May 16th

A special invitation is extended to KHS members and the general public to come and celebrate the grand spring re-opening of the Murney Tower Museum on Friday morning, May 16th at 9:30 am.

The Murney Redoubt was constructed in 1846 on the shore of Lake Ontario as part of the British naval defence system for Kingston. A partnership was formed in the 1920s between the Department of the Interior (now Parks Canada) and the Kingston Historical Society, which officially opened the site as a museum in 1925.

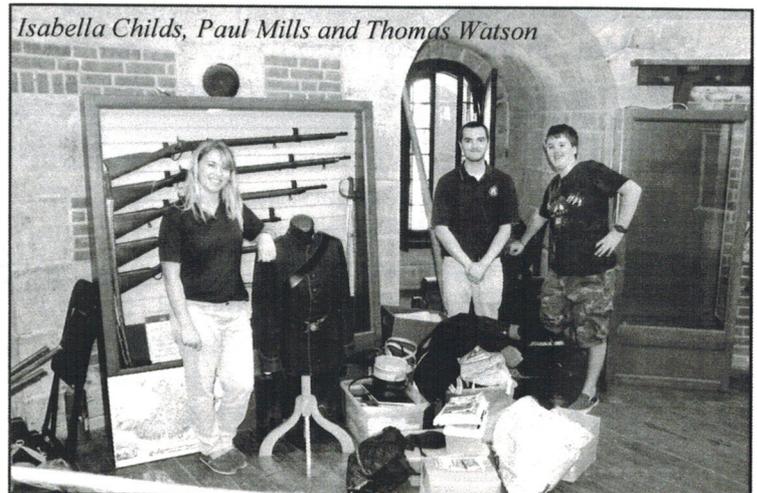
Visitors are surprised by the secret underground amenities and the clever construction techniques used to house the artillery. There are many artifacts depicting military family life in the 1800s. Children can try on made-to-measure scarlet military jackets or pioneer dresses with bonnets.

Local students are employed every summer as interpreters through special work grant programmes. Museum management is carried out by volunteers under the wing of the Kingston Historical Society and the direction of Graeme Watson.

The museum is open from May 16th to Labour Day weekend, every day from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. It is situated at the corner of Barrie and King Streets, next to the Newlands Picnic Pavilion. Admission is \$5. Bilingual and special school tours are welcomed, by appointment. For more information, please email murneytower@gmail.com or call (613) 572-5181.

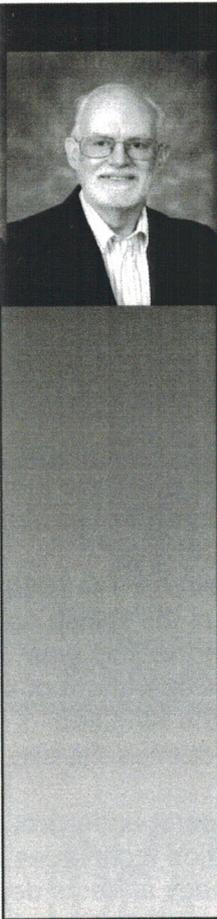
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Isabella Childs, Paul Mills and Thomas Watson

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT ... "Ah, the good old days!"



How well we remember them and wish they would return. Grandparents kept us enthralled with what it was like when they were children, how much they miss what they used to love, and how all has gone to rack and ruin in their later years. Come to think of it, we are probably doing the same, telling our grandchildren how nice it was to be away from the phone once you left the house (or even went upstairs), or only had to choose between two television channels, one of which was very fuzzy.

There is a very nice postcard of Market Square, showing it around 1900. The horses are all standing still and in line, with neat colourful blankets on them. There is no garbage, no dirt, no animal droppings, and the light fall of snow makes it look very picturesque. It is amazing how photos could be massaged, even before the wonders of Photoshop. And then came April 14th, 2014, the day when our City Hall Market Square was transformed into a movie set, and we saw what it was really like 100 years ago .

On April 14th, a few more truths became apparent. There was mud and dirt and filth and garbage and dim street lighting, and no washrooms, and heavy woollen clothing and live birds ready for slaughter and un-refrigerated meat, and smoke and steam and coal dust. And mud everywhere. If you had servants at home to clean dress hems and pant legs and boots, all might have been fine – or you might even have been rich enough to ride in one of the new-fangled automobiles. But for most of us, I think our grandparents' memories were either faulty or selective. I wonder if we are giving a better picture of history to our grandchildren?

If you have not found it yet, visit <http://www.cityofkingston.ca/explore/maps> on your computer. The City has done a wonderful job letting us explore Kingston's past and present. We hope to have a presentation on the project in next year's programme.



A Kingston post card sent to Collins Bay in 1906, for just a penny, captured the scene behind City Hall on market day. The produce market, first established in 1801, still operates today, three days a week, once winter is gone.

THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established in 1893

LIMELIGHT is published 5 times a year in January, March, May, September and November. Please forward submissions to the Editor, Eva Barnes, by fax to (613) 546-4308 or via e-mail to eva_barnes@sympatico.ca. Phone contact: (613) 546-4300. Reprinting of articles must be accompanied by an acknowledgement of the Society, the issue and date. All photo credits and by-lines must be retained. The KHS gratefully acknowledges the support of our sponsors in producing LIMELIGHT.

MEETINGS are held usually at 7:30 pm on the third Wednesday of the month, September to May, in the Wilson Room of the Kingston Public Library on Johnson Street at Bagot. Refreshments are served. Special annual events include a formal fine-dining experience with a special presentation honouring the birthday of Sir John A. Macdonald on January 11th, and a commemoration marking his death at the Cataraqui Cemetery National Historic Site on June 6th. Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first Prime Minister, was born in 1815 and passed away in 1891.

NEW MEMBERS are welcome! Membership rates are \$50 per individual, \$60 for families, \$60 for institutions and \$25 for students. Membership includes receiving *Limelight*, our newsletter, and *Historic Kingston*, the journal published annually by the KHS.

MAILING ADDRESS

Kingston Historical Society
P.O. Box 54, Kingston ON
K7L 4V6

kingstonhs@gmail.com
www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca



Ceremonial Season Opening of the Murney Tower Museum

Friday, May 16th, 2014 at 9:30 am

Special guests: Mayor Mark Gerretsen and the École Catholique Cathédrale Grade 6 class
Refreshments by Jessup Food and Heritage Info: (613) 572-5181 murneytower@gmail.com

May Meeting, Wednesday the 21st,
7:30 pm in the upstairs Wilson Room,
Kingston Frontenac Public Library
130 Johnson Street at Bagot

***The Influenza Epidemic of 1918
in Kingston***

Dr. Joe Scanlon presents
an overview of the nature of the dreaded
and devastating epidemic that had international
consequences at the end of World War I,
and describes how medical staff and families coped
with the illness here in Kingston.



KHS member Barbara Monk is wearing a recreated WWI Canadian nursing uniform she researched at the Museum of Health Care in Kingston. Barb is a passionate local historian, Queen's grad and living history re-enactor.



The Kingston Historical Society cordially invites you to the

**Commemoration Service
for Sir John A. Macdonald**

at his gravesite
in the Cataraqui Cemetery National Historic Site

Friday, June 6th, 2014 at 1:30 pm

*Guest speaker: John Boyko, Historian and Author
"Sir John A. Macdonald: Saving the Nation"*

This annual tradition combines pageantry and national history.
Refreshments to follow. Rain location: Christ Church,
990 Sydenham Road Information: (613) 549-8841

*Suggestions for speakers and Society activities are always welcome...
Councillor Ron Ridley is the Chair of Programming*

OUR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL FOR 2014

President:	Peter Gower	Councillors:
Vice President:	to be filled	
Secretary:	Don Richardson	Nancy Day, Warren Everett, Peter Ginn,
Treasurer:	Randall Levi	Ben Holthof, Alan MacLachlan, Ron Ridley,
Past President:	Gordon Sinclair	Paul Van Nest, John Whitely

By Appointment:

Historic Kingston: Duncan McDowall (2014) Marcus Letourneau (2015)

Limelight: Eva Barnes **Murney Tower:** Graeme Watson

Kingston was becoming more and more excited about international affairs in the Spring of 1914. To the south, the United States and Mexico were at war, and peace talks were taking place in Niagara Falls. More important, in Europe the Home Rule question for Ireland was causing grave concerns. British army Reservists, newly immigrated to Canada, knew they would be recalled to the colours if there was war, as expected, in Ireland.

Here there was much excitement about the first scheduled air service in Canada: a one minute flight from Toronto to Toronto Island by Hydro Aeroplane. The *Whig* had an advertisement for a race between a plane and a car at Ogdensburg, New York: no result was reported. Two planes gave a display of their abilities near Macdonald Park in June.

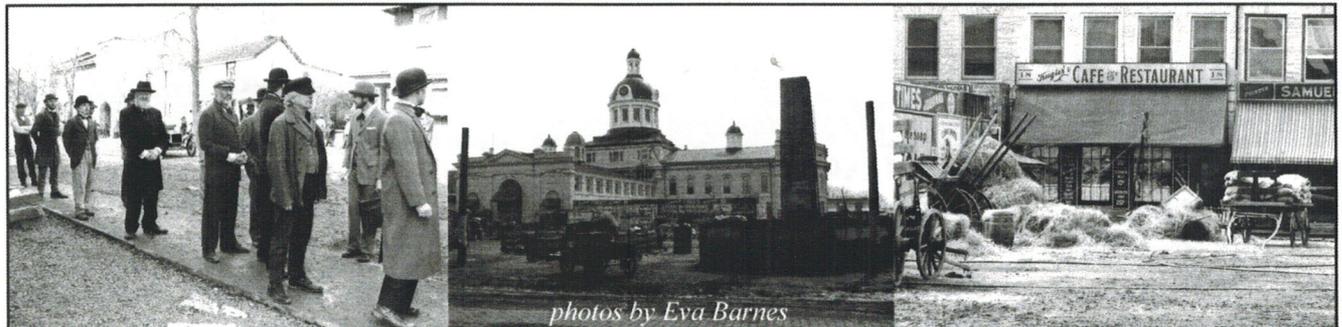
Meanwhile Minister of Militia Sam Hughes was accused of being 'militaristic: fight at the first and fight at the last'; and a major platform in the Provincial election was the attempt to ban the barroom: '1600 BARS: WIPE THEM OUT IN ONE CLEAN SWEEP' headlined the *Whig*.

For sale in Kingston were Grafonolas for \$50, and records to play on them for 50 cents each. Dresses could be bought for \$2.98, but lengths of material seemed more popular. Ladies' oxfords ('some buttoned, some laced') were on sale for \$2.48, and corsets for 50 cents. A round trip ticket by railway to New Liskard was \$9.95, and a 135 day cruise around the world could be bought for \$900. (Those who bought their tickets this May would have an unexpected end to their cruise). A solid brick, all modern, house on Johnson Street was advertised for \$4300.

Matters became worse in Ireland: On May 23rd 'England Needs To Pray For Divine Guidance/ For Once Again The Outlook Looks Dark'; on June 18th 'Rifles Landed/ On Connemara Coast By Two Yankee Boats/ Coastguards Gagged; and on July 11th 'Irish Volunteer Force Growing Into Big Army'. The patriots wanted independence for Ireland; Ulster men and women wanted the status quo; no third alternative was talked about yet. The British government wanted to give independence; the British army in Ireland announced it would refuse to fight against the Ulster forces who objected. Plans were afoot to move the rest of the British army stationed in England to Ireland (which would make them unavailable for service elsewhere).

In Kingston, the Ringling Circus performed in June at the Fairgrounds and 'made one forget about hard times', and the election campaign progressed. 'ROLL THE OLD CHARIOT ALONG AND LEAVE NOT A BAR BEHIND' said the *Whig*. The 'liberal temperance coalition party is out with the "abolish the bar" slogan and the conservative (government) forces point to their record of legislation curtailing the liquor traffic and ask "Why abolish the bar and leave licensed liquor shops?"' The election was on the 29th June, and the *Whig* predicted 68 or 70 seats for the Liberals. On the 29th the *Whig* reported that the Austrian heir and his wife had been assassinated, and that it was anybody's election. The next day the news was that the Conservatives had won 83 seats to the Liberals 26.

But events were happening elsewhere. The June 24th story 'It May Be The beginning Of Expected World's War' was followed by the declaration of war by Austria on Serbia, and British citizens being evacuated from Mexico City. Then: sensation. The body of Miss Blanche Yorke was found in the basement of a Tamworth doctor's house. She had been missing for 21 days; Dr. Robinson was still missing. Both had been reported seen all over the area, including on the Cape Vincent steamer. The *Whig* and the *Standard* had wonderful investigative stories for the holiday weekend.



photos by Eva Barnes

Curious Kingstonians came by the hundreds to watch the transformation of the historical downtown precinct behind City Hall and along King Street into a breathtaking period film set. Every detail was considered to create authenticity. Even light standards were removed, and the streets covered with a thick layer of mud. A railway line was built along Market Street. Then came the farm animals, horses, carriages, and motor cars. It was easy to imagine what life was like in our home town in the early 1900s.



Eva Barnes photo

Something to consider...

owning a gentlemanly period ensemble for future Kingston Historical Society civic events and public ceremonies.

Distinguished. Comfortable. Affordable.

KHS member Warren Everett is attired in the versatile and uniquely stylish 19th century clothing combination to be worn as Hosting Chair and Coordinator for the upcoming formal 200th anniversary Sir John A. Macdonald banquet celebration in the Senior Staff Mess at the Royal Military College in January of 2015.

Help start a new and special KHS tradition with a statement about Kingston's history.

More information: Eva Barnes tel (613) 546-4300 or Warren Everett (613) 545-9316 sw.everett@yahoo.ca

A tailored cutaway Victorian coat, or fitted frock coat, can be yours to own for the one-night cost of renting a tux or dark suit with accessories. Orders need to be placed before July to avoid disappointment in 2015. A suggested and tested on-line supplier of good quality men's period attire is Gentleman's Emporium of California.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

meetings and events

- Thursday, May 1st** **KINGSTON & DISTRICT HERITAGE FAIR** for students. Info@ohfa.ca
McArthur Hall at Queen's Open to the public 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm.
KHS contact: John F. Fielding tel: (613) 544-0086
- Sunday, May 4th** **MARITIME HERITAGE IN STORY AND SONG** featuring Rosalee Peppard
Catawaqui United Church, 967 Sydenham Road, Kingston www.rosalee.ca Tickets \$20.
Proceeds go to the preservation of the historic cemetery. Info: (613) 766-9505
- Saturday, May 17th** **ONTARIO GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY MEETING**, Wilson Room, Main Library
at 10:00 am. Topic: *Researching Female Ancestors* (Mother's Day), 130 Johnson St.
- May 23rd to 25th** **ONTARIO HERITAGE CONFERENCE** in Cornwall. For heritage professionals.
www.ontarioheritageconference.ca/ Email: heritagecornwall@yahoo.ca tel: (613) 363-5312
- Tuesday, May 27th** **UNITED EMPIRE LOYALIST BANQUET** Speaker: Paul Banfield, Queen's archivist.
Donald Gordon Centre 12:00 noon \$30 tel: (613) 386-3877 or (613) 546-2256.
- Saturday, June 7th** **VILLAGE OF BARRIEFIELD: 200th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**
10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Heritage demos, walking tours, music, refreshments and much more.

KHS LIMELIGHT ON THE INTERNET

*an experiment****Are you on the internet?***

Council hopes to reduce printing and mailing costs for **Limelight** in the fall. If you would like to participate in an experiment with the distribution of our newsletter electronically via the KHS website in September, please send an e-note to our Membership Chair, **Paul Van Nest** at pvannest@cogeco.ca Comments about receiving the hard copy paper version through Canada Post would also be welcomed. **Limelight** would be uploaded to a password-protected page for members only. You would receive an e-mail announcement with a link to that page. With just a click, you would access the full colour version of the newsletter.

**KINGSTON'S BELL TELEPHONE COMPANY:
NEW TECHNOLOGY, NEW BUILDING**

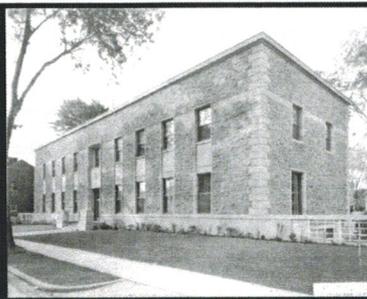
Our March presenter was John Grenville, who spoke on the development of Bell Telephone communications in Kingston. Alexander Graham Bell patented his telephone technology in 1876, sparking a communication revolution. Following demonstrations of the technology in the following year, Kingston had its first phone installations in 1879. The Bell Telephone Company of Canada was established in Montreal in 1881 and Kingston received its first phone exchange in a hotel on the northwest corner of Ontario St. and Clarence the following year. Early systems required telephone operators to connect the calls, which were carried to the central exchange office by individual wires supported on poles. Subscribers numbered just one hundred in 1883, but by 1909, the number had increased to one thousand from Kingston's population of just over 18,000. By 1915 there were 2,000 customers.

The Bell Company outgrew its original premises and moved to a purpose-built structure at 81-83 Clarence St. Intercity long distance was established in 1915 and, because of its strategic location between Toronto and Montreal, new vacuum tube repeater units were installed in Kingston in 1917.

The next technological advance was the dial telephone, which utilized centralized switching equipment. The new Bell Telephone building, housing the exchange and offices was to be located at 450 Princess St. just north of Division. The new structure was to be in the latest and most modern commercial style, designed by Bell architects F.J. Macnab and Hugh Angus Inglis Valentine. The building was opened in 1941 and featured "symmetrical placement of vertical, recessed bays on either side of a similarly designed entrance bay, the smooth stone trim and spandrels, and the lack of other ornamentation, are all typical of the style." Although the building no longer functions as a business office, it remains the hub of Bell communications in Kingston. The building itself is an important part of the Williamsville neighbourhood streetscape and Kingston's architectural heritage.



photo by Peter Ginn



1941 photo courtesy of Bell Archives, Montreal



photo by Peter Ginn

READERS' CORNER

new books about history

An account of Oscar Wilde's visit to Kingston on May 22nd and 23rd, 1882 states: "Wilde's train pulled into the Grand Trunk station at 4:25 pm. He was tired and went directly to the British American Hotel. Smoking a cigarette, he alighted from his cab and walked slowly to the hotel entrance, climbing the hotel stairs "as if enduring a most terrible punishment." He wore his travelling outfit of tweed trousers, brown velvet coat and green velvet tie; his huge theatrical cloak was said to look "like a thatched roof over a delicate strawberry." What did he think of Fort Henry and City Hall? Wilde's observations are revealed in an engaging collection of visitors' comments about Kingston through the passing years. It is published by William Morley.



*Kingston's Independent Bookstore
156 Princess Street
Kingston, Ontario K7L 1B1
Tel: (613) 546-9799*

KINGSTON THROUGH THE YEARS
Visitors' Accounts 1758-1906
An Anthology Compiled and Edited
by William F.E. Morley, M.A.

**BEFORE ANNEXATION:
ASPECTS OF PORTSMOUTH VILLAGE LIFE, 1859-1951**

Our April presenter was Rev. Bruce Cossar, who spoke about Portsmouth Village from its incorporation in 1859 up to its annexation into the City of Kingston. The Village of Portsmouth grew up around Hatter's Bay, now known as the Olympic Harbour, which was an important, central feature of the commerce of the village. The boundaries then were Alwington Ave. to Portsmouth Ave. on the east and west, the lakeshore on the south and the undeveloped area to the north up to Johnson St. Included in the area were the Penitentiary and the Rockwood Asylum for the Insane.

Most commerce was based along the waterfront and the bay with its long pier on the south side of Main, now King St., with residences on the northern side. The pier in the harbour was essential to the local businesses and a frequent point of discussion for the Village Council.

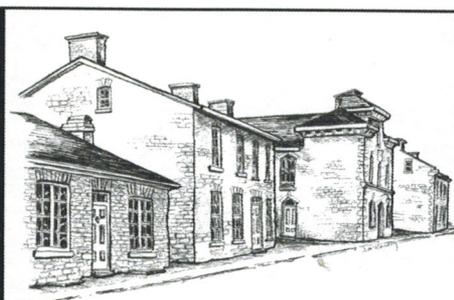
The horse-drawn street railway out from Kingston was extended up to the Village limits in 1876, but it was not until the system was electrified that Council approved grading of the steep slope in front of the Penitentiary and installation of track on the north side of King St.

Approximately one third of the land within the Village was occupied by the Rockwood Asylum and the Penitentiary. The quarries operated by the Penitentiary expanded from that institution to the west and north to Johnson St. and lines of inmates being escorted to work in the quarries and on the institution's farms were a fixture of Portsmouth life. In 1925 work commenced on the Prison For Women, constructed almost entirely by convict labour.

As modern utilities such as electricity and sewers were introduced into the City of Kingston, agreements to extend these facilities were negotiated by the Village Council. Costs for water and sewage extensions periodically raised the spectre of amalgamation with the City, but it was not until December of 1951 that annexation was finally approved by the Village Council. Portsmouth became a part of the City of Kingston on January 1st 1952.



photo by Peter Ginn



Portsmouth Village, Artist: Jennifer McKendry

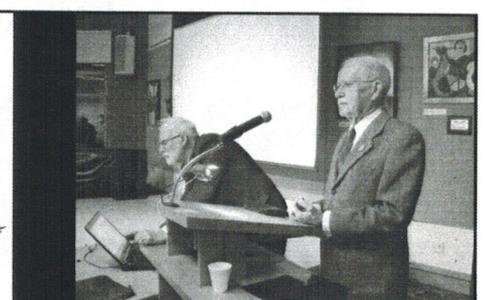
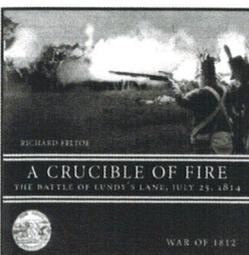


photo by Eva Barnes

READERS' CORNER

new books about history



New book release from Dundurn Press, Toronto about the War of 1812:

***A Crucible of Fire:
The Battle of Lundy's Lane, July 25, 1814***
by Richard Felton

This fifth book in the Upper Canada Preserved series examines a pivotal period in the war.

**PORT OF BATH
MARINE HERITAGE FESTIVAL**

Three square rigged brigantine ships, including the St. Lawrence II from Kingston, will race for the historic Friendship Trophy

on June 7th, 2014 along Amherst Island
brigantine.ca or email info@brigantine.ca

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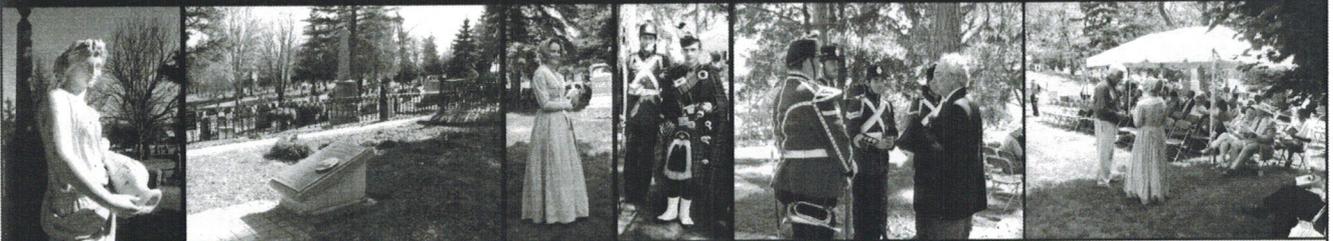
A Trusted Place to Call Home Since 1954

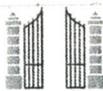


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Ministry of Culture of the Government of Ontario*

SPONSOR HIGHLIGHT

for May and June




CATARAQUI CEMETERY
AND FUNERAL SERVICES
Operated by The Cataraqui Cemetery Company
NHSC · Est. 1850

Garden Cemetery
Cremation
Funeral Services
Monuments
(613) 546-6545

**The Kingston Historical Society
gratefully acknowledges the generous support
and participation
of Cataraqui Cemetery
National Historic Site**

**in the annual June 6th commemoration
of the life of Sir John A. Macdonald
Canada's First Prime Minister**