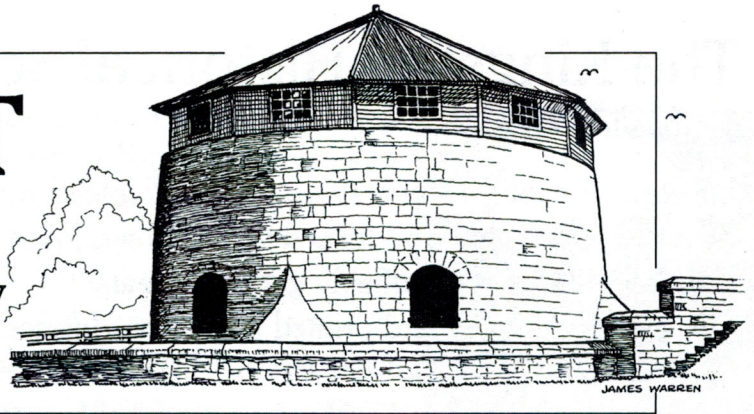


LIMELIGHT

Newsletter of the
Kingston Historical Society

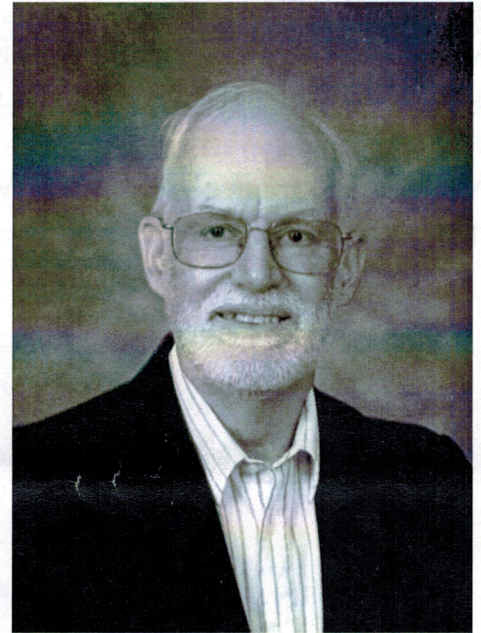
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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

During the summer, Kingston lost two parts of its history. The life of Gordon Smithson is detailed elsewhere in this issue. His legacy, including books on Cataraqui, the Railways in Kingston, and Williamsburg, remains. But his loss leaves a gap that is hard to fill – especially coupled with the recent death of Marjorie Simmons.

Kingston also lost the Cataraqui Archaeological Research Foundation this summer. While it conducted its archaeological work for profit, all of that profit was put back into educational projects. CARF had contributed to the culture and heritage of the City since 1983. Despite gallant efforts, the income from the business was not sufficient to keep CARF going. There was no white knight saviour in sight and the Board had to close CARF down. The collections have been dispersed: a great loss to Kingston. The registered charity still exists, so there may be a future.



Thus we are reminded that institutions, just like people, do not necessarily go on for ever. Change is inevitable. If we want institutions to continue, we must be willing to adapt, and to support them. Remember this as you are asked to support the Sir John A MacDonald birthday dinner in 2014. It will only continue if you buy your tickets.

Peter Fowler

In this issue...

President's Report	1
Masthead	2
Faith and Fate	3
First Impressions of Kingston	4 & 5
Speakers' Corner	6
In Memoriam / Our Sponsors	7
14th Annual J. A. Macdonald Dinner	8

The Kingston Historical Society

established 1893

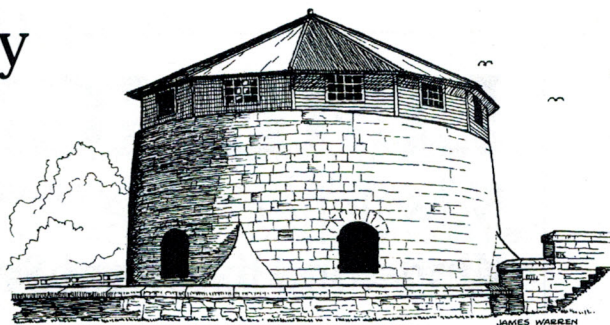
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KHS holds monthly talks or events, usually at 7:30 pm on the third Wednesday of the month, September to May, usually in the Wilson Room of the Kingston Public Library on Johnson Street at Bagot Street. Special annual events include a dinner and talk 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

Wednesday, 16 October 2013 7:30 PM

**THIS
MONTH'S
MEETING**

"The Macdonald Locket: Love, Death and Domesticity in Upper Canada"

the story of a Macdonald Family locket with photographs of Macdonald, his first wife, Isabella and their son Hugh John from the Library and Archives collection.

Julia McArthur

**Wilson Room of the Kingston Frontenac Public Library
Johnson Street, at Bagot Street**

Refreshments

All Welcome



Working on my series of Downtown Kingston, I found that sometimes I had to work from a photograph as it was almost impossible to paint on the spot with parking difficulties etc. Such was the case when I was painting "Camera Kingston" working in my car on the waterfront at Douglas Fluhner Park.

It was there that this story started. A truck pulled in with a young couple in it. The man with lovely blue eyes came over to my open window and offered me a religious paper. Instead of saying my usual comment that I have my own religion, I smiled and accepted it. After he left I decided to read it. I realized that it wasn't that much

different than my own philosophy. I called him over and explained this saying that I believed that there are no coincidences in life and who knows there might even be a reason for our meeting today.

I must have given him an invitation to my book launch in July 2012 because there he was. He was excited to see me and told me that before he met me he was very mixed up and did not know what to do in his life. Because of our discussion that day, he decided to propose to his girlfriend. They were getting married next May and wondered if I would like to come to their Wedding. I told him how happy I was for him and that I would be delighted to go! That was the last that I heard from him.

It was May 9th 2013. Every morning through the week, after swimming at the YMCA, I go to McDonalds restaurant on Princess Street for breakfast. I have always been able to park somewhere in front. Strangely this day there was no parking spaces on either side of the street so I had to go around the block and park on Clergy Street. Crossing Clergy Street, I heard someone calling my name. It was my blue eyed friend who was so happy to meet me. He asked me to his wedding that was taking place across the street at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church on the 26th of May and to the reception after at the Olympic Harbour.

The wedding is this weekend. I picked out a nice painting and card to give them and realized I don't even know their names.

I certainly hope that Mr. and Mrs. Blue Eyes will be very happy because if they aren't it will be all my fault! Ha

Now getting back to the painting of Camera Kingston. Don Sleeth the co-owner told me it was started in 1977 at 107 Princess Street. When Jackson Metivier's Ladies Wear closed across the Street at 114 Princess Street, Camera Kingston moved in. Already this painting is history as in June 2013 they have replaced their old sign with a new black one.

Kingston Historical Society Awards Inaugurated in 1993, to mark the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Kingston Historical Society, these awards have been made annually to individuals, groups and institutions in recognition of outstanding contributions to the preservation and interpretation of local history.

Members of the Society are encouraged to nominate (with detailed reasons for the nomination) those whom they feel meet the criteria for the award. Please do so in writing either on paper or via e-mail, giving the name and contact information of your nominee, and as much information as possible about your reasons for nominating the person, group or institution.

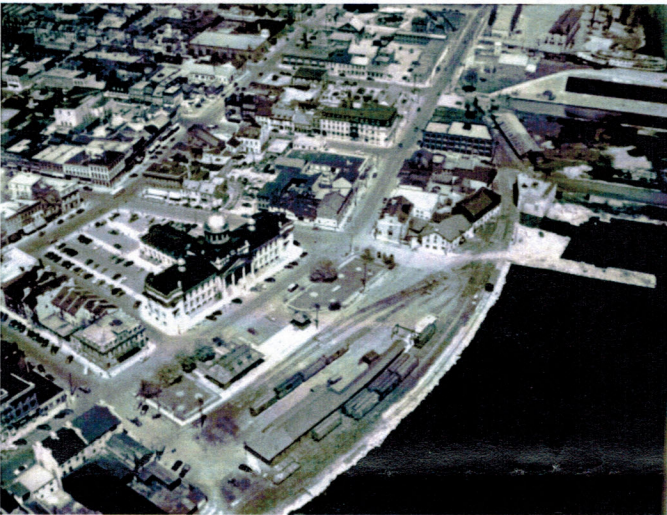
Completed nominations should be sent to Chairperson, KHS Awards Committee, Box 54, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 4V8 or to Chairperson KHS Awards, . no later than October 31, 2013.

Award presentations are made at the annual KHS Christmas Party in December.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF KINGSTON

At this time of year as the sun rises later and sets earlier I reflect back upon the warm days of summer and I can't help but think the summer of 1958 when I spent most of July in Kingston will stick in my head. I arrived in the city for the first time as a young man and my mother decided that I should work for my uncle's paint company that summer. It was the first time that I was more independent and I shared a room, worked, ate and relaxed together that summer.

The room we rented was in a rather rundown large white boarding house on the north side of Brock Street between



*1950's City Hall area,
QUA, George Lilley fonds, V25.6-4-36*

\$5 each a week. It was very small with two single beds and a small kitchen. We ate at Lido's restaurant where we purchased meal tickets that gave us a good wage in the late 1950s. Even if I spent \$6.00 on movie tickets a week. We only went to a movie or played pool on rainy days when no work was paid. However, if we lost a day we usually made up for it with extra hours. 40 hours work in a week, even 50 hours some weeks.

The ESSO storage tanks on Rideau Street disappeared and a new building was built on the River and stood across the road from the historic home with a plaque there. Reading that plaque was the first time I realized that Kingston was different. Each day, weather permitting, Tom and I with our brown bag lunch walked through the downtown streets of Kingston. Though a few times we were with adult co-workers - all from Toronto - were drinking beer and I told you that I was not impressed. My hometown of Paris, Ontario was in the southwest that proclaimed it the prettiest town in the province. A city with a waterfront that was black with coal, grubby warehouses, and the only beach we discovered within walking distance - we did not go there from City Park. While City Park was very attractive the water was

dirty. I saw human waste floating by. Maybe if I hadn't been swimming with my eyes open I wouldn't have noticed. But I did. City Hall and the market were attractive and it had four movie houses in those days whereas Paris had only one.

By 1967 I had married and with my family had moved to Brockville. Trips to Queen's University became a regular event, mostly for the better although I questioned some of the buildings that were constructed in the 1970s and 80s such as the new Division and some of the condominiums on Ontario Street that block the view of the waterfront. Confederation Park was torn down and signs of out-of-date industries disappeared.

We moved to Kingston in 1989 when I began teaching at Queen's University, Faculty of Education and now we have many examples of 19th and early 20th century architecture. Topnotch restaurants of every kind and nationality abound. There is outstanding live entertainment. Unfortunately there is now only one movie theatre downtown (Screening Room) and no department store. Despite that we do try to do most of our shopping and find most of our entertainment in Downtown Kingston.

Kingston has changed for the better and so have my impressions. Thanks Kingston and long may you thrive.

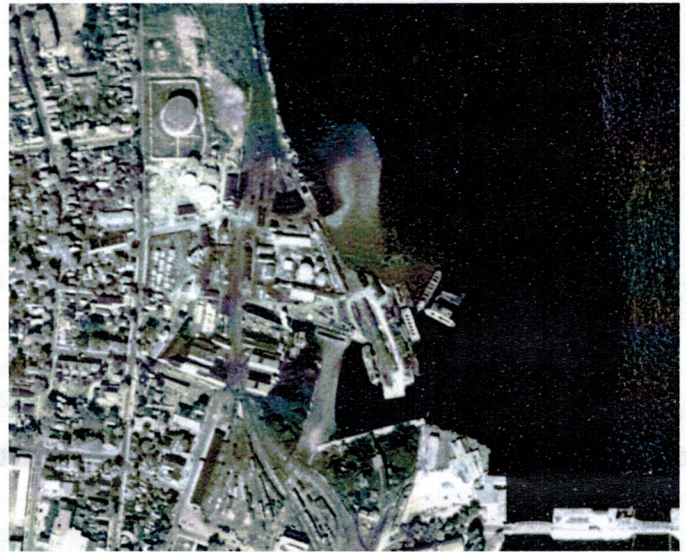
but think it is all over much too quickly. Some summers, of course, are more memorable than others and for me the summer of a painting crew contracted to paint the ESSO bulk storage tanks on Rideau Street. I was 16 years old when I was hired on my own although there was another 16 year old, Tom from Toronto, who was also hired by Uncle Bill. Tom

Barry and Barrie. It has since been torn down and replaced by the large fire station. The room cost Tom and me \$10 or \$12 a closet. Around the corner at Barrie and Princess was a room with 21 meals for \$15. We were paid \$1.90 an hour, a very good wage and pool I could still send \$50 home at the end of the summer when we couldn't paint and if we didn't paint we didn't get paid. Longer hours on good days thereby always getting at least

many years ago but I know they overlooked the Cataraqui area. The plaque recognizing that John A Macdonald had lived in Kingston was Sir John's home although not his birthplace. Lunches from Lido's would jog to and from work through the city on Saturday to make up for a lost day or two, when our friends were cavorting, Tom and I explored Kingston. And I can tell you that it was beautiful and it even had a sign as you entered from the north. My impression of Kingston was that it was a horrible place, rundown buildings and dilapidated factories. The city didn't have a car - was in Macdonald Park across the street from the beach was gross and we exited quickly when we were adding to my growing negative view of Kingston. This is not to say that Kingston didn't have its good points. City

as I took many summer courses to improve my qualifications as a teacher. What I saw was a changing Kingston and the extremely ugly apartment building, Elrond College (now Princess Towers), on the north side of Princess near the waterfront. City Hall is now an attractive park and most of the waterfront was cleaned up as the dingy warehouses were

couldn't want to live anywhere else. On nearly every walk around the historic downtown core we discover wonderful buildings like the Grand Theatre, which has replaced one of the movie houses of the 1950s, along with the K ROCK Centre feature. We do miss what was our only department store in the historic core, S & R, which although beautifully restored is not a part of Kingston.



Kingston 1953, ESSO tanks

Speakers' Corner

Presented by Walter Lewis

Written by Ron Ridley
Photos by Peter Ginn



Walter Lewis was September's presenter with an interesting talk on the complex history of Carleton Island and its place in an interesting jurisdictional dispute following the War of 1812.

During the American Revolution the British Army established a fortification and shipbuilding yard on the western end of the island. Following the American Revolution the boundary was quite vague on many points, including that of Carleton Island, until well after the War of 1812. The American government had granted land to a Mr. Charles Smyth, who formed a partnership with two Managhan brothers, who were situated in both New York State and Kingston. Carleton Island became a warehouse for the partnership with large stores of tobacco, among other goods. The local collector of customs in Kingston, Christopher Hagerman became convinced that the Carleton Island depot was merely a cover for smuggling and, with a writ from a local magistrate, appeared on the island with a small group of armed men and seized over 17,000 pounds of tobacco. Following an armed standoff with inhabitants of the island, Smyth allowed Hagerman to transport the goods to Kingston rather than risk a violent conflict.

The incursion into what was perceived by the American government and public into what was their territory created a sensation in what was already a volatile situation following the recent war, but cooler heads prevailed and the situation became a legal dispute over Hagerman's authority to conduct the seizure. When, in 1822, Carleton Island was determined to be American territory, the seizure was determined to be unlawful, and the property was ordered to be returned. However, as the goods had been left outside for two seasons, they were now worthless. Smith and the Manahans tried through the courts to obtain damages but were never able to obtain compensation.

Charles Smyth went on to be a prominent investor in New York State. Christopher Hagerman went on to become Attorney General of Upper Canada and a Judge of the Queen's Bench. Anthony Manahan served as a Colonel of the Hastings militia during the period of the 1837-38 Rebellion. Both Hagerman and Manahan served as MLA's for this area.



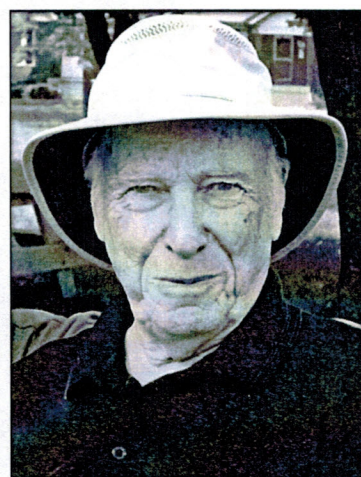
*Walter Lewis receiving thanks from
KHS member Rick Nielson*

The story of smuggling and the potential international incident faded away with time. Today, Carleton Island, located just south of Wolfe Island is only sparsely inhabited by cottagers and is accessible by boat from Cape Vincent NY.

In Memory of Gordon Smithson

We are saddened to announce the death of Gordon Smithson on September 11th. Gordon was a dedicated researcher and historian who wrote widely on how the various Kingston communities and businesses developed historically and socially. His interest in documenting the histories of families and businesses in the Pittsburgh Community led to him becoming a founding member of the Pittsburgh Historical Society and its first president. His contributions to the recording of local history through several historical organizations were many and varied: from cemetery transcriptions to cable TV productions such as *The View from Anglin Bay*. He was a major contributor to a history of Frontenac County, County of 1,000 Lakes, to the Pittsburgh Township history, Lilacs and Limestone, and to Williamsville Revisited, collected stories and photos of Kingston's Williamsville district, sponsored by the Kingston Historical Society. His independent publications included a book on Cataraqui Village among others. For his significant contribution to recording the history of Kingston's communities, Gordon was presented the Kingston Historical Society Award in 1999. More recently, he returned to the Pittsburgh Historical Society's executive to take on responsibilities for publicity and production of its newsletter, and although ill, he produced much of its Fall Newsletter. Gordon will be greatly missed as an avid contributor to the documenting of Kingston's history.

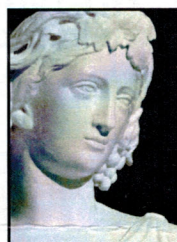
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14th Annual Sir John A. Macdonald Dinner



Our guest speaker for this year's Sir John A. Macdonald Anniversary Dinner, **Saturday January 11 2014**, will be Dr. Sarah Gibson. Dr. Gibson is well known through her articles on Kingston Street names which appear weekly in the *Whig Standard*.

The dinner will take place at the Senior Staff Mess at the Royal Military College. Please gather in the Mess any time after 6:00PM to meet our guest. The dinner will commence at 7:00PM. The cost for the dinner will be \$60.00 for Society members and \$75.00 for guests of members. Please fill out the tear off portion below and send it along with your payment made out to the:

**Kingston Historical Society
c/o W. Everett,
253 Willingdon Ave,
Kingston, ON K7L 4J2**

All reservations must be received no later than December 21, 2013.

The dinner is again being held at the Senior Staff Mess RMC. A Commissionaire will be available to assist in parking and directions to the mess.



Sir John A. Macdonald Anniversary Dinner, Saturday January 11, 2014

Name(s): _____

Telephone & email: _____

Number of Members _____ Number of Non-Members _____

Number of Vegetarian meals Required: _____

Food Allergies: _____

Please ensure you include the names of all those attending the dinner.