

STORIES BEHIND THE OLD STONES

There have been many walking tours of downtown Kingston. And why not? History oozes from the pores of these old stones and the land on which they were built.

First let's go back to this land. It was the promise of their own land that the Loyalists – those, who during the American Revolution had remained loyal to the crown and wanted the type of government to which they had become accustomed – made the arduous journey northward. However there were others – entrepreneurs who made that trek into the wilderness for the offer of new land and the benefits they might reap from it.

In 1783 expecting the influx of the Loyalists Governor Haldimand ordered Major Holland and his party of surveyors to begin work. Deputy surveyor John Collins was responsible for the original town plot of Cataraqui (Kingston). The responsibility for settlement was left to Major John Ross, the British Commandant at Cataraqui. In the fall '83 several of his officers and two merchants, Robert Hamilton and Peter Clark, erected houses on land near the barracks. The proclamation from King George III to Haldimand: "his Majesty approves the plan you have proposed for settling some of the Loyalists at Cataraqui and places adjacent" would not arrive until June 1784. Hence the following agreement was signed by each builder/occupant: "I agree that the House which I have built is in no Respect to be Considered as Private Property or Transferable by me without permission from the Commanding Officer, but to all Intents and Purposes belonging to the King and if his service shall require it to demolition or in Case of bad Conduct on my Part to Forfeiture".

People had been drifting north before the war's end; it has even been rumoured that a few French and Indian squatters were in the area. There may have been cabins and shanties before "legal" settlers arrived. If there were, they are no longer extant, but certainly the old stones and a few

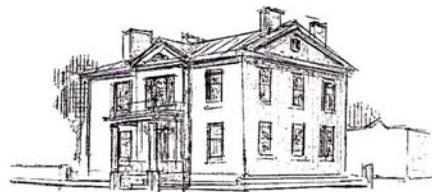
frame dwellings have stood the test of time. Let us see if they will reveal their stories.



St. George's Church, 1792

The Rev. John Stuart had been holding church services in a room in the garrison but as his congregation increased, Archibald Thomson was hired to build a frame church on reserved land across from the market place. The original St. George's church stood on the site of the present British Whig Building.

Born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Rev. Stuart studied and received ordination in England and after returning to America was appointed as Missionary to the Mohawk Indians at Fort Hunter. Suspected of Tory leanings, his home, property and church were destroyed and he and family were confined in Schenectady. They were finally allowed to leave to make their way northward to Montreal where he was appointed chaplain to the 2nd Battalion King's Royal Regiment of New York. At the war's end he left and visited all the settlements along the St. Lawrence and farther to Niagara finally returning to settle on his farm just west of the village of Cataraqui (Kingston) in 1785. Rev. Stuart himself received lots 122 and 139 at the north east corner of King and Johnson Streets upon which St. George's Cathedral now stands.



264 King St E Lot 123 (at Johnson) Crown to James Dawson 1807. Dawson, a sergeant in the N.Y. Militia, is listed in East District on the UE list. He was in Kingston from 1793 to 1798 and

also in 1809. He joined Freemason's Lodge in 1795 and served as town constable 1797-8.

An 1815 town map shows a small building facing Johnson St. The lot was divided in 1823, the SW 1/3 to John Spence and wife, the NE 2/3 to Samuel Merrill who sold his part in 1825 to Henry Gildersleeve who came from Connecticut after the War of 1812. He was a shipwright and worked on the "Frontenac", the first steamship on Lake Ontario. He started his own shipping line, married Sarah Finkle and in 1825 built "Gildersleeve House" a town residence in the "Loyalist Style". It remained in the family until 1909 when sold to Dr. Glover who died in 1962.



203 King St E Lot 82 also adjoining Lot 69 to the south on Earl was owned by Robert Macaulay (McCaulay) in 1815.

"Knaresborough Cottage" was built as a single storey in 1834 by Thomas Rogers an early Kingston architect. In 1841 a 2nd floor was added for Mrs. Ann Macaulay, mother of The Honourable John Macaulay. Still later in 1856 extensive renovations were made from plans by architect John Power. It remained in the Macaulay family until 1947.

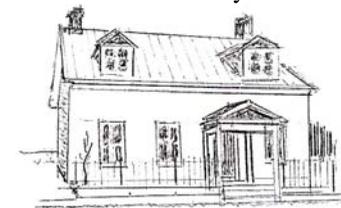


202 King St E Lot 127 1/5 acre (1 acre = 5 town lots, 1 town lot = 1 chain by 2 chains or 66' by 132') also adjacent Lot 134 on Earl St. Crown to the Heirs of Muir (Mary, David and Elizabeth Muir) 1807.

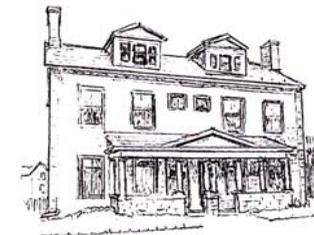
By 1810 the lot was sold to the Rev. John Stuart for twenty pounds, who in turn sold to George Okill Stuart in 1814. This small house was built in 1841 by Duncan Sinclair a shipwright.



204 King St E Lot 128 Crown to Charles Peters in 1798 (refer to 194 King St. E.). Duncan Sinclair built this stone with its arched carriage-way in 1851. He sold in 1854 to John Craig, one of the carpenters who worked on City Hall.

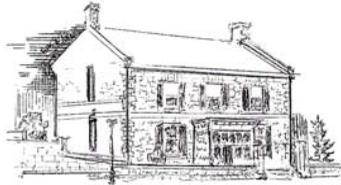


194 King St E Corner of King and Gore. Lot 128 Crown to Charles Peters in 1798, who also received lots 129, 132, 133, 148, 153, which was most of the E side of Gore St and part of the W side between King and Wellington. He was listed in the Midland District but as expunged. Built before 1819 it is one of the earliest extant dwellings on the street representing a typical, unpretentious cottage. In 1819 Andrew Denyke, a regular soldier in the New Jersey Volunteers advertised for sale "six lots with dwellings thereon". George Oliver bought this one Lot 128 – and was on the assessment roll in 1838.



76-78 Gore Lot 132 Crown to Charles J. Peters 1798. Architect William Coverdale built this stone house in 1842 for William Denn, gentleman, and converted it to a double house in 1845 which

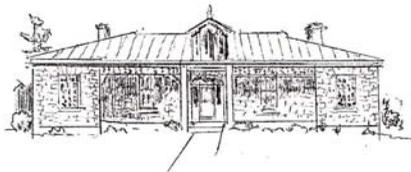
was “typical of the adjustments property owners in Kingston had to make when the capital was moved away”.



191 King St E Lot 80 and also Lot 71 behind it on Gore. Crown to Mahlon Knight UE 1804, who also received Lot 13 Con 3 Kingston Township. Knight was born near Philadelphia in 1744. Knight sold the city lot the same year to Richard Cartwright, Sr. for one hundred pounds. Was Mr. Knight an entrepreneur or did he just prefer to be a farmer?

“Cartwright House” was built in 1832-33 for Robert David Cartwright and his bride Harriet Dobbs of Dublin. R. D. Cartwright had been appointed assistant minister at St. George’s in 1831.

Robt. David was the son of businessman and member of the Legislative Council, the Hon. Richard Cartwright Jr. and grandson of Richard Cartwright, Sr. who had emigrated from London, England in 1741, settled in New York and married Johanna Beasley of Albany. Because of their Loyalist sympathies the family had been escorted to the Canadian border in 1778.



75 Lower Union Lot 150 Crown to Andrew Denyke. Denyke (Tenyke) was born c. 1756, was a soldier in the New Jersey volunteers, a master mariner on Lake Ontario and built and kept a tavern in Kingston. His four daughters were all baptized at St. George’s.

This Regency stone cottage was built c. 1828-32 or possibly before 1820 with the dormer added later in Gothic revival style. In 1832 it was sold from a John Blake to James Nicholls, lawyer, and bequeathed to his brother-in-law, Charles Oliver.

Named “Charles Place” to distinguish it from brother George Oliver’s house around the corner.



156 King St E Lot 171 also 172, 173 & 174 Crown to Hugh Earl, 1803. Captain Hugh Earl, born Ayrshire, Scotland and officer in the Provincial Marine Dept. married Anne, daughter of Molly Brant and Sir Wm. Johnson. Anne Earl also received considerable land (a triangle bounded by Bagot, Johnson and a continuation of West St!) Molly was granted land and a house was built for her where the present Rideaucrest Home now stands. A few years ago the Kingston Historical Society erected a bust of Molly Brant on the grounds of Rideaucrest.

Hugh Earl’s earlier 1802 frame house was the first house on the block. The present stone house – “Earl Place” – was built in 1851 for Colin Miller, one of the Captain’s sons-in-law.



131-133 King St E Lots 74 & 75 Crown to Jason Russell and Joshua Forsyth. A James Russell received lots 31,32 on Ontario St and 36 Lower Union St. In 1815 there were two buildings on that corner lot 31. A James Russell Sr. was church warden at St. George’s and a James Russell was a master carpenter in the dockyard. Joshua Forsyth also received connecting lots 33, 34 Ontario St and lot 35 around the corner on West St. Joseph Forsyth was the Kingston representative of Forsyth, Richardson & Co. through whom he was tied in with the MY Company, and after 1804 with the North West Co. He was born in Aberdeenshire and came to Canada c. 1784.

The large limestone building was erected to architect Coverdale’s specifications in 1842-43 as a double house for Noble Palmer, chemist and founder of “Kingston Spectator”. According to

Preston a John Palmer was a sergeant in the 34th Regiment and had received land although this has not been verified. Gov. Gen. Sir Charles Metcalfe moved into one half before it was finished. This building has been turned into apartment condos one of which is now (2006) for sale asking price of \$299,000.00.



81 King St E Part of farm lot 25 Crown to Michael Grass UE. Captain Michael Grass led the party of Loyalists from New York to Sorel and finally in 1784 to Cataraqui (Kingston) thus becoming the first permanent settlers of the township.

In 1809 Grass sold to Wellington Murney. By 1841, hardware merchant, John Watkins and partner Sam Muckleston built the present Tudor half timber in a number of building ventures during the Capital period. Watkins was the donor for KGH Watkins Wing. (The original KGH building was the home of the Provincial Parliament from June 14, 1841 to November 1843).



53 King St E Farm lot 25. Crown to Michael Grass. In 1809 Henry Murney bought the whole farm lot from Grass. By 1815 Murney had possession of 2 large lots about 1+ acres at the NE corner of Barrack and Rideau Sts.

“Murney House”- the first stone house on this block – was built in 1841 for his widow Mrs. Henry (Harriet) Murney. In 1885 it was sold to lawyer Andrew MacLean. The main part of the farm lot was sold to the government as the proposed site for the Parliament Buildings. This is now City Park.



The Old Stones: A Walking Tour



Kingston and District Branch