

MURNEY NEWS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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OVERVIEW OF THE MONTH

Happy Holidays from the Murney Team! 2021 was out of the ordinary, but we're proud of everything we've accomplished over the past 12 months. We launched our 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, our first-ever website, 7 educational programs for the public, 19 YouTube videos, 2 virtual exhibits, 2 outreach initiatives, 10 collection stories, 6 collaborations with our partners, as well as enjoyed 10 features in the media. From a photo contest to a cooking channel to a new collections lecture series, the staff had a great time inventing and implementing creative ways to stay connected with our community despite being unable to open until midsummer. Our reopening on July 17, 2021, the first time since 2019, was the beginning of a great summer in which the staff restructured the museum experience to ensure a healthy and safe visit for all visitors. Now we're gearing up for the New Year, and the team wishes all of you and your loved ones the happiest of holidays, and a Happy New Year!

VISITOR INFORMATION

Murney Tower is now
CLOSED for the season.

Stay tuned for
announcements regarding
our opening next spring.

WEBSITE

You can now find us at
www.murneytower.com



STORAGE WORK

Over the course of the month of November, Murney Tower Museum's newest Museum Assistant, along with the Curator, Collections Intern, and volunteer, have been working hard on getting us settled into our new storage unit. A lot of the work being done in the storage unit thus far has involved clearing space on our shelves, unpacking artifacts, archival materials, and business supplies from the moving boxes, and re-wrapping fragile artifacts. Our Museum Assistant is also currently working on creating a numbered inventory of all our books and inputting that information into a spreadsheet.

Our next steps, once all of those things have been completed, is to further unpack all of our collection, identify the objects, and create a full collection inventory.




COLLECTION HIGHLIGHT: STEREOGRAPHIC STORIES

When Museum Assistant Alison Dringenberg began exploring Murney Tower Museum's collections, one of the first artifacts that caught her eye was a set of six stereographic cards published in 1900. A stereograph (a card with left- and right-eye views of the same image) would be observed through a stereoscope, merging the two images into one three-dimensional view. In the 1800s, this was the only way for people to view the wonders of the world from the comfort of their own home. To learn more about stereoscopic technology and the fascinating set of cards that prompted this inquiry, check out "Stereographic Stories: Love, War, and Nineteenth-Century Virtual Reality," available on our website [here](#).



HISTORY

AFTER 175 YEARS, KINGSTON'S MARTELLO TOWERS STILL FORTIFY THE CITY
by Vanessa Chiasson



MODERN-DAY KINGSTON, ONTARIO, is a home of young students and old buildings. But in the 1750s, this "Limestone City" was all anyone could dream about. The British held it, the Americans wanted it, everyone clamoured for a piece of it. Thus, when Kingston was named the capital of the United Province of Canada, there was only one thing for the British to do: fortify it the way they did, building four Martello Towers. Inspired by 18th-century castles at Mortella Point in Corsica, these remarkable circular forts with their cannon-proof walls were a rage in the 1800s. The British sprinkled Martello Towers all over the world, building 14 in Canada. Just nine remain today, including Kingston's four. 2021 marks the 175th anniversary of construction.

Murney Tower is the busiest of the four. Established as Murney Tower Museum in 1925, it's the oldest museum in the city and a must-see local attraction. From May to September costumed guides bring the Tower's history to life. And while it was built for 24 enlisted men and one officer lived above stairs in the three-story Towers - along with their families, these cramped quarters, a genuine war has been waged. May Pugh was born in Murney Tower in 1882. She went on to become a decorated nurse in WWII, thus ensuring the spirit of the tiny Tower carried on to the 20th century.

Murney Tower's size is something that the museum struggles with, especially in the age of social distancing. You'd be pressed to enforce adequate physical distancing in what Captain Simge Endogian describes as "a very intimate space." As the museum has had to think outside the box - and walls, virtual programming bridging the gap.

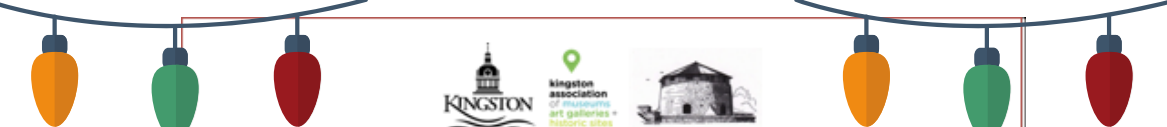
Fort Frederick Tower has the distinction of being the only Martello Tower to see military action. However, it's not the kind you might imagine. As part of the Royal Military College campus, Fort Frederick was once used as a common room for recruiting cadets. Unsurprisingly, its soundproof construction was the setting for many youthful hijinks. However, when the cadets caught rolling cannonballs down the stairs, it was time for a change.

BE RIGHT: The Martello defensive towers are sturdy built and still impressive on the Kingston Ontario skyline. However the truth is they became obsolete before they were fully constructed.

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MURNEY'S RECENT FEATURE

Exciting news! We've recently been featured in *Esprit de Corps*, a Canadian military magazine operating out of Ottawa by publisher and former soldier Scott Taylor. "After 175 Years, Kingston's Martello Towers Still Fortify the City" by Vanessa Chiasson is an engaging read on the Martello towers that line our city's waterfront - both the history and the legends. She describes how, although the four cannon-proof forts were obsolete by the time they were constructed, the towers have proved invaluable to the city of Kingston. She also gives a special shoutout to our museum, a "must-see local attraction," and the virtual programming we've launched to bridge the gap with the community during the age of social distancing. The article is available to read [here](#). Thank you to Vanessa Chiasson for the feature!



Murney Tower acknowledges with thanks the continued support of the City of Kingston, the Kingston Association of Museums, Art Galleries and Historic Sites, and the Kingston Historical Society.

