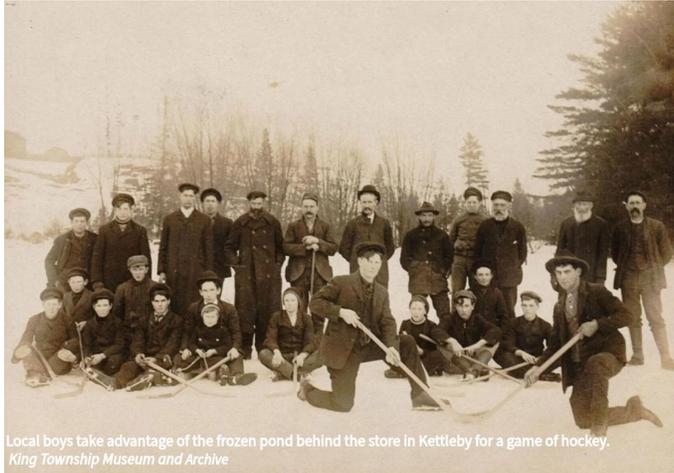




NEWS FROM KING TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Local boys take advantage of the frozen pond behind the store in Kettleby for a game of hockey.
King Township Museum and Archive

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Please join us for the 2026
KTHS AGM Sunday, March 1**

**12:00 – 3:00pm at Laskay Hall,
King Heritage & Cultural Centre**

Enjoy a potluck lunch, followed by meeting and guest speakers

Our 2026 KTHS guest speaker will be **Denny Timm**, the King Township Clerk. Denny will speak about the state of the Township’s 14 abandoned pioneer cemeteries, in particular the Laskay Secessionist Presbyterian cemetery at 1 Mill Street in Laskay, and answer our questions. Please join us!

Borealis Big Band Delights!

The KTHS once again featured the Borealis Big Band from Aurora at our annual Christmas Concert December 7th. Their 22-member band included two vocalists, and played Christmas classics and a few contemporary pieces for two hours. What a festive way to kick off the season!



KTHS King History Book Awarded Provincial Honours

The Ontario Historical Society (OHS) has announced the runners-up for its prestigious 2025 Best Local History Book Award, recognizing two outstanding works that bring Ontario's past vividly to life. Among those honoured are **Ann Love and Sharon Bentley** for *The History of King Township: A Community Shaped by the Land* (2025), alongside **Ian McKechnie and Tom Mohr** for *Reflections on Old Victoria County: In Tribute to R.B. Fleming* (2024).

The OHS Best Local History Book Award celebrates excellence in local history publishing, recognizing books released within the past three years that make a significant contribution to the understanding of Ontario's communities. This year's top honour was awarded to *North Gower: A Village History, 1820–2020*.

In November, Love and Bentley received heartfelt praise from one of their readers, King Township Councillor Debbie Schaefer, who wrote after reading their book cover to cover. In her congratulatory note, Schaefer lauded the authors' compelling blend of storytelling and scholarship, highlighting Ann Love's engaging narrative style and Sharon Bentley's rich historical insights.

"At times I just had to put the book down to ponder what I had just read," Schaefer wrote, singling out the story of the grand maple at Goldie Feldmann as a particularly memorable example of the authors' thoughtful and detailed approach. She also praised the inclusion of firsthand contributions from individuals deeply connected to King Township's history, calling it "a stroke of genius" that added sincerity and authenticity to the work.

Schaefer further noted that the book's opening sections provide an exceptional foundation for understanding the township's natural heritage, what it once was, and how it has changed over time, before concluding, "Fabulous book. Truly a standard for a history book."

This April marks one year since *The History of King Township: A Community Shaped by the Land* debuted at a well-attended launch at the Municipal Chambers, an event that fittingly coincided with King Township's 175th anniversary celebrations. Since then, the King Township Historical Society (KTHS) has sold more than 600 copies.

A limited number of copies remain available for \$40 and can be purchased online at www.kingtowshiphistoricalsociety.com, as well as in person at the King Museum and Pine Farms Orchard.



My Recollections of Meeting King's Blair Burrows

By Caroline Marshall

My husband Scott's grandfather, W. P. Scott, introduced us to Blair. He had a cottage on the Green Lane in King. He knew that Blair was thinking about selling her home and thought it would be a good place for us to live.

We had tea with Blair a couple of times and she told us she would like us to buy her house.

She actually built the house herself with only the help of one man.

Blair bicycled through France and had noted the Terre Pisé form of construction [otherwise known as rammed earth]. At that time, it was most unusual for women to travel, especially bicycle through any European country. She originally wanted a manure floor which could be polished. As in some African countries she would have made designs on the floor with peach pits.

Blair said the King community thought she was odd, to put it mildly, so she decided to take a more moderate route with large slabs of flagstone full of fossils.



The house was originally thatched, but when too many squirrels got into the thatching, she removed it and replaced it with shingles.

Blair was well-known in her old age at the local police department.

She regularly phoned them to say there was a prowler on the property. Apparently, they sent the same police officer after each call and he would be greeted with a cup of tea ready for him.

Her cold cellar was always full of interesting things such as cut cucumber in brine. Blair made mint sweets - mint leaves dipped in egg whites and sugar. She dried them in the sun on a tray.

The original house was a very pretty pink. The white wash had milk and I believe lime in the mix. My husband repainted it at least once with her recipe.

We put a skylight in the ceiling and added a wood stove. Scott made an amazing toboggan run from the top of our hill to the bottom. He iced the edges. Unfortunately, his step brother broke his foot on it one year. He was on the National Rowing Team so his coach wasn't pleased.

We had wonderful parties in the living room. The walls helped insulate - we never had to worry about bugs and it was cool in the summer.

The pool liner was made from half a roll of black plastic that farmers used on their fields to protect them from frost. The pool was filtered, but otherwise it was just a hole in the ground. Scott brushed off the dirt every fall before emptying it. He dug a couple of steps and we replaced the liner every few years. It was extremely inexpensive.

Blair Acton Burrows (1884–1985): Known as a historic figure in King Township, Ontario, who built a "mud house," died on **November 13, 1985**, at the age of 100.

Time and Memory – Tweedsmuir Histories

By Louise Di Iorio

In 1925, the Federated Women’s Institutes of Ontario encouraged the Institute branches to give more time to the study of local history. The timing was critical, they believed, pointing out that “Canada was still a young country, pioneering was relatively close to the people in many sections, and the tales of the trials and tribulations of earlier days were still being told to the younger generations.” Further encouragement came from Lady Susan Tweedsmuir, the wife of the Governor-General of Canada, who was committed to promoting both literacy and local history in Canada.



The Village Histories were conceived as an anniversary project to mark the 50th anniversary of the Women’s Institutes in 1947, and they were named in honour of Lady Tweedsmuir’s husband, who had died in office in 1940. They were to include the history of settlement, pioneer families, industries, buildings, public enterprises, schools, churches, and important local current events. The Institutes were also asked to include a history of their branch and its contribution to the welfare and development of their community, a welcome opportunity to “toot their own horn,” as King City curator Helen Rumble liked to say.

Each of the eight Tweedsmuir Histories of King Township reflects the different interests, abilities, and personalities of their contributors and their communities. **The Schomberg History** was carefully typed and has colourful decals of birds, flowers, pets, and sayings pasted on nearly every page. Each page is separated and protected by a sheet of tracing paper, and they were placed in a large, sturdy black binder with metal pegs, with the branch name and the Institute emblem embossed in gold on the front cover. **The Snowball History**, in contrast, is contained in two regular 3-ring binders and its title has been carefully printed by hand on the cover in yellow paint. The contents have been carefully handwritten on heavy paper. The Provincial Curator remarked that the Snowball Tweedsmuir History was especially precious because it contained the handwriting of so many members from that little village.



The curators and committees gathered together old documents, oral histories, biographies, autobiographies, statistics, poetry, personal stories, sketches, maps, photographs, newspaper and magazine articles, and various material artifacts, such as invitations, pamphlets, old letters and postcards. They included descriptions of the religious and social life of their villages, and detailed their proud and poignant was records. The branches’ request for contributions elicited an enthusiastic response from the inhabitants of King

Township, many of whom were delighted to be asked to recount the history of their family, farm or business.



Lady Tweedsmuir offered to sponsor a competition to award prizes to the best-kept history books. The Laskay and Schomberg members, who produced the most extensive and the most elaborate collections in King Township, fared quite well in these competitions.

Today the treasured Tweedsmuir Histories of King Township are carefully preserved and celebrated at the King Heritage and Cultural Centre. They have been digitized for public access on the King Township Public Library website, which gratefully acknowledges that without the work and foresight of the King Women's' Institutes, much of the history of this community would have been lost to time and memory.

The Catholic Settlement in King Township

By Bev Flanagan

King's rich history includes many small villages and hamlets that were once bustling communities. These thriving settlements were found all throughout the Township; at crossroads, at rail lines, at riversides. The intersection of Concession 5 and the 16th Sideroad was no exception. Today when you travel north on Jane Street towards the 16th Sideroad you see on the south east corner a beautiful Catholic church up on the hill. Sacred Heart Church is 3.75 miles northwest of King City and appears to be sitting out in the middle of nowhere. There is a reason for everything. History will show us that the church is exactly where it should be.

It was quite challenging for early Catholic settlers in King Township to practice their faith with little or no access to places of worship and with few priests available to celebrate Masses. As more and more immigrants came to Upper Canada in the early 1800s, the more urgent it was that their spiritual needs be met. The settlers required schools and churches. The historic St. Mary's Church on the 10th Concession near Nobleton was the first Roman Catholic Church in King Township and opened with Sunday Mass on September 23, 1855. This Church served the needs of Irish immigrants who had left Ireland because of the potato famine. They travelled to St. Mary's by horse and carriage from Lloydtown, King City, Kleinburg, Bolton and all the countryside in between. It was a Mission church whose priest would come from Tecumseth to the north.

In 1876 the St. Patrick's Parish in Schomberg was established. The priest from Schomberg would serve the St. Mary's congregation and visit other locations in King like private homes to say Mass. One of these homes was John Joseph McCabe's dwelling at Concession 5 and the 16th. It is noted as early as 1876 Father Sheehan from St. Patrick's would visit at Easter and Christmas and would pray for the sick and the aged for all who congregated at the McCabe residence. This was the humble beginnings of Sacred Heart as a Mission of St. Patrick's Parish.



As more Catholics moved to this rural area a real church was required. Mr. McCabe donated land at the northwest corner of Concession 5 and the 16th and a wooden frame chapel was constructed. Father Ralph Egan, Catholics in the area, friends and neighbours helped to build it out of recycled and leftover wood. It opened on Christmas day in 1930 and was dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This plain tiny chapel was a tremendous advantage and benefit to the area as it was more convenient than travelling to St. Mary's or St. Patrick's. Although automobiles had become popular the roads were terrible and it was difficult navigating on what some referred to as cow paths.

The new Sacred Heart Mission Church would stand for 30 years. It was instrumental in the growth of the Catholic Community in King. Finally, they had a real church to worship in, a satellite church of the St. Patrick's Parish in Schomberg. But what really made this settlement prosper and expand was a young enthusiastic Irish priest by the name of Father Francis J. McGoey.

Father McGoey was an assistant to the priest at St. Clare's Roman Catholic Church at Dufferin and St. Clair in Toronto. The depression years were difficult for all Canadians, but particularly arduous for families residing in urban areas. Inhabitants of rural agricultural areas could at least grow their own food. Unemployed families in Toronto were not that fortunate. Father McGoey wanted to assist these poor families and get them off government relief. He had a vision, let us get these folks back to the land so they can prosper and support themselves.

Mr. McCabe's generosity again played an integral role. He leased 12 acres to Father McGoey who then convinced 5 families to move to the "King Ridges" in King Township at Concession 5 and the 16th Sideroad in the spring of 1934. Each family was given seeds to plant and 50 chickens. It was hard work moving to the country with few resources and building shacks to live in on two acre lots. Their goal in the end was to be able to purchase property of their own and construct permanent residences. Father McGoey called his agricultural settlement of re-established city families "Mount St. Francis". Officially it was referred to as the Catholic Land Settlement Corporation. This was the corporation that Father formed to handle his purchases of the farms that he would eventually sell to the families.

The concept was simple. Learn to work together to cultivate their land, produce food for themselves with a surplus to sell and build permanent homes on the land purchased with their profit. Father McGoey was able to purchase a 50-acre farm by borrowing here, there and everywhere which he later resold to the families as they became self-sufficient. In the spring of 1935, 17 more families arrived. Many of them were Irish or of Irish descent.

Produce and crop profits went into a common fund and at the end of the year the families shared the revenue. The families that stayed and proved themselves as hard workers were given permanent homes on 10 acre lots with specific contracts to pay them off. They cleared the land, raised chickens, produced honey, planted and harvested crops, lived off the land, got their hope and self-esteem back, and practiced their faith at the Sacred Heart Church.

By 1938 there were 38 families living independently on 210 acres. Mount St. Francis was a success with its principle of: back to the land could lead one back to God. The community boasted a bakery, a store, a church, and tradesmen for cabinetry work, a tinsmith and a barber. The inhabitants assisted one another and shared their livestock so they could eventually be independent. The women also worked together to make blankets, clothes and preserves.

Father McGoey was a proficient manager of the Catholic Settlement. His faith, dedication and determination to make it a success were a powerful driving force. In 1946 he became the full-time pastor at St. Patrick's in Schomberg.

Meanwhile, the Catholic Settlement was in need of a school. In 1934, 18 students started classes in the church. It was the first elementary Catholic school in King Township. The little church built in 1930 was now doing double duty as a school and a place of worship. In 1936 the men in the community built a school on the southwest corner of the intersection, opposite the church. A year later, at the invitation of Father McGoey, the Sisters of Providence from Kingston, Ontario were welcomed to Mount St. Francis to staff and undertake the direction of the school. These nuns were renowned for their care of the poor, sick and orphaned. A convent was built to house them which was moved years later north across the 16th Sideroad to the location of the first little chapel constructed in 1930.



In 1946 the school was enlarged to accommodate classes up to grade 11. In 1947 Sacred Heart School constructed another building on the property south of the existing one to facilitate the education of all the high school grades. On June 10, 1949 six students from the Catholic Settlement completed their Grade 12 studies. They were John Lawlor, Richard Gainer, Patrick McGeean, James Hanlon, Rose McViegh and Angela Sheehan.

Sacred Heart School was reduced to grades 1 to 5 when Holy Name Catholic School was built on King Road in 1968 across from the King City Cemetery. By 1975, all grades had been consolidated at Holy Name, and Sacred Heart School on Jane Street was closed. The Sisters of Providence continued to run and manage the school until 1973. Their work at the Catholic Settlement, Sacred Heart and Holy Name Schools was complete. They were fun loving, kind hearted and dedicated women and everyone in the Sacred Heart community was sad to see them go.

The Catholic Settlement at Mount St. Francis continued until approximately 1958. Many of the families moved on but others chose to stay. Families like the McCormicks, the Marshs, the O'Reillys, the McGeeans and many others were grounded in this Catholic community by their faith, their connections to neighbours and the hard work they had put into their homes.

The McCormicks were one family that came out from the St. Clare Parish and stayed. Lawrence McCormick and his wife Harriet raised eight children on their plot of land in the settlement. When Harriet died in January of 1990, she was remembered as the last of the original settlers of the Catholic Settlement who remained living on their original plot of land. There are still McCormicks living in King Township today.

In 1936, Clifford and Florence Marsh came to Mount St. Francis with their three children. After the probation year, Clifford was offered land to purchase north on Jane Street where he lived until his passing in 1976. His daughter Elizabeth Marsh Noel is still alive and resides in Barrie. Her two brothers are deceased. Elizabeth, or Betty as she likes to be called, was just a little girl when her picture with Father McGoey was published in The Toronto Daily Star in an article about the success of the cooperative living at Mount St. Francis in King Township. Betty is likely one of only a handful of surviving settlers brought up from Toronto by Father McGoey.

So how did the beautiful Sacred Heart Church get to be at its present location? The original wooden chapel built in 1930 collapsed under the weight of heavy snow on Saturday February 6, 1960. The last Mass celebrated there was the previous evening at 8 pm. Alternate plans were



necessary when it was condemned and slated for demolition. The Sacred Heart School auditorium became a temporary church for the Sunday masses for the roughly 100 Catholic families in the King City area.

The generous community wasted no time in rallying together and constructing a new red brick church on the south east corner of the intersection. It truly was a community effort. The pews and Stations of the Cross were donated by the Sisters of St. Joseph in

Toronto. The Church was completed in time for the midnight mass celebration on Christmas Eve, 1960. For the next nine months, Sacred Heart Church continued to operate as a Mission or satellite church of St. Patrick’s Parish in Schomberg. On November 11, 1961 the Archdiocese in Toronto declared that Sacred Heart Church was now an independent Parish. The Augustinians who arrived at Sir Henry Pellat’s Marylake Estate on Keele Street in 1942 took over the care of Sacred Heart and supplied the Priests. Ever since the Church’s establishment in 1961 the Pastors have been provided for by this religious order. The Parish celebrated its 60th Anniversary in 2021 and continues to serve Catholic families in the eastern half of King Township.

So the early settlers gathered for Mass in private homes and later built a small chapel. They were soon joined by more Catholics who settled at Jane and the 16th (also known as the Green Lane), thanks to Father McGoey’s communal back-to-the-farm initiative. The intersection is no longer a Catholic Settlement, but the Sacred Heart Catholic Church does remain there as a wonderful reminder of our humble beginnings. Today the church has 1200 families registered.

My parents, Peter Flanagan and Kathleen Sullivan were born in King Township in 1908 and 1923. After getting married they moved back to King Township in 1944 to the Catholic Settlement area north of the 16th on Jane Street at King’s Summit on 50 acres. There they raised their 9 children who all attended Sacred Heart School and Sacred Heart Church for their sacraments. My husband and I still live in the original family home.

Interested in Preserving King’s History? Join the KTHS Board of Directors!

The King Township Historical Society is seeking enthusiastic and dedicated individuals to join our volunteer Board of Directors who will use their leadership and management skills and experience to help the organization move forward in a responsible and relevant fashion.

Directors are required to be actively engaged in the work of the organization, attend monthly Board meetings and events, and support special projects. The time commitment is modest, but the rewards are significant.

Send your expression of interest to kinghistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

Are you interested in local history and helping to preserve the history of King Township?

JOIN THE KTHS TODAY!

Looking to meet like-minded people, hear fascinating speakers, and attend local events? Consider joining the King Township Historical Society for just \$25/individual and \$30/family annual membership!

QUESTIONS? CONTACT kinghistoricalsociety@gmail.com
LEARN MORE AT www.kingtowshiphistoricalsociety.com

It's Time to Renew Your KTHS Membership & Tell a Friend!

Are you interested in local history and learning more about how to support and preserve the history of King? Maybe you are new to King and looking to meet like-minded people. Consider joining the King Township Historical Society for just **\$25/individual and \$30/family annual membership!** You may submit your membership online through our website at www.kingtowshiphistoricalsociety.com or by mail.

Already a KTHS member? Now is a great time to renew your membership for 2026 – online, by mail or in-person at the March 1st AGM. Questions? Please email us at kinghistoricalsociety@gmail.com.



Follow us on Instagram @kinghistoricalsociety too!



King Township Historical Society, 2920 King Road, King City ON L7B 1L6
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
 (PLEASE PRINT INFORMATION AND MAIL CHEQUE TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS)

NAME(S) _____ PHONE _____
 ADDRESS _____

 EMAIL _____ POSTAL CODE _____
 NEW _____ RENEWAL _____

INDIVIDUAL \$25 _____ FAMILY \$30 _____ DONATION _____
 ENCLOSED \$ _____

Trees of Giving Supports Kingcrafts Studio

This year, the annual Trees of Giving fundraiser at the King Heritage & Cultural Centre raised more than \$836 for Kingcrafts Studio.

This year's theme was 'Through the Decades' in honour of King Township's 175th anniversary as a municipality. The KTHS display was named Whisking Through History and featured a display of vintage kitchenware and cookbooks from the area.

Thank you to Bev Flanagan, Sharon Bentley and Murdene Pozdrowski for organizing KTHS's contribution this year!



What’s Happening in and around King?

Mayor’s Cultural Gala – Local Legends
Thursday, February 26, doors open 5:30pm
The Manor Event Venue, 16750 Weston Road, King

The fourth Mayor’s Cultural Gala will take place on Thursday, Feb. 26 in support of arts, culture, and heritage in King Township. Funds raised from this event will go towards supporting the important work of ASK and the [King Heritage & Cultural Centre](#). Tickets on sale at www.king.ca/mayorsgala



5th Annual Art Show in Recognition of International Women’s Day
January 31-March 27, 10:00am – 4:00pm
Opening and artist forum Sat., Feb. 7, 1:00 – 2:00pm

In partnership with Arts Society King (ASK) and King Heritage & Cultural Centre, the theme for 2026 is ***In Her Own Time***. The passage of time is an ever-present force in women’s lives, marking growth, transformation, and the stages of life. From the phases of the moon and the changing seasons to personal milestones and aging, time moves forward —shaping experience and identity. Artists were invited to interpret the concept of time and reflect on its impact in their own lives through visual art and accompanying statements.



Hoot, Howl & Squeak
Saturday, March 28, 6:30pm - 8:30pm

As the sun sets, the forest comes to life. Join the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) at the scenic Cold Creek Conservation Area on March 28 for Hoot, Howl and Squeak, an evening of fun and adventure in the woods. Learn about bats, owls and coyotes before taking to the trails for a firsthand exploration of their habitat. Free community event.



History of KTHS in Brief:

The KTHS dates back to 1972 when a group of dedicated residents, with interests in preserving the history of their Township, gathered to form the King Township Historical Society. In 1981 ~1982, the KTHS was incorporated by the Ontario Historical Society under a Provincial Letters Patent. Our goals and objectives are to encourage research into the history, to secure and preserve an accurate account of the progress and development, and to promote public interest in the history of King Township. More information may be found on our website at www.kingtowshiphistoricalsociety.com.