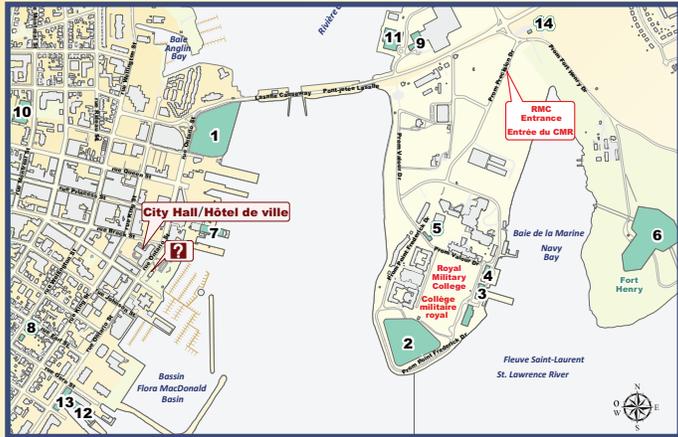


Explore Naval Historic Sites: KINGSTON

Kingston's rich marine history dates back more than 300 years and is carefully preserved in parks, monuments, forts, museums, buildings and dockyards that are still in active use throughout the City.



The French explorer Robert Cavalier de la Salle was the first European to discover Kingston, known as Cataraqi, in 1669. The name Cataraqi is of aboriginal origin, meaning "where the rivers and lake meet," referring to the St. Lawrence and Cataraqi Rivers joining with Lake Ontario.

In 1673, Louis de Buade, Count Frontenac, the Governor of New France, met the Iroquois aboriginals on friendly terms and established what came to be called **Fort Frontenac**. 1 The British subsequently captured and destroyed Fort Frontenac in 1758. What we now call Kingston was founded in 1782 as a settlement for refugee British colonists (United Empire Loyalists).

The War of 1812 was fought between the United States (U.S.) and Great Britain. Most of the fighting took place along the border of the U.S. and the provinces of British North America. During the war, Kingston was the base for the British naval fleet on Lake Ontario. The war ended in 1815. Between 1815 and 1846, the British built a series of defences at Kingston. Some of these were to guard the entrance to the Rideau Canal. The canal was completed in 1832 as a secure route between Montréal and Lake Ontario via Ottawa, in the event of another war with the U.S. In 2007, the Rideau Canal and the fortifications at Kingston were designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Kingston's location at the junction of the Rideau Canal, the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario made it the primary military and economic centre of Upper Canada. Kingston served as the capital of the united provinces of Canada from 1841 until 1844 when the capital was moved to Montréal.



Fort Frederick and naval dockyard circa 1813



Martello Tower

Numbers in the text relate to site locations identified on the included maps.
Please respect private property.

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2 Fort Frederick is located at the tip of Point Frederick and was originally made of earthworks (fortifications built from soil). Fort Frederick was built to defend the navy dockyard and the town of Kingston. On 10 November 1812, the Fort took part in repulsing an American naval squadron. The current Fort and a tower with thick stone walls built in 1846-47, commonly referred to as a Martello tower, replaced the War of 1812 era fort. Today, Fort Frederick is part of the Royal Military College (RMC) of Canada and the tower houses the College's museum.

3 The Royal Naval Dockyard was established on Point Frederick in 1789 for the Provincial Marine, a branch of the British Army that provided transports and armed vessels to the colonial government. It was transferred to the Royal Navy in 1813. During the War of 1812, the dockyard built warships in a naval arms race with the American fleet based at nearby Sackets Harbor, New York, for control of Lake Ontario.

Some of the ships that were built and launched at the dockyard before 1815 included¹:

- HMS *Duke of Gloucester* 1807 – 6-gun schooner. *Gloucester* was captured by the Americans on 27 April 1813
- HMS *Royal George* 1809 – 21-gun sloop. In November 1812, *Royal George* was the largest warship on the lake. On 9 November 1812, she was intercepted by an American fleet of seven ships but managed to escape to Kingston. Renamed *Niagara* 1814
- HMS *Sir George Prevost* 1813 – 21-gun schooner renamed *Wolfe* 1813, altered to brig and re-named *Montreal* 1814
- HMS *St. Lawrence* 1814 – 112-gun warship that served during the last months of the War of 1812. She was the largest warship on the Great Lakes and larger than British Admiral Nelson's flagship HMS *Victory*. HMS *St. Lawrence* was decommissioned in 1815. She lies sunk in Lake Ontario at the foot of Morton Street in Kingston.



HMS *St. Lawrence*

- HMS *Prince Regent* 1814 – 56-gun frigate renamed *Kingston* in 1814
- HMS *Princess Charlotte* 1814 – 42-gun frigate. Renamed *Burlington* 1814
- HMS *Psyche* 1814 – 56-gun frigate. Her frames were sent out from Britain to be assembled at Kingston.

The Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1817 between the U.S. and the United Kingdom provided for the demilitarization of the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain.

4 The Stone Frigate is a stone building that was erected in the Dockyard as a warehouse for naval stores. Although planned in 1816, it was not completed until 1820 when the need for storage facilities to

- Earl Street - one of the oldest streets in Kingston
- John & Joseph Power - featuring some of the buildings designed by these prominent Kingston architects
- King Street - the 'ceremonial' entrance to Kingston's downtown
- Ontario Street - the waterfront of old Kingston
- Princess Street - the main street of the oldest business district of Kingston
- Wellington Street - through the heart of old Sydenham Ward

hold gear and rigging from British warships taken apart in compliance with the Rush-Bagot Agreement had become urgent. It served on-and-off as a warehouse and a barracks. In 1876 the structure, now known as the Stone Frigate, was refitted to house the newly established RMC.



5 Dockyard Gateway and Guard House.

The stone gateway was the entrance to the Naval Dockyard. Just inside the gateway is a small stone building known as the 'Old Guard House' which currently serves as the RMC museum office. Nearby is another small stone building known as 'Porter's Lodge.' These two buildings likely date to the period 1839-40 when the Dockyard was reactivated because of the rebellions in Lower and Upper Canada.



The RMC Campus also has a **21-inch torpedo** and a **twin 4-inch gun mount**, which were acquired during the College's 100th anniversary in 1976. The torpedo is of the type used by the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) in WW II. The 4-inch gun mount was originally fitted in the destroyer HMCS *Huron* during WW II and then, in 1952, in HMCS *Donnacona*, the Naval Reserve Division (NRD) in Montréal, Québec. It was used at the NRD for training until it was moved to RMC.



Twin 4-inch gun mount

6 Fort Henry. The first Fort Henry was built during the War of 1812 to defend the Royal Navy Dockyard from attack by land. It was composed of earthworks and a wooden blockhouse. The present fort was built between 1832 and 1837. It is the largest fortification west of Québec City. It was built to defend the Rideau Canal. Fort Henry is now a museum and holds many artifacts from the warships *Prince Regent* and *Princess Charlotte*. Their wrecks lie in Deadman Bay to the east of the fort.

Canadian Navy shipbuilding in Kingston was centred at the **Kingston Shipyards** in operation from 1910 until 1968. The **Marine Museum of the Great Lakes** now occupies the remaining shipyard buildings. The 1890 drydock, which is alongside the museum, is a National Historic Site.

The Kingston Shipyards built eight minesweeping trawlers from 1917-19; 11 corvettes and two anti-submarine trawlers from 1940-44; and one minesweeper in 1954. Most of these ships were built for the RCN; however,



COURTESY OF THE MARINE MUSEUM OF THE GREAT LAKES

Belleville

several saw service with the U.S. Navy or the British Royal Navy. Many of the RCN corvettes built in Kingston were named after nearby Ontario communities, e.g., *Napanee*, *Belleville*, *Smiths Falls* and *Trentonian* (for Trenton).

Over the years there have been many shipyards along the Kingston waterfront, most of which have ceased to exist. One of these, **Canadian Dredge and Dock** on Anglin Bay, built tugs and other small vessels for the Navy during and after WW II.

In response to the war in 1939, the **Kingston Naval Division** was established on the site of the old feed mill, **7** where the Holiday Inn now stands at the foot of Princess Street. In 1941, the Division was commissioned as **HMCS *Catarqui***. There are now 24 NRDs spread across Canada. The mission of NRDs is to recruit and train sailors to support and sustain Canadian Forces (CF) operations. Naval reservists have diverse backgrounds and commitments, e.g., full-time students, farmers, teachers, mechanics, lawyers, etc.

HMCS *Catarqui* has occupied several sites in Kingston since 1939. From 1943-59, *Catarqui* occupied **47 Wellington Street** (right). **8** Originally built as a school in 1873, it also served as the Kingston Badminton Club and is now an apartment building.



In 1959, *Catarqui* moved into a new navy-built facility located on the opposite side of Highway 2 from the RMC campus. In 1972, this building was transferred to RMC and became part of its new gymnasium, the **Sir Archibald MacDonnell Athletic Centre**. **9**

10 From 1972-92, HMCS *Catarqui* moved to the **Kingston Armoury** located at 100 Montréal Street.

11 In 1992, it moved into its current home on the *Catarqui* River at 24 Duty Drive, adjacent to its former facilities that are now part of the Kingston Military Community Sports Centre.



12 The **Marine Museum of the Great Lakes** at Kingston is located at 55 Ontario Street. Its largest artifact is the icebreaker *Alexander Henry* that operates as a bed and breakfast residence during the summer. The museum has, in its collection, two superb warship models – a "Flower" class corvette like those built in 1941 and the 112-gun *St. Lawrence*, built 1814.

Monuments

13 **Navy Memorial Park** is in front of the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes. It has several monuments commemorating Canadians who have served in the Canadian Navy and Merchant Marine.



14 The **War of 1812 Monument** was constructed in 1937 in memory of the officers, seamen and soldiers who served in this area in defence of Canada in the War of 1812. It is located at the Fort Henry Visitor Centre at the intersection of Highway 2 and Fort Henry Drive.



¹ MacPherson, Ken. "Naval Service Vessels on the Great Lakes 1755-1875." *Ontario History*, September 1963.