

From Ice Age to Present Day: A Journey Through the History of King Township



By **Kim Silcox**

Three years ago, at the outset of the King Township Historical Society's 50th anniversary year, local author and King resident Ann Love and King's retired deputy chief librarian Sharon Bentley, took on the monumental task of writing *The History of King Township: A Community Shaped by the Land*.

The book, which chronicles the fascinating evolution of King Township, will make its debut on **Thursday, April 24 at 4:30pm** at a special book launch hosted by the KTHS at the Township Municipal Centre.

Entirely funded in advance by generous donors throughout the Township, this project faced significant challenges during the pandemic due to the closure of archives across the province.

Undeterred, Ann and Sharon embraced the challenge and proposed a fresh approach—one that would explore the history of King through the lens of its landscape. Their vision was to delve into how the land and natural environment have transformed over time, and how people have adapted to and shaped it.

In their approach, Ann and Sharon made it clear that they wouldn't be retelling the stories of the growth of our villages and hamlets or focusing on landmarks like Eaton Hall or Mary Lake, as Elizabeth Gillham and Kelly Mathews had already done in previous books. Instead, they sought to offer a new narrative, one that would highlight the evolution of both the land and the community, using fresh perspectives on key events like Simcoe's legacy, the first settlements, and the Lloydtown Rebellion.

As the project progressed, the duo set an ambitious goal: to have the book completed in time for the Township's 175th anniversary year. For the next two years, Sharon scoured both online and physical archives, utilizing digitized newspapers, community museums, university collections, and government records across Ontario and North America. She also organized research trips to the Ontario Archives and numerous visits with long-time King residents.

Meanwhile, Ann worked tirelessly on the writing, often uncovering fascinating stories she felt could not be left out of the book. To enrich the narrative, she has included vignettes by local authors—many of whom are no longer with us—that had previously been featured in the KTHS newsletter. These stories, shared by voices from King's past and present, offer intimate glimpses into the Township's history, including:

Out of Sight by Margie Kenedy

Responding to Need, Adapting to Change Part 1: The Wheat Barn by Phyllis Vernon

What Happened to the Rank-and-File Rebels from King? by Patricia Blackstock

Septimus Tyrwhitt by Bertrand Duclos

Henry Frost by Richard Vien

Responding to Need, Adapting to Change Part 2: The Bank Barn by Phyllis Vernon

Whatever Need Existed in the Community; the Institute Was There by Louise Di Iorio

The Long-Lost Trail by Ken Carter

The Mount St. Francis Catholic Land Settlement Corporation by Bev Flanagan

The Lady in the Mud House: Blair's Story (1884 ? 1985) by Gillian Watt

Pine Farms Orchard by Tony Rolph

The Pottageville Swamp: Zoological Studies Begin in Ontario by Vicki Hotte

King Township Public Library by Gordon Craig and Sharon Bentley

Hospice King by Susan Deschamps and Philomena Duley

The Accidental Archives by Elsa-Ann Pickard

Throughout the writing process, Ann and Sharon continued to weave these vignettes into the book, enhancing its depth and richness. By the time the manuscript was complete, they had crafted rough drafts for three of the book's nine sections, covering the entire span of King's history?from the end of the Ice Age to the near future.

The KTHS is deeply grateful to Ann Love and Sharon Bentley for their dedication to *The History of King Township: A Community Shaped by the Land*. Their meticulous research and heartfelt storytelling have given us a treasure to enjoy for generations to come. This book is truly a labour of love, celebrating the unique history of King Township and the people who have called it home.

Pre-order your copy today and save! *The History of King Township* will be available for \$30 online and at the April book launch, where you can have it personally signed by the authors. After the launch, copies will be available for \$40 at www.kingtowshiphistoricalsociety.com and at the King Heritage & Cultural Centre.

Please join us on Thursday, April 24th at 4:30 pm at the King Township Municipal Centre for this remarkable milestone in King's history. We ask that you kindly RSVP to kinghistoricalsociety@gmail.com so we can prepare for the event.