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MAKING ART



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RAWDON 1952: NEVER A DULL MOMENT

Trying to work as an artist – it ain't easy

LAST November, at the founding meeting of the English Language Arts Network, I was struck by the focus and dedication of the people taking part. I don't mean I was surprised to find that artists are focused and dedicated, merely that these qualities usually take second place to creativity and talent. We may have stereotyped ideas about how artists live and work (starving in a garret, etc) but most of the time we just enjoy their products. Indeed, as Oscar Wilde maintained, it is the aim of art to reveal art and conceal the artist; if you're at a play and find yourself thinking of how many hours it took for the actor to memorize his lines, or looking at a painting and wondering how much the brushes cost, something is wrong. Of course, many of us do take the time to analyse how the artist's craft works, and we usually discuss this in terms of creativity and talent.

It would not have made sense for a huge roomful of writers, actors, singers, dancers, and visual artists to have talked about their individual crafts on such an occasion. What all these people had in common was the experience of working - or, more to the point, trying to work - as an artist. It ain't easy. But art is hard not because writers get "block" and actors go "dry" but because they also have to wait tables or sell shoes or teach (in no particular order of desirability). No, even that's not it: art is hard because artists have to do all that and then be creative. It is not, of course, in the nature of art that creativity is easy when you don't have to do a bunch of exhausting things first, but it sure helps. (That is the point and beauty of government arts programs.)

All these exhausting things are what most people call what they "do" - maybe "do for a living," although that somehow implies that this is still the most significant thing in your life. Answers to questions about what somebody does for a living are usually all you need to know about a person: you don't need to be told that the person is glad it's Friday and can now put his or her feet up and watch TV or get ready to wash the car.



Artists don't "live for the weekend" - or not only for the weekend; some even live for the next coffee break just so they can go write down a brilliant idea they've been musing over all morning. To define people by what they do for a living means in many cases that you miss everything significant. It's a habit we should get over. There was a time in my life when I decided to ask people I met what they did "best." Not surprisingly, I got a few peculiar answers and lots of blank stares. Still, the question had merit: tell me about the interesting things you do regardless of whether it brings you money. Most readers of the Quebec Heritage News will be all too familiar with the idea of having a passion that may not bring cash but keeps you alive in other ways.

Now, I'm talking as though artists never actually make money from their art, which is clearly untrue. A few make a lot. Many make a little, though not enough to live off, hence the waiting tables. Many never succeed, and of these some give up but others just carry on, doing their art in their "free" time. We tend to call this last group "amateurs" but the term is unfair: if we dismiss certain kinds of creativity just because they don't bring in money, we're excluding a lot of artists and are surely missing the whole point.

If we dismiss certain kinds of creativity just because they don't bring in money, we're excluding a lot of artists and are surely missing the whole point.

And yet, and yet... The ELAN artists' focus and dedication did suggest that there is a line between art and simply engaging in a hobby. The difference does not have to do with talent or skill or interest, but rather with the ability to put everything second to art. How many of us have had unfulfilled aspirations, and yet can't really say we don't have the time? Maybe it's not about time so much as focus, not

about enthusiasm so much as dedication.

Let me see. Somewhere I have a drawer full of poems, an outline of a play, chapters of a novel. I'm sure I could get them out and polish them off. But then, well, the car really does have to be washed, doesn't it.

Rod MacLeod

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On the cover: Wood-cutters, by painter Horatio Walker. For the full story please turn to Page 16.

FAKING LITERATURE FOR FUN AND PROFIT

Speaking of mental cases...

Crad Kilodney's CanLit submissions

For years, this abrasive, eccentric writer had a reputation for selling his books (sample titles: Excrement, Mental Cases and Putrid Scum) on the streets of Toronto. In 1988, he perpetrated what he called the "biggest literary hoax in Canadian history." Disguised as original work by unknown amateurs, Kilodney submitted poetry and short stories by famous CanLit figures to various publishers and literary contests. All the work was rejected. An editor at Montreal's Vehicule Press, which received a collection of Irving Layton poems written under the name Herman Mlunga Mbongo, did send a nice rejection letter, noting, "Irving Layton, to whom I showed your manuscript, was as delighted as I was to see how useful his poems still are."



Andreas Karavis: Cavities please

In a 1999 feature in Books in Canada, Montreal poet David Solway celebrated the work of a newly discovered Greek poet named Andreas Karavis, complete with an interview and a photograph. Solway claimed that he had hunted the reclusive fisherman-poet for years until he finally met him in 1991; he claimed he had begun to translate the Greek's poems in 1993. Karavis's fame soon spread. There were parties for the launch of his books, including one at Montreal's Greek embassy in 2000, where Karavis appeared in person, wearing a navy blue fisherman's cap. Soon after, Montreal journalist Matthew Hays (a contributor to CBC.ca) wrote a column in the Globe and Mail raising questions about Karavis's real identity. Solway admitted that he had invented the man, written his poems and had charmed his dentist into playing Karavis at the party.



Left: Street hustler and phony writer Crad Kilodney. Right: Andreas Karavis (aka David Solway's dentist). Photos courtesy Vehicule Press.

These two items are by Rachel Giese who writes about the arts for CBC.ca.

HERITAGE ISSUES

QAHN project: 'Getting the community to agree on how it can be done'

Information workshops focus on heritage conservation

History buffs in rural Quebec are planning to offer a series of conservation workshops this spring aimed at helping municipal leaders identify, protect and promote local heritage.

Sponsored by the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) the workshops are designed to show how town councillors can collaborate with local conservationists to save important landmarks and historic sites for future generations.

"As stewards of community heritage, municipal leaders and historical societies have a moral duty to conserve it carefully," said Dr. Josiane Caillet, architecture and art historian from Stanstead who is working with heritage groups to stage the workshops in the Laurentians, Montérégie, Outaouais and Estrie regions of the province.

"The challenge is getting municipal councillors and other members of the community to agree on how it can be done."

Though popular interest in local history has increased pressure in recent years on smaller municipal governments to combat the erosion of Quebec's unique natural, cultural

and architectural landscapes, research has shown that many town councils are still reluctant to adopt conservation policies.

For instance, since 1986 Quebec's Cultural Property Act has given municipalities the legal power to formally recognize and cite historic sites in their jurisdiction that they judge to be of heritage interest. With the exception of large metropolitan centres, however, this power is rarely used, according to a 2001 report on heritage policy, prepared for the province's Ministry of Culture and Communications.

Caillet, who is also developing a municipal guide to local-heritage conservation, said the workshops will also help dispel the myth that heritage conservation is a drain on municipal budgets. On the contrary, she said, sound management and promotion of heritage resources can stimulate community development.

Exact locations and dates for the heritage awareness and stewardship training workshops have yet to be confirmed, but most will be held at community centres, historical museums or town hall buildings, next spring.

Funding for the Heritage Awareness Training and Stewardship Initiative (HASTI) workshop series is provided under the federal Official-Languages Communities Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network is a non-profit, non-partisan umbrella organization whose mission is to help advance knowledge of the history and culture of English-speaking communities in Quebec.

For more information on the QAHN workshops call Josiane Caillet (819) 876-5987, amsdenf@sympatico.ca, or Dwane Wilkin, QAHN executive director, 1-877-964-0409, 819-564-9595, execdir@qahn.org. Laurentians workshop coordinator is Sylvia Fendle, a director of the Morin Heights Historical Association, (450) 226-8576 (home), (450) 226-1220 (work), sylfendle@yahoo.ca. Outaouais and Hudson Workshop coordinator is Jonathan E. J. Murphy, archaeologist and historian, Chelsea, (819) 827-7658, Cell: (819) 210-2935, jmurphy@geocognition.com. Estrie workshop coordinator is Charles Bury, Director, Compton County Historical Museum Society; (819) 875-5793, charbury@netrevolution.com.

If you're reading this you know someone who deserves Phelps prize

Call for award nominations

The Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) is currently inviting nominations from Core members for its 2006 Marion Phelps Award for outstanding contribution to the protection and preservation of anglophone heritage in Quebec. The annual award is named for Miss Marion Phelps of the Brome Missisquoi Historical Society, who was recognized by QAHN in 2001 for her nearly five decades' work as volunteer archivist with the Knowlton-based society. Since then, Joan Bisson Dow, co-founder of the British Gaspesian Heritage Village in New Richmond, historian Kenneth Annett of Ste-Foy and author Norma Geggie of Wakefield have received the Phelps Award.

Do you know of someone in your community who has consistently worked toward the promotion and preservation of local heritage? Send us his or her name and contact information, accompanied by a brief, one-page biography describing this person's contribution no later than April 30, 2006. The board of directors will present the 2006 Marion Phelps Award during QAHN's annual meeting in June.

HERITAGE HAPPENINGS

Outaouais Heritage Web Magazine

Heritage network board meeting set for Wakefield

Plans are underway to launch the latest addition to QAHN's family of regional heritage web magazines on Saturday, April 29, in the charming and historic West Quebec village of Wakefield.

When it goes on line officially later this spring, Outaouais Heritage Web Magazine will feature a virtual smorgasbord of historical and visitor information, including links to many of the region's heritage highlights, museums, historical societies and local archives.

"The launch event is really QAHN's way of thanking everybody from the Outaouais who pitched in to help us create this fabulous new tool for discovering the history of Quebec's anglophone communities," web magazine editor Matthew Farfan said.

In addition to many original photos and article contributions by Farfan himself, Outaouais Heritage Web

Magazine contains an unprecedented online collection of history writing from some of West Quebec's best known writers, including Diane Aldred, Bruce Ballantyne, Gunda Lambton, Venetia Crawford, Ernie Mahoney and Norma Geggie, winner of the 2005 Marion Phelps Award.

The internet-based website will be devoted to exploring the fascinating development of West Quebec from prehistoric times to the present, offering visitors and researchers alike a chance to browse through a rich store of local lore, family history and archival photographic material from Buckingham and the Gatineau Valley to Aylmer on the Ottawa River west to Shawville and all the way to Fort Coulonges.

The invitation-only event will take place in the afternoon at Les Trois Erables bed-and-breakfast, following the spring meeting of QAHN's board of directors.

'This evaluation is being done too quickly'

National Assembly hears QAHN concerns for churches

A committee of National Assembly members who are steering development of a new provincial government policy on the future of religious heritage in Quebec have been urged to consider the unique legacy of English-speaking congregations in the province.

In hearings before the government's standing committee on culture, held January 25, the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) voiced concern about the selection criteria currently used to determine the funding eligibility for church renovations.

Since 2004, the Religious Heritage Foundation of Quebec, the province's main public funder of church restoration projects, has taken a mainly quantitative approach to evaluating project proposals, with the result that smaller, simpler structures tend to score lower in the selection process compared with larger, more ornate buildings, according to Patrick Donovan, QAHN board member from Quebec City who prepared the brief for the Committee.

"We worry that this evaluation is being done too quickly, without taking into consideration all of the heritage value of a particular site," Donovan writes. "Such judgments should instead be based on qualitative and detailed heritage studies that take more than just aesthetic factors into account."

Richard Evans of Patrimoine-Heritage Huntingville, founding president of QAHN and a current executive member, appeared before the Culture Committee in Quebec City. Evans also cautioned against relying too heavily on a point system to grade the merit of heritage sites rooted in different cultural traditions.

"Such methods are an inadequate basis for judging the patrimonial significance of community history," Evans said. "They don't take into account the importance of different cultural origins and may fail to reflect Quebec's historic religious diversity."

The QAHN delegation also raised the question of pioneer cemeteries in Quebec's rural regions. Hardly a month goes by without news of yet another pioneer burial ground somewhere in the province that's in dire need of attention, its gravestones cracked and crumbling, its fence in ruins, its volunteer trustees grown too old to clear the brush or mow the lawn. Across many regions of the province, moreover, where traditional rural communities have experienced considerable population decline in recent decades, the threat to this aspect of Quebec's heritage is particularly pronounced, QAHN told the committee.

Committee members, including prominent Parti Québécois MNA Daniel Turp, seemed interested to learn that in some English-speaking communities, funds established generations ago for the upkeep of burial grounds have simply run out, while others continue to rely on Quebec's dwindling inventory of volunteer-run non-profit cemetery companies.

QAHN called on the Quebec government to develop and implement a national policy for the restoration and long-term preservation of all rural cemeteries, regardless of their linguistic or religious affiliation. "We believe that a properly funded, national program to care for these sites is necessary in order to provide future generations of Quebecers and Canadians with a tangible record of the historic role played by rural anglophones in the development of Quebec society."

HERITAGE TAX DOLLARS AT WORK

On the Trail of Nicholas Vincent

Hello Sotheby's? this is the Portrait Gallery calling...

The Portrait Gallery of Canada (PGC) recently acquired a watercolour series depicting Huron diplomat Nicholas Vincent at Sotheby's auction in New York. In the following interview, the Gallery staff who made this spectacular acquisition give us their impressions of these works, which have not only artistic but historical value as well.

Q: Tell us about the works just acquired by the Portrait Gallery of Canada.

A: They are four watercolours painted in 1840 by Philip John Bainbrigge (1817-1881), a British soldier who was a member of what has been called the Group of 1838, an informal association of civilian and military artists active in Quebec City circa 1835-1842.

Q: The works have been grouped under the title *Watercolor Scenes of Canadian Indian Life in Wintertime*; and yet Bainbrigge was in fact focussing on a specific person.

A: Yes. The person in question is Nicholas Vincent, a Huron from Lorette (Quebec). His Huron name was Iza-wan-ho-hi, which means 'he who

immerses things into the water.' He was a very important figure who took his battle for the territorial rights of the Quebec City Hurons all the way to the Court of King George IV in London. He was very much aware of the symbolic value of culture.

Although he spoke French at Court, he made it a point of honour to speak Huron when addressing Canadian

parliamentarians. He was much in demand as a speaker.

NATURAL AND SPONTANEOUS

Q: How would you rate the works from the artistic standpoint?

A: The interesting thing is that the subjects look natural and spontaneous. The pictures could be snapshots. The other known portraits of Nicholas Vincent depict him in

much more official poses. The national portrait collection of Library and Archives Canada already has a lithograph of Nicholas Vincent, but he is not shown as naturally as in these new acquisitions.

Q: How do you make an acquisition through an auction at Sotheby's?

A: We generally make telephone bids. The auctioneer calls us when the item in which we are interested is coming up. The bids increase in \$500 amounts. There was another bidder interested in this particular lot. We eventually won with a bid of US \$9000.

Q: Do you know who the other bidder was?

A: No, that's kept confidential. Even

though we only go to auction three or four times a year, it ends up being profitable. These new portraits will enrich the permanent exhibition of the Portrait Gallery of Canada, which will open its doors in December 2007.

From the Library and Archives Canada electronic newsletter, Volume 2, Number 2, March-April 2006.



Watercolour depicting Nicholas Vincent, by Philip John Bainbrigge, one of four painted in 1840 and recently purchased by the National Portrait Gallery. This one depicts the chief reloading his musket after downing a deer.

OPINION

Orford Park land donated to all on the condition that it remain forever free

Sale jeopardizes future integrity of all protected areas

By Dwane Wilkin

The Charest government's apparent determination to squander historic parkland in one of the few designated conservation areas in southern Quebec amounts to a gross betrayal of the public trust, and should be vigorously opposed by all Quebecers who care for our province's natural heritage.

It matters little whether the decision to sell the land in Mount Orford Park to real-estate developers was intended as a gift to certain Liberal-friendly businesses in the Eastern Townships or if it simply resulted from Premier Charest's own ideological inability to grasp the worth of anything that can't be traded for cash on the barrel. If the sale goes ahead and parkland is turned into a luxury private resort complex, all but a handful of wealthy Quebecers will be the poorer for it.

As is always the case when private investors' interests are pitted against the common good, the argument for planting 950 condominiums around Mount Orford depends solely on unprovable claims that the project will stimulate the local economy. Such claims may or may not have merit, but they are certainly out of place in any debate over the future management of Quebec's priceless network of publicly owned parkland. A particularly vivid illustration of why real-estate development is incompatible with the goals of conservation may be found in the garish make-believe village at the foot of Mont Tremblant, itself the victim of Quebec politicians who altered the provincial park's zoning laws in the 1930s in order to accommodate an American millionaire socialite's dream of owning his own ski lodge.



Conservation zones are established first and foremost to protect and preserve wildlife habitat, not to boost profits, create jobs or grow the value of investment portfolios. This is a principle that the current government sadly seems all too willing to abandon and one which environmentalists and community groups, including the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) must strive now more than ever to uphold.

Of course, there are also sound environmental reasons to worry about unleashing urban development in a provincial park. According to an environmental study conducted for the government's own environment ministry last year, the Orford condominium project carries significant risks, including an inadequate water supply. It is regrettable, but likely, under the circumstances, that residents in the Orford area will now be forced to take the government to court to stop the proposed sale. If and when this happens, they will have QAHN's complete and utter moral support.

Mount Orford Park was created in the 1930s from land donated to all on the condition that it remain forever free from human plunder. To allow even part of it now to be exploited for private gain surely jeopardizes the future integrity of all protected areas in the province and will only serve to destroy what past generations of civic-minded Quebecers, including park founder George Austin Bowen, endeavoured to preserve for our children.

Dwane Wilkin is executive director of the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network.



THE ARTIST

Mac used vet benefits to get started

Forrest McCarthy: Artist, lumberjack, guide and friend

By Joseph Graham

Forrest "Mac" McCarthy came into the world in Trenton, Ontario in 1924. He wasn't from Trenton – just passing through. His father was a pipe insulator from Ottawa, and he had heard that there was a lot of work in Detroit, so the family pulled up stakes and moved. They spent a couple of months in Trenton before moving on, and Mac spent the first five years of his life in Detroit. Mac doesn't recall much of those times. When the Crash came, Ottawa beckoned and they moved back.

A move like that, especially when you are five, tends to have a lasting effect, and Mac grew up admiring the calm and beauty of his new home town. He doesn't know exactly what made him think about capturing what he saw on canvas, but from a young age he began to seek out beauty, and by his adolescence he knew his way around the Pick Gallery and other museums in Ottawa. He must have been an enigma to his family. There were no artists or art admirers on either side, even going back a ways. He painted in watercolours and pastels and dreamed about adulthood.

In 1942, just 18 years old, he joined the Air Force and the war effort, hoping to become a pilot. A slight, unimposing, nervous young man, he was told he could not apply for flight instruction until he overcame a pronounced stutter. When he did, he was given a different reason, and by 1945, when the war was over, he still wasn't a pilot.

Mac was 21 when the war ended, and like many others, the rhythm of his life had been disrupted and he did not know what to do. He found himself drifting back to the galleries



and museums, and he heard about courses he could take in Montreal, courses that could be financed by the veterans' retraining program, at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. At the first opportunity he went there and was soon living a dream.

A student of art and artists, Mac never imagined or planned to study under the direct influence of the Group of Seven – his modesty never would have permitted him to. Still, he knew who they were, and when he found Arthur Lismer would be his teacher, he knew how fortunate he was. The Group of Seven was formed around 1913, inspired by Scandinavian landscape art to some extent, but mostly driven by a determination to be artists. Most of the original members were supporting themselves in commercial art, the exception being Lawren Harris, of



the family of Massey Harris farm equipment. The members of the group had met in Toronto, working in commercial art at the Grip Engraving Company, and they took treks to northern Ontario, to the Laurentians and anywhere that they felt was wild and natural to paint together. Arthur Lismer, one of the original members, went on to teach, and his path crossed Mac's at the Montreal Museum. Perhaps as important as Lismer to Mac was a fellow student named Al Cole, and they became life-long friends, studying, planning and eventually living together, even after Al Cole married. While the

four years they spent studying, from 1945 to '49, were full and happy, surrounded and encouraged by the daughters of the rich and famous and in the company of great artists, they had few illusions about their earning capacity as

artists afterward. Mac landed a job at Chez Pauzé, an upscale seafood restaurant on Ste. Catherine Street in Montreal. In 1949, he and Al Cole wandered into the Veterans Affairs offices trying to see if it would be possible to get some help to buy a small parcel of land in the countryside somewhere. They dreamed of a pied-à-terre, a tiny piece of the country



The Legends

of

Forrest "Mac" McCarthy

*His watercolours, oil paintings and
Lino Prints*

VERNISSAGE

Sunday January 15, 2006

Time: noon to 3 p.m.

Exhibition Hall

PAVILION DES ARTS

1364 chemin Pierre Peladeau

Ste. Adèle, (Exit 69 autoroute 15)

Contact person:

Mme Gisele DuCap

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Email: legends_mac@sympatico.ca

These two pages: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (as painted by Arthur Lismer on the back of a shirt cardboard); *Lumber Camp Christmas*; photo of McCarthy at his lino-press; invitation to this past winter's show.

THE ARTIST

where they could paint, inspired by the same natural beauty that had guided Lismer and A.Y. Jackson. The Veterans Affairs officer told them that it was not possible to buy a small parcel of land, but they could have a large 'terre', a farm, where it could be hoped that the veterans could eke out a living. Veterans have been rewarded for service with this kind of homestead since well before Confederation, and many farming communities were established that way. Communities such as Rawdon, established at the cusp of the 18th and 19th

centuries, came into existence this way, directing and rewarding the energies of young veterans.

Mac was anxious about how they would pay. They had scraped together the bus fare to come down to the Vets' offices, but they had no cash to put down. No problem, said the officer. He explained how they could acquire a 300-acre property in the back hills of Sainte Agathe, and they jumped at the opportunity. They were just in their mid-twenties with no real financial prospects, but they figured they should be able to cover the costs, a modest monthly fee, with the help of odd jobs.

In the spirit of moving to the country, they signed with James MacLaren Lumber Co., packed up their paints and gear, and found themselves on a bus headed north. They went way beyond Sainte Agathe and the end of the decent roads.

Forrest McCarthy is a slight, small-framed man who probably never tipped the scales beyond 130 pounds, but that spring he and Al found themselves working as drivers, "draveurs" in French, the fellows who had to make sure the logs don't jam on their way down the flooded river during the thaw. This is among the most dangerous jobs in lumbering and demands attention and agility. Poking at logs from the shore or from boats and sometimes from other logs, one slip and you are in the ice-cold run-off surrounded by rolling, roiling timber, spray and ice. They worked on through the summer on various projects, and come winter, they were given a pair of snowshoes each and sent off as scalers, inventorying the fallen trees.

While they both kept their focus on their art, and their paintings describe the lumber camps and the forests, Mac's linocuts best document this period in vivid, simple form. Dedicated to their art and to life in the country, the two looked out for the best opportunity to pursue their passions. When they met Sam Fike, a Pennsylvanian who ran a hunting and fishing club, they found a friend and mentor. For three years, they acted as guides and general camp hands, taking the rare spare moments to return to their canvases and dreaming about their homestead in Sainte Agathe. In the winter, they had the run of the camp, looking after it while all the guests and the rest of the staff were away, receiving food and supplies from Allan Falby, their friend and lifeline. Falby remembers once relocating them to a different part of the camp on the understanding that he'd be back in a few days to pick them up. Unfortunately, the weather came in, and when he returned a week later, he said they were ready to eat their shoelaces. It was during this period that Mac began his linocuts, taking his time over the long winters to perfect his technique and to document all he had seen and learned. A linocut is a carving made on a surface of linoleum, like a floor tile. Then the linoleum is inked and pressed onto a canvas or thick paper. The printed image will be the mirror



of the carved master on the tile. The carvings showing the lumber camp at Christmas, the blacksmith's shop and the guide's cabin all evoke this pristine wilderness where they lived and worked. When they built their first house off the 9th Range Road in Sainte Agathe in the late 1950s, they had no problem dealing with the fact that there was no electricity - they were used to that. Their friend Sam Fike made a deal with them that if they could grow Christmas trees, he could sell them in Pennsylvania. They planted crops of Scotch Pine and Fike was as good as his word. Mac and Al were the kind of people who never lost touch with friends, though, and Allan Falby, who went on to a long career flying for Wheeler Airlines, remembers an arrangement he made with these artist-lumbermen. When a client had fished over his limit up at one of the northern fishing camps, he would often give the over capacity to Falby rather than just abandon it at the camp. Allan still remembers watching Mac scurry off into the woods after he dropped the extra fish from his plane as he passed low over the house.

By 1967, they had built their new home where Mac still lives, properly set up with places for them to paint. It was around this time that Les Bastin, one of the neighbours, asked Al if he would look after his horse while Les was away.

One day Al began to talk about Jean, whom he met while looking after Les's horse. Jean had also grown up in an urban environment, delivering milk by horse and wagon in the same part of Montreal where Al and Mac were studying art, but their paths did not cross then. It took the horse barn in Sainte Agathe for that to happen. Jean was married when she met Al in Sainte Agathe, but all of that is another story. Soon Mac was sharing the house with Al and Jean. Needing to generate a little more money, they set up a nursery and began to sell trees to the growing vacation community in the region, and so they weren't at home as much. Mac never took up much space with his linocuts and never paid much mind to what was happening around him, and their lives went on harmoniously.

One day, a friend arrived in his Mini stuffed full and

heavily laden with the cast iron components of a contraption from a print shop, and Al and Mac set it up on the concrete floor of the basement. It was easily adapted to press linocuts one at the time and it still sits where it was placed decades ago, immobile but functional.

Eventually Mac and Al realized that they were running out of steam and could not maintain the rough, outdoor pace as well as their art. Thankfully, the vacationers who had moved in, while still a ways away from their farm, had brought property values up, and so they negotiated with one of them to buy their property provided they could continue to live there.

Al, the bigger, stronger more worldly of the two is gone. He passed away in 1998 and Jean left to live closer to her daughter, but Mac, with more than four score years behind him, stays on. The original buyer sold on, but the new one,



Nora Conant from New York, delights in having Mac there in their old house. "When I first saw Mac he was burning an old sofa in the yard, and I thought, now this is what I was looking for!" she said, recalling the look of horror on the real estate agent's face. While she can only get away from the States from time to time, she knows that Mac is up there at the farm, and that he still manages to maintain himself. In fact, he doesn't look any different than he did ten years ago. When asked about a creosote stain on the chimney he said "Yeah, I have to get up on the roof and get rid of that chimney cap. Darn thing is just no good. Stops all the smoke and it comes dripping down the side. Look how dirty the snow is where it drips!" Mac's still doing linocuts. He has a dream of documenting all the old French-Canadian country legends, many of which he heard on the nights in the lumber camps.

Opposite: *The Portavee*. Above: *Atwater Square*.

THE ARTIST

From Laurentian landscapes to the horror of war

Edwin Holgate: Last painter to join the Group of Seven

By Sandra Stock

Edwin Holgate was born in Allendale, Ontario, but his family settled in Montreal in 1901. Edwin was only fourteen years old when he started to study art in the Saturday class of William Brymner at the Art Association of Montreal. Later he became a full-time pupil of Brymner, then, still a young man, he set out for Europe in 1912 to study at the Academie de la Grande Chaumière in Paris. At that time, Paris was still the centre of the art world and the place to be for anyone who was serious about being a professional artist.

However Edwin also managed to enjoy himself and see Europe. In *The Laurentians, Painters in a Landscape*, Art Gallery of Ontario, 1977, which gives an outline of his life and works, we read that, "With two friends he cycled from Paris to Naples, visiting art galleries and museums along the way, reading poetry..."

In Paris Edwin had formed friendships with many Russian émigré artists and became interested in their cultural background. He

decided to travel to Russia. This trip proved to be a lot more exciting than Edwin had expected. "When in July, 1914, he traveled to the Ukraine with the bare minimum of luggage, he looked forward to a holiday with the families of his friends. The sudden outbreak of World War I left him stranded in Russia; his eventual return journey by Trans-Siberian Express east to Japan and from there to Victoria, British Columbia, took months."

When he came back to Montreal, he joined the Canadian army and was assigned to the ammunition delivery squad (by mules!) in Belgium and France. Even in these extreme

circumstances, Edwin continued to make sketches, which showed compassion and spontaneity in wartime conditions.

After the war, Edwin stayed briefly in Montreal and married a childhood friend, Frances Rittenhouse. Frances was an accomplished musician (mainly piano) and they both returned to Paris to continue studying in their

respective areas. They spent the summer in Brittany with Robert Pilot, another noted Canadian artist, and upon their return to Montreal, Edwin showed his work at his first one-man exhibit at the Montreal Arts Club. He was part of a group of artists who contributed much to the cultural development of Montreal – the Beaver Hall Group.

In 1923 Edwin first came to the Laurentians – a cabin at Mont Tremblant that was "Accessible only by boat – it offered him the privacy and surroundings he needed." (*The Laurentians*)

At this time, the idea of a unique Canadian culture, apart from the traditions of Europe and

different from the United States, was taking shape. This was the period of the Group of Seven painters: A.Y. Jackson, Lauren Harris et al, who felt that Canadian themes, especially that of wilderness, were worthy subjects for major works. Tom Thompson, who never was one of the "Seven" is probably the best known example of this movement. Edwin Holgate was invited to join the Group of Seven in 1931, but never exhibited as a member due to their disbanding shortly after he joined.

Holgate, who was fluently bilingual, taught at the École des Beaux-Arts and at the Art Association of Montreal at



Holgate works on these pages: Ludvina, La Malbaie, Gulls, Portrait of a Girl, Untitled. The artist is shown opposite.

this time. He also exhibited his own works - landscapes, portraits, nudes, etc. Also he was extremely proficient with woodcuts and illustrated a number of books.

In 1939 his life was again disrupted by war. In 1943-44 he was appointed Official War Artist with the Royal Canadian Air Force, and was posted to England.

Upon his return in 1944, he decided to "look for land, build a house, and move to Morin Heights." In his words, "Like many others I was restless, exasperated, felt I'd go nuts if I didn't get away and find myself" Both he and Frances enjoyed the year-round country life. There was time for painting outdoors.

For several winters Edwin Holgate conducted Saturday morning art classes, held in various locations in Morin Heights. Phyllis Buxton (now 96 years of age) remembers being in Edwin's classes and her article



entitled An Important Time in My Life, written for The Porcupine, # 5, June 2002, says the following: "We had to be the organizers and be there on time and attend regularly. These were Edwin Holgate's only stipulations. These we kept, Saturday mornings from nine to twelve, trudging through sleet, snow or rain from 1954 to 1964. We first met in a classroom in the present Morin Heights School, then upstairs in the former school building that was razed for the new highway and then lastly we met in the basement of the United Church.

"The shattering fact that we would not commence with lovely oil paintings, but had to start with charcoal drawings dismayed us, but we accepted, perhaps meekly, but finding, as Edwin predicted, it gave us the perspective we needed. What he said was 'law'. We gathered for ten



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fanciful, companionable years, some leaving and new members joining." During the time Edwin and Frances lived in Morin Heights, Edwin had served as a municipal councillor and was very active in community affairs.

Morin Heights has always been an attractive place for artists – the peaceful life and the great beauty of the still mainly unspoiled natural environment has always held an appeal. Edwin and Frances encouraged other artists who came here, such as Peter Whalley, who also remembers Edwin and Frances setting up a recreational recorder-paying quartet, including Peter and his wife Barbara. There were no public performances, but Peter speaks of this fondly as a lot of fun and break from 'serious' visual art.

Edwin Holgate "became so much a part of this community that even today, three years after his return to Montreal, his

presence in Morin Heights has not yet been quite accepted as a thing of the past. The move to the city had however become necessary for health reasons. This meant a painful break with casual country living." (*The Laurentians*)

In one article we have referred to for the "facts" of Edwin Holgate's life, the concluding paragraph is worth citing. "The retrospective exhibition arranged for The National Gallery of Canada by Denis Reid had to be kept small for traveling. It was shown in art galleries across Canada from July, 1976, paying tribute not only to Edwin Holgate, the painter, but also the Edwin Holgate, the man who continued to go his own way, never asked for honours or sought them, and, who, acutely aware of the world around him, maintained his integrity above all else." (*Edwin H. Holgate*, edited Denis Reid, 1976) Shortly after this



booklet was published, Edwin Holgate died in Montreal at the age of 85.

Sources: *The Laurentians, Painters in a Landscape*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Gage Publishing Limited, 1977, pages 43 to 45; *Edwin H. Holgate*, The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, edited by Denis Reid, 1976; *Edwin*



Holgate, 1892-1977, Sandra Stock, *The Porcupine*, # 5, Morin Heights Historical Association publication, June 2002; *An Important Time in My Life*, Phyllis Buxton, *The Porcupine*, # 5, Morin Heights Historical Association publication, June 2002; Peter Whalley, *Morin Heights*, interview, 2002.



Opposite: Saturday Morning Art Class: circa 1955, teacher Edwin Holgate is second from left (photo: Sandra Stock).

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Horatio Walker: Painter of the Habitant

Visit turned into a lifetime for gifted Ontario boy

Editor's note: Horatio Walker, 1858-1938, was one of those Ontario-born artists who came to Quebec for a visit and ended up returning to stay. For more than 50 years Walker was one of Canada's foremost painters. In particular his portrayals of rustic farm life in Quebec were and are admired around the world. The first of these two articles appeared in Canadian Magazine in 1919, the second in 1934. Our thanks and compliments to professor Claude Bélanger of Marianopolis College in Montreal for making them available on the excellent Quebec History/Encyclopedia web site. See below for details.

Late in the summer of 1870, an impressionable boy from Ontario was making his first visit to the old city of Quebec. His father had brought a shipment of timber to Wolfe's Cove, now marked by rotting docks, but then a lumber mart for two continents. As the lad drew into Quebec he was astonished to see a flotilla of fur-laden

canoes manned by Montagnais Indians from the Lower St. Lawrence. The spectacle seemed like a page from Parkman himself.

"How I would like to live here," said the boy.

It was Horatio Walker's first glimpse of the land he was to perpetuate in paint for future generations. The Canada of yesterday had gripped him it has held him ever since and made him its supreme artist-interpreter. Others have come and gone, on visits or vacations; he has set up his home and spent his life in the very midst of the habitants. He came while rural life was yet primitive and unspoiled; he sighs now as the old order changes and gives place to the new. Horses may replace oxen, shoes may drive out the sabots, store clothes may oust the homespun, but the habitant life of the past will linger in the poetic canvases of Horatio Walker.

As a boy of twelve left these romantic scenes to return to the more prosaic backwoods of Perth County, his decision to make his home in Quebec was completed, but it was years before this hope was realized. Already in Listowel, where his father was a considerable citizen, his native ability in art was evident. A curious incident, a landmark in his career, had occurred a few months before. Observing the lad's facility with pencil and brush as evidenced even in cartoons of his teacher, the local Orange lodge, needing a banner for their coming Twelfth of July procession, had asked the Walker boy to paint one for them. The opportunity was as great as the compliment, and soon there was a dashing silk banner, with "King Billy" on the white horse, crossing the Boyne, on one side, and the open Bible and the immortal names of Ulster towns on the other... The banner was an instant success, and for his first public commission the boy artist received the tremendous sum of \$20. In the Listowel of those days that spelled fortune to a youngster, and soon the swelling artist was treating his chums to such luxuries as the town afforded. A hair cut with a shampoo was about the height of metropolitan imitation to which their tastes led them.

A kind father indulged a yearning boy's love for Quebec with two or three more annual visits, with fresh glimpses of timber rafts, steep-roofed cottages, and dominating church spires, the memory of which remained and beckoned as other tasks came to hand. At fifteen, young Walker went to Toronto and secured employment in the photograph studio of Notman & Fraser. We think of photography nowadays as a recently developed art. We do not realize the artistic product of the Notman studios of that day in Montreal, Toronto, Halifax and Boston, recording the leading men and women of two nations and



rendering pictures in natural colour through the skilled brushes of real artists. It was a studio in which a young artist might well seek a place. The "atmosphere" was there, trained men mingled with eager youths, and the celebrities of the day passed steadily through the portals. Among living Canadian artists who worked and learned in this home of the strangely assorted paint brush and wet plate were R. F. Gagen and F. McGillivray Knowles, as well as Horatio Walker. Mr. Gagen, as an older man, then gave Walker most of the practical instruction he ever received, though its volume was naturally slight considering the circumstances.

It is evident that Walker was an apt pupil, for at twenty he had left photographs behind and crossed the border to attain his first success in paint. He lived for a short time in Rochester, wandering afield sketching in the rolling and wooded valleys of northern New York, as well as doing several commissions. His first picture shown in New York, to which height he had now reached, was called *A Sty*. It depicted with much realism a number of pigs lying down, and was a worthy precursor of many later rural studies. The sketches for it were made in Quebec, where the young artist had strayed from Toronto when chance offered. A larger picture followed, the next year, bringing election to the Society of American Artists, then to the American Watercolour Society, where he won a \$300 prize with a picture called *Swineherd and Pigs*. This fine bit of French Canadian life was bought at once for the Piker Art Gallery at Northampton, Mass., and the young artist had made his first score in the world at large.

Now began the thorough study of Quebec rural life, which is the basis of Walker's individuality and his achievement. He possessed remarkable natural gifts in draftsmanship, for the lack of which no splashing colour can compensate. From a modest studio in Quebec City, he radiated through the riverside parishes, pack on back, sketchbook in hand, and learned his country and his people thoroughly. Only a deep enthusiasm would carry a young man for years through this drilling and grilling. He walked forth and back through the shore settlements from Portneuf to Charlevoix, seventy-five miles, sketching the habitant as he worked, as he played, and as he lived. No peddler or insurance agent could be more devoted to his "beat" and his calling. He talked with the people in their own patois, he lived in their primitive homes, he attended their festivities and joined in their hours of sorrow.

Moreover, he was their link with the outside world. In his pack were the late French-Canadian newspapers, and from these he read the news to the habitants, hungry for variety in their drab life. Murder trials and stories of great crimes and disasters interested them most, and they crowded



round the dim light in their cottage as the visitor, joining in the smoking of *tabac Canadien*, unfolded these thrilling tales of a faraway cruel, but interesting, world. For this suave and talkative stranger the habitants conceived a real liking, and for the courteous and kindly old men who headed the north shore families of that generation the artist had a fondness and respect which has never left him. Close contact for years brought an exhaustive collection of sketches in pencil, watercolour, and oil, recording the whole life of a people with sympathy and exactness. With his power with the pencil, as well as his luminous colour,



Opposite: *Celestin 1894*. Above: A mid-life photo of Horatio Walker. Right: *A Canadian Pastoral*.

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the artist made spot sketches which have been a solid basis for the more ambitious interpretations of later years. Those early impressions of the habitant have been constantly freshened and reinforced as the artist yearly takes to the field on the Isle of Orleans, and makes new sketches of the quaint life now fast passing away. We still think of rural Quebec as picturesque and backward, but to an artist like Horatio Walker there are many changes in a generation, and he sighs for art's sake as the old implements and the old garments give place to modern and exotic things. He has lived on the Island since the eighties, and has ever made his environment his work and his interest. There have been annual visits to New York, and several sojourns in Europe, but they have been for Always there is luminous

observation and recreation, rather than study. The artist has made his way in his own method, dowered by nature with a colour sense and supreme ability to draw.

And what kind of man is the habitant as seen by Walker, his artistic interpreter? There is a natural tendency to compare the work of Walker with that of Millet, who has perpetuated on canvas the peasant life of France. The resemblance, however, stops when the type of subject has been mentioned. Millet gives the world a discouraged, downtrodden race, as symbolized in *The Man with the Hoe*. Walker's men are hardworking, but they are not gloomy nor despairing. There is ignorance and lack of animation in Millet's figures, but in Walker's there is sunlight and the glory of accomplishment. Faces in Millet's works tell of the hopeless struggle to raise rent for a non-producing owner; Walker's farmers know that the reward of their industry is their own.

As has been so well said, "Art is life seen through a temperament". Millet, dealing with down-trodden peasant life, carried that side perhaps to an exaggeration. Walker, possessing a sanguine temperament, living in a new country, perhaps idealizes his people. At any rate, no Walker picture fails to cheer and inspire the spectator. The colours alone would do this were one to disregard the epic theme or the superb drawing. There is ever a warmth that carries its seductive tones to the fibre of one's body. Is there a cloud in-the sky? There will be a rosy glow, as in *Plowing-The First Gleam*, as the sun breaks over the south shore of the St. Lawrence; or in *Oxen Drinking*, where the day ends with a glorious burst of colour, suffusing the tired figures at the trough. Is there a woodsman in the forest? Against the snow and the dark trees there will be a touch of red, perhaps the axeman's trousers, perhaps his shirt.

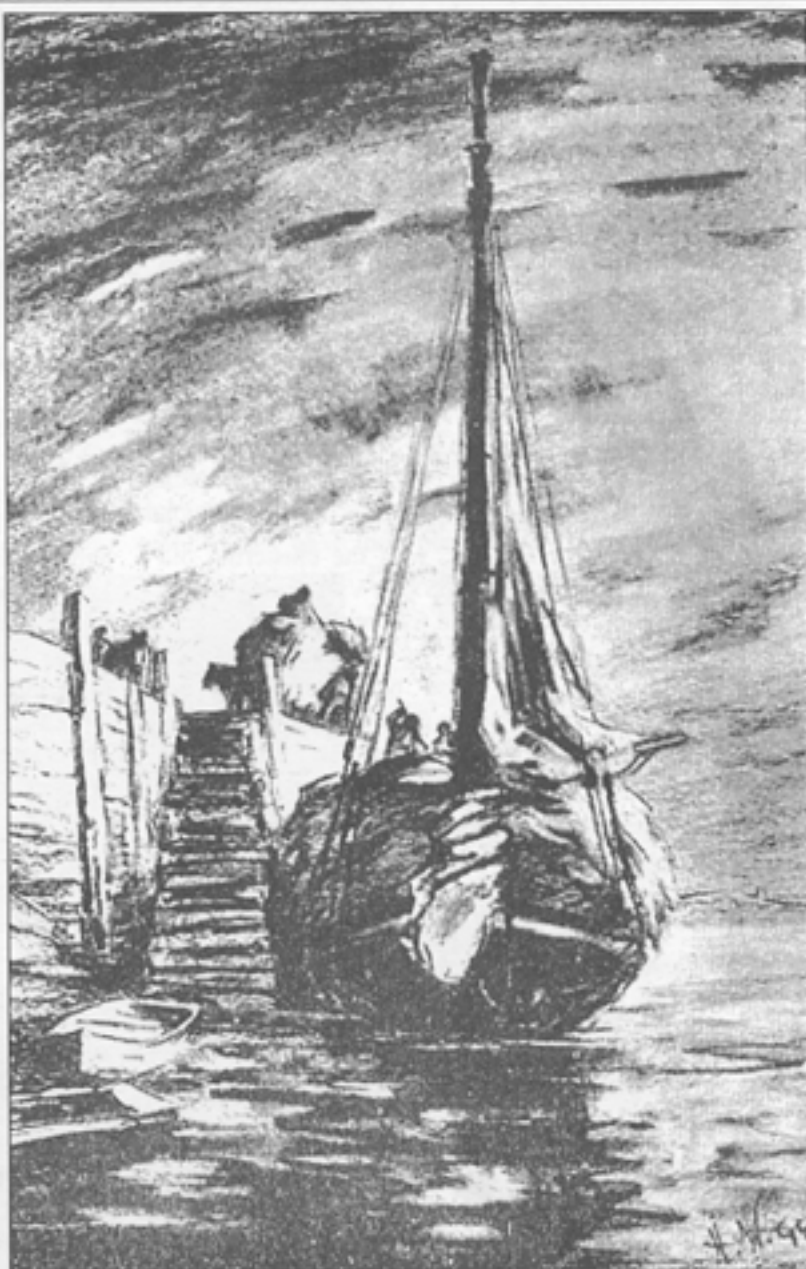


colour which reaches the spectator's faculty for appreciation.

Some say Walker's pictures are theatrical, that his figures do unusual things to heighten the effect. It is quite true that this artist is daring, but if his farmers are represented at times in striking attitudes, they are not impossible, though rather, perhaps, uncommon attitudes. The upraised hand with the goad in *Plowing - The First Gleam* is arrested and demonstrative, but it gives at once a fine feeling of effort and movement, which promises that the day will see something accomplished. In *Oxen Drinking* there is a spacious sky, full of colour and interest, all giving a Homeric scale and epic grandeur to the scene. Even the woman and turkeys in *At Feeding Time* and the figures in *A Sty-Boy Feeding Pigs* uplift and glorify the routine of these commonplace tasks. One cannot study them without a new sense of the dignity of labour and an enhanced respect for such workers. His men in the fields are absorbed in their tasks and almost unconscious of their own personalities. They fall naturally into their environment, and their work and their land seem to form part of the great scheme of a nation's enterprise and development. Arched by a kindly sky, living on a goodly earth, their place in the world is worthy, and men's reward will correspond with their effort.

Absorbed in their daily tasks, they yet do not neglect their religion, and in the hour of trouble or unrest they kneel at the wayside shrine. This symbol for the devout habitant is plentifully distributed along the highways of Quebec, but the more elaborate shrines with a large figure of Christ on the cross are fewer than formerly. In *A Rural Shrine* Mr. Walker shows a figure bowing in prayer before a figure of the Christ. He is returning from toil, and as he prays his oxen stand, seemingly with understanding. The shrine lifts high on the canvas and is dark against a bright sky beyond. Clouds and a warm glow fill a large space, and one feels, no matter what one's creed, that here is comfort for the weary and hope for the habitant's future life.

Many artists of to-day would say Horatio Walker is conservative and old-fashioned. Compared with the radicals, he is both. He has not experimented in the new methods of the Impressionists and Futurists, and doubtless has little sympathy with them. He is a realist and a careful, honest painter, but withal a colourist. He paints life as he sees it, even though his spectacles may be a trifle rosy. He knows the life he interprets, and he pictures it with sympathy. His home at Ste. Petronille, Isle of Orleans, faces Quebec six miles up river, and from his garden the Falls of Montmorency, like a bridal veil, and the ever-changing Laurentians, are always in view. The site is



eminently historic, for on the point now forming Walker's spacious country house style of home, Jacques Cartier camped when in 1535 he spent the first winter ever endured by a white man in Canada.

The river road winds through the village and far down the Island toward St. François. The massive village church almost casts its shadow from the hill to the Walker studio, and down the road the shrines are freely sprinkled. An old-fashioned windmill with sails for farm power is but one remnant of primitive methods. The habitants are laying aside their homespun, and old cottages as they fall are replaced with hard, tinny-looking structures; but while Walker's art remains the world will never forget its happy, simple-living habitant.

Opposite: *L'Eglise de l'Île aux Grues, 1888; Interieur d'une maison.* Above: *Unloading Hay Boat.*

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Age cannot wither nor custom stale

Horatio Walker 1934: still young in all but years

By William G. Colgate

IT was about three o'clock of a bright Sunday afternoon that I took the ferry to Ste. Petronille, Isle of Orleans, the home of Horatio Walker, dean of Canadian painters, widely renowned, yet better known perhaps amongst collectors and dealers of the United States than in his native Canada.

The sail down the St. Lawrence from Quebec by ferry was a delightful one.

In the steadily receding distance one could obtain a good view of the ramparts of Quebec, with the clustering old houses and church of Notre Dame des Victoires grouped picturesquely and compactly at the foot of the cliffs.

On arrival, a five-minute spin by taxicab through a twisting, turning, tree-lined road brought me to my destination. I unlatched the garden gate. A winding path of field stone bordered by flowering peonies and iris, led me to the door of the house, a rambling, low-lying structure

built in roomy bungalow fashion, I pressed the bell button. There was a sound as of a chair being pushed back. The door opened, and through the outer protecting screen came the brisk, hearty tones of a masculine voice in salutation. In the shade of the garden summer house we chatted for a while.

"May I ask, Mr. Walker," I said, as I admired the view of the river and distant shore, "what brought you, Ontario-born, to the Isle of Orleans to work and live?"

"Well, I liked the place the first time I saw it. Fifty years ago, I came here on a sketching trip, landing first at St. Laurent and then here.

"And what is, more I have lived in the same house ever since. It was originally owned by a habitant. According to French law, he couldn't sell until his sons came of age. So he rented it to me. Meanwhile - of course this was some years later - I saw my lawyer and instructed him if the property ever came on the market to let me know at once wherever I might be. It happened that when I was in the Old Country one time a cablegram came saying that if I wanted the place I'd better hurry home. I got back in four days, closed the deal and here I am.

"I remember," he continued in a reminiscent vein, "my first order. I was a lad of about fifteen, living at home at Listowel. The Orangemen of the town wanted a banner and they came to me. Somebody I suppose had told them I dabbled in paints a bit, and the result was I got my first commission." He smiled broadly as he raised his head, gazed out at the garden, and no doubt thought of the contrasts which fifty years had brought."

"How did you get the materials for your banner?"

"Oh, I just got a piece of silk of the right proportions, sized it, roughed out my designs and went ahead and painted. It was quite the conventional subject. I recall it had four long tassels commemorating the four Orange victories - Aughrim, Derry, Inniskilling and Boyne. One side bore a picture of King William on a white horse with arm outstretched leading his troops into action, while the reverse side showed an open Bible with crossed swords. It was not very original, but the Orangemen were proud of it, and they paid me twenty dollars. Not all at once; I got it in four instalments.

"Our neighbours were kind. One in particular. At a time when any youngster who seriously aspired to make a living at painting was regarded as touched, or as they called it, soft in the head, he stuck up for me, fought my battles against the sneering or contemptuous; and on one occasion did physical combat for me as one entitled to



some consideration as an artist. He did more; he sat for my first portrait, and later exhibited it quite proudly in one of the drugstores in town, where it attracted the admiring attention of the townspeople, who began to think I might amount to something after all. Not that they were wildly enthusiastic. You can't make rural folk act that way. They live too close to realities. But from then on I met with more outspoken encouragement."

"What became of the portrait?"

"I wish I knew. My friend died some years later. His widow moved to Toronto, and so far as I know took the portrait with her. She wrote to me a short while ago. I shall have to write and ask her about the old painting, if I can find her letter."

"Why," I asked in a momentary pause, "have so few Canadian artists developed a distinct style in portraiture?"

"Because of a slavish obedience to academic traditions, for

the most part. They are afraid to be themselves, to follow their own bent. Anyone can copy, imitate or repeat. It takes an unusual man to strike out for himself, to devise new ways of doing things."

I dropped that subject for one that I thought would interest him more,

"What is your opinion of modernism in art? Has it made any worthwhile contribution to Canadian painting?"

Mr. Walker reflected for a moment. "No," musingly. "I can't say that it has. At any rate its influence is not perceptible. It is just a passing phase," I should say.

"Would you apply such stricture to Matisse, Picasso and Cezanne of the new school?"

"Cezanne I rather like. He seems to have got somewhere. His work is lucid, sincere, intelligent. Of the rest," with a characteristic throwing out of the hands, "I'm not so sure. I suppose they have their place, but I can't say much for it.

Personally, I enjoyed a meeting I had with Matisse in Pittsburgh, where he and Augustus John and myself had pictures on view. We afterwards had dinner together."

"To what extent do you consider Continental art is influencing painters on this side?"

"Not as much as formerly. Not nearly as much I should say. Of course our rich men still buy Dutch interiors and signatures. But even they are gradually being weaned from a worship of foreign art to a perception of the good qualities of their own. Indeed my suggestion to individual collectors and to the curators of galleries would be to buy good Canadian paintings now when they can be had cheaply. There will come a day when such pictures cannot be had at any price. Take some of our earlier painters like Kreighoff, for example. Where can you pick up a Kreighoff today unless you are willing to pay a stiff price for it? So far as Canada is concerned, I don't believe we shall amount to much in the arts unless we achieve something more than the status of a crown colony. The shadow of the Old Country hangs over us, influencing all we think and do."

Mr. Walker branched off to consider the future of Canadian art. "If



Opposite: The Bake Oven. Above, Petronille of Saint François, next page, Corner of Pig Lane in Quebec.

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Canadian painting continues to be Canadian in spirit," he said, "the outlook is encouraging. In supervising the work of a class of students in the city, when I am partly engaged during the winter months, I try to teach them to be themselves; for only in this way, I am convinced, can a truly Canadian art be evolved. My own attitude toward painting is to paint the thing as I see it."

Mr. Walker finished rolling a cigarette, then he said: "How would you like to visit the studio?"

"Needless to say, I accepted the suggestion eagerly."

NORTH LIGHT

The studio, a square, roomy and barn-like structure, was situated at the north-east end of the garden close to the river. It has what is the main desire of artists, a steady north light.

As we enter the studio a collection of small sketches marked by spontaneity and freedom of handling, characteristic of rapidly recorded impressions, caught my eye. "Oh, those," explained Mr.

Walker casually, "are some things I did when I was in Spain during my student days."

What particularly impressed me, however, was their pronounced variation in style from the artist's later work. Not that there was a lack of decision and force, as if of one feeling his way; there was plenty of both to be observed. Perhaps it was a matter of subject, climate or color. Maybe all three.

By this time we had made the round of the studio. Tea was served in view of the garden. There was, for me at least, more delightful conversation. As we strolled through the

flower-lined walk to the gate the trees were casting long shadows across the lawn. We chatted of many things, of life in Ontario, of travel, of the condition of art, of old friends, of religion, even.



"All religions you know, are pagan," he observed, "only for gods we have substituted saints." A clue here to the philosophy of the man. At the gate we said good-bye. As I turned down the road to the dock, he wave me farewell, his tanned face ruddy in the setting sun. Genial host, companionable man, artist. Full of life, humour and the zest for work and living which even the years cannot dim.

SOURCES: M. O. HAMMOND, Horatio Walker: Painter of the Habitant, in *Canadian Magazine*, Vol. LIII, No 1 (May, 1919): 21-29; William G. COLGATE, Age Cannot Wither Nor Custom Stale. Horatio Walker, One of Canada's Outstanding Painters is Still Young in All But Years, in

Canadian Magazine, October 1934. For an excellent experience visit the Quebec History web site www2.marianopolis.edu/quebechistory/encyclopedia,

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ARTWORK FROM: Pierre-Georges ROY, *L'Île d'Orléans*, Published by the *Historic Monuments Commission of the Province of Quebec*, Québec, Ls. A. Proulx, 1928, 505p.; F. Newlin PRICE, Horatio Walker, LL.D., S.A.A., N.A., R.I., R.C.A., New York & Montreal, Louis Carrier & Co., 1928, 15p., 38 plates; David Karel, Horatio Walker, *Musée du Québec*, Montréal, Fides, 1986, 311p.

THE HOLIDAYS

A one-way ticket on the train cost \$1.80

Rawdon 1952: There seemed to be never a dull moment

By Beverly Prud'homme

Author's note: From response received from visitors to the Rawdon Historical Society web site, there seems to be a great interest in Rawdon during the middle of the last century. In response to this interest, I have dug out my collection of the Rawdon News Bulletins and tried to portray Rawdon as it was at that particular time. I admit to using this source extensively for the following article, but I know that the editor and his staff would give whole hearted approval, were they still here.

In 1952, Rawdon was known primarily as a tourist destination. Rawdon was considered easily accessible using the old route 33 or 18. Being only about an hour's drive from Montreal it was very convenient to have a summer house here. For the same reason, as well as being the closest community north of Montreal where English was spoken, Rawdon also drew many American tourists, particularly from the New England area. For those without cars, public transport was available. Buses left from Montreal regularly as did the Canadian National Railway train with extra departures on weekends. A one way ticket on the train cost \$1.80. Bus fare was even less.

The township sector of Rawdon has always had several distinct areas known by name. The summer areas were Lake Brennan, Lac Claire, Gratten Lake and Masonville. In the village a few seasonal cottages could be found at the bottom of Albert, Church and Queen Streets as well as in 'The Pines' on the main level of town but most of the cottages for summer residents in the village were clustered around the beach area, 'the top end of the village' as locals termed it. A little farther north of

the beach area was the burgeoning Polish community. Over in the Pine Lands area, several Hungarian families had built summer cottages.

Not all summer visitors owned or rented places in Rawdon. Many preferred to 'room' or 'board' while here. Several hotels offered rooms for about \$42 a week, American plan.

Boarding houses were scattered all over town and in the countryside. They charged about \$3 a day without meals. For an additional cost meals would be provided. Often guests returned to 'their' boarding house year after year and became part of the family. Some of the better known establishments in town were Mrs. Burns and Mrs. Abby Blaggrave on 4th Ave, Mrs. Dick Blaggrave, Mrs. St Louis

and Fred Christopher's on Metcalfe, Barrie's on 3rd Avenue at the corner of the dam, Walkers on 10th Avenue. 'At the top end of the village' a Russian boarding house catered to their compatriots.

As mentioned above, many people owned or rented what were termed summer cottages. While some visitors were here only a couple weeks or on weekends, many mothers with their children moved up at the end of the school year and spent the whole summer in Rawdon. These particularly became part of the community, joining year round residents in their daily activities. Years later, many of the young ones returned to live permanently, choosing to bring up their own families in Rawdon and remembering the sense of security and the community spirit they experienced in their youth.

During the summer of

1952 there seemed to be never a dull moment in Rawdon. Most of the activities were annual events sponsored

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THE HOLIDAYS

by the various community groups and organizations. Every weekend some kind of entertainment was offered.

Summer activities got off to a start with the Loisirs of Rawdon holding a picnic and various races at Dorwin Falls to celebrate Saint Jean Baptiste Day. Almost 200 children, some accompanied by parents, took part in the festivities. The following week, July 1, the Anglican Church held its annual picnic and games at the Falls. This was a long standing tradition that originated in 1897. More than 500 people came for the lunch of ham, potato salad, baked beans, ice cold lemonade, and home made pies for dessert. After lunch there were races and competitions for young and old alike. In the evening, a barn dance was held in the Anglican Hall, the day ending with sandwiches, sweets and coffee served at 11:30 p.m.¹

A Tombola, sponsored by the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 198, included a parade along Queen Street, led by Chief of Police Charles Demers seated on a jet-black steed. The reigning Queen for 1952, Mrs. Eileen Rothdram, was also in the parade. Later she presided over the activities held in the Legion Hall (then on Church Street), including the drawing of tickets for various prizes.

The hall was transformed into a midway with booths of all sorts to tempt young and old alike. I can still feel the sense of excitement in the atmosphere when you entered the front door. For a child it was a magical experience. There was a Panda Booth with life size pandas, the Pony Game, Crown and Anchor, and Bird Cage. Rogers Plastics (now Créalise) had a booth with prizes of their own production. It was a colourful display. There was a Jewelry Pitch, card games and more, all vying for the attention and money of patrons. A very popular feature was a Fortune Teller, ready to offer insight as to the future of those willing to pay the price. Younger children flocked to the Fish Pond and the Nickel and Penny Pitch. The Cowboy Booth was popular with the young boys. Good sharp shooters took home Roy Rogers pistols, chaps, hats, and holsters.

Tucked away in the back corner of the large hall was a home baking table where the ladies of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 198 offered mouth-watering pies and cakes for a price. After the fun and games, the prizes were



drawn. The first prize on the raffle ticket was an electric washing machine, followed by an electric kettle and a steam iron being as second and third prizes.

Toward the end of August the Chamber of Commerce sponsored a Trade Exhibition in the Legion Hall with businesses from Rawdon and surrounding areas exhibiting their products and services. Of great interest to all was a cement silo constructed near the entrance of the hall by Rawdon Cement Works. This certainly caught people's attention! A silo in town! They were only two places in Quebec offering a silo made of cement blocks and Rawdon Cement was one.

In July a regatta, held on Rawdon Lake, offered canoe and row boat racing and a swimming competition. In the evening, the boats were decorated with Chinese lanterns and rowed down the lake creating a mystical aura of coloured lights seemingly floating on the water. This parade was followed by the dancing on the beach to live music.

Another weekend, Frank Szuba (Rawdon Cement Works) organized a folklore night with participants from several communities. Among the presentations was George Walton, a well known and respected tenor. Beverly Gilbert did a toe and a tap dance. Children from a local Ukrainian summer camp showcased their traditional songs and dances. Pierre Benoit sang parts from well known operas and Janet Scott gave two performances of song. There was what was then termed 'barn dance' music with a caller and four couples demonstrating square dancing. Henri Pontbriand, who also acted as MC, gave a rare public performance, singing in four different languages. Quite a varied concert!

The youth in Rawdon were not forgotten by the various organizations. While they were included in most regular activities, there were also special activities to keep young people amused during the summer holidays and all year round. Police chief Charles Demers had a Juvenile Police Club for the boys. It held regular meetings all year with special events during summer months. A Field Day at Dorwin falls June 25th started the holidays off in good style. The presence of the fire truck added to the excitement of the approximately 25 boys in attendance.

Members of the Royal Canadian Legion were also involved in activities for the younger generation with their Youth Welfare program. They put on their summer tombola particularly to raise funds for this project.

Previous page: Ad for Cameron Service Garage. Above, Boys' Club Fire Truck. Opposite: Chamber of Commerce tourism ad. All from *Rawdon News Bulletin*.

THE HOLIDAYS

While day camp as known today was unheard of in Rawdon, the Rawdon Summer School sponsored by the Anglican Church was already in its 3rd year with almost 100 children attending activities under the supervision of Rev. S. Willis. Children from outlying districts were bussed in. Classes were held in the Legion Hall (on Church Street directly behind the Anglican Hall). Mornings were given over to handicrafts, songs, stories and games. This particular year the theme was Roman history. The younger children made Roman armour and the older ones made a Roman fortress complete with moat and drawbridge. Afternoons were spent at the Pine Lodge swimming pool with Don Bell giving swimming classes. Some of the young girls helped out (volunteering, of course). These included Eleanor Purcell, Wilma McBride, Heather Bell, Verna Asbil, and Bernice Boyce.

During the week there were other diversions. On Tuesday nights there was a card party at the Rawdon Inn, and the Legion had social dancing every Wednesday night. There was the 5th Avenue Theatre which showed films every evening, including stock cowboy features, light comedies, and tales of adventure. Belles on their Toes, San Francisco Story, Kangaroo and Quo Vadis² were among the features offered in English. The news reel that started the show and the ever-popular Looney Toons were added attractions. All this for the price of 25¢ admission.

The usual church teas, sales and card parties also offered diversion during the summer. Pine Lodge held its annual Swim Meet at the end of August. Young and old alike, trained all summer for this very popular event. A twelve mile bicycle race offered a \$25 prize to the winner! Who, among those who were teenagers at the time, can forget Peter Mailhot's chip stand near the beach? Were there ever such good French Fries? This was the place for both local youth and the 'city kids' as they were known, to hang out. Down at the other end of town, on the corner of Queen and 4th, the Square Circle did likewise for the young set. For many years it drew the young ones in particular for fries and pop, an ice cream cone, or maybe a fudgesicle. The main attraction, though, was a small seating area inside with a juke box. The floor between the booths was well worn by baby doll shoes stepping – or was it stomping to the latest rock and roll hits.

The Chamber of Commerce at this time was aggressively promoting Rawdon not only as a tourist destination, but as

a convenient location for industrial or commercial ventures. The ad on this page appeared in the May issue of the Rawdon News Bulletin.

POLITICS

There was also considerable political activity in Rawdon during the summer months. There were municipal and school (Catholic) elections for both the township and the village. In the township, James Mason was mayor and Ernest Tinkler, Emerie Leblanc, Louis Rivest, Malcolm Kirkwood, Ernest Boyce and Léo Lane were councillors. In the village, Philip Tinkler was mayor, with Vital Perreault, Reginald Purcell, Hildaige Héroux, Clifford George Parkinson, Dr. Lucien Godin and James Robertson as councillors. These administrations were occupied with improving roads and streets within their respective jurisdictions. The village administration was busy paving Queen Street between 4th and 13th Avenue, and then 3rd Avenue over the bridge as far as what is now Golf Road. Sidewalks, posts, and rail guards were installed on the bridge. Albert and Queen from 4th to 1st Avenue, as well as the access to Dorwin Falls (now 1st Avenue) was given a new coat of gravel.

The beach was widened, the pier repaired, the chalet painted, unsightly signs removed and an attractive fence put up. Rawdon Lake was restocked with fingerlings. Dorwin Falls was allotted \$200 for clean-up and repairs.

Rawdon Village now had a garbage service. It was provided by a private citizen under the supervision of city hall. A weekly pick-up was available for 35 cents per pick-up. The township was also investing in their infrastructure with grants from the provincial government. Various roads were repaired, including Lake Brennan and Lac Claire roads, what is now Routes 341, 337, 125, as well as Lake Morgan, Forest, and Laliberté Roads.

In 1952 Rawdon could hardly be considered an uneventful or unchanging town.

NOTES

[1] There was an understanding that everything had to be finished by midnight to avoid breaking the Sabbath.

[2] I wonder how many people in Rawdon on seeing this film realized the man who wrote the original musical score, Cecil Sprague Copping, had a direct tie to Rawdon. *This story reprinted from the Laurentian Heritage Web Magazine. Visit it today at the Quebec Heritage Web, www.quebecheritageweb.com.*

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PASSINGS

An espresso with Jacques Boisvert and Memphré

Jacques Boisvert of Magog, underwater historian, scuba diver, environmentalist, columnist and hunter of mysterious lake creatures, died in February at the age of 73. The following interview is from 2002.

By Richard Roy

Memphré, the sea serpent of Lake Memphremagog, is alive and well, or is it? If anyone would know the answer, it would be 'dracontologist' Jacques Boisvert, who has been diving in the lake since 1980. But Boisvert, who logged his 6000th dive in the lake in December 2001, has yet to find evidence of the creature's existence.

"Everyone expects me to convince them that the monster exists, but I never attempt to persuade anybody," he says, leaning forward over the table to sip his espresso. "At first I laughed at the idea of the creature and still I laugh. I don't have to believe in the serpent. My job as an archivist is to document all sightings and to promote the lake."

Boisvert does believe that he once touched something he thought was a tree stump while swimming with his son. He has been quoted as saying that when his hand grazed the "stump" it disappeared leaving a murky cloud. "I couldn't say that it definitely was Memphré, because I didn't see it. It could have been anything, or it could have been its tail."*



According to tribal legends," Boisvert says, Memphré lives in a "lair beneath Owl's Head Mountain or near Skinner Island, west of Magoon Point at the entrance to Fitch Bay. The Indian people were afraid to swim in these areas and warned the first European settlers in the region about Anaconda [Memphré's Abenaki name]." The first documented "evidence" by a white man dates to 1816 when Ralph Merry IV, although not a witness himself, reported sightings by other people who had brought the subject to his attention. An interesting note is that Merry, in his diaries, does not refer to one serpent but to several.

The next documented sighting, according to Boisvert, was in the Stanstead Journal of 1847. An extract from the Journal reads: "I do not know if it is common knowledge that these strange dwelling creatures like giant sea serpents

inhabit Lake Memphremagog." In 1855, also in the Journal, David Beebe, the founder of Beebe, reported that "a strange animal something like a sea serpent...exists in Lake Memphremagog."

In 1986, Boisvert founded the International Dracontology Society of Lake Memphremagog, whose mission is to investigate the whole phenomenon. "Dracontology" is a word coined for Boisvert by Benedictine monks. A branch of cryptozoology, "dracontology" refers to the study of

unidentified lake-dwelling creatures. The word has been made official by l'Office de la langue française du Québec and by the American Heritage Dictionary.

By the year 2000, Boisvert himself had collected 50 sworn sightings from 124 people, bringing the grand total to 229. He has recently created a pictograph representing Memphré that has become the emblem of the Dracontology Society. It has been posted at various places around the lake to encourage people to keep an eye out and "Memphré is not the only object of my diving career," says Boisvert, who is also the founder of Magog's Memphremagog Historical Society. Placing his espresso cup back on the table, he says that "when I started, my aim was to tell the history of the lake from its very beginning. Three weeks after I started, I found an anchor that a

steamer had lost about fifty years before. After much research, I located Gilbert "King" Woodard who was the stoker on the [steamer] Anthemis, and he identified it for me."

His espresso finished, Boisvert leaves me with a final thought. "Whether you believe in sea serpents or not," he says, "Memphré is known worldwide and is "visited" by people from all over." Then, leaving me the bill, he is up and away before I have the chance to say goodbye.

* Sonia Bolduc, "Memphré: Myth and Reality," Université de Sherbrooke, 1997.

From the Quebec Heritage Web. Visit the Townships Heritage Web Magazine at www.townshipsheritage.com.

Photo: Courtesy of www.memphre.com

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Naming the Laurentians, By Joseph Graham

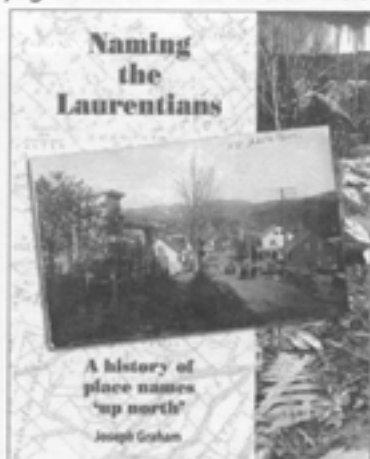
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Author Joseph Graham is a frequent contributor to the Quebec Heritage News. Naming the Laurentians is published by Les Editions Main Street, Inc. To order, send a cheque for \$33.70 (\$24.95 plus taxes, postage and handling in Canada - please inquire for foreign orders) made payable to Naming the Laurentians, 1494 6th Range Road, Ste Lucie des Laurentides, QC J0T 2J0. The ISBN number is 0-9739586-0-X.



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