



The Maple Leaf Rag

Friends of the Canadian Collections

Amis des Collections Canadiennes



SPRING 2016

The AGM of the Friends of the Canadian Collec- tions/Amis des collections canadi- ennes

Wed. May 11, 2016, 2 pm.

TK Boardroom

Marti Latta, Professor *emeritus*, Anthropolgy,
University of Toronto will hold a lecture titled:

Champlain's Cahiagué and the Warminster Site.

Samuel de Champlain visited Ontario in 1615 and 1616. His base of operations was the Huron village of Cahiagué. Archeological research at the Warminster Site, north of Orillia, by the University of Toronto between 1940 and 1978, has provided convincing evidence that this was Cahiagué, including a number of artifacts, which may be attributed to Champlain himself. As a result, this is the best dated site in Ontario, and it forms the basis for our understanding of the Huron native people at the beginning of European contact.

No registration required. Everybody welcome. Election of the FCC executive will follow the lecture.

Letter from the Chair:

This issue is dedicated to Canadian painters and paintings. We hope that you will visit the ROM to see these and detect many more interesting paintings on your strolls through the galleries.

Last year's fundraising centered on Arlene Gehmacher's project of publishing volume III of a catalogue of Canadian watercolors and drawings. We had a good campaign and raised \$14,115.00 towards this project. A big **THANK YOU** to all who made this possible.

**PLEASE RENEW YOUR FCC
MEMBERSHIP—WE COUNT ON
YOUR SUPPORT**

When you renew your ROM membership, look for the heading "Optional Donation" on the membership form. Under "My gift is in support of..." scroll down to "Friends of the Canadian Collections/amis des collections canadiennes," and place a check mark.

We need your donations to finance Canadian research and Canadian artifacts at the ROM.

By Mary Allodi, edited by Arlene Gehmacher



Watercolor by James Settee (Cree) :
E. McColl, Inspector of Indian
Agencies, en route over the Dawson
River, Circa 1877—1889, Acc.No.
985.177.1

Gift of Henry Borden

Photo ROM Images

In 1974, as curator of the Royal Ontario Museum’s Canadiana picture collection, Mary Allodi published the first catalogue of the collection’s 2,220 watercolours and drawings acquired up to 1972. The basis of the collection comprised images of early Canada, most of which had been acquired by Sigmund Samuel (1867–1962), steel industrialist, whose abiding passion about Canada’s colonial history had him focus on works up to 1867, the year of the British North America Act (Confederation). Samuel’s eventual endowment for the continued acquisition of images of Canada helped create for this institution a superb collection of early pictorial Canadiana.

When the first two volumes were published during those heady days of national consciousness after Canada’s centennial, they were recognized as landmark publications of pictorial documents of our early colonial history. From landscapes to urban scenes to portraits to ship portraits to botanicals to genre scenes to scenes of aboriginal life, the collection’s images reflect an artist’s response to a subject as much as the pictorial evidence of the subject itself. The holdings of the ROM were a revelation, to the extent that reproductions sold enabled the Canadiana Department to buy its own van!

Mary Allodi, retired in 1995 and now *curator emerita* (and Member of the Order of Canada), undertook to develop “Volume 3” of the Canadiana picture collection. Edited by Arlene Gehmacher, it is nearing completion for the copy edit phase. Featuring over 700 watercolours and drawings acquired 1972-2000, it retains the structure of the first two volumes, but now will boast many more colour reproductions, and many of those large-scale.. It also been expanded in scope to include a bibliography of primary (archival, manuscript) and secondary (published, printed) sources for both artist biographies and for those picture entries with explanatory notes or extended commentaries. This third volume, like the first two, will be recognized as a trove of images of Canada and information about them as well as the artists—professionals and amateurs—who created them. The works featured in all three volumes stand as the pictorial legacies not only of the understanding of Canada during its colonial past, but also the history of collecting pictorial Canadiana at the Royal Ontario Museum.

Arlene Gehmacher

New Acquisitions: Watercolor by Arthur H. Hider



Hider-Massey-00, Photo ROM Images

In 1980 David G. Sadler, VP at Massey-Ferguson in Toronto, donated to the ROM a water color by English Canadian painter Arthur H. Hider (1870-1972).

This water color depicts the Massey Harris Company Factories circa 1896 and was the basis for a chromolithograph produced by the Toronto Litho Co. Ltd. An example of advertising art, it reflects the company's pride of being the largest producer and exporter of agricultural equipment with factories all over the British Empire.

The water color is a bird's eye view of the Massey-Harris "factory family" of 1895 bringing together in a single image the Massey-Harris factories from diverse geographic locations thus forming a sort of "industrial dreamscape". In the chromolithograph this image is enforced by the slogans "Over 3000 men employed" and "over 2,000 horse power used". Arlene Gehmacher hopes to complement the gift of this water color with the purchase or donation of its chromolithographic counterpart.

Dorothea Burstyn

Jane Ash Poitras



It's Good for Your Heart. Jane Ash Poitras, 2003, Photo ROM Images, ROM2010-11675-1

I think that the role of the artist today is to become free to transcend. Then they can transform, enlighten, and become empowered.

Jane Ash Poitras, Hart House, Toronto

The ROM began collecting works by contemporary Native artists in the 1960's. These works reflect Aboriginal traditions, as well as the communicative power of modern styles. They help us understand what it means to be a person of Aboriginal ancestry in today's world.

As one of Canada's pre-eminent artists, Jane Ash Poitras is best known for her expressive mixed media presentations. Through the juxtaposition of personal and historic imagery, she explores the impact of Colonialism, past and present, as well as the political and spiritual strength of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas. She has an impressive academic record, having received Bachelor Degrees in Science (microbiology) and Fine Arts, and a Masters of Fine Arts, plus two years of study in Pharmacology. Ms. Poitras

meets regularly with Elders from Native communities to learn their stories and travels often, observing and taking part in rituals of various Native cultures. By doing so, she brings a humanist approach to her work. She does not try to give information, rather, it is about sharing knowledge. Her work results from the ongoing investigation of traditional non-Western medicines and the ‘secrets’ of plants, and incorporates knowledge that is taught and knowledge that is revealed, in combination with a powerful artistic vision.

Jane Ash Poitras was born in the community of Chipewyan, Alberta in 1951 and is of Cree/Chipewyan ancestry. She was orphaned at age 6 and was raised by a German-Canadian widow. European folk medicine and gardening were part of her upbringing. Until her thirties, she had no opportunity to identify with her Native culture. Once she did, it changed her perspective and how she defined herself.

Jean Read

The work of Jane Poitras is currently exhibited in the Daphne Cockwell Gallery of Canada: First Peoples

Material is based on available ROM information and on Jane Ash Poitras and Gallery signage.

The Death of General Wolfe



Benjamin West: The death of General Wolfe, Photo: ROM Images, Acc.No. 968.26.1

One of the ROM treasures in the Sigmund Samuel Gallery of Canada is the 1776 painting “The Death of General Wolfe” by Anglo/American artist Benjamin West. It depicts the death of British General James Wolfe during the Battle of Quebec in the Seven Years War.

The Seven Years War was the culmination of one hundred and fifty years of French - British conflict in North America. The war began in 1754 when a combined French – First Peoples force expelled

British colonists from a settlement in the Ohio Valley. It escalated into the world's first global conflict and by 1755 both the French and the British had sent thousands of professional soldiers to North America. The conflict soon spread around the world and only ended in 1763 with the signing of the Treaty of Paris.

The ROM painting depicts the death of General Wolfe in a stylized scene from the Battle of the Plains of Abraham on September 13, 1759. Although the battle only lasted for fifteen minutes, both Wolfe and the French General Montcalm were killed. The British victory here did not end the war but the fate of New France was decided and Wolfe became a hero and an icon of British dominance in North America.

The artist, Benjamin West, a co-founder of the Royal Academy who enjoyed the patronage of George III, was well known as a painter of historical, religious and mythological subjects in the dominant 18th century Neoclassical style. Neoclassicism was a reaction against the ostentation and excesses of the previous Baroque and Rococo stylistic periods. It attempted to rekindle the spirit of classical art by adhering to principles of order and reason. Contemporary scenes were often depicted in Greek and Roman settings.

West's figurative painting was heavily criticized at the time for showing the figures in contemporary costume rather than ancient dress. Many felt it was an affront to the art of history painting and at first George III condemned it because he felt it lacked dignity. However, West's representation was ultimately successful and eventually led to more historically accurate depictions in the art of the time. The painting shows the dying Wolfe as a Christ-like figure symbolically being held in the arms of a figure similar to the Virgin Mary. Only four of the fourteen men in the painting were actually at the battleground. The idealized Indigenous warrior to the left who is kneeling apart from the others with his chin on his hand appears calm and thoughtful. Next to Wolfe in the blue jacket is Dr. Thomas Hinde who is attempting to staunch the bleeding. On the ground in front of Wolfe are his musket, cartridge box and bayonet.

An example of including people who were not actually in the battle is the figure depicted behind the man in the green uniform. He is Simon Fraser, Lieutenant Colonel of the 78th Fraser Highlanders and was away recovering from wounds that he had received earlier. In the background and left of the men surrounding Wolfe a runner is coming with a French Fleur-de-lis flag symbolizing the news that the French were defeated.

West painted five large versions of "The Death of General Wolfe". The first was painted in 1770 and exhibited at the Royal Academy in London. It was presented as a tribute to Canada for its service during the First World War and is in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada. Other copies reside in various places but the ROM copy is the last and remained in West's gallery in London until 1829 when it was purchased by a descendant of Brigadier-General Monckton, Wolfe's second in command in Quebec. The painting remained in the family until 1921 when it was acquired by Sigmund Samuel who had an abiding passion for Canada's colonial history.

This cover design for the January, 1935 issue of the *Canadian Home Journal*, is by Rex Woods, Canada's leading commercial artist from the 1930s to the 1950s.

The oil painting depicts the Old Year and New Year, represented by the traditional figures of a winged, grey-bearded old man bearing an hourglass and a scythe (the Old Year), in the company of a very young child (the New Year). So far, so conventional...but Woods has given the tradition a humorous turn. The Old Year is ready for the New in one respect: he has already turned his hourglass so that the sands of 1935 have begun to run out. But he is perplexed by the appearance of the actual New Year, who has just zoomed in from upper right. This child, with the standard cowboy accessories of bandanna and broad-rimmed hat, is riding a rocking-horse composed of the date '1935', and has already lost his hat to its unruliness. The design would have been made in 1934, some time in advance of publication of the January issue. By late 1934, Canada and the United States were already in the grip of the Depression, with western areas – especially those affected by Dust Bowl drought – particularly hard hit. Overseas, Adolph Hitler had become *Führer* of Germany in August, 1934.



Photo McLean Publishing., ROM Acc.No.998.68.28

Rex Woods was born Reginald Woods on July 21, 1902 at Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, England. He came to Canada in 1920 and studied at the Ontario College of Art before working in Toronto commercial art studios. In the 1930s Woods became a successful and well-known illustrator for popular magazines and advertisements, designing for *Maclean's* and the *Canadian Home Journal*. Among his advertising creations was the 'Macdonald's Lassie': the image of a Scottish Highlands girl used to advertise Macdonald's tobacco. He also painted the replacement for Robert Harris's group portrait of *The Fathers of Confederation* after the original was destroyed in the 1916 fire on Parliament Hill. Wood's copy, donated to Canada in 1967, still hangs in the Parliament Buildings. Woods maintained a studio on Eglinton Avenue West, and died in Toronto on November 18, 1987. Woods followed contemporary trends in commercial art, notably the work of the American artist J.C. Leyendecker, whose *Saturday Evening Post* covers also influenced Norman Rockwell. Leyendecker's career was already in decline, however, by the time Woods painted this cover for the *Canadian Home Journal*.

The *Journal*, published from 1910 to 1958, was a popular magazine that reflected its readership: generally, older Anglophone Ontario women interested in contemporary and topical issues. By 1930, the *Journal* had 132,000 subscribers, but many more would have seen this cover. Note that this cover advertises an article by Norma Phillips Muir on 'The Story of the Dionne Quintuplets'. Born the previous year, the children had already been removed from their parents by the Ontario government, and placed in a specially-built hospital nursery, where the public could view them. The magazine published Canadian fiction by Lucy Maud Montgomery, Mazo de la Roche and Leslie Gordon Barnard, among others, and was explicitly Christian. In the 1950s, half a million households took the *Journal*, which merged with *Chatelaine* in 1958, and ceased publication.

The painting is part of the ROM's Rex Woods collection, donated to the museum by the estate of Woods's widow Etheldreda Jeanne Woods. The collection consists of more than 600 paintings and drawings, over 2,000 photographic negatives, and over 500 file folders of Woods's personal and business papers. Arlene Gehmacher, Curator of Canadian Prints and Drawings, is currently researching the collection with a view to a publication and an exhibition.

Anne Thackray

“POINT AND PUNCH”

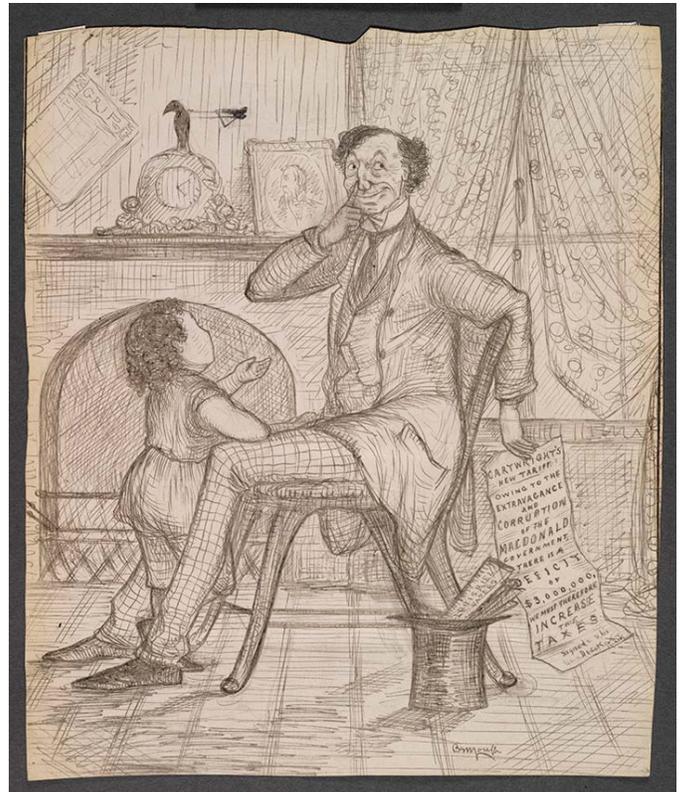
If you enjoy a bit of shrewd and witty satire aimed at crooked or hapless politicians, by all means go to the Sigmund Samuel Gallery Canada’s Decorative Arts and walk on through to the Wilson Heritage Room. There you will find some of the ROM’s collection of editorial cartoons by J.W. Bengough (1851-1923) and Sam Hunter (1858-1939). Taking their cue from current events of the late 1800s and early 1900s, they POINT at noteworthy events or attitudes and then PUNCH home their point, largely via their visual commentary of caricature, irony or wordplay, revealing individual or broader prejudices.

J.W. Bengough, initially a reporter for *The Globe and Mail*, founded, edited and published a wholly satirical weekly titled “Grip” (from 1873-1894) in which he was free to scold and moralize as he chose.

Sam Hunter provided his shrewdly rendered work mostly to Toronto newspapers.

We usually see editorial cartoons in their finished state, replete with captions. This exhibition features original drawings without them and yet we engage with their poser to get a point across. In some cases captions have been given in the accompanying text, which also provides the background needed to understand the cartoons more fully. For example, in the cartoon by Bengough – “A Touching Appeal”, done in pen and ink as well as conte over pencil, we see John A. MacDonald (a favourite target) pushing his nose to one side, a well understood gesture indicating that he was “crooked”. The text tells us that the caption accompanying the published image was “Touching the Secret of Increased Taxation” and that there was additional text reading, “Say Uncle John, won’t you give me a deficit? Ma says you gave the grits one”. This is a reference to MacDonald having been recently ousted from office as his government expenditures came to light.

Eva Cunningham



J.W. Bengough: “A Touching Appeal”

Photo ROM Images , Acc.No. 914x53.43-1

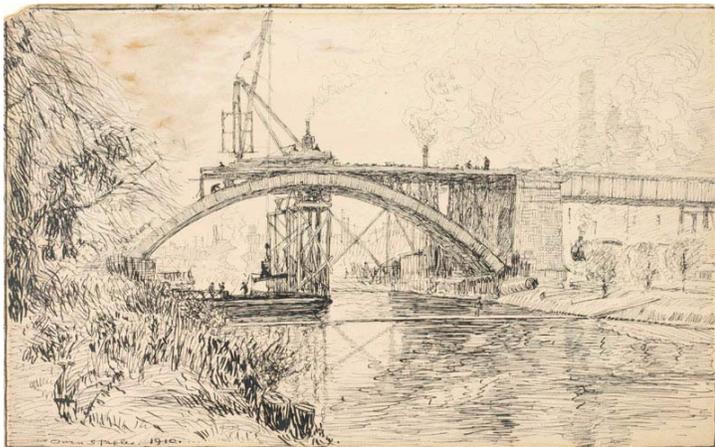
Arni Brownstone: *War Paintings of the Tsuu T’ina Nation* (June 2015, 978-0-8032-6521-9)

Arni Brownstone’s book *War Peinting of the Tsuu T’ina Nation* is on a short list for the **Melva Dwyer award**.

While the Tsuu T’ina Nation (Sarcee) is one of the smallest and least known of the Plain tribes, it left a rich history of their war exploits in form of paintings. The book deals with these pictorial narratives on hide robes, war shirts, tipi liners and tipi covers thus giving a vivid picture of the changing relations between the Tsuu T’ina Nation, other plain tribes and non-Native communities during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Arni Brownstone is assistant curator for world cultures at the ROM.

Owen Staples (1866-1949)



Owen Staples: Construction of the Wilton Bridge, Photo ROM Images, Acc.No. 977.80.29



Owen Staples at work, Photo: Toronto Reference Library

O ne of Canada's most illustrious, but widely unknown, painters, Owen Staples came to Canada with his family when he was three, in 1872. He was always drawing – birds, flowers and animals. His father died when he was ten, and his mother had to care for eight children between the ages of one and eleven. She ran a private kindergarten, and gave music lessons, teaching all her own children to sing, as well, finally moving the family to the States to find work.

Owen's mother died when he was fifteen, and for a week at least, he and a brother lived on the street. Eventually Owen was given a job as a messenger boy at the Rochester Art Club where they were living at the time.

From 1888 until 1908, Staples worked for the *Toronto Telegram* as a staff artist and political cartoonist. But he was never allowed to sign his name. He had to use Rostap, a contraction of the name Jack Robinson, the editor, and Staples.

Staples was drawn to industrial scenes and was considered one of the few inspirational Canadian painters to paint more than landscapes and be historically accurate. Of his painting of the construction of the Wilton Street Bridge (now Dundas Street in downtown Toronto), it is written, "No one has ever painted a more glorious canvas than this fabulous impressionist masterpiece from an artist at the peak of his form, turning an ugly mechanical spectacle of industrial mayhem into a feast for eyes in every part of the canvas."

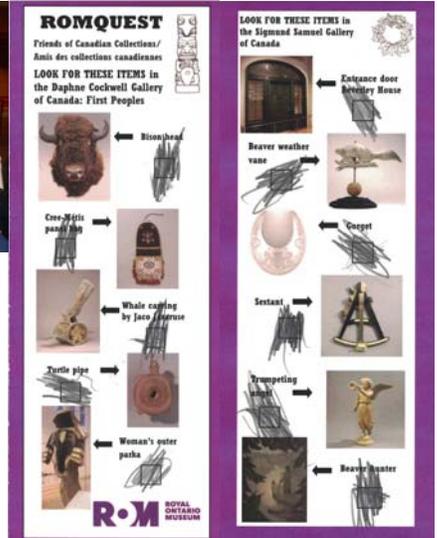
Staples used various media such as oil, water colour, pastel, mezzotint, and pen and ink. The Royal Ontario Museum holds a large collection of Staples' works.

Liz Muir

MARCH BREAK WITH THE FCC: A treasure hunt at the Canadian galleries



Our treasure hunt in the Canadian galleries was a huge success, we had a continuous stream of enthusiastic children participating. Photos show members of the FCC staffing our table in the First People's Gallery. One "treasure hunter" obviously took his chore very seriously.



ADOPT-A-CANADIAN JOURNAL

Journals are vital for the support of the ROM collections and research by its curators and for use by students. Subscription costs are increasing every year. For that reason, the "Adopt-a-Canadian Journal" program was launched to help defray costs.

The ROM Library has benefited significantly from your support in the past. Again, we are including a list of the journals up for adoption this year. Contributors are acknowledged with a small plaque in the journal rack in the ROM Library.

To make a contribution, send the title of the journal (see 10/11) with your check, made out to the "Adopt-a-Journal-Program, ROM" to

Tom Lewis, FCC/ACC Treasurer

Department of Museum Volunteers,

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We thank you for supporting this program.

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The Maple Leaf Rag is edited by Liz Muir, emuir@eol.ca

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Friends of the Canadian Collections/ Amis des Collections Canadiennes

Adopt-a-Journal:

List of available journals:

Alternatives Journal (\$ 93.79)

Le Bulletin ornitologique (\$ 49.72)

Canada's History (\$45.63)

The Canadian Field-Naturalist (\$106.00)

Canadian Geographic (\$41.25)

The Canadian Mineralogist (\$752.58)

Cap-aux-Diamants (\$58.60)

Craft Journal (\$75.00)

Fusion Magazine (\$102.83)

Heritage (\$166.00)

Journal of Canadian Art History (\$97.18)

Journal of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society (\$30.00)

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Studio (\$86.00)

Trail & Landscape (\$55.37)

Payment method:

Cheque make payable to **FCC ROM, memo on cheque "Adopt-a-Journal"**

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Please mail your donation to FCC Adopt-a-Journal, DMV Office, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2C6



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Our mandate is to expand our Donors' awareness of the richness of Canadian culture and natural history. We need your support to contributing funds to curatorial purchases, research projects, and gallery displays of Canadian material. We produce a bi-annual informative newsletter, The Maple Leaf Rag.

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 2. Through the ROM website under the "Support Us" button and select "Donate Now". Under the drop down menu for "My gift is towards" select **Friends of the Canadian Collections**.

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