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On the cover

A swashbuckling privateer, pistols brandished, boards a ship in search of plunder in this painting by David Palumbo.

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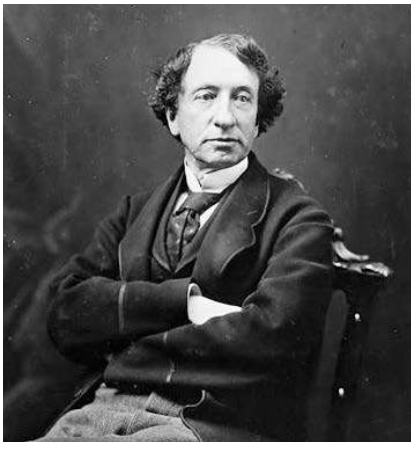

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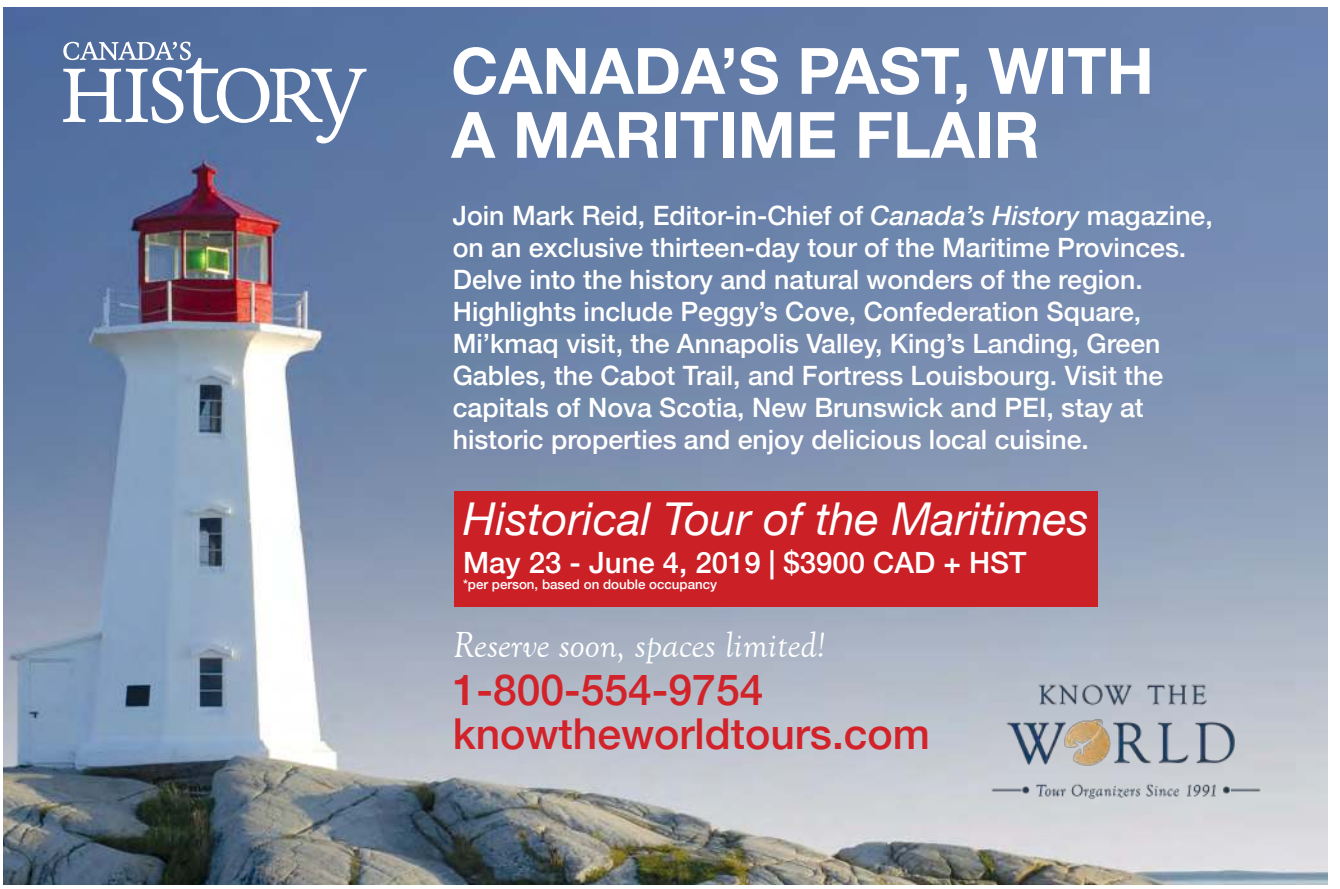

Making waves

Cutlasses and crossbones. Parrots and peg legs. Yo ho ho! and a bottle of rum. Just saying the word "pirate" calls to mind swarthy swashbucklers, buried treasure, and walking the plank.

While younger generations might consider Johnny Depp's Captain Jack Sparrow from the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise the quintessential corsair, for me no one beats Robert Newton's portrayal of Long John Silver in the 1950 version of *Treasure Island*.

I saw the movie on TV back in the seventies, and, as a Nova Scotia lad who woke up every morning to the grey waters of the Northumberland Strait, Newton's depiction of the literary antihero struck a chord; in my imagination, I was Jim Hawkins, seeing the skull-and-crossbones banner rising on the horizon.

Little did I realize at the time that buccaneers had indeed once plied the waters of Atlantic Canada — and that many were actually pirates for hire. These scallywags even carried an air of respectability. They were privateers, and they enjoyed official sanction to raid enemy ships during times of war — so long as they shared a portion of the plunder with their sponsors.

In this issue, Nova Scotia author Dean Jobb explores the lucrative privateering trade that flourished in Atlantic Canada during the age of sail. As he explains, the War of 1812 was especially profitable for these fierce freebooters; many American merchant ships fell victim to privateers operating out of hotbeds of piracy like Liverpool, Nova Scotia.

Elsewhere in this issue, we explore the legend of La Corriveau, a ghastly spectre that figures prominently in Quebec folklore. Recent evidence reveals that the banshee was based on a real-life figure in New France.

We also recall the photographic legacy of a former *The Beaver* magazine photographer whose promising career was cut short by tragedy.

And, we feature a poignant personal essay on the life of Benjamin Chee Chee — a talented Ojibwa artist whose unique and groundbreaking style inspired new generations of artists. Sadly, Chee Chee lived his life like a shooting star — briefly blazing through the art world before his flame was tragically extinquished.

Mark Reid

CONTRIBUTORS

Nova Scotia author **Dean Jobb** wrote "Pirates For Hire." He teaches in the non-fiction writing program at the University of King's College. His most recent book, *Empire of Deception*, explored the exploits of a 1920s con man. His next book recreates the Victorian-era crimes of Thomas Neill Cream, a Canadian doctor who murdered at least ten people in Canada, the United States, and England.

Ernie Bies, who wrote "Dancing His Own Line," was raised in Hearst, Ontario. Trained as a civil engineer at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute and Carleton University, he enjoyed a long career working on projects in the Arctic and in First Nations communities. One of the benefits of his exposure to Canada's cultural diversity was the enduring friendships he developed with many Indigenous people. In his retirement he enjoys writing about people and events that have affected his life.

Katherine Schumm wrote "Magnetic North." Originally from Royal Oak, Michigan, the self-described American-Luxembourger recently moved to County Clare, Ireland. She is an accountant who pursues freelance writing and historical and genealogical research in her free time. Her ardour for genealogy derives from her historically minded family

André Pelchat, author of "Macabre Discovery," is a freelance writer, tour guide, and lecturer who lives in L'Avenir, Quebec. He has written several articles for *Canada's History* and is the author of books including *Histoires à dormir debout!* and *Les années dangereuses, le Québec à l'âge des révolutions (1760–1805)*. Pelchat also gives lectures for museums and libraries in Quebec as well as for L'Université du Troisième Âge, a service that provides university courses without exams or a degree to people who are over fifty.

THE PACKET

Not-so-ancient history

Christopher Moore asks, "Can the First World War finally cease to be a living, traumatic presence? Perhaps it is ready to join the Napoleonic Wars or the War of 1812, which are still important and fascinating landmarks but are no longer felt so viscerally" ("The last end of the Great War?" October-November 2018).

There is an approximately twenty-one-year gap between the two world wars, from 1914-18 to 1939-45. Twenty-one years is a mere pause between wars, and they should not be separated. The First World War might be ancient history to my children and grandchildren, but it's certainly not to me.

My father served in both world wars. In the First World War he was in the British Royal Marines at the war front in Ypres, Belgium, where he received a leg wound. During the Second World War, my dad joined the Veterans Guard of Canada in the latter part of the war, guarding German prisoners of war in several Alberta locations.

Fred Perry
Surrey, British Columbia

Familiar experience

I read with great interest "The Country of Half Welcomes," by George Melnyk, in the August-September 2018 issue of *Canada's History*. I confess that I pick up my copy at my favourite magazine outlet in London, Ontario. There are not many outlets left, and I like to support them. I identify with those who received a half welcome when they came to Canada, although I readily admit that Canada has been very good to me. I came to Canada in 1948 and am a descendant of one of those thousands of soldiers who fought for the Polish Free Army during the Second World War.

Stan Skrzeszewski
London, Ontario

Red flag

Your article on the Red Ensign flag ("Treasures of Canada") in the August-September 2018 issue gives a misleading impression that the flag shown in the article "was officially adopted shortly after Confederation." Not so. That flag evolved in 1957 with three red leaves on the shield from a flag that was formally proclaimed by order-in-council in 1921 with three green maple leaves. Ninety years after Confederation does not qualify for the term "shortly"!

Fred Gaskin
Cambridge, Ontario

Mental health awareness

I was very impressed with the thorough account of Canada's participation in the Great War and the societal changes that war triggered.

One of the changes was the founding of the Canadian Mental Health Association in Toronto in 1918 to, amongst other things, provide "adequate care of returned soldiers suffering from mental disabilities."

The CMHA continues to support Canada's mental health needs and also celebrates its centenary this year.

Robert Salsman
CMHA board member
St. John's, N.L.

Errata

Canadian First World War pilot Alan Arnett McLeod received the Victoria Cross in March 1918. His name was inadvertently omitted from the article "For Valour" (October-November 2018). In the same issue, "Innu" was mistakenly used instead of "Inuit" in one instance in "Peacetime Killer." We regret the errors.

During the fur trade era, outposts regularly received "packets" of correspondence. Email your comments to editors@CanadasHistory.ca or write to Canada's History, Bryce Hall Main Floor, 515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9 Canada.

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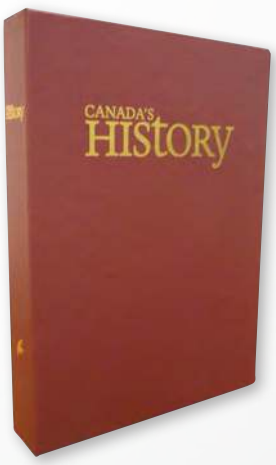

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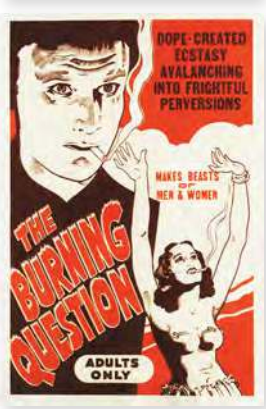
CANADA'S HISTORY

War on weed

Sensational campaigns targeted marijuana use.

Marijuana — it's the burning weed with roots in hell, offering a moment of bliss but a lifetime of regret. At least, that's what anti-cannabis films from the 1930s warned. Many of these films came from the United States, though Canada had its share of scare tactics. In 1922, Emily Murphy, the first female magistrate in Canada, published *The Black Candle*, warning people of the alleged dangers of marijuana and quoting a Los Angeles police chief who said the drug "has the effect of driving [people] completely insane." Canada made marijuana illegal in 1923, though there's not much explanation as to why — no parliamentary debate was recorded when marijuana was added to the list of illegal drugs. On October 17 — ninety-five years after banning marijuana use — Canada became one of the few countries where recreational use of the drug is legal.
— Kaitlin Vitt



ALAMY

Top: A poster for the movie *The Devil's Weed*, which was also shown under the title *She Shoulda Said No!* Right: A selection of posters for other films warning against the alleged dangers of marijuana and listing possible side effects of using the drug.

Documentary to address overlooked history

Plans are in motion for an independent feature documentary film after controversy over a CBC miniseries made national headlines.

CBC's *Canada: The Story of Us*, which aired in 2017, covers almost four centuries of Canadian history yet fails to acknowledge Samuel de Champlain's arrival at Port Royal, Nova Scotia, with Pierre Du Gua de Monts in 1605. The series skips over that region's history and begins with Champlain's founding of Quebec City in 1608.

Politicians from across the province asked the CBC to apologize for the error and to film a prequel that included the overlooked history. While the network apologized, it has not yet produced the requested prequel. As a result, Annapolis Royal Mayor Bill MacDonald and Ben Proudfoot of Breakwater Studios partnered to make the film *Port of Origins*.

The documentary is intended to portray highlights of the place known at different times as Nme'juaqnek, Port Royal, and Annapolis Royal. The story spans from pre-European contact to 1760 while also depicting the history of the Mi'kmaq, French, Acadians, English, and Scots in that area. The film's production schedule depends on funding.
— Moriah Campbell

NEWS

Belgian town honours Canadian soldier

A rose in Belgium was named in September in honour of Private George Lawrence Price, the last Canadian and last Commonwealth soldier killed in battle during the First World War. Price died minutes before the end of the war near Le Roeulx, where the christening of the flower — a rose species developed in 2011 by a Belgian producer — took place. In November, the town unveiled a memorial park dedicated to Price and marked one hundred years since the end of the war.

TOP: COURTESY OF BREAKWATER STUDIOS. BELOW: GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

BY THE NUMBERS

Official languages

Canadians have used French and English in parliamentary debates and courts since Confederation, and the country has recognized them as official languages for the past fifty years. The *Official Languages Act* of 1969, established under former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau's government, aimed to ensure Canadians had access to federal services in either language. In 1988, the *Official Languages Act* was revised, and it was updated again in 2005, all to extend and to promote the use of both languages.

428,625

Number of students in public elementary and secondary schools who were enrolled in French immersion programs in 2015–16, excluding those in Quebec and Nunavut. The number was up by 4.6 per cent from the previous year.

1

Percentage of people in Canada who are bilingual. It's the highest percentage in history.

18

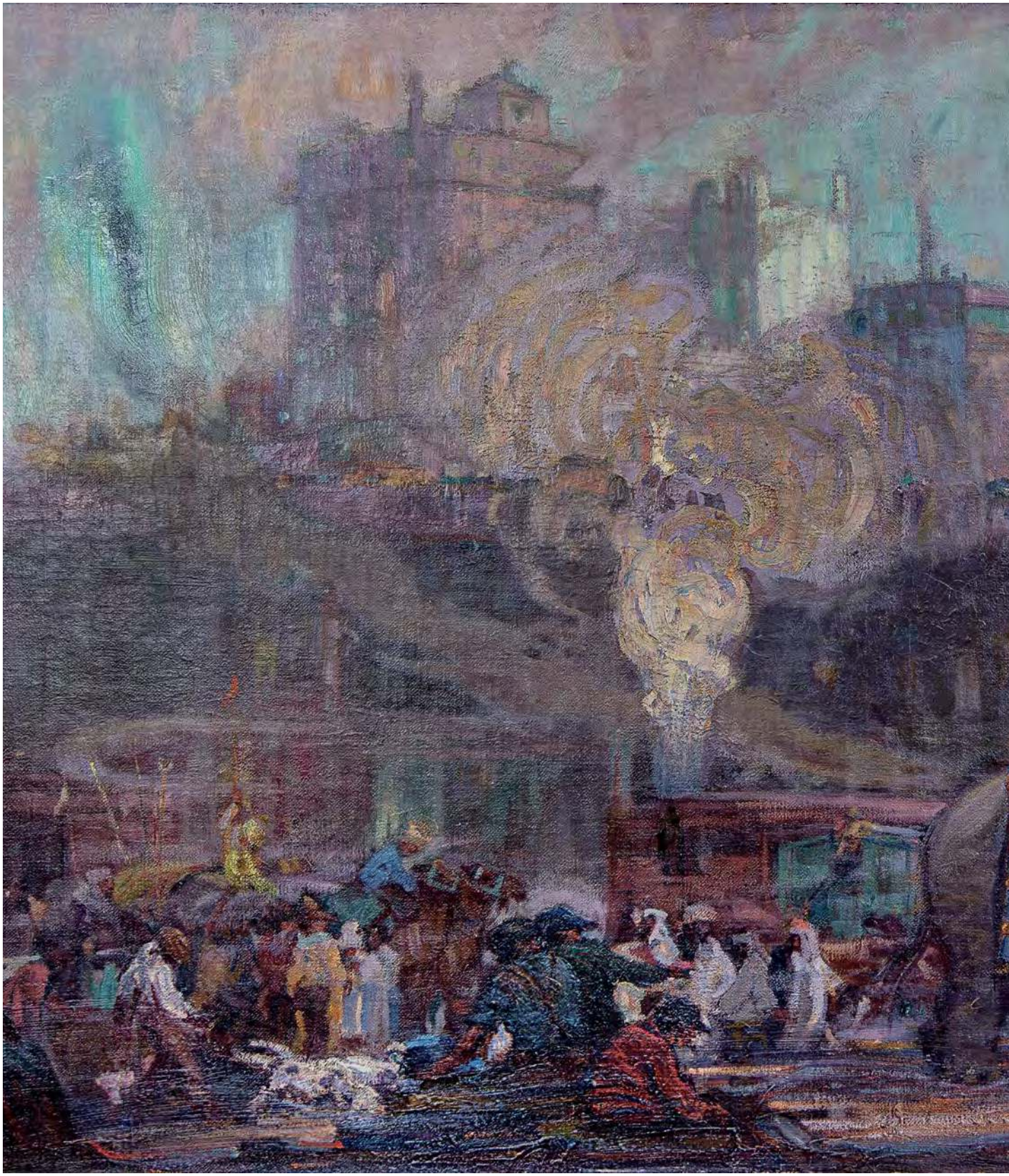
Number of provinces that are officially bilingual (New Brunswick). In Quebec, French is the only official language.

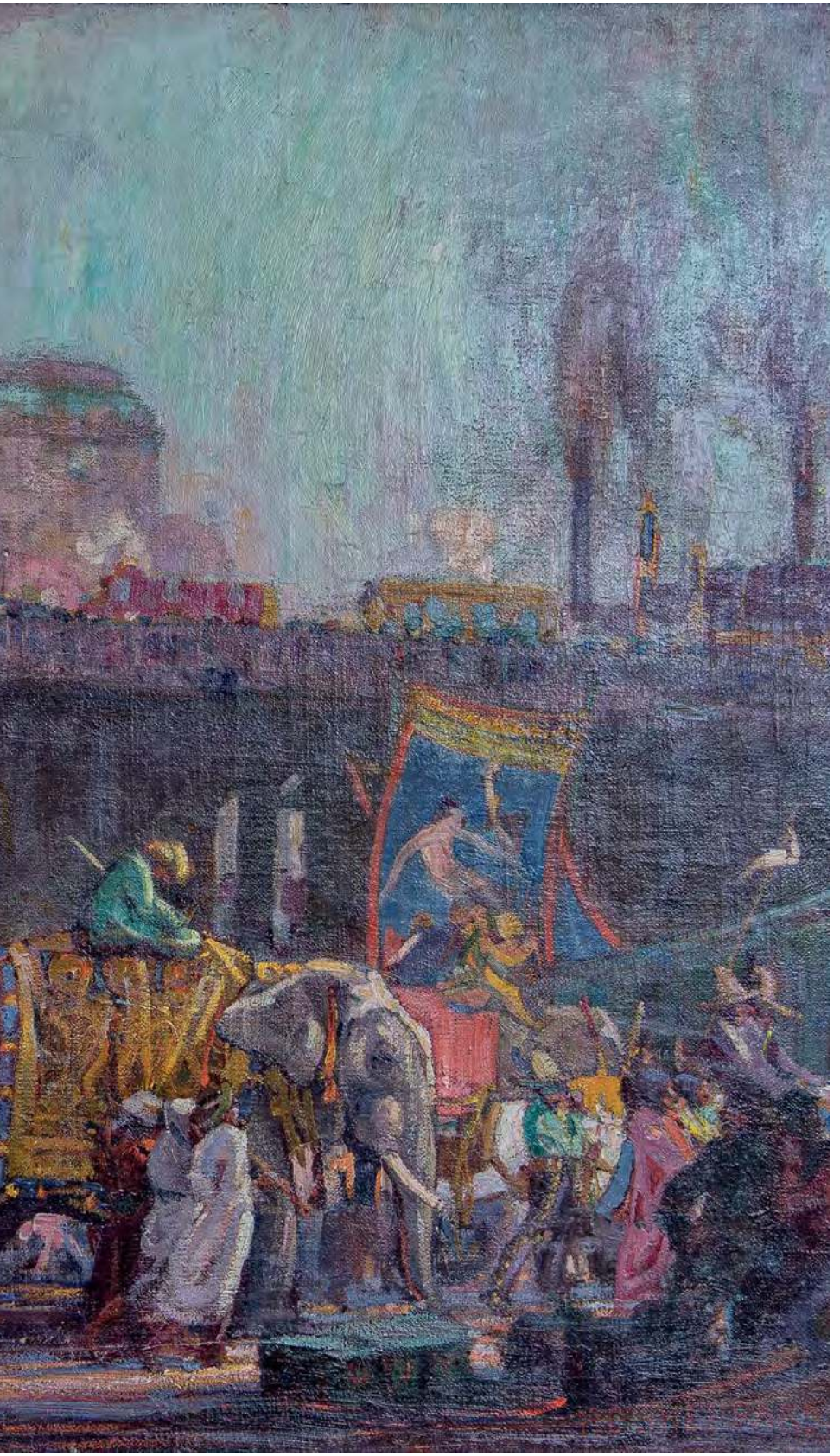
30

Percentage of people in Canada who can hold a conversation in French.

Number of mother tongues or languages spoken most often at home in Canada, including English and French.

200+





BRUSH STROKES

Arrival of the Circus

circa 1919, Peter Clapham Sheppard, oil on canvas, 101.6 cm x 147.3 cm

At a time when his fellow painters drew inspiration and a sense of purpose from the Canadian landscape, Peter Clapham Sheppard applied his brush and the newly developed modernist techniques to the life and tumult of cities.

Sheppard worked and exhibited alongside painters such as Lawren Harris, and he represented Canada at international exhibitions. Yet his contributions to Canadian art were largely forgotten — perhaps due to the prominence of the Group of Seven and of the narrative linking Canadian art to the country's landscape.

While Sheppard's hometown of Toronto was the setting for many of his works, he also painted in Montreal and New York. His subjects included shipyards and rail yards, bridges and harbours, beaches and street scenes. *The Bridge Builders*, *Construction, Bloor Street Viaduct*, painted in 1915, shows labourers at a massive engineering project, while 1919's *The Engine Home* plays with colour and form.

In the new book *Peter Clapham Sheppard: His Life and Work*, Tom Smart writes, "Sheppard preferred to concentrate more on expressing the abstract potentialities rather than the purely picturesque qualities of a scene." Somehow, in doing this, he also managed to bring to the fore the dynamism of city life.

Arrival of the Circus, a tableau portraying performers and elephants at the Canadian National Exhibition, shows his versatility. As in Sheppard's other paintings of the time, figures are as loosely represented as the ever-billowing smoke that spills into the urban sky.

— Phil Koch

Surgical tools

Tales and Treasures from the rich legacy of the Hudson's Bay Company

This assortment of surgical implements was part of a medical chest that was provided to HBC post managers working in remote locations where access to medical aid was not directly available. Some post managers may have had a little medical or first-aid training, and it was recognized that their role was not to replace a doctor; nonetheless, they could be called upon to provide medical services.

Reviewing a copy of the *Hudson's Bay Company Post Manager's Medical Guide* from 1953 reveals that these items and an assortment of medicines were part of a standard medicine chest — and that post managers were responsible for maintaining and replacing the items. The guide provides basic information for treating common ailments, although the tools seen here suggest that minor surgeries, such as tooth extraction, were not outside the realm of a manager's potential duties. This particular set was used during the 1970s in Naujaat (formerly called Repulse Bay) in what is now Nunavut, but the tools themselves date to the 1930s.

— Amelia Fay, curator of the HBC Collection at the Manitoba Museum

ARTIFACTS FROM THE MANITOBA MUSEUM / PHOTO BY ANDREW WORKMAN

HUDSON'S BAY

The Beaver magazine was originally founded as a Hudson's Bay Company publication in 1920. To read stories from past issues, go to **CanadasHistory.ca/Archive**. To explore the history of the Hudson's Bay Company, go to **hbcheritage.ca**, or follow HBC's Twitter and Instagram feeds at **@HBCHeritage.**

Left: The Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. Top right: A spindle whorl by artist Kwetsímet (Keith Nahanee) at the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre in Whistler, B.C. Above: A woven mask by Grace Wilson is part of the Haida Now exhibition at the Museum of Vancouver.

Transformations renewed

A trip to Vancouver offers many chances to encounter the thriving cultures of coastal First Nations. *by Phil Koch*

Northwest Coast Indigenous art and cultural practices that were actively suppressed a century ago are today widely celebrated both in traditional forms and via new experiments and manifestations. While several British Columbia First Nations have established cultural centres in their own communities, a visit to the Vancouver area presents numerous opportunities to see and to learn about the region's Indigenous art.

When arriving or departing via the Vancouver International Airport, situated on the traditional territory of the Musqueam First Nation, visitors encounter large sculptural installations featuring mostly traditional forms that have been created within the past few decades by leading Indigenous artists. They include pieces by Musqueam carver Susan Point, whose richly evocative *Cedar Connection* sits beside the walkway to the Canada Line SkyTrain station, and Bill Reid's haunting *The Spirit of Haida Gwaii: The Jade Canoe* in the international terminal. In these and other works, links between nature and culture are interwoven as part of community and family histories.

Coastal artisans have long produced skilfully crafted items for cultural and ceremonial purposes as well as for trade. Sculptures, prints, jewellery, and other items made by Indigenous artists can be seen and purchased at the Bill Reid Gallery in downtown Vancouver. Meanwhile, as part of revitalization efforts in the city's Downtown Eastside, Skwachàys Lodge allows visitors to watch as works are created in its main-floor gallery by Indigenous artists in residence. It also offers themed hotel rooms.

Across the Burrard Bridge from downtown, the Museum of Vancouver's remarkable Haida Now exhibition — which continues at least until April 2020 — was created in partnership with the Haida Gwaii Museum. Dozens of intricate argillite carvings, including pieces by renowned carver Charles Edenshaw, are among more than 450 historical and contemporary works presenting aspects of Haida culture. The exhibition explains how artworks show histories, family lineages, and social standing while playing economic and ceremonial roles, and it places the particular Haida artistic "dialect" in the context of work produced by other coastal First Nations. It also contrasts authentic work with "artifakes" —

TOP RIGHT: COURTESY SQUAMISH LIL'WAT CULTURAL CENTRE; OTHER PHOTOS BY PHIL KOCH

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CANADA'S HISTORY

Top left and centre: Kwakwaka'wakw masks are among thousands of items in the Museum of Anthropology's Multiversity Galleries, while Bill Reid's sculpture *The Raven and the First Men* is displayed in the Vancouver museum's Bill Reid Rotunda.

Above: Skwachàys Lodge Aboriginal Hotel & Gallery in Vancouver includes a rooftop sweat lodge and smudge room.

Below: *He-yay meymuy (Big Flood)*, by Squamish and Kwakwaka'wakw artist Xwalacktun (Rick Harry), at the entrance to the Audain Art Museum in Whistler, B.C.

PHOTOS BY PHIL KOCH

mass-produced replicas — while explaining that items such as clan crests are protected intellectual property.

At the University of British Columbia, the Museum of Anthropology houses impressive collections and rare sculptures in a building designed by Vancouver architect Arthur Erickson, who incorporated elements of Haida architecture. Thousands of artifacts from First Nations (and from around the world) are displayed, typically following consultations with members of the represented communities. The museum grounds include large totem poles and a pair of Haida houses, while the newly opened Indian Residential Schools History and Dialogue Centre is nearby on the UBC campus.

A two-hour trip north to Whistler via the Sea to Sky Highway offers breathtaking views of islands and mountains while giving a sense of the abundant lands and seas that provided the material and cultural wealth of coastal First Nations as well as inspiration for their art forms. The Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre, built at Whistler in time for the 2010 Winter Olympics, operates as a partnership between two First Nations. It showcases Squamish and Lil'wat art, history, and culture via hourly guided tours through a unique building with vistas onto the surrounding forest.

From there it's a short walk to the Audain Art Museum, housed in an award-winning building by Patkau Architects that opened in 2016. Historical artifacts are displayed alongside recent and contemporary art by Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, Brian Jungen, and other Indigenous and non-Indigenous B.C.-based artists. Temporary exhibits during a recent visit included Heiltsuk artist Shawn Hunt's high-tech version of an Indigenous transformation mask. Hunt's mask — which produces a dramatic "mixed-reality" audio-visual experience for those who wear it — was exhibited alongside a more traditional mask by Robert Davidson.

At the same time, the exhibition Beau Dick: Revolutionary Spirit set the work of the Kwakwaka'wakw carver, hereditary chief, and community activist alongside pieces created by his forerunners, his collaborators, and artists he mentored. The show was one of the museum's reconciliatory initiatives, and, according to curator Darrin J. Martens, it presented "an opportunity for increased dialogue related to issues affecting Indigenous communities in the wake of the Residential School experience…."

The Audain also displays numerous paintings by Emily Carr, who famously portrayed coastal cultures and landscapes, but the largest collection of her work belongs to the Vancouver Art Gallery. There a new curatorial program pairs Carr's paintings with works by other artists — such as Chinese ink painter Lui Shou Kwan or Kwakwaka'wakw contemporary artist Sonny Assu — in special thematic exhibitions. And in Vancouver's Stanley Park, totem poles by prominent Indigenous carvers welcome and impress visitors — functions performed by similar poles in coastal communities for generations.

Find more photos, contact information, and recommended reading at CanadasHistory.ca/TransformationsRenewed.

PIRATES FOR HIRE

THE EXPLOITS OF ATLANTIC CANADA'S PRIVATEERS.

by Dean Jobb

A SCHOONER EMERGED ON THE HORIZON off Massachusetts, its black hull so low to the water that it was almost invisible. The interloper was small, just fifty-three feet bow to stern. "In size and appearance," Maine's *Portland Gazette* newspaper later noted, it looked "like one of our Gun Boats." Even though Britain and America were at war in 1812, few aboard the Yankee fishing boats and merchant vessels cruising near Cape Cod saw the unfamiliar ship as a threat — until it was too late.

The newcomer was the Nova Scotia privateer *Liverpool Packet*, under the command of Captain Joseph Barss Jr.; both names were soon reviled all along the New England coast. In the summer and fall of 1812, Barss and his forty-man crew scooped up dozens of American merchant vessels, including eleven in one week that October. He later commandeered nine fishing schooners in a single day. The *Packet* was the most successful privateer on either side during the three-year conflict, seizing about one hundred vessels — more than the combined captures of the rest of Nova Scotia's privateering fleet — and bringing at least fifty back to Halifax to be sold off, cargo and all. One prize, the American schooner *Lucretia*, yielded a valuable cargo of fishing gear, candles, soap, and shoes. Canadian historian Faye M. Kert, an expert on the history of privateering, estimates the schooner earned its owners, investors, and crews at least a million dollars, an astounding sum at the time.

The Americans were incensed. "That an insignificant fishing schooner … should be suffered to approach the harbour of the metropolis of Massachusetts, capture and carry home in triumph 8 or 9 vessels of sail," the *Boston Messenger* fumed on

Captain William Rogers capturing the Jeune Richard, 1 October, 1807, by British artist Samuel Drummond. The painting illustrates boarding and combat techniques of privateers like those who plied the waters off eastern North America in the 1700s and 1800s.

NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM, GREENWICH, LONDON

New Year's Day, 1813, "should seem utterly incredible were the fact not placed beyond any doubt."

In Portsmouth, Maine, ship owners outfitted a privateer of their own, the schooner *Thomas*. If it ever caught up with the *Packet*, it would be a formidable foe — it was twice the size of the Nova Scotia marauder and carried a crew of eighty. It also bristled with ten cannons, double the number ready to fire from the *Packet*'s deck.

Then, in June 1813, the captain of the *Thomas* spotted a vessel off Cape Cod: a small, low-slung schooner with a black hull. The chase began.

Like pirates, privateers preyed on merchant vessels and profited from the plunder they won. But there is a distinction between them that made a difference — privateers operated only in wartime, under legal authority, and within strict rules of engagement. They were, in essence, private contractors retained to disrupt the enemy's trade as part of the war effort, freeing up naval vessels for the front-line work of blockading, bombarding, and duelling with warships. Their motivation to join the fight was profit, not just patriotism. As the *Liverpool Packet*'s lucrative career showed, there was money to be made.

The romantic, swashbuckling image of privateers was brought down to earth in 1976, when Canadian folksinger Stan Rogers released his signature sea shanty, "Barrett's Privateers." It quickly became a staple of music festivals and tavern singalongs, with its well-known refrain, "I'm a broken man on a Halifax pier/The last of Barrett's Privateers." It tells the fictitious story of a young Nova Scotia fisherman who joins the crew of a leaky sloop, the *Antelope*, during the American Revolution, lured to privateering by the promise of easy money. "I was told we'd cruise the seas for American gold," the narrator says, "we'd fire no guns, shed no tears." The *Antelope*'s first engagement with an armed American merchant ship is its last, and the fisherman loses both legs in the battle.

"Barrett's Privateers" is set in 1778, but the British government commissioned Nova Scotia's first privateers two decades earlier, at the outset of the Seven Years War against France. Letters of marque — official decrees authorizing the seizure

Above: Portrait of Captain Joseph Barss Jr., skipper of the famed privateer vessel *Liverpool Packet*.

This map shows principal ports used by privateers during the American Revolution and the War of 1812.

MAP ILLUSTRATED BY MATT YATHON, IMAGE COURTESY OF THE QUEENS COUNTY MUSEUM, NOVA SCOTIA

The *Liverpool Packet* was built for speed, as evidenced by its angled mast and long bowsprit. This painting of the *Packet* during the War of 1812 is by Thomas Hayhurst.

COURTESY OF THE QUEENS COUNTY MUSEUM, NOVA SCOTIA/ COLIN MACHAFFIE

of French vessels — were issued in 1756, just seven years after Halifax was founded. Sea captains and merchants were "encouraged in every way," Nova Scotia writer George Nichols noted in an early account of the practice, "to fit out privateers to distress and annoy the enemy." At least fifteen privateering vessels were based in Halifax, and prominent businessmen such as Joshua Mauger and Malachy Salter armed and dispatched vessels to Caribbean waters in search of prizes.

This initial foray into privateering, Nichols wrote, set the ground rules for future conflicts. Privateers registered with Nova Scotia's Admiralty Court and returned all captured vessels to Halifax, where a judge would decide whether the seizure was legal. If it turned out the vessel was not registered to enemy owners, or if the cargo was destined for British buyers, these would be restored and the privateers earned nothing. Ships and cargoes condemned as prizes of war, however, were sold, and the privateering vessel's owners and crew shared the windfall. Fortunes were made. War, Nova Scotia's merchants discovered, was good for business.

Privateers had to adhere to a rigid code of conduct. They could not fly the Royal Navy's colours to impersonate one of His Majesty's warships, and when they returned to port they were expected to share "any valuable information obtained about the enemy" that was gleaned during their outings. Most importantly, once a battle ended or after an enemy vessel surrendered, these legalized pirates were to behave like gentlemen. Captured crewmen and passengers were not to be mistreated. "No persons taken or surprised in any vessel, though known to be of the enemy," Nichols explained, "were to be killed in cold blood, tortured, maimed, or inhumanely treated contrary to the common usages of war."

During the American Revolution, the colonies that would one day form Atlantic Canada were targets for enemy attacks on vessels and outports. Privateers from New England raided Yarmouth, Lunenburg, Charlottetown, and other communities, sometimes looting private homes, burning forts and barracks, and taking local officials hostage. The Nova Scotia government fought back in 1777 by issuing a letter of marque

A sailor heaving the lead in John Atkinson's 1807 *Costumes of Great Britain*. Atkinson wrote and illustrated the book.

to the commander of the aptly named *Revenge*. At first the thirty-gun schooner was ordered to defend the province's coast, but soon it and other privateers were authorized to hunt for American prizes. "Seamen and able-bodied landsmen who wish to acquire riches and honour," said one enticing advertisement in the *Nova Scotia Gazette* in 1779, "are invited to repair on board the *Revenge*, private ship of war." Large crews were needed, as men would be transferred to each captured vessel so it could be sailed back to Nova Scotia. With scores to settle and trading ties to the American colonies severed, plenty of idled fishermen and sailors were eager to sign on. There was another inducement — crewmen of privateers were protected from the press gangs scouring Nova Scotia waterfronts and kidnapping sailors to serve on Royal Navy ships.

In 1778, privateers returned to Halifax with captured vessels at the rate of one per week. Seizing unarmed fishing boats and merchantmen was easy and bloodless, but sometimes rival privateers battled toe to toe. In July 1780, off Sambro Lighthouse at the mouth of Halifax Harbour, the Nova Scotia brig *Resolution* squared off against the more heavily armed American privateer *Viper*. The two vessels raked each other with cannon fire for ninety minutes before the *Resolution* was forced to surrender. At least eight sailors were killed, and dozens were wounded. There were also examples of kindness and camaraderie. When HMS *Blonde* went aground off remote Seal Island in 1782, the captains of two American privateers helped to rescue the survivors, then set them free.

Privateers were again dispatched in the 1790s, ahead of the Napoleonic Wars, this time in search of French and Spanish ships. Liverpool, on Nova Scotia's south shore, joined Halifax as a major privateer base. One Liverpool-based vessel, the *Charles Mary Wentworth*, returned in 1799 with four prizes, including a fourteen-gun Spanish privateer captured after an hour-long fight. One of the fiercest battles of the war, however, was waged by the Liverpool brig *Rover* and its crew of fifty-four men and boys, under the command of Captain Alex Godfrey.

In September 1800 a Spanish task force — the armed schooner *Santa Ritta* and three smaller gunboats — ambushed the *Rover* in the Caribbean. Stalled in a light breeze and about to be boarded, Godfrey nimbly swung his vessel to fire on the gunboats at close range, then boldly attacked, boarded, and captured the *Santa Ritta*. The Spanish suffered horrendous losses, but none of the *Rover*'s crew was killed or injured. The engagement, naval historian William James wrote in the 1820s, clearly proved "how well the hardy sons of British America could emulate their brother-tars of the parent country."

A new test of the mettle of colonial privateers, against an old enemy, lay ahead.

When Britain and the United States went to war again, Enos Collins was ready. Born in Liverpool, Nova Scotia, he had served as an officer on board the *Charles Mary Wentworth* as a young man and was familiar with the business of privateering. His ambitions "outgrew the opportunities offered even by the thriving seaport of Liverpool," as his biographers have noted, and by 1812 Collins was a successful merchant and ship owner in Halifax.

That's where he first spotted a schooner named *Severn*, which had been seized for contravening British laws that banned the transportation of slaves. It had been built for speed, with masts angled toward the stern as if bent in the wind and a long bowsprit to carry as much sail as possible — think of Nova Scotia's famous schooner *Bluenose II*, only smaller and sleeker. Collins, wrote Kert in her book *Privateering: Patriots and Profits in the War of 1812*, "knew a good privateer when he saw one" and bought it at auction for £440. Renamed *Liverpool Packet*, the

IMAGE COURTESY OF RENÉ CHARTRAND

Capture of Snap Dragon by The Martin, 1813, by Irwin John Bevan, shows a battle between privateers during the War of 1812. Entrepreneurs from Saint John, New Brunswick, bought the American ship *Snap Dragon* and made it part of their privateering fleet.

schooner ferried the mail between Liverpool and Halifax until the outbreak of war in June 1812. Collins was among the first to apply for a letter of marque.

Nova Scotia and New Brunswick contributed more than forty privateering vessels, and by mid-1813 Newfoundland had commissioned nine. Over the course of the three-year conflict, these raiders would bring home more than two hundred enemy vessels. At one point, according to historian W.S. MacNutt, thirty captured American prizes were tied up in the harbour at St. John's, and bottles of seized champagne were plentiful enough to be used for target practice. One enterprising Newfoundland merchant, saddled with a cargo of American grindstones, took advantage of the lean winter months and forced customers buying bread to pay an extra two dollars for a stone.

The United States countered with some five hundred privateers of its own, inflicting heavy losses on British and colonial shipping. Kert estimates American privateers captured at least 1,400 vessels and suspects the number may have been closer to two thousand. The *Yankee*, a sixteen-gun brig operating out of Bristol, Rhode Island, led the pack with fifty-eight vessels seized. The Americans also suffered one of the deadliest disasters to befall a War of 1812 privateer, and it was self-inflicted. A British warship trapped the New York-based *Young Teazer* in Nova Scotia's Mahone Bay in April 1813. Boarding parties were approaching when the vessel exploded, killing twenty-nine of the thirty-seven men on board. Survivors reported that a ship's officer, who had been released after an earlier capture and faced the gallows for violating his parole, had ignited the vessel's powder magazine.

In Halifax, meanwhile, Collins moved quickly to outfit the *Liverpool Packet* for war. The vessel embarked on its first cruise authorized to "apprehend seize and take any Ship vessel or goods" belonging to the enemy. It was said to be armed with five rusted cannons that were serving as gateposts until brought out of retirement. It returned with two prizes and earned enough profit to buy proper guns. Collins also found a new captain who could make the most of the *Packet*'s potential as a privateer.

Top: A plaque and a cannon near the Queens County Museum in Liverpool, Nova Scotia. Above: The museum has many exhibits related to privateering, including a full-scale replica of a schooner's bow section.

Right: A museum display about the accomplished Liverpool privateer Captain Joseph Barss Jr.

PORT OF THE PRIVATEERS

It has been two centuries since the *Liverpool Packet* prowled the New England coast, but visitors to the Queens County Museum in its namesake Nova Scotia town can once again walk its deck. A full-size replica of the first thirty-four feet of the vessel was installed as an interactive exhibit in 2014 to tell the story of the men who waged economic warfare in the age of sail.

Highway signs bearing the slogan "Port of the Privateers" welcome visitors to Liverpool, which was founded in 1759. "Our privateers earned that name," said Linda Rafuse, the museum's director. "It's an important part of our history. That's our drawing card."

A scale model of the *Liverpool Packet*.

Each June the town of 2,500, which is about a ninety-minute drive southwest of Halifax, hosts Privateer Days, a weekend of music and events that recall the days when Liverpool vessels set out in search of prizes. A highlight is an encampment of red-coated re-enactors who portray members of the King's Orange Rangers, a unit garrisoned in Liverpool during the American Revolution to repulse attacks from American privateers.

Large nineteenth-century homes, built by sea captains and merchants who grew wealthy from the sale of captured vessels and cargoes, line Liverpool's Main Street. The closure of the area's major employer, a pulp mill shuttered in 2012, has made tourism even more important to the town. Privateering – the memory of it, at least – is still a mainstay of Liverpool's economy.

— Dean Jobb

COURTESY OF DEAN JOBB

Joseph Barss Jr., an experienced Liverpool mariner in his mid-thirties, was the logical choice. He had commanded two privateering vessels during the Napoleonic Wars — he was "the colony's own Francis Drake," wrote historian Edward Butts — and his brothers, John and James, were shareholders in the *Packet*. Dark-haired and five feet ten, with a sturdy frame and intense grey eyes, he would be hailed as a hero in Nova Scotia and condemned as an "evil genius" in the American press. Barss "prowled up and down the New England coast," by one newspaper account, "carrying off prizes under the noses of navy brigs, revenue cutters and commerce raiders" flying the Stars and Stripes. It was a perfect marriage of daring skipper and swift vessel. "No spot was too perilous for Joseph Barss to reach if there was a prize to be made," noted Charles H.J. Snider in *Under the Red Jack*, a 1920s account of East Coast privateering.

Barss's preferred hunting ground was the approaches to Boston Harbour. The *Packet* was off Cape Cod and on its tenth cruise on the morning of June 11, 1813, when it was spotted by the *Thomas*. The ships exchanged fire until the *Packet* ran out of ammunition. Barss ordered his crew to dump four of the five cannons to lighten the vessel, then it fled. After a five-hour chase, and with no hope of escape, he surrendered. The *Thomas*'s trigger-happy crew continued to fire on the defenceless *Packet*, killing three members of its own boarding party.

PRIVATEERING SURVIVED AS A FORM OF WARFARE UNTIL 1856, WHEN IT WAS OUTLAWED AS PART OF THE TREATY OF PARIS NEGOTIATIONS TO END THE CRIMEAN WAR.

In an era when the norm was for captured privateer crews to be quickly swapped and for captains and officers to be released on parole, New England's public enemy number one was locked up in a Portsmouth, New Hampshire, jail. American newspapers claimed his incarceration was retaliation for British mistreatment of the captain of an American privateer, but Barss's brazen seizures and long list of prizes likely singled him out for punishment. It was months before Collins, who enlisted the aid of Nova Scotia's lieutenant-governor, Sir John Coape Sherbrooke, secured his release.

Captured privateering vessels were often used against their former owners, and the *Packet* soon put to sea under new names, first as *Young Teazer's Ghost* and then as the *Portsmouth Packet*. The Americans inherited Barss's vessel but not his luck. Within a few months the ship was spotted by the Royal Navy's HMS *Fantome* off the Maine coast, hunted down, and taken to Halifax. Collins promptly bought it back, restored its name, and sent it in search of more victims under a new captain. The reborn *Liverpool Packet* seized eighteen more American vessels before hostilities ended in 1815. As for Barss, he became part owner of a captured American privateer renamed *Wolverine*, which brought home eight prizes. The *Wolverine*'s original name was the *Thomas* — in a remarkable coincidence, it was the vessel that had captured him off Cape Cod.

Privateering survived as a form of warfare until 1856, when it was outlawed as part of the Treaty of Paris negotiations to end the Crimean War. Britain, France, Russia, and, ultimately, another fifty-two nations declared that "privateering is and remains abolished" and agreed that letters of marque would not be issued during future conflicts. The United States refused to sign on but nonetheless ended the practice, although the breakaway Confederate states authorized raiders to prey on Union shipping during the American Civil War.

Privateers may not have been pirates, but waging a form of warfare for the sake of prizes and money makes them look, to modern eyes, more like mercenaries than patriots fighting for their country. Unlike naval commanders, they could choose their battles — they could pick off easy targets and avoid armed merchant vessels or other targets willing to put up a fight. "The bottom line, not bravery, was the deciding factor" in captures, Kert has observed. Privateering offered "an opportunity to serve one's country while conveniently serving oneself."

It remained a risky business, however. Many privateers were killed in action or, like the unlucky narrator of "Barrett's Privateers," were maimed or wounded. Storms and shipwrecks were occupational hazards. There was another, more patriotic bottom line: Privateers made an important contribution to the war effort by attacking the enemy's commerce, communications, and supply lines.

George Nichols, one of the first to chronicle the exploits of Atlantic Canada's privateers, argued they deserve to be remembered not as "unscrupulous adventurers" but as courageous and honourable warriors. Liverpool historian Janet Mullins agreed, describing them as "daring and intrepid, self-sacrificing and patriotic mariners" whose bravery and chivalry upheld "the best traditions of the sea." Many privateer owners and officers were leaders of their communities and held public office after the War of 1812. Joseph Barss's brother John, for one, was elected to the Nova Scotia legislature. Enos Collins, who used his privateering profits to expand his mercantile empire, founded Nova Scotia's first bank and became one of the richest and most powerful men in Britain's American colonies.

Joseph Barss commanded the *Wolverine* on a privateering cruise to the West Indies in 1814 before retiring from seafaring. His imprisonment after the *Packet*'s capture, biographer Catherine Pross has suggested, left him in poor health. He settled on a farm near Kentville, Nova Scotia, in 1817 and died seven years later. The scourge of New England's sailors and ship owners, the "evil genius" behind the unparalleled success of the *Liverpool Packet*, was forty-eight.

MAGNETIC NORTH

YOUNG RICHARD HOURDE WAS DRAWN TO THE ARCTIC AND ITS PEOPLE DURING HIS SHORT CAREER WITH THE BEAVER

by Katherine Schumm

IN THE SUMMER OF 1936, a twenty-one-year-old man from London, Ontario, sat on the shores of Baillie Island in Canada's Far North, listening to water lapping against chunks of grounded ice and to the sounds of Kentucky hillbilly music twanging from the phonograph his Inuit companions were playing in a nearby tent. He continued to take drags off his cigarette in the frigid air, laughing to himself that the warbling "Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie" was such a favourite of local families.

Richard Hourde, circa 1934.

Richard Nash Hourde sat wrapped in snow-covered beaver furs thousands of kilometres from the comforts of home, tossing around ideas for an article he had yet to pen. For the previous several weeks, the young writer and photographer had been stranded on the island off Cape Bathurst, Northwest Territories, waiting for the steamship *Audrey* to push past the ice floes that held it many kilometres away. Delayed as he was in getting home to his grandmother, he was still surrounded by the exact material he needed to write his next story for his employers: the Hudson's Bay Company and its newly revamped magazine, *The Beaver*.

Eighty years later, I am sitting at a desk that belonged to my grandfather, who was Hourde's cousin. In my hands I have a leather wallet with a brass zipper. I keep flipping it over and over, thinking back on Hourde's journey across the Northwest Territories. Opening up the smooth wallet, I tick through the cards still tucked in the front pocket, exactly where they were when he listened to that nighttime music. One of the items is the business card he handed out while working for the HBC; another is a dance card from a YMCA where he must have socialized.

I, too, am tossing around ideas for how to write a story. It must run in the family. This time the story is Richard's own, and in an act of poetic parity I am writing it for the same magazine that once employed my relative. My task is a little harder though; unlike him, I don't get to write about sailing vessels and cartons of oranges. I am writing the story of a young man who went off on a great northern adventure and never made it home.

IMAGES COURTESY OF KATHERINE SCHUMM

An unidentified Inuit man turns the camera on Richard Hourde.

The story of Richard Hourde's exploits started in 1934, when he seated himself in his grandmother's parlour to read a copy of Courtney Ryley Cooper's 1929 book, *Go North, Young Man!*, a tale of Canada's northern frontier. Already an amateur photographer at the age of nineteen, Hourde lapped up the thrilling stories of hunting bears, snowshoeing through blowing drifts, and capturing images of northerners in nature. Young and perhaps a little naive, he had been restlessly stumbling from job to job during the Great Depression. After reading Cooper's book, Hourde turned to his indulgent family for a small loan and set off for the wilderness surrounding Kapuskasing, Ontario, on his first sojourn away from the urban life he had known.

Laden with a sleeping bag, wool trousers, sheepskin-lined moccasins, heavy fur mitts, and snowshoes, Hourde settled in to a boarding house in "Kap" and planned his next move. He took in some dances and went bowling, all the while stockpiling supplies for his unfunded, experimental journey. He bought a dog, a tent, and a little stove with folding pipes and an oven. He planned to set up camp a few kilometres outside of Kapuskasing and began limiting his diet to oranges and milk in order to keep his budget in line — and to stay healthy. He was going to photograph wolves and moose and then hunt them for their meat and fur, selling the pelts to subsidize his writing and photography.

Nature did not reward his enthusiasm. Everything he had planned depended on heavy snow, but snowfalls were unusually light through most of the 1934–35 winter. Hourde sat in his tiny tent and wrote letter after letter to his mother, begging the heavens for more snow and outlining ideas for articles. At the end of that first winter, the would-be hunter had failed to bag a single moose or wolf. He must have sustained himself on tinned food as well as the milk and oranges.

Hourde retreated to London, Ontario, the next year to regroup and to make contact again with the Hudson's Bay Company. By the spring of 1936, my tenacious relative hit the road again, this time hitchhiking from London to Winnipeg, spending his twelve-day journey in motor cars, horse-drawn wagons, and, during one leg, in the back of a truck with two pigs for companions. Finally he arrived at the Winnipeg YMCA, clad in his best flannel shirt and his good hobnail boots, ready to talk business with Douglas MacKay of the HBC and *The Beaver* magazine (now *Canada's History*).

After many days of spitballing ideas, and a few fireside chats over glasses of bourbon, MacKay granted Hourde a roving assignment to shoot "Eskimo" scenes in the Arctic using company-furnished photographic equipment. His pay would be $125 a month plus expenses. This was the big break! Hourde scribbled the great news furiously to his mother on plain cream-coloured stationery and quickly posted it via airmail before setting sail from Edmonton on the grand adventure of his life.

He travelled up the Mackenzie River, mostly aboard massive paddlewheelers, including the *Athabasca River* and the SS *Distributor*. Hourde made friends easily, chumming around with Anglican missionaries and local folks at the various ports where he stopped to switch ships or where his vessel paused to deposit mailbags and crates of goods.

At the end of June 1936, his ship stopped for forty-eight hours to clean its boilers at Fort Norman, Northwest Territories. Hourde took the chance to paddle up the Great Bear River in an RCMP canoe. He later wrote in a letter sent home that, while he was out on the icy water, a storm swept in quickly and forced him to paddle back madly toward Fort Norman. Slipping ashore just ahead of the weather, Hourde tromped up the riverbank straight into a pack of huskies that threatened to tear him to pieces. His letter to his mother remarked that the locals were quite delighted with his close call and had a grand laugh at his expense.

A few days later, he arrived in Aklavik, Northwest Territories, excited to greet the Indigenous residents who met the ship with their own fervour — many of them had not received fresh supplies or outside news since the previous summer. Hourde snapped photos as the locals lined up to buy oranges

IMAGES COURTESY OF KATHERINE SCHUMM

Opposite page above: A mother and child, identities unknown, in the western Arctic, circa 1936. Opposite page below: This photo appeared in the magazine with the caption "Freuchen, who makes a specialty of relaxation, at Baillie Island, 1936." Above: Unidentified visitors disembark from a bush plane at Fort McMurray, Alberta, circa 1936. All photographs by Richard Hourde.

at a dollar per dozen and fresh eggs for a dollar and a quarter — roughly four times their cost in southern Canada. He jotted down quick notes about how well they spoke English, courtesy of Anglican missionaries who had introduced the language, and how they travelled quite easily in their specialized Arctic schooners, one of which was named the *Henry Ford*. His curiosity was piqued at the name — how had they heard of the famous automobile tycoon?

His party pushed farther north, stopping in Kittigazuit, then Tuktoyaktuk, and all the way out to Baillie Island over the course of about three weeks. All the while, Hourde spent time among the Inuit, dining with them and making as many friends as he could.

One young man he met had just come ashore in a kayak. He greeted Hourde jovially and, with a broad smile, proceeded to haggle with the stranger, soliciting him to buy a carton of cigarettes for five dollars — the equivalent of more than eighty dollars today. The photographer happily agreed, tucked the carton under his arm, and then visited with the man and his family in their home. Another young Inuk he met engaged Hourde in a long talk about his favourite toothpaste and camera equipment and then invited him aboard his schooner to admire his own photographic collection. Near a sprawling expanse of tundra — he called it a field — Hourde met a young boy who demanded a bribe of a single orange before he would sit for a photo, posing with his citrus treat among Arctic flowers.

Hourde found it nearly as thrilling to spend time in the company of Rev. Archibald Fleming, the Anglican bishop of the Arctic, and to watch him preach to the local communities as he worked to bridge the colliding cultures. Every letter sent home was packed full of such tales and was suffused with an overwhelming joy for living, if for a short period, in a very different world.

When it was time to head back south, the trip took a perilous turn. Grievously icy conditions in the western Arctic stranded Hourde and his district manager on Baillie Island for four weeks

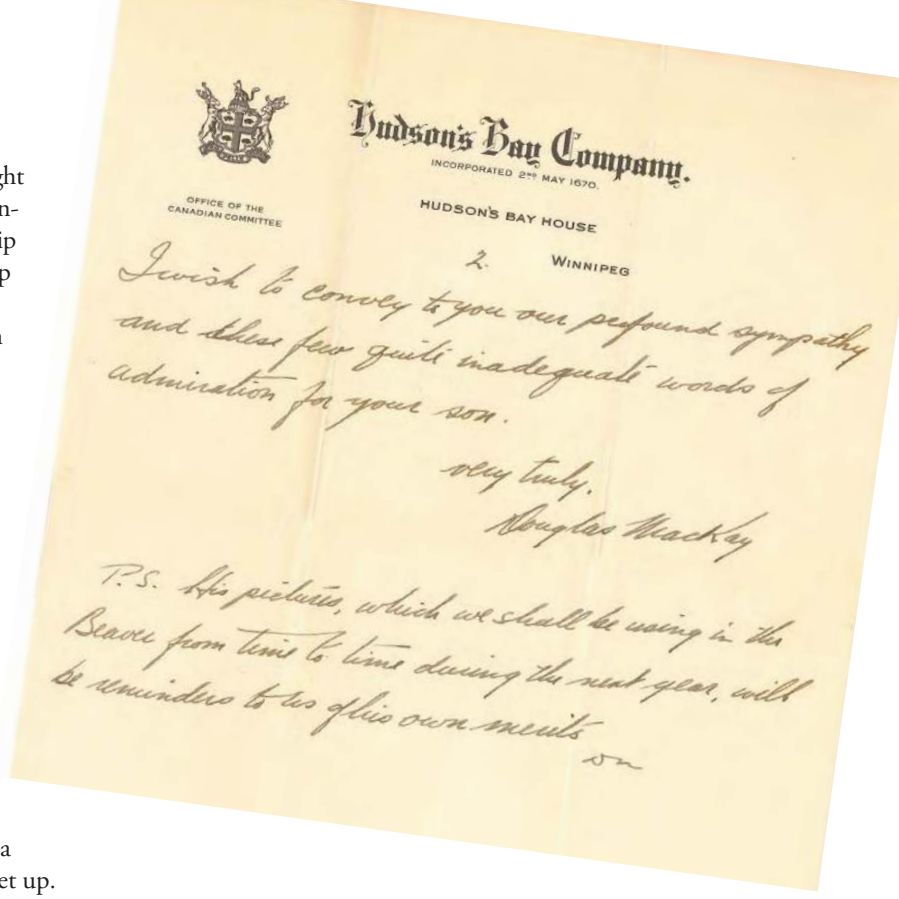
IMAGE COURTESY OF KATHERINE SCHUMM

RCMP officers heading north. Left to right: Corporal Ernest Covell, Constable Gifford Moore, and Constable R.W. Christie. Photo by Richard Hourde.

Opposite page: The second page of the condolence letter written by Douglas MacKay of the HBC to Hourde's mother.

as they waited for the *Audrey* to pick them up. Night after night, Hourde watched out over the water, country music yodelling across the ice, wondering if his ship would ever make it or if the icy conditions might keep him ashore on the island for many more months.

In haste, Hourde and his travelling companion made the risky choice to hop aboard a smaller vessel to catch the *Audrey* on Herschel Island. After two days on the second island, and with no sign of the promised ship, impatience finally got the better of Hourde. He and another fellow made for Aklavik via schooner. They might have succeeded, but for the walls of ice barring their way. During the first week of September, the small schooner struggled between grounded ice floes and the shore. During one of those early fall nights, the ice closed in on them. The men built two fires and made camp on the beach between them. The ice had completely hemmed them in; they couldn't even go back the way they came. The snow was flying furiously, and they wondered throughout the freezing cold and very dark night if a rescue by airplane would be needed once the snow let up.


Hudson's Bay Company.
INCORPORATED 2ND MAY 1670.
OFFICE OF THE CANADIAN COMMITTEE
HUDSON'S BAY HOUSE
2. WINNIPEG
I wish to convey to you our profound sympathy and these few quite inadequate words of admiration for your son.
Very truly,
Douglas MacKay
P.S. His pictures, which we shall be using in the Beaver from time to time during the next year, will be reminders to us of his own merits
DM

It is at this point in the story that I look out at my own snow-covered landscape. Icicles hang from tree branches, and thick snowbanks obscure the view of the road from my warm and toasty home.

I want to pad over to the thermostat and tick up the temperature just a bit, and I struggle to imagine a night sleeping on the ground in the High Arctic surrounded by unyielding ice blocks. Perhaps I did not inherit Hourde's fortitude.

Hourde made it through that night in September 1936, and by the next day conditions had improved enough that the schooner was able to push through the ice. By early October, Hourde had arrived home in London, where he developed his photos and combed through all of his materials. The December 1936 issue of *The Beaver* marked his publication debut, with the printing of his photo essay "From the Western Arctic."

That winter the restless Hourde eagerly awaited the coming summer and the promise of his next HBC assignment in the North. He could not resist, though. He had to get back out into the wilderness even before that commission. So he packed his tent, camping stove, and snowshoes (no word on what had happened to the dog) and headed back to the Kapuskasing area, where he contracted with the Abitibi Power and Paper Company to photograph its operations.

The last letter Hourde ever sent home was from Cochrane, Ontario, on February 20, 1937. Writing to his mother on moose-adorned stationery from the Stevens House hotel, he said all was well and that he was about to catch a train to Moosonee.

Hourde never made it on board. He took ill on February 25, developing a viral infection that quickly turned into pneumonia. He was treated at the Kapuskasing hospital, where he died on March 3, 1937, at the age of twenty-one. His grandmother, Clara Nash-Blanchard, was able to travel to Kapuskasing to be with him for a brief time. Whether that was one day or several, she apparently complained of the cold drafts through his hospital room the whole time. After he died, she was the one who brought his body home.

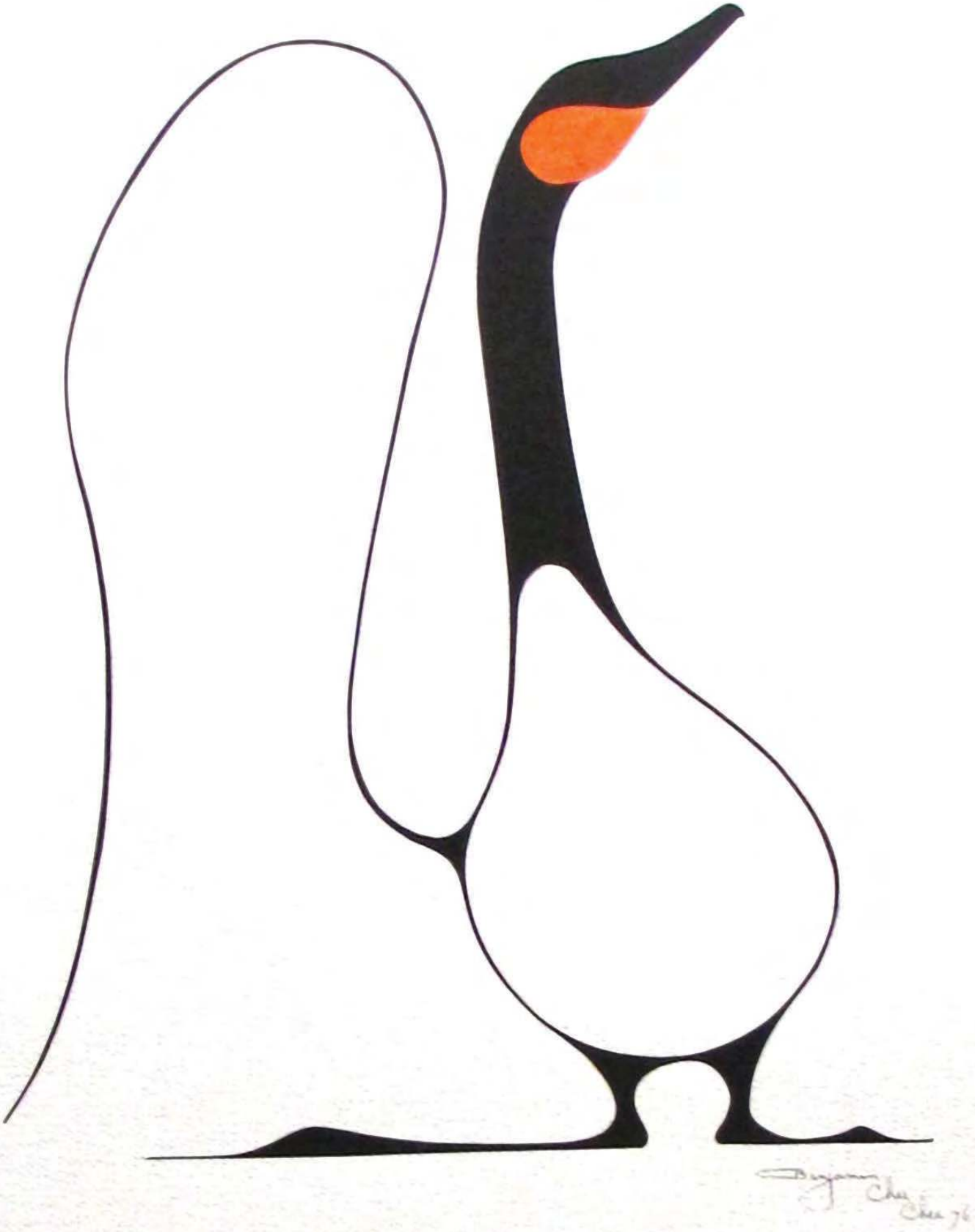
Douglas MacKay, the HBC employee who had hired Hourde, hand-wrote a letter of condolence to his mother, my great-aunt, in April 1937. (This was just eight months prior to MacKay's own death in the fiery crash of a fourteen-seater Zephyr plane.) "We had all here become genuinely attached to your son and we often remarked how certain he was of a real career in photographic work," MacKay wrote. "His pictures, which we shall be using in *The Beaver* from time to time during the next year, will be reminders to us of his own merits."

As I thumb through the substantial, overly full binder that holds all of Hourde's original photos, ink drawings and doodles, letters home, and magazine clippings from *The Beaver*, I see that the last entry is a Canadian Pacific Telegraph telegram of sympathy. This and MacKay's letter take the place of what should have been countless more letters from Hourde to his family, describing hillbilly music, packs of growling huskies, Inuit children and their oranges, and so many more tales that were never to be told — not by him.

Instead I sit here shuffling through maps and letters, trying to retrace his brief and fantastic adventures, trying to stitch together all of the stories — many of them elevated to legend at our family gatherings. *The Beaver* went on to publish his photos and articles on occasion well into the 1950s. And, all these years later, we still talk of him: Richard Nash Hourde, hero to his little cousin, my grandfather, Robert Stevens. Daring photographer. Loving son. The great Arctic adventurer whose life was cut short but whose stories and pictures endure.

IMAGES COURTESY OF KATHERINE SCHUMM

One of Benjamin Chee Chee's famous goose paintings: *Untitled*, acrylic on paper, circa 1976.



DANCING HIS OWN LINE

A CLOSE FRIEND REMEMBERS THE RAPID RISE AND TRAGIC FALL OF OJIBWA ARTIST BENJAMIN CHEE CHEE.

BY ERNIE BIES

BENJAMIN CHEE CHEE HAD IT ALL. By January 1977, he had achieved the goals he had set for himself. He wanted to be appreciated as an artist, one whose work was instantly recognized. He wanted respect from merchants who would supply his everyday needs and not demand immediate payment. He wanted friends and love, and, above all, he wanted to find his mother; he had lost track of her years before.

In his short career as an artist, Benjamin had risen from painting movie posters to seeing shows of his work mounted from coast to coast in Canada. His paintings were sought after in the United States and in Germany. He enjoyed fine clothes, good wine and food, and his drink of choice was Chivas Regal. He could walk into Chuck Delfino's men's shop on Bank Street in Ottawa and walk out with the best suit without ever having asked the price. When he needed a new pair of his favourite Beatle boots, Florsheim Shoes on Sparks Street took care of him. Wallack's Art Supplies ran a tab when he needed brushes, paint, or his favourite Arches paper. Jimmy's Tavern and La Gondola restaurant in Ottawa and Café Versailles across the river in Hull, Quebec, provided him with food and drink, knowing he would pay at the end of the month — and he was, after all, a big tipper.

Benjamin had no shortage of friends, some fair-weather and others who genuinely cared about him. Tall and good-looking, he never lacked for female companionship. In the summer of 1976, after a long separation from his mother, he finally located her in a tourist camp in northern Quebec, where she was working. In his typically flamboyant style, he rented a plane and flew in unannounced to surprise her. She was swimming with some children, and Benjamin jumped into the water fully clothed to embrace her. He brought her back to Ottawa with him, his family now complete.

After selling every one of his paintings at a show in Vancouver in January 1977, he returned to Ottawa with plans to relocate to British Columbia with his mother. But first he wanted to have one last show in Ottawa to coincide with his thirty-third birthday on March 26, 1977. He spent February creating new works, designing posters and newspaper ads, and making a list of people to invite, including the prime minister, the Governor General, and the mayor of Ottawa.

Benjamin was on top of the world. Then came the tragic night of March 11. Arrested for creating a disturbance in one of his favourite restaurants, he was handcuffed, taken to the police station, and thrown into a cell for uncooperative prisoners. It was a bare cage.

What went through his mind in the next few minutes that caused him to take his own life? There is no simple answer. Benjamin Chee Chee lived life as a shooting star, briefly lighting up the world around him before running out of energy, his flame prematurely extinguished by tragedy.

Benjamin was born in Temagami, Ontario, a region of lakes and woods northeast of Sudbury. He was an Ojibwa, the only child of Josephine and Angus Chee Chee, who named him Kenneth Thomas. He was born in the house of his mother's friend, Angele Egwuna Belaney, the first wife of Archie Belaney, the Englishman who had adopted First Nations ways and had become famous as the naturalist Grey Owl. It was Angele who suggested that his parents add the name Benjamin.

His mother, Josephine Marie, grew up in Notre-Dame-du-Nord, Quebec. She moved to Haileybury, Ontario, and then to Temagami, where she met Angus, a tourist guide, trapper, and woodsman whom she married in 1943. Benjamin, who was born in 1944, did not qualify for the designation of status (registered) Indian because his parents were non-status and he was born off-reserve. Although the exclusion haunted him all his life, and even after his death, it also drove him to succeed on his own. As he told the *Ottawa Citizen* in 1973, "I want to do it by myself. Otherwise they will want to own you — they'll say 'I helped you then.' No one can say that now."

On March 24, 1945, while Angus was gathering firewood with two other woodsmen from the village, their truck broke through the ice of Lake Temagami, and he drowned. He was buried on Bear Island on Benjamin's first birthday.

The early tragedy set the pattern for the difficulties Benjamin Chee Chee was to encounter for the rest of his life. After Angus's death, Josephine had to find paid work, often leaving her young son in the care of others. As he grew older she noticed that he loved to draw and whittle, talents that under different circumstances might have been developed sooner. She also noticed a tendency to wildness in him that, because of her own difficulties with alcohol abuse, she was unable to control. In a CBC Radio interview, Ben spoke candidly about his early life. "The memories of Temagami that I had were good and bad, some ugly .... I used to stay out late at night," he recalled. "I didn't start to drink until I was eleven years old .... I stole things. I got into big trouble."

When he was twelve, Benjamin and some of his friends borrowed a car for a joyride. He was sent to a Roman Catholic reform school, St. Joseph's Training School for boys, in Alfred, Ontario, more than five hundred kilometres to the southeast. With no stable home to return to, he remained there for more than four years. Hundreds of men have come forward over the years with stories of abuse at the school and have won significant settlements. There have also been many suicides among its victims.

Benjamin said he enjoyed playing hockey at St. Joseph's, but he would not talk about his time there except to refer to the Christian Brothers, who were in charge, with a derogatory sexual expletive. Friends assumed that his words reflected the abuse he suffered.

Richard McCann, a fellow student at the school, remembered Ben's repeated efforts to run away. "When they would bring him back they would literally beat him unconscious. First the students would be made to beat him, then the brothers would beat him. He would never say a word, never cry out," McCann told the *Ottawa Citizen* in 1990. He added that the Christian Brothers said Benjamin "could take a beating like a man." Benjamin left the facility an angry young man. The mistreatment he suffered helped to fuel the alcohol addiction he would battle his entire life.

His mother married Ed Roy in 1960 and moved to North Bay, Ontario. On his release from St. Joseph's, Benjamin came to live with them for a time, tried going to school in Sudbury,

Ojibway artist

Selling beads back to the white man

Nicholas Art Gallery displays Ojibway artist's paintings

A one-man exhibition of Ojibway artist Benjamin Chee Chee opened at the Nicholas Art Gallery at 5 Nicholas St., Thursday.

The 35 works on view include a large oil painting of buffalos on the plains. There are abstract paintings dealing with In-

taught, his work is at a profe sional level.

This viewer admired the o line in oils of a bird. Blue a

July 21, 1973
The Ottawa Citizen

Talent trebled

By Jenny Bergin

It would be easy to believe, on seeing his work for the first time, that two—or even three—people were responsible for Benjamin Chee Chee's exhibition, currently on view at the Nicholas Gallery.

There's the lover of cool geometry, hard-edged forms on a pristine background: the manipulator, who works with a single motif printed or stamped into carefully regulated designs; and there's the stylizer, who organizes rebellious flowers or free-flying birds into simplified, captive compositions.

But Benjamin Chee Chee, a 29 year-old Ojibway painter, did them all, and has brought to them his own particular brand of discipline and regard.

and rightness through the very fact of their repetition.

But the few hard-edge paintings are not to be ignored, if only for their startling contrast in personality and technique. After the heavy impasto and swirling, lively movements of the "stamped" works, the robot precision and immaculate handling of what virtually amounts to a stain technique comes as a real jolt.

Add a few pictures incorporating rows and rows of tiny beads—again the repetition of form—and those flower paintings, and it becomes plain that Mr. Chee Chee is a man of many parts.

Already a 4'x7' work in the show has been purchased for exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum next

COURTESY OF ERNIE BIES

Top and far right: Headline and photo from a profile of Benjamin Chee Chee in the *Ottawa Citizen*, December 8, 1973.

Above and right: Reviews from Ottawa newspapers of Benjamin's first exhibition, in 1973.

and then returned to Temagami to be near his only friend, Hugh McKenzie, whom he thought of as a brother. Benjamin lived with Charlotte Peshabo and her husband on the nearby Bear Island Reserve. Charlotte, who had been present at his birth, cautioned him to avoid the gang of boys from his past; but when they came calling he could not resist. The boys got into mischief, including some "after-hours shopping" at the Hudson's Bay store, which led to Benjamin's arrest. Charlotte did not hear from him for years. He felt he had let her down, and he decided to strike out on his own. Over the next few years, he drifted through northern Ontario, trying his hand at a variety of jobs and constantly running afoul of the law, usually for liquor-related offences. During this time, he lost track of his mother.

In 1965 Ben moved to Montreal. Throughout the previous tumultuous years he had continued to display his artistic talents, but he never found the support or the courage to promote himself as an artist. Benjamin busied himself with odd jobs, becoming an exterior painter. He would point proudly to the British pavilion at the Montreal world's fair, Expo 67, and say he worked on the two-hundred-foot-high scaffolds where no one else would go.

While on the Expo 67 site he undoubtedly would have visited the Indians of Canada pavilion and likely would have made the acquaintance of some of the Indigenous artists who were commissioned to create murals and other artworks for that project. Norval Morrisseau, Alex Janvier, and George Clutesi were among the commissioned artists. Several Indigenous Canadian artists also took part in an international exhibition at Expo 67, something that may have influenced Benjamin's desire to pursue a career that would use his talents.

He found work with a promotional company doing posters and billboards for movies. He was able to use his talent by illustrating posters for films such as *Yellow Submarine*, where his love of abstract and surrealist work became apparent. His favourite project was a promotional display for *The Graduate* in 1968, in which the leading character's name was Benjamin Braddock. Chee Chee took great pleasure in painting the name "Benjamin" in large letters on a billboard.

In an effort to connect with Montreal's artistic community, he attended coffee houses and bars frequented by artists and would shyly show them some of his early attempts. Well-known artists Robin and Dorothy Watt encouraged him to devote more time to his art and to try different techniques and media. Dorothy presented him with a set of woodcarving tools as well as a portable easel and painting supplies. Knowing that he had no formal art training, she gave him several books on the subject; one was a very basic book called *Fun with Art* that helped him to develop his stencilling and spatter-painting techniques. Watt also invited him to work in her studio, where she could coach him as he learned.

A lawyer in Montreal named Fred C. Brown met Benjamin in 1969 and took an interest in him, providing advice and assistance that sparked the artist's brief career. Brown described Ben as "a brilliant man, logical, inventive, impeccable in his personal habits, meticulous in any work he performed."

This mixed-media work by Benjamin Chee Chee, *Thunderbird Design*, circa 1973, was bought at auction in 2017 and donated to the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health in Ottawa.

Assuming that Benjamin could benefit from federal grant and assistance programs in Ottawa, Brown sent a letter to Cathy Donnelly Eberts, an employee of what was then the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), in 1972. That letter opened the door to Ben's career as an artist.

Eberts worked with Six Nations artist Tom Hill in the Cultural Development and Education Branch of DIAND. Benjamin called her to follow up on Brown's letter, and she decided to visit him in Montreal. He was living in a neat basement apartment with his partner at the time, Lucille L'Orange, who was very supportive and even had him on the wagon. Eberts examined Benjamin's portfolio of paintings, which demonstrated techniques such as stencil, spatter, stipple, and sponge. His subject matter reflected his First Nations influences; the works bore titles such as *Thunderbird Design* and *Buffalo Design*. The geometric patterns that later dominated his abstract period were also evident.

Eberts said some pieces were interesting and some were bad, but she brought back several to display around her office with a note on the back that introduced him to the Ottawa market: "Benjamin Chee Chee is an Ojibway from Temagami, Ontario. He has started to paint seriously quite recently but the results are obviously very good. Due to his financial circumstances Ben has had limited experience with different media and techniques but hopefully with the sale of some of his works will come a little money for art supplies. The work you see here is done with inks and oil base paints. Each one is an original and they are for sale." She added her office phone number at the end for anyone interested in the work.

Benjamin's unfortunate interactions with police continued during his eight years in Montreal, resulting in six stays at the

infamous Bordeaux prison. Looking for a new start, he decided to move to Ottawa in 1973. He thought he could receive support and assistance from DIAND but learned that he was not eligible; the department's policy at the time was that only status Indians qualified for grants and training programs.

Brown contacted Pierre and Marie Gaignery at the Nicholas Art Gallery in Ottawa and arranged for them to see Benjamin's work. They were immediately taken by his versatility and range and gave him his first exhibition in July 1973. The works were mostly abstract designs but included some paintings of birds and flowers and collages using beads on burlap. Ben attended the opening. Even at twenty-nine years old, he still found it hard to believe that people would actually pay for his work.

Jenny Bergin's review in the *Ottawa Citizen* was titled "Talent trebled." She suggested that viewers might think that, given his range, "two — or even three — people were responsible for Benjamin Chee Chee's exhibition." W.Q. Ketchum wrote in the *Ottawa Journal*, "Though he is largely self-taught, his work is at a professional level." Tom Hill, who was coordinating the Canadian Indian Art 74 exhibition for the Royal Ontario Museum, bought a painting of a group of bison sheltering in the haze of a dust storm for the DIAND collection. Hill also paid eight hundred dollars for a large painting entitled *Migration*, which showed the tracks of caribou wandering aimlessly.

Benjamin's second exhibition was held at the University of Ottawa in December 1973 and contained works similar to his first. Catherine Jutras wrote a detailed article in the *Ottawa Citizen* entitled "Ojibway artist — selling beads back to the white man."

"'I think of myself as an Ojibway artist — a member of the Ojibway nation,'" she quoted him as saying, adding, "he rejects the label 'Indian artist' just as he rejected the traditional form and materials of 'Indian' art."

Pierre Gaignery of the Nicholas Art Gallery later observed, "Bennie went his own way and sometimes incorporated himself into a painting. He'd paint a group of animals or birds with a lone image going in the opposite direction, saying, 'That's me.'" Benjamin tried several different styles, including portraits and landscapes, but he always returned to his first loves, abstracts and birds. At times he would set up his easel and sketch local scenes along the Rideau Canal or at Rideau Falls near Ottawa's city hall, but he felt self-conscious with onlookers observing him too closely. He resorted to taking photographs from which he could work in privacy.

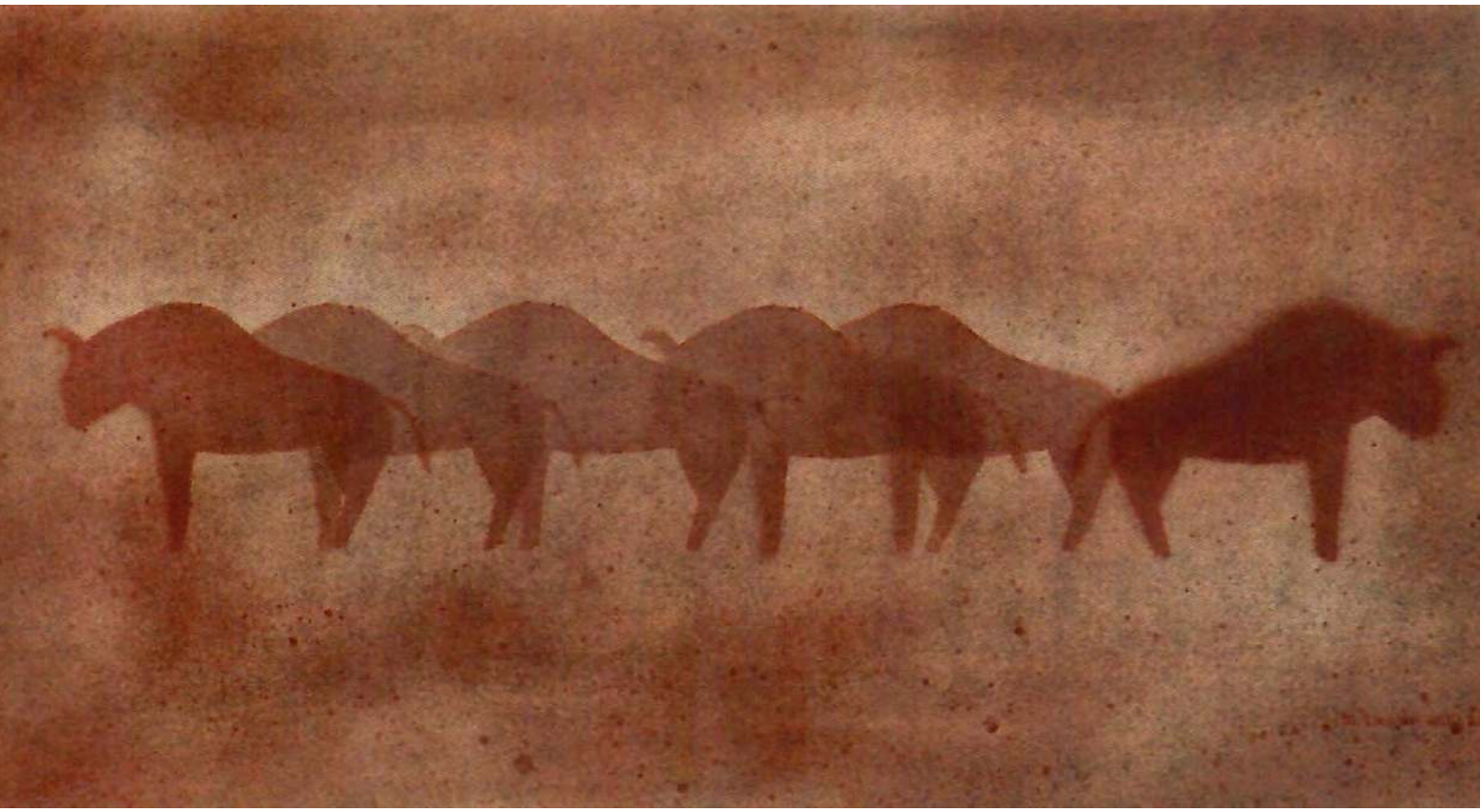
I first encountered Benjamin Chee Chee early in 1974 when I worked at DIAND. I had been intrigued by the images on posters for his exhibition at the University of Ottawa. One day he wandered into my office attempting to sell some paintings. I chose one and asked the price. With a mischievous gleam in his eye, he responded, "How much money do you have?" I counted out all the money I had with me, which totalled forty dollars. He said, "Forty dollars," and then reconsidered, saying he didn't want to leave me with nothing. He gave me a dollar back. We formed an instant friendship that day.

Over the next few years he dropped by my office many times to visit or called me when he needed help, which was often. The help ranged from advancing him money for food and art supplies to helping him move when he wore out another landlord's patience, finding him legal representation when he crossed the line, or just listening when he needed to talk.

My office was on the messy side, and one day he brought me

Left: Benjamin Chee Chee folded a piece of scrap metal into one of his trademark "Benjie birds," circa 1975. Right: He painted this flat rock from the river to be a paperweight at around the same time.

PRIVATE COLLECTION



Above: *Untitled*, acrylic on paper, circa 1972, by Benjamin Chee Chee. This painting was purchased by Tom Hill, a fellow Indigenous artist, for the federal government's collection.

Left: *Untitled* (Ottawa Street Scene 2), print, circa 1974, also by Chee Chee.

ABOVE: INDIGENOUS ART CENTRE, INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA. BELOW: PRIVATE COLLECTION

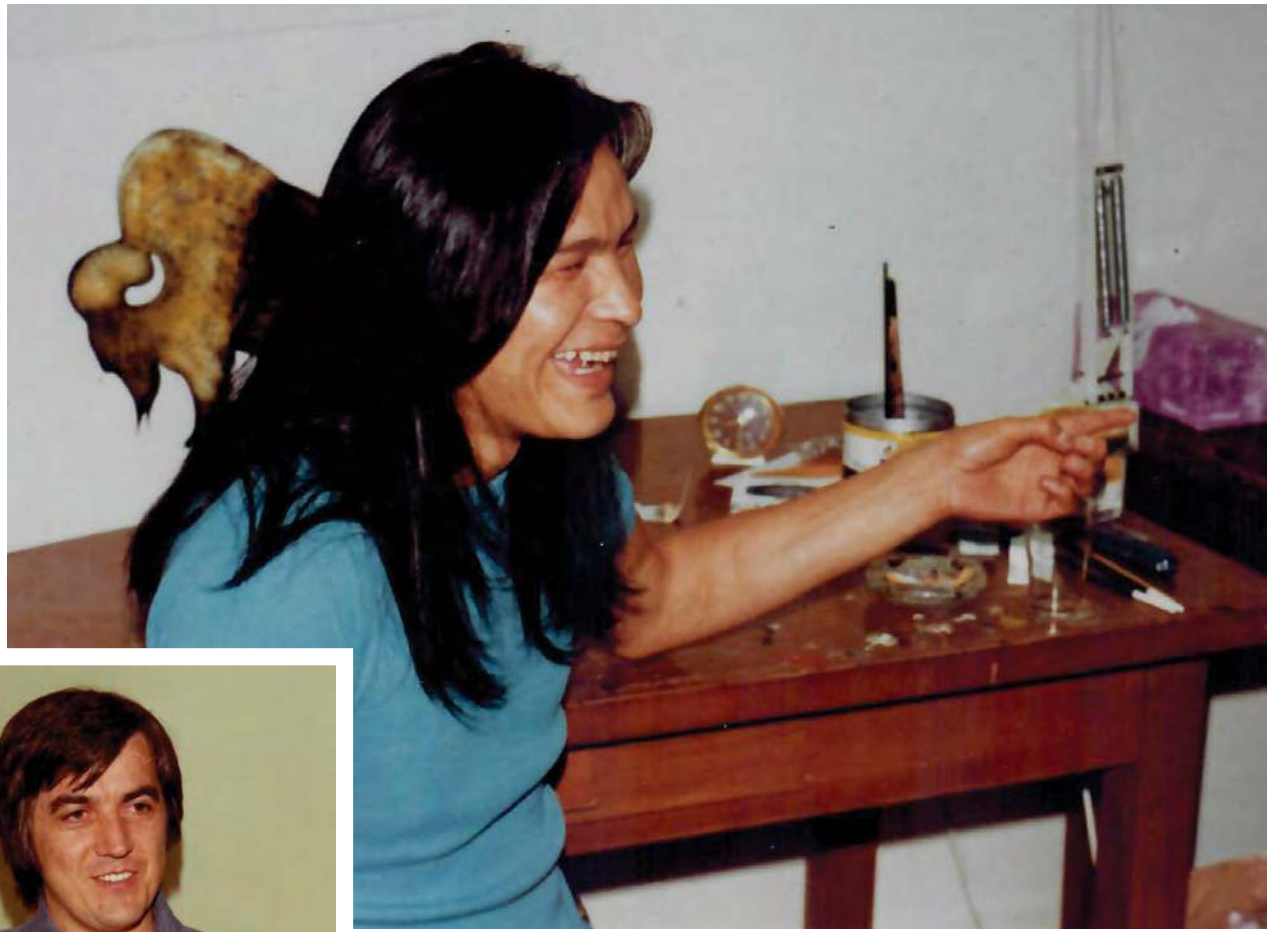
a flat rock from the river that he had painted and signed. He told me that I now had the only Chee Chee paperweight in the world. Another time, as we were walking down the street, he picked up a piece of metal strapping and twisted it while we walked, only to discard it. I picked it up and asked him why he threw it away. He said, "It's just a piece of junk." I said, "No, Ben; it's art." He had created a perfect image of one of his "Benjie birds."

Wishing to help him reach a wider audience, I took a selection of his work to galleries in Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, and Waterloo in Ontario. They were all interested in taking some pieces on consignment; by the time I got home they were calling for more.

Always appreciative of those who helped him, Benjamin spoke with great reverence about people like Dorothy Watt, Fred Brown, and Cathy Donnelly Eberts, and he considered Pierre and Marie Gaignery his second family. While he attracted companionship in bars as long as he had money, there were times when he found himself alone and reached out for support. One Christmas Day he called me. I invited him over, but, while he said he did not want to impose on my family day, he kept me on the phone for an hour or more. Brown also talked of getting phone calls, usually in the middle of the night, in which a lonely Ben would chat for hours.

Ben lived in an apartment in Ottawa's Centretown neighbourhood and was a popular patron of nearby bars such as the Gilmour House and the Alexandra Hotel. After a big payday he'd be known to buy a round for the house. He had countless friends until his money ran out. He was a charmer, quick-witted and blessed with a sense of humour that was apparent in many of his paintings. When he drank his mood darkened and he would lash out, even at his best friends. I was never subjected to this anger, but I was aware of its potential. Ben, who stood five feet ten and a half inches tall and weighed 165 pounds, was deceptively strong and did not react to pain, a stoicism that dated back to his early days at the training school in Alfred.

While waiting for his big breakthrough, Benjamin busied himself with small commissions illustrating legends, certifi-



Top: Benjamin Chee Chee in his Hull, Quebec, apartment, July 20, 1975.

Above: Writer Ernie Bies in a 1975 photo taken by Benjamin Chee Chee.

Right: Benjamin often worked for days on end while focused on his painting. This photo was taken August 3, 1975.

cates of achievement, and teachers manuals for the education branch of DIAND. His iconic stylized Canada goose image began to take shape. In 1974, People's Art published his first limited edition of four lithographs, known as the animal series: *Running Horses*, *Black Bear*, *Sea Otter*, and *Mountain Sheep*. His *Migration* was displayed at the Canadian Indian Art 74 exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum, hanging beside works by Canada's leading Indigenous artists.

That same year, Benjamin produced the Ottawa series of lithographs featuring four local scenes. While the street scenes demonstrated one aspect of his talent, he wanted to perfect a style that would be instantly recognizable as his work.

DIAND had created the Central Marketing Service (CMS), later the Canadian Indian Marketing Service (CIMS), to assist and to promote Indigenous artists and craftspeople, regardless of status. CMS collected works from aspiring artists across Canada and acted as a wholesale supplier to galleries in Canada, the United States, and Europe. Its staff provided

COURTESY OF ERNIE BIES

From the Montreal series of lithographs, circa 1975. Benjamin Chee Chee returned frequently to the image of goose family groupings.

PRIVATE COLLECTION

mentoring, training, and promotional services. Benjamin was introduced to CMS by fellow artist John Dockstader and soon became a regular visitor and a rising star among its artists and artisans.

On August 31, 1974, he was featured in the *Ottawa Journal* in a full-page profile that included a large photograph of the artist at work. "When I draw fish or birds or animals they have no symbolic meaning from the past. For me they are animals of the present and I draw them because I like their clean lines and beautiful shapes," Benjamin told the newspaper. The article said he was working on a portfolio of stamp designs that he wanted to send to Canada Post so that everyone who got a letter with his bird stamps on it could say, "I am collecting the art of Benjamin Chee Chee." Nothing came of the effort.

The November 1974 issue of *Canadian Indian Artcrafts* profiled Benjamin, saying his work was "reminiscent of Paul Klee." It also reported that Dr. Ted Brasser had purchased several of his works for the permanent collection of what was then called the National Museum of Man.

Benjamin continued to develop his iconic birds, which would ultimately bring him the recognition he sought, and closed out the year with a commission for a non-denominational greeting card that featured three geese marvelling at a star. The National Indian Brotherhood commissioned a series of original paintings that were used to illustrate its entire 1975 calendar. Throughout this period, Benjamin experimented with his style and subject matter.

He opened the year 1975 with another exhibition at the Nicholas Art Gallery. It included thirty new works featuring moose, geese, and seals plus some abstracts. W.Q. Ketchum of the *Ottawa Journal* praised the show, noting, "he has a fine color sense and his work has an admirable economy of line." The review in the *Citizen* was less kind. Although reviewer Kathleen Walker acknowledged that "the collection consists of free-wheeling, imaginative drawings," she dismissed the distinctive style Benjamin had worked so hard to achieve, saying, "once you've seen one ... you've seen them all."

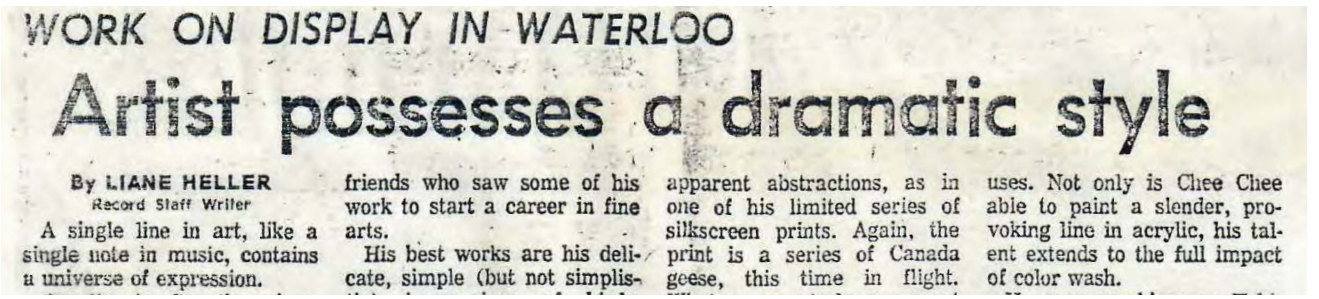
Soon after, Robert McKeown profiled Ben in a feature article in the *Toronto Telegram*'s *Weekend* magazine published on January 11, 1975. Titled "The Search of Benjamin Chee Chee — to find fame and his mother," the piece opened by saying, "Benjamin Chee Chee isn't famous yet but he's positive he will be. Not arrogantly positive, just confidently positive."

His friends cautioned Ben to exercise strong control of the marketing of his work and to continue to experiment as an artist. Eberts, one of his original champions, told me in

a 1977 interview that, after his initial triumphs, Ben went through a period of laziness, "churning things out for quick sales and ignoring advice on properly marketing his work." With the early success, he had started drinking again, she said, prompting a breakup with Lucille L'Orange.

The CIMS provided Ben with studio space, in the form of a drafting table used by its commercial artists, art supplies, and a stable work environment. The organization collected his works for future exhibitions and began to promote him. Peter Allard, who worked with CIMS at the time, met Ben in June 1975 and gave him dedicated support and mentoring. "Benjamin tended to work in spurts of enthusiasm. Nothing for a month and then a week of working night and day," he said. "Not all of his work was accepted, and he would simply tear up the rejected pieces."

Benjamin's paintings were included in group shows that year in Toronto, Kingston, and Brantford, Ontario. On November 16, 1975, Governor General Jules Léger opened the newest gallery at what was then called the McMichael Canadian Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario; it was dedicated solely to Indigenous artists. Benjamin was thrilled that his work was included in the company of talents such as Norval Morrisseau, Carl Ray, and Jackson Beardy. He had now joined the ranks of those who had been represented at Expo 67.



WORK ON DISPLAY IN WATERLOO

Artist possesses a dramatic style

By LIANE HELLER
Record Staff Writer

A single line in art, like a single note in music, contains a universe of expression.

friends who saw some of his work to start a career in fine arts.

His best works are his delicate, simple (but not simplis-

apparent abstractions, as in one of his limited series of silkscreen prints. Again, the print is a series of Canada geese, this time in flight.

uses. Not only is Chee Chee able to paint a slender, provoking line in acrylic, his talent extends to the full impact of color wash.

That summer, after a visit back to Bear Island, Benjamin and his old friend Hugh McKenzie moved into a bright apartment across from Jacques-Cartier Park in Hull (now part of the city of Gatineau, Quebec). Ben furnished the apartment with government surplus furniture and his few other possessions, including one cooking pot and his art supplies. He modified a wooden table by drilling several holes in it to hold his brushes.

He would subject himself to marathon painting sessions, sometimes lasting two days without a break, relying on Benzedrine pills — aptly nicknamed bennies — to stay awake.

Occasionally he would make a mistake or run out of ideas, sparking an instant of rage when he would throw his jar of paint against the wall in frustration. When the anger subsided, he knew he would have to pay for the cleanup and repainting; I once jokingly suggested that he just sign it and leave the new tenants with an original Chee Chee painting.

It was fascinating to watch him at work. Although his hands had a slight tremor, when he picked up his paintbrush they became rock-steady. Focusing on a blank sheet of paper, he would create the wing of a bird in one continuous fluid motion. Without measuring or sketching in advance, he instinctively knew where to begin and to end the brush stroke, how much paint he needed, and when to turn the brush.

That apartment was the base for many misadventures that demonstrated Ben's disregard for his own well-being. The Café Versailles was just down the street, and he was on good terms with the management. One day he had an argument with his girlfriend and stormed out of the restaurant, kicking the door open and, in the process, breaking the glass. He immediately went back to the manager and put the cost, some four hundred dollars, on his tab. He then said to the manager, "That's my door now, right?" When the manager agreed, Ben went to his apartment, came back with a hatchet, and proceeded to chop the rest of the glass out of the door.

Once Benjamin decided to swim home from Gatineau, forgetting about the powerful current in the Ottawa River. He eventually came ashore well downstream, minus his shirt and boots, later saying he had floated on his back and enjoyed looking at the stars.

That Christmas, Ben and Hugh realized that they didn't have a tree, so they took the fully decorated tree from their building's lobby and dragged it up to the fifteenth floor, leaving a trail of needles and broken ornaments right to their door. It wasn't long before the angry superintendent came knocking. In a panic they threw the tree off the balcony, and it landed on a parked car fifteen floors below. Ben paid for all the damages, and I helped him to move shortly afterwards.

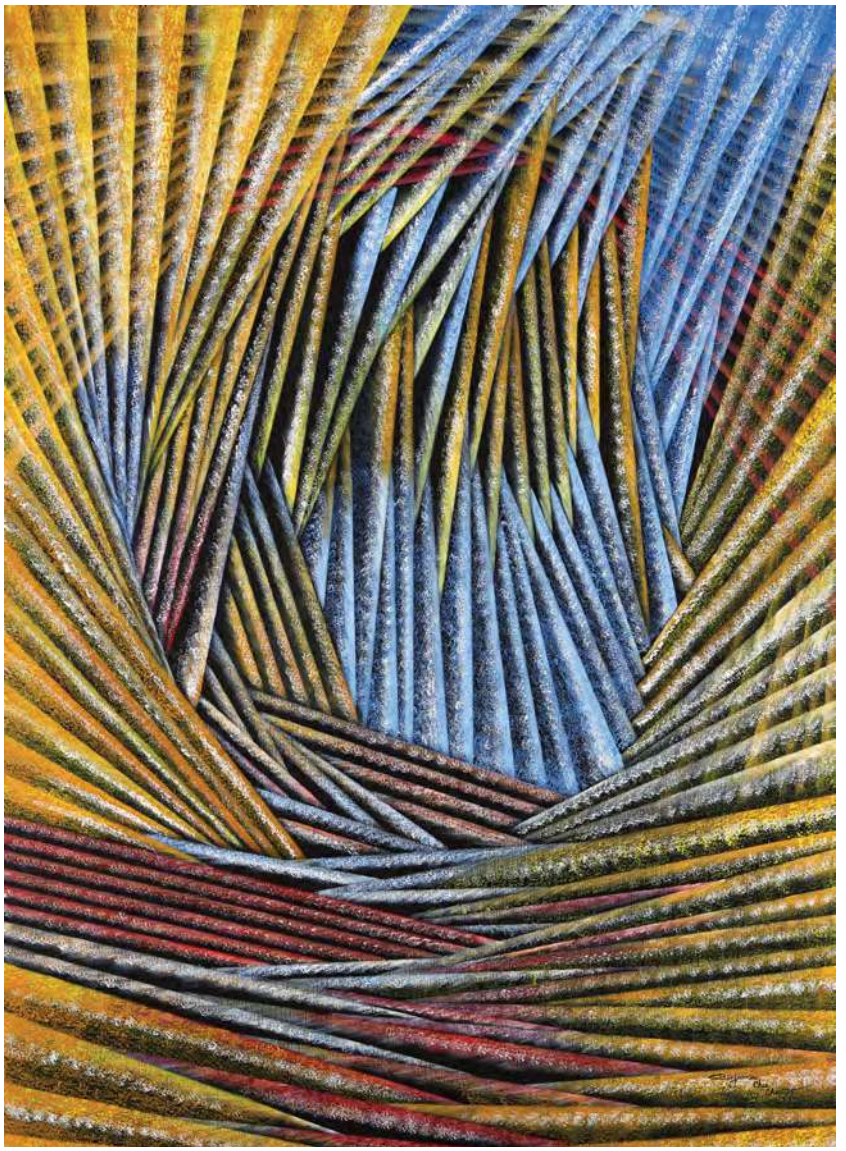
As reflected by his art, with its minimalist lines, Ben seemed to operate with little need for possessions. When he moved he simply took his art supplies and his clothes and left all his furniture behind. He gave me his paint-spattered table, of which I have made great use over the last forty years.

Ben had no use for address books, ledgers, or detailed written records; he was blessed with a phenomenal memory and honoured his debts.

On Friday afternoon he would visit CIMS, sell his week's production, and then make the rounds to pay off his accounts before hitting the bars. By Sunday, flat broke and hungry, he'd call friends for help.

Often, after one of these weekends, I would meet him at a restaurant or grocery store and buy him food. I tried to advise him to put some money aside for a rainy day, but he

COURTESY OF ERNIE BIES



Opposite page: A review from the October 2, 1976, edition of the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record* praised Benjamin Chee Chee's command of sweeping lines.

Clockwise from top left: *Untitled*, acrylic on paper, circa 1975. *Untitled*, acrylic on paper, circa 1975. *Untitled*, acrylic on canvas, circa 1975.

TOP AND CENTRE LEFT: BURT CURTIS, BENJAMIN CHEE CHEE COLLECTION OF THE THUNDER BAY ART GALLERY. RIGHT: INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA

scoffed, "Money is just paper. I can draw something on this napkin and sell it — that's my money." He lived for the day and never seemed to worry about tomorrow, although he did once ask me how he could be a straight-living guy like me. I think we both realized that, with his artistic temperament, he was a long way from a life in the suburbs.

Ben's devil-may-care attitude often got him into jams. On one occasion he even found himself married. The marriage only lasted a few months, and none of his friends or agents were aware of it until after his death. Occasionally he would ask friends to hold money for him. Charlie Smith, a buddy from the Gilmour Hotel, recalled, "Once I was holding $160 for him when he called from the Val Tétreault jail in Hull saying he needed $100 for bail. Then he went around telling everyone that I had saved his life."

Ben was respectful of the law when he was thinking clearly, although he did have a police record dating back to 1961, mostly for alcohol-related offences. Once he arrived at my office with two black eyes and a bent nose. I asked him what happened, and he said it was the cops. I asked if he wanted to do anything about it, and he said, with pride, "No, I deserved it. But it took four of them." He accepted that his actions had consequences.

One summer day in 1975 he "borrowed" a car on Bank Street, unconcerned that he had no licence or insurance, and side-swiped another car. I found him a lawyer, Eric Williams, and Ben made good all the damages and fines; he received a suspended sentence for his crime. He insisted on hand-delivering payments to people for the damages to their cars, along with an apology.

Williams was impressed with Ben's integrity and genuine remorse after causing trouble to other people. He felt Ben's risk-taking would eventually catch up with him but observed that Ben was determined to live life to the fullest: "He packed sixty years of living into his thirty-two-year life."

On a later visit, I saw a very nice Chee Chee painting in Williams' office. Ben would often give his paintings away to people

who had helped him, whether they were officers of the court, taxi drivers, police officers, or waitresses.

In January 1976, James Purdie of the *Globe and Mail* reviewed a solo exhibition of Benjamin's work at the Evans Gallery in Toronto. He supported Ben's rejection of the "Indian artist" label, saying that attitude was "important, too, to the whole art movement now flourishing but lacking diversity among the Ojibway." Benjamin did not subscribe to the Woodland style founded by Norval Morrisseau; instead he preferred to develop his own unique approach.

The rest of 1976 saw a constant flurry of activity, including exhibitions in Waterloo and in Halifax as well as the releases of a new edition of six silkscreen prints featuring animals and birds and of boxed Christmas cards featuring Ben's stylized caribou.

The highlight of 1976 was undoubtedly Ben's reunion with his mother. Peter Allard of CIMS had heard that she was in northern Quebec. He located her working at a tourist camp in Notre-Dame-du-Nord, near the Ontario-Quebec border. Ben immediately set out to find her, chartering a plane for the last leg. "It was June 27, and I was swimming with my nieces at the camp when a plane arrived and landed on the water," she told me in a 1977 interview. "Ben jumped out and ran into the water to give me a hug." Josephine returned to Ottawa with him.

Ben spent Christmas at Bear Island with his friend Hugh McKenzie and came back to Ottawa on January 4, 1977. He was so anxious to get home that he called me collect from North Bay and asked me to send him money so he could take a taxi. I managed to persuade him to take the bus.

He invited me to his room at the Alexandra Hotel and with great excitement unwrapped his latest prototype drawings for a new edition of silkscreen prints that he called the family series. He had completed them at Bear Island and brought them with him as he rode on the back of a Ski-Doo to Temagami. The prints featured images of two mature geese with a gosling. "Me, and my Mom, and my Pop," Ben said with glee. His favourite was a picture of the three of them flying high. Ben often said that after he died he wanted to come back as a bird so he could soar through the heavens forever.

His prospects for 1977 suggested that it would be the best year of his life. Publishing house Clarke, Irwin & Company featured Benjamin's soon-to-be-famous *Dancing Goose* as the January illustration on its annual "Indian Art" calendar. He was scheduled to attend a solo exhibition of his work at the Wildlife Gallery in Toronto on January 8 and another at the Wah-sa Gallery in Winnipeg in February. He was most excited about another solo exhibition at the Marion Scott Gallery in Vancouver at the end of January. His good friend Fred Brown, who now lived in Victoria, would be there, and afterward Ben would be able to boast of having had one-man shows from coast to coast. He even attended an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting with his mother, but he was not ready to commit. His paintings were now selling for five hundred to a thousand dollars apiece, a far cry from the twenty or thirty dollars he'd been getting just five years earlier.

Benjamin spent three weeks in Victoria, where he had many heart-to-heart talks about his life with his friend. Brown mostly listened. "All of the dark and dreadful caverns of his mind were explored, all his terrors and fears were expressed; he knew the ultimate result of his addiction — the loss of his great talent," Brown recalled. "Yet he had hope and determination: After moving permanently to Victoria at the end of March, he intended to do something about that addiction, and I know he was serious, for he was a determined man." But, while in Victoria, Benjamin continued his partying ways and spent a night in a local police cell.

He sent me a cheery postcard: "Exhibition is a roaring success. No snow out here. Say hi to your family. Benjie." All forty-five paintings in the exhibition sold on the first day, some for as much as $1,200, and he was asked to produce several new works while he was there.

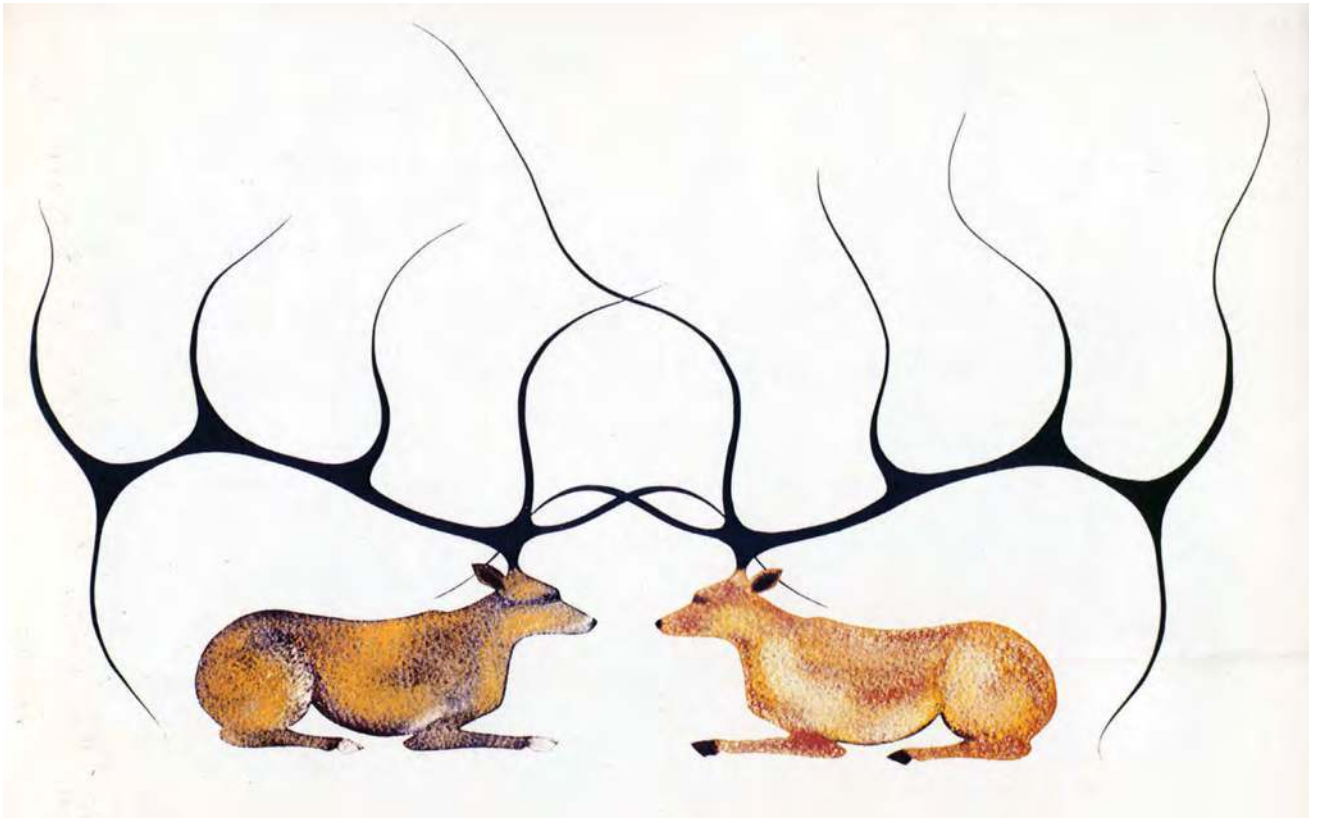
Ben often said that after he died he wanted to come back as a bird so he could soar through the heavens forever.

Ben had decided to relocate to Victoria with his mother, but he wanted to have one final show in Ottawa to coincide with his thirty-third birthday on March 26, 1977. All through February and early March, Benjamin could not contain his excitement for the upcoming show.

The morning of March 11, 1977, started with so much promise. He walked his mother to the bus station — she was going to attend an AA conference in Toronto — and then had lunch with a friend at his favourite restaurant. After lunch he delivered his newest paintings to CIMS, and then ran into Tom Hill on the street. "He planned to do a series of paintings or drawings about the finding of his mother. It was just another day in Chee Chee's life," Hill said.

Filled with promise and good humour, Ben returned to the restaurant for some celebratory refreshments with another friend, Charlie Smith.

The staff began to dim the lights and drew the curtains for the evening dinner crowd, but Ben still wanted to party. He insisted on opening the curtains and whooping it up. The management asked him to go home, even offering to call him a taxi. When they finally escorted him outside, Ben struggled to get back into the



Top: Silkscreen print, 1976. Lower left: Josephine Roy, Benjamin Chee Chee's mother, displays photos of some of his work, September 1977. Lower right: A poster advertising a show scheduled for January 1977 in Vancouver.

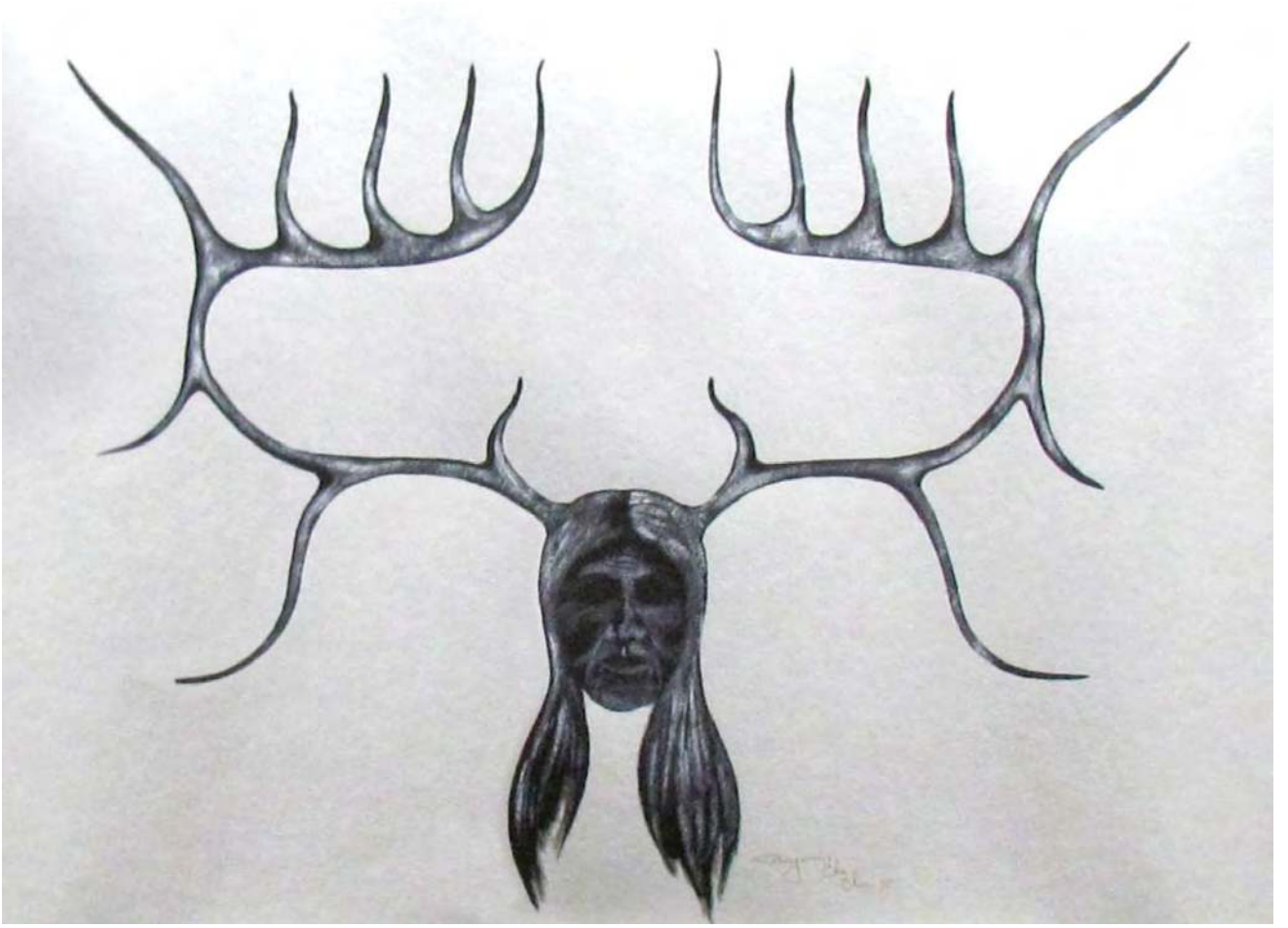
TOP: PRIVATE COLLECTION BOTTOM: COURTESY OF ERNIE BIES

restaurant and, in the ensuing scuffle, broke the door. Smith tried to take him home, but he wouldn't leave.

Smith later said of Ben that "when he was drinking there seemed to be a persecution complex…. He would be mean, and vulgar, and sometimes violent. But even at those times you couldn't help but like the man. To know Ben Chee Chee was to accept him when he was drunk."

The police were called and tried unsuccessfully to persuade Ben to go home. He was arrested, booked for drunkenness at 6:45 p.m., and placed in a cell at 6:50. Cell No. 10 is a bare cage, devoid of furniture and reserved for uncooperative prisoners.

Brown later wrote a scathing letter to the *Citizen* condemning the treatment Ben had received on his arrest. "Had he been a senator, cabinet minister, a prominent businessman (and I am sure some of those august groups suffer from a similar affliction) he might have been driven home."



Although he did not title this 1975 work, Benjamin Chee Chee described it as a self-portrait.

In the few minutes it took for Ben to make the decision to end it all, what went through his mind? The degradation of being thrown in a cage when he had been flying so high just an hour earlier? Did he dwell on the fact that he had humiliated himself at the restaurant where he had gained respect and friendships? Benjamin had in the past said he wanted to be a role model for his people. Did he feel like he had let them down?

Such thoughts may have been the final straws when added to the burdens he was already carrying. The tremendous demand for his work by galleries and collectors, his attempts to maintain his artistic integrity, his desire to achieve stability in his lifestyle, and his apparent failure to cope with his personal problems likely all combined to cause him to take that last tragic step. And did the abuse he suffered at St. Joseph's Training School set him on this destructive path?

The late Dr. Alvin L. Evans, former professor emeritus at Wilfrid Laurier University, studied and lectured on the suicide epidemic among Indigenous people in Canada. In a letter about Ben's death that he wrote to me in March 1979, Evans said "there seemed to be some obvious motivations, such as, his arrest and alcoholism. I think, however, there are some deep cultural problems which have developed over the several hundred years in which the North American Indian has been exposed to white man's culture. The Indians' loss of identity, of language, of traditions, of religion, of the sense of worth and value, of self-respect, no doubt have contributed to Benjamin's death, as well as the suicides of increasing numbers of young Indian men and women." Evans published a book about his research in 2004, entitled *Chee Chee: A Study of Aboriginal Suicide*.

Ben watched silently from the back of the cell as an officer made the rounds at seven o'clock. Approximately six minutes later, the cellblock officer returned, escorting another prisoner, and found that Ben had used his shirt in an attempt to hang himself. The officer cut him down, but the damage had been done. Ben was taken to the Ottawa General Hospital and kept on life support until his death on March 14, 1977. The *Ottawa Citizen* ran a story with the headline, "He seemed bent on self-destruction."

When I inquired later about how the costs of Ben's funeral had been paid, Gary Lafontaine of the Odawa Native Friendship Centre advised me that DIAND could not provide funding because Ben was non-status; it was one final rejection.

In a news release to other Indigenous organizations, the friendship centre announced, "Within our community, a Native person

PRIVATE COLLECTION

Untitled (Family in Flight), 1977. Chee Chee said this painting, which was among his last, depicted himself and his parents reunited.

has passed away. His name was Benjamin Chee Chee — and with him, he took the talents of a great Indian artist. We will remember him through the work he left behind." The centre arranged for a traditional Ojibwa funeral, with a wake at its downtown premises, where almost one hundred people signed the memorial record. "All costs were covered by donations," said Lafontaine.

A service was held at St. Theresa Roman Catholic Church on March 18, and, according to his mother's wishes, he was buried at Notre Dame Cemetery in Ottawa's east end. His friend and fellow artist John Dockstader designed a tombstone featuring Bennie birds, but there was not enough money to complete it.

On June 9, 1977, about a dozen members of the public attended an inquest — which is mandatory when there is a death in custody. Thirteen witnesses, including the police officers who were involved, the ambulance attendant, doctors, the coroner, and Pierre Gaignery all testified about the grim sequence of events that led to Benjamin's death. The younger police officers seemed somewhat sympathetic, stating that Ben was not violent and that he was being charged with drunkenness because he was "boisterous, intoxicated, and staggering." The older officers emphasized his history of violence involving police. His two-page rap sheet, which dated back to 1961, included his first arrest at Bear Island for the Hudson's Bay store break-in, charges for drunkenness and fighting in Northern Ontario, six alcohol-related incarcerations at the Bordeaux jail in Montreal, some visits to Hull jail, and three incidents in Ottawa, including the infamous car theft and charges for assaulting police officers and resisting arrest.

Cellblock officers testified that they did not think he was seriously injured as they detected "a weak pulse and seemingly shallow breathing." The cellblock was not equipped with resuscitation equipment, and no attempt was made to revive him before the ambulance arrived at 7:15 p.m. Dr. Phyllis Hierlihy of the Ottawa General Hospital testified that his death was the result of a prolonged lack of oxygen that caused severe brain damage. She also testified that his blood alcohol level was elevated to the point where it would have caused profound intoxication, and that no drugs were found in his system.

The coroner's jury made three recommendations: "that cell block officers be qualified to administer artificial respiration with appropriate equipment; that mandatory and frequent rounds of the cell block be carried out; and that a better system

COURTESY OF THUNDER BAY ART GALLERY

The notorious St. Joseph's Training School in Alfred, Ontario, where Benjamin Chee Chee spent four years.

PROMISE UNFULFILLED

Simon Brascoupé, a prominent Algonquin artist, worked at the federal government's Central Marketing Service in the 1970s. In Benjamin Chee Chee's art, Brascoupé saw echoes of traditional stencil designs used by generations of First Nations craftspeople in creating images of animals, birds, and plants on birchbark.

He also saw loss. "He was very quiet. I think he missed his family. I felt that he was always searching for something."

Chee Chee's separation from his family and his time at reform school shaped him. "I don't think you get over it. His life experience reflects the life experience of many Indigenous people in Canada," Brascoupé said. "He was another tragedy in our community."

Simon Brascoupé.

Chee Chee was "just starting to establish himself. He was experimenting with pushing the boundaries of his art," Brascoupé said. He can picture another path for Benjamin Chee Chee – one in which he is both a well-known artist and a beacon for others who struggle. "Some artists start out from a difficult early life, and, as they mature, they are able to get out of their addictions," Brascoupé said. "He wrestled with finding himself, with who he was as an Indigenous person," experiences he could have shared with others facing the same questions.

Brascoupé knows many Indigenous people who survived residential school or who were adopted away from their home communities during the Sixties Scoop but who have been able to focus on giving back to their community and to supporting others. Like so many who knew Benjamin Chee Chee, he wondered what was going through the artist's mind before he killed himself. "People weren't talking about these things back then. Maybe if they were, that would have helped." – *Nancy Payne*

of monitoring the cell block from the officer's desk be installed." Perhaps, in death, Benjamin saved other lives.

The day after the inquest, special sales that had been organized by the CIMS opened in four galleries across Canada: Nicholas in Ottawa, Inukshuk in Waterloo, Marion Scott in Vancouver, and the Wah-sa Gallery in Winnipeg. As happens after many artists' deaths, the demand for Benjamin's work escalated along with prices.

Wah-sa Gallery had originally planned to host a solo exhibition of his art in February 1977. "Chee Chee's death was the first we experienced in artists we represented — tragic," Wah-sa's Gary Scherbain said in a recent interview. He said Benjamin inspired many Indigenous artists who followed him. "His lineal style led to a number of other Indigenous artists patterning his style into their approach — Clemence Wescoupe, Doris Cyrette, Isaac Bignell, Hugh McKenzie, and Sweetpea [Leo Neilson]."

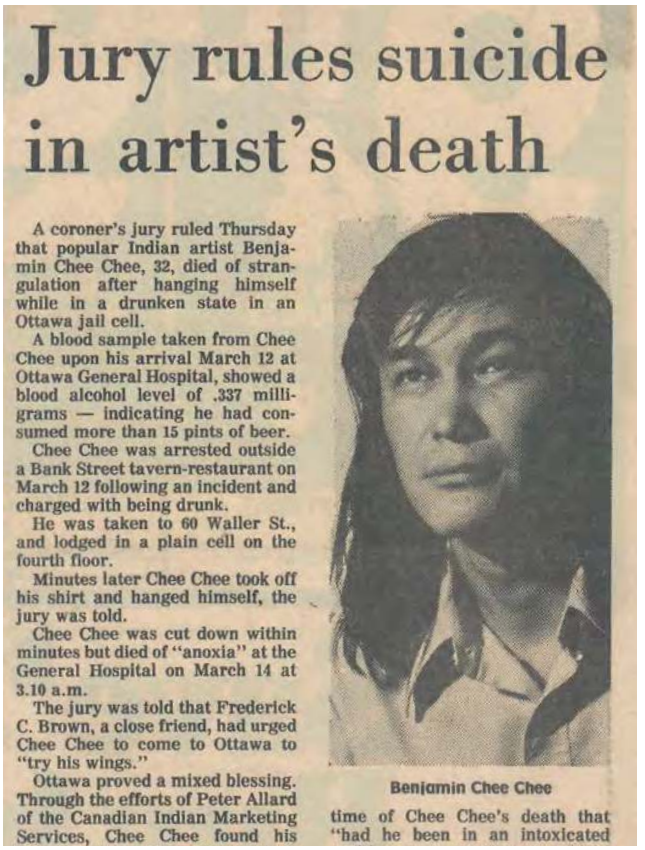
In November 1978 the CIMS released the family series of limited-edition silkscreen prints from the originals Ben had completed at Bear Island around Christmas 1976. They were well received by the public. The Chee Chee estate benefitted from the sale of the prints as well as from several commercial ventures that promoted and sold images created by Benjamin, making *Dancing Goose* and *Friends* some of the best-known and most easily recognizable images in Canadian art.

The nominations committee of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts had contacted Bob Gervais, CEO of Canadian Indian Marketing Services, about Benjamin in 1976. Rebecca Sisler, the academy's executive director, advised me in a letter from March 1979 that "it was felt by the Committee that Benjamin was a young artist, still developing, and that national, professional recognition was a little premature. Doubtless, had he lived, he would have become a member of the Academy."

In 1979, I contacted Ottawa Mayor Marion Dewar and suggested that the city consider buying a 1974 Chee Chee original painting of Rideau Falls with the city hall in the background. She responded favourably, and a reception was held on May 24, 1979, when she and Ben's mother, Josephine Roy, unveiled the painting that would hang on the main floor of city hall. More than three hundred people attended the reception.

Benjamin lay in a grave with no headstone for twenty years, its only marker a small stick decorated with colourful ribbons and a miniature beaded headdress that a young Indigenous girl, Kelly Attigiak, had placed on the grave. Carl Crozier, an Indigenous man who lived nearby, brought the state of Ben's grave to the attention of the Ottawa Native Concerns Committee (ONCC), a volunteer advocacy group. ONCC president Alex Akiwenzie mobilized local Indigenous artists, including Simon Brascoupé, Barry Ace, and Albert Dumont, members of the Odawa Friendship Centre, and many of Benjamin's friends. Together they created the Benjamin Chee Chee Memorial Fund. Brascoupé produced a new print called *Dancing Goose*, which was raffled off in one of many fundraising efforts. *Ottawa Sun* reporter Ron Corbett wrote several stories, and radio personalities Lowell Green and Steve Madely took to the

TOP: COURTESY OF ERNIE BIES; BOTTOM: COURTESY OF SIMON BRASCOUPÉ



Jury rules suicide in artist's death

A coroner's jury ruled Thursday that popular Indian artist Benjamin Chee Chee, 32, died of strangulation after hanging himself while in a drunken state in an Ottawa jail cell.

A blood sample taken from Chee Chee upon his arrival March 12 at Ottawa General Hospital, showed a blood alcohol level of .337 milligrams — indicating he had consumed more than 15 pints of beer.

Chee Chee was arrested outside a Bank Street tavern-restaurant on March 12 following an incident and charged with being drunk.

He was taken to 60 Waller St., and lodged in a plain cell on the fourth floor.

Minutes later Chee Chee took off his shirt and hanged himself, the jury was told.

Chee Chee was cut down within minutes but died of "anoxia" at the General Hospital on March 14 at 3.10 a.m.

The jury was told that Frederick C. Brown, a close friend, had urged Chee Chee to come to Ottawa to "try his wings."

Ottawa proved a mixed blessing. Through the efforts of Peter Allard of the Canadian Indian Marketing Services, Chee Chee found his

Benjamin Chee Chee

time of Chee Chee's death that "had he been in an intoxicated

Left: A report on the findings of the coroner's jury looking into Chee Chee's death, from the June 10, 1977, *Ottawa Journal*. Right: Benjamin Chee Chee's grave went unmarked for twenty years, but on June 27, 1997, ceremonies were held to unveil this gravestone.

airwaves to publicize the cause. Local citizens and businesses — including Martel and Sons Monuments, which donated the gravestone — got on board, and DIAND provided a substantial grant. Enough donations were raised to finally erect a fitting tombstone on June 27, 1997.

Ceremonies lasted from dawn until dusk. A fire was started at a sunrise ceremony, and maintained by keeper Richard Yellow Quill until the day's events were completed. Benjamin's mother unveiled the tombstone, which was inscribed with his likeness, his iconic dancing goose, and a quotation from the artist himself, in both English and Ojibwa: "My works are not influenced by inventions of mythology but honour the totems of the present."

Hugh McKenzie and many of Ben's friends from Bear Island, including Chief Jim Twain, band elders, and local drummers, participated in the events. The mayors of Ottawa and neighbouring Vanier, Ontario, declared June 27, 1997, Benjamin Chee Chee Day in their respective cities, and both attended the graveside services. A community feast followed, and the first plate filled was for Chee Chee himself, "to feed his spirit," as Albert Dumont said. Kelly Attigiak, by then ten years old, was introduced to the assembled crowd as the one who had sparked the drive to mark the grave.

"Respect at last" blared the headline of the *Ottawa Sun* the next day. It was long-overdue but also well-deserved, lasting respect. Temagami First Nation Chief James Twain spoke to the graveside gathering of about one hundred people, saying, "I want people to recognize him as an artist … but also as a human being who suffered as many of our members do."

Ben once expressed his philosophy of life in a CBC Radio interview: "The whole world is mine if I want it. God gave you a life, and it's up to you to do the best with it. I got lots of problems, but I think I can handle it. If I made it this far, I think I can make it the rest of the way."

The week before he died he came to my office three times. I could see that he was anxious. He talked about his conquests, new and old, and expressed concern that his mother was not keen to move permanently to British Columbia. He bought and sent a humorous card to Fred Brown and chuckled when I found two six-cent Christmas stamps in my briefcase for him to use. He was going to work in Ottawa for a month or so to settle his debts and to get a stake so that he could pay rent in Vancouver and take a well-deserved holiday. I was leaving for a field trip to the Yukon the following week, and we arranged to have dinner on my return.

The last thing he said to me was, "You're a good friend to me, Ernie." Those words haunt me still.

The Temiskaming Art Gallery in Haileybury, Ontario, presented a retrospective of Benjamin Chee Chee's life and art early in 2018. Ben's friend Hugh McKenzie assisted curator Felicity Buckell in this tribute. The exhibition is now touring to other Ontario cities.

COURTESY OF ERNIE BIES

CREATIVE *VOICES*

Competition honours talented Indigenous writers and artists.

Canadians are becoming increasingly conscious of the importance of hearing and respecting Indigenous voices, and young people offer unique perspectives on interpreting their heritage and contemporary Indigenous identity. Historica Canada's Indigenous Arts & Stories program aims to provide youth with a platform to share their stories, visions, and ideas.

Indigenous Arts & Stories encourages First Nations, Métis, and Inuit youth from across the country to submit creative writing or art exploring a moment or a theme in their history, culture, or identity.

In the fifteen years since the program began, Indigenous Arts & Stories has evolved into the largest and most recognized art and creative writing competition for Indigenous youth in Canada, with more than 4,200 young people, between the ages of six and twenty-nine, sharing their creativity.

A jury of notable Indigenous artists, writers, and community leaders selects the winners.

In giving Indigenous youth a platform to celebrate their heritage and to realize their creative potential, we are reminded of the ability of art and writing both to empower Indigenous youth and to educate all Canadians.

Supporting youth as they explore their voices through art and writing is vital to the continued survival and revival of Indigenous cultural heritage.

It is also an integral part of our country's shared reconciliation journey.

Indigenous Arts & Stories aims to inspire the next generation of Indigenous artists and writers to share their voices and stories with the nation.

This year's winners come from across the country and reflect the diverse experiences of our participants.

In the writing competition, the winners were: senior category, Shelby Lisk, Belleville, Ontario (Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory); junior category, Leah Baptiste, Brooks, Alberta (Deline, Northwest Territories); and in the emerging category, Megan Tiessen, Summerland, British Columbia (Ojibway), and Bryan Bruno, Edmonton (Maskwacis, Alberta).

In the arts competition, the winners were: senior category, Jared Boechler, Saskatoon (Métis); junior category Tehatsistahawi Kennedy, London, Ontario (Beausoleil First Nation); emerging category, Jaelie Young, Calgary (Tahltan), and Tyson Moxam-Gosselin and Tristan Medwid, Winnipeg.

To read the winners' full writing pieces and to learn more about the artists, visit Our-Story.ca, where you can also explore work by past winners and finalists.

Clockwise from top: *Do Never*, by Jared Boechler; *Bear at the Lake*, by Tyson Moxam-Gosselin and Tristan Medwid; *Two Sockeye*, by Jaelie Young.

Crucible (excerpt)

by Leah Baptiste

Crucible

(noun.) A ceramic or metal bowl in which metals or other substances may be melted or subjected to very high temperatures.

Or

A situation of severe trial, or in which different elements interact, leading to the creation of something new.

Silver down my wrist
Dim light hangs above me
Knelt down before the crucifix
Drip, slow
Into the stone bowl
Simmering
Flame grasps the bottom
Smoke rises from the hot blood
A wreath of stone, flame, and blood
They want it to separate
They ache to pour in the bleach
But the blood clots
The blood binds
Hotter, hotter
And it only turns darker …
This is the story that I tell
Not one of stereotypical birds and wise men
A story coated in my Indigenous truth
The truth that may not yet set us free
No doubt will fill us with anger
As heated as this fire gets
Must clump together
Holding on to our identity
Hand in hand
With pride we will stand for our blood
The tint to our skin
The different curvature to our tongues
The lives that we practise
In this crucible made to separate our culture from our blood
Will only bring about a people stronger than before
Until the fire consumes flesh
Leaving behind a pool of brown blood
That with no amount of bleach
Can ever be washed away.

The Woodcarver and his Wife (excerpt)

by Megan Tiessen

Once there was an elderly couple of craftspeople, a woodcarver and his wife. The woodcarver and his wife were very skilled; every day they would go into the forest to create their handiwork.

The woodcarver took fallen branches that he found lying around, found a log, and sat and carved. The woodcarver's carvings were very impressive, and they all told a story. The woodcarver's carvings told stories of his culture, the struggles it had faced, the victories it had won, and where it was now.

The woodcarver's wife was a weaver; every day when she and her husband went into the forest she would collect grasses that she found.

The woodcarver's wife took only enough grasses as she needed, never any more ….

One day during their walk to the forest the woodcarver and his wife found a notice saying, "in a few days the forest will be sold to the logging company."

Dismayed by the news that the woodcarver and his wife's beautiful forest would soon be just sticks and stumps, they set off to find the owner of the land, to talk about the forest's situation.

The Great Grandmother Spirit (excerpt)

by Bryan Bruno

Kay-Lynn was searching for help. Kay-Lynn could not find anyone to help her.

She then stopped and started to pray to the Creator and Grandmother Spirit. She asked Grandmother Spirit to help her find her little brother Jacob.

She started to walk down the trail and saw the sky go dark with big bright colours. She never saw the sky look so beautiful.

She then saw Grandmother Spirit in the sky. Grandmother Spirit told Kay-Lynn to follow her, so she did. Grandmother Spirit said, I am here to help you find your little brother Jacob.

Kay-Lynn listened to Grandmother Spirit and trusted her while she followed her down the long, dark trail.

All of a sudden, the sun started to shine so bright in her eyes, and Grandmother Spirit was gone just like that. When Kay-Lynn looked again, she saw her brother Jacob down the trail.

Seventh Fire Leadership, by Tehatsistahawi Kennedy.

Invisible Indian (excerpt) by Shelby Lisk

It's strange to me how people always want me to be an "authentic Indian" when I say I'm *Kanyen'keha:ka*.

They want me to look a certain way, act a certain way. They're disappointed when what they get is ... just me. White-faced, light-haired. They spent hundreds of years trying to assimilate my ancestors, trying to create Indians like me, who could blend in, but now they don't want me, either. They can't make up their minds.

They want buckskin and face paint, drumming, songs in languages they can't understand recorded for them but with English subtitles, of course. They want educated, well-spoken, but not too smart. Christian, well-behaved, never question. They want to learn the history of the people, but not the ones that are here now, waving signs in their faces,

asking them for clean drinking water,

asking them why their women are going missing,

asking them why their land is being ruined.

They want fantastical stories of Indians that used to roam this land.

They want my culture behind glass in a museum.

But they don't want me.

I'm not Indian enough.

They say I'm fake, but they don't realize that every time I have to write and speak to them in English, the language of the colonizer, I am painfully aware of what I've lost.

So, I sneak around quietly, gathering pieces – beads here, a word there, a dance, a song – until I'm strong enough to stand tall and tell them who I am ....

MACABRE DISCOVERY

An iron cage resurrects the story of La Corriveau – the witch of Quebec folklore.

by André Pelchat

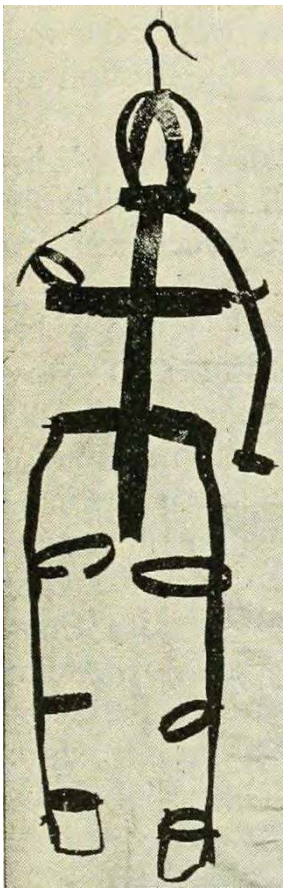
IN SEPTEMBER 2013, AN UNUSUAL ITEM APPEARED IN THE QUEBEC MEDIA: LA CORRIVEAU'S CAGE HAD BEEN FOUND. THE DISCOVERY MADE HEADLINES AND WAS THE SUBJECT OF NUMEROUS COMMENTARIES. WHAT WAS THE STORY, AND WHY DID IT CAPTURE SO MUCH ATTENTION?

In 2011, Claudia Méndez, a volunteer and tour guide with the Société d'histoire de Lévis, in Lévis, Quebec, found a surprising artifact at the Peabody Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. The wrought-iron exoskeleton was identified as having been used for the exposition of "Mme Dodier's body" after the woman's execution in 1763. Méndez was familiar enough with Quebec history to recognize that Dodier was the married name of the woman known to Quebecers as "La Corriveau" of French-Canadian legend.

The grim object was taken to the Musée de la civilisation in Quebec City to be authenticated, and in October 2015 experts confirmed that it was, indeed, the infamous "cage de la Corriveau." Though essentially unknown to the rest of North America, the story of the woman who was imprisoned in that cage is part of Quebec's history, legend, and folklore.

According to historian Luc Lacourcière, in all of Quebec history there is "no woman with a worse reputation than Marie-Josephte Corriveau." La Corriveau was born in Saint-Vallier-de-Bellechasse across the river from Quebec City in 1733. In 1749 she married Charles Bouchard. Their union produced three children and all seemed to go smoothly until Bouchard died in 1760 of "putrid fevers," a diagnosis nobody appears to have doubted at the time. Later legends whisper that Marie-Josephte poisoned Charles or perhaps poured molten lead in his ear while he was sleeping. Eventually, rumour would suggest that as many as seven husbands died by her hand, but the stories were pure invention.

After Charles' death (in the presence of a priest and several witnesses, none of whom saw anything suspect) Marie-Josephte sought another husband, as was expected of a young widow with children. In 1761, she remarried to a farmer named Louis-Étienne Dodier. The new union was tumultuous. The couple fought frequently, and Dodier also clashed with his stepfather, Joseph Corriveau — mainly, it seems, about money issues and matters related to the management of the farm. The family was dirt poor during the difficult years of British military occupation immediately following the conquest of New France.



A 1916 visitor's guide to Salem, Massachusetts, showed what is now known to be the iron cage or gibbet that contained the body of Marie-Josephte Corriveau.

On January 27, 1763, a neighbour found Louis Dodier in the stable, dead in a pool of blood. At first the militia captain who had been called in to investigate thought Dodier was "killed by his horse," which the officer wrote in his report to Major James Abercrombie, commander of British troops in the area. But a rumour soon spread among neighbours that Joseph Corriveau killed his stepson, and in February Dodier's relatives filed a complaint, prompting General James Murray, the region's governor, to order an investigation. Dodier's body was exhumed, and Dr. George Fraser performed an autopsy. On February 14, he ruled that "none of the wounds found on Dodier's body could have been made by a horse." Joseph Corriveau and his daughter were arrested.

The trial was held in Quebec City, at the Ursuline convent. Because Quebec was under military rule, the proceedings took place in military court with a jury of twelve British officers, none of whom knew French, the only language understood by the accused and the witnesses. Most of the testimony was based on "gossip and hearsay," Lacourcière noted, and focused on the enmity among the victim, his wife, and his stepfather. Some witnesses also painted Marie-Josephte as a woman of loose morals, but no evidence exists to suggest she was unfaithful to her husband or in any way behaved improperly according to what was expected from a wife. On April 9, Joseph Corriveau was found guilty and sentenced to hang. Marie-Josephte was found to be an accomplice and was sentenced to sixty lashes and to be branded on the hand with the letter *M* for murderer.

On the day before Joseph's scheduled execution, though, there was an extraordinary reversal. When the priest came to hear Joseph's confession and to prepare him for his death, Joseph suddenly claimed he had lied to protect his daughter and that, in truth, she was the one who committed the crime. His eleventh-hour honesty, he said, came from his fear of going to hell. The obviously

OPPOSITE PAGE: ILLUSTRATION BY GMB CHOMICHUK ; CENTRE: PUBLIC DOMAIN

self-serving declaration was enough for Governor Murray to have the confessions of both accused re-examined. Marie-Josephte eventually signed a confession in which she admitted to killing Dodier with an axe, "due to the bad treatment she received from her husband." Joseph went free, and Marie-Josephte was sentenced to hang. She was put to death on April 18, and the legend of La Corriveau was born soon after.

What captured the public's imagination was Murray's decision to expose the young woman's body in a human-shaped iron cage, hung at a crossroad at La Pointe-de-Lévis on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River. Nothing like it had been seen before, and the macabre display created a stir among the locals. In a morbid prank, a group of young people took the cage down and carried it to the local cemetery. The cage was removed after forty days at the same spot and buried in the cemetery, only to be exhumed in 1849, when it was found to contain just "one bone of a leg," according to early nineteenth-century writer Philippe-Joseph Aubert de Gaspé.

The 2016 Quebec documentary *La Cage: L'histoire de la Corriveau* explores the reality and the legend of the grim artifact.

The macabre cage, or gibbet, was briefly put on display in Montreal, "at the house of Mr. Leclerc," according to the newspaper *La Minerve*, and then, reported *Le Canadien*, by a Mr. Hall on the Côte du Palais in Quebec City. The cage — stolen, according to poet and author Louis Frechette — was eventually sold to the American showman P.T. Barnum. After that, all traces of it were lost until Claudia Méndez stumbled upon it in Salem. Since then, researchers have discovered that the cage was listed in 1899 among artifacts owned by the Boston Museum and that a tourist guidebook included it in a description of the holdings of the Essex Institute in Salem.

After her death, La Corriveau became a regular character in French-Canadian folklore. In his cloak-and-dagger novel *The Golden Dog*, published in 1877, writer William Kirby makes her a poisoner by trade and a descendant of an Italian alchemist with ties to the Borgias, no less. Aubert de Gaspé, in *Les Anciens Canadiens* (1866), provides us with one of the first written accounts of the classic folk tale involving La Corriveau and her cage.

In his version, a man named François Dubé, the father of the narrator, is taking a nighttime stroll along the Lévis shore of the St. Lawrence and hears a "tick-tack noise." Suddenly he feels "two big dry hands, like a bear's paws, squeezing his shoulders. Terrified, he turns his head and sees La Corriveau, clinging to him. She extends her arms through the bars of her cage and tries to climb on his back." La Corriveau tells the man that she wants him to carry her to Île d'Orléans, where her witch friends are holding a Sabbath. La Corriveau can't cross the St. Lawrence on her own because it is a "blessed" river.

François can hear the witches holding their rites on the island and shouting at him, "Are you coming, lazy dog? Bring our friend to us! We have 14,400 rounds to make before the crowing of the cock and we have to leave!"

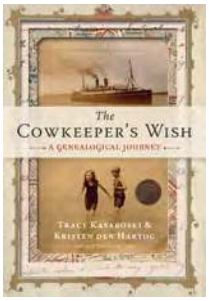
La Corriveau tells Dubé, "Well, if you won't carry me there, I will strangle you and I will get to the Sabbath by riding on your soul!" And that she does. François, however, doesn't die. He loses consciousness and wakes up in the morning in a muddy trench near the road. He struggles up and finds his bottle of firewater nearby. He wants to take a sip but ... it's empty. Apparently, "the witch had drunk it all!"

For generations, variations of this story have been told and retold in French-Canadian families. I heard a very similar one from my grandmother and found it a very scary tale. The name of the traveller changes, but La Corriveau in her cage, climbing on the man's back and wanting to go to the witches' Sabbath, always remains.

Stories of creatures that scrabble to cling on a traveller's back are found in folk tales around the world — it even happens to Sinbad in the *Arabian Nights*. But in Quebec this familiar motif attached itself to an actual historical character, La Corriveau, with a real artifact, the cage in which her body was exposed. And that is why the discovery of her cage in a museum is so striking: To a Quebecer who heard the creepy tale as a child, the discovery of La Corriveau's cage is comparable to somebody unearthing Cinderella's slipper or Aladdin's lamp.

In 2015, three separate experts concluded that the cage found in Massachusetts was the one used to expose Marie-Josephte Corriveau's body. According to Jérome Morissette, an art restorer who specializes in metals, the uniform corrosion on the iron bands makes it "impossible that this piece be a reconstruction." And so it was that, in the tale of La Corriveau, legend suddenly entered history.

IMAGE COURTESY MERLIN FILMS/FRANÇOIS GAMACHE



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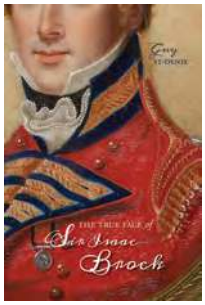

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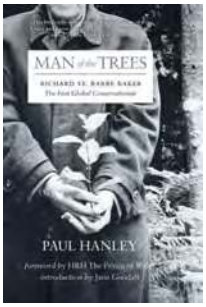

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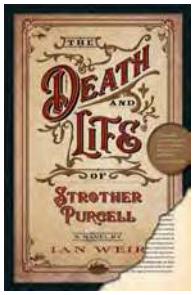

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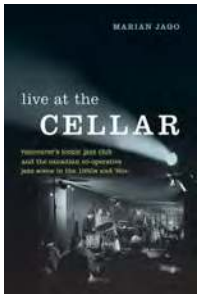

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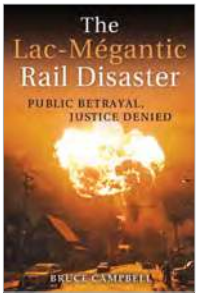

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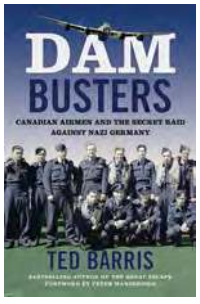

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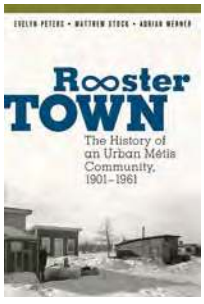

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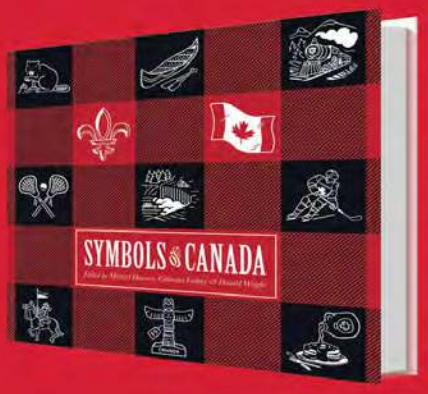

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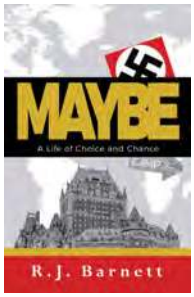

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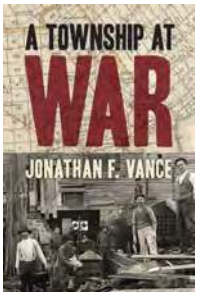

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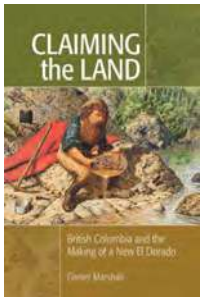

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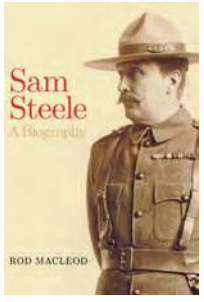

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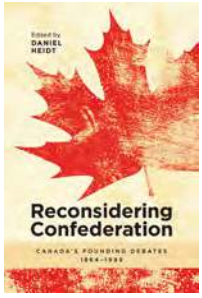

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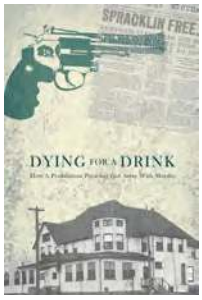

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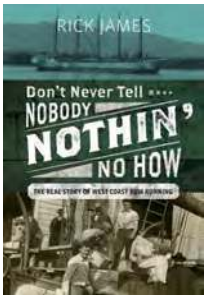

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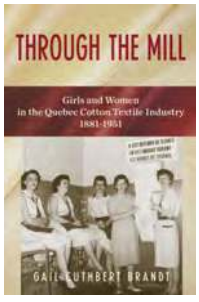

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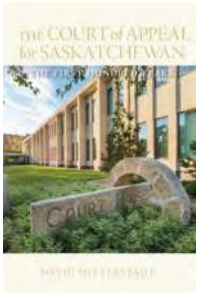

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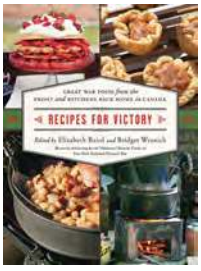

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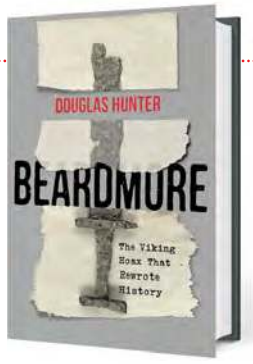

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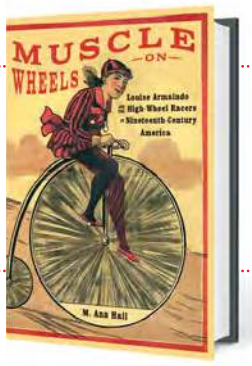

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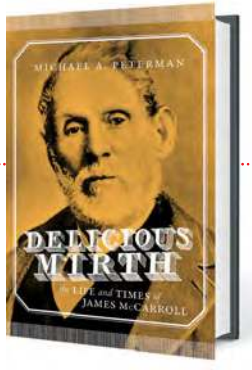

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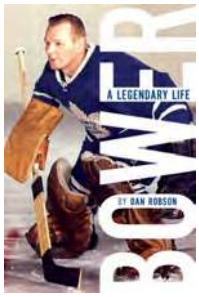

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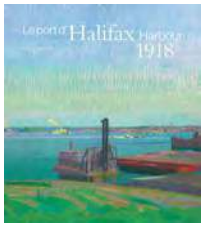

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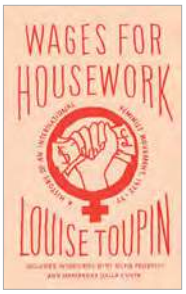

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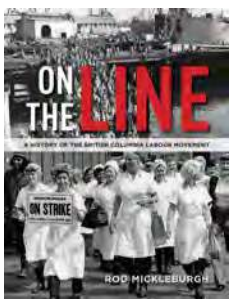

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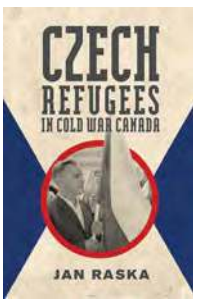

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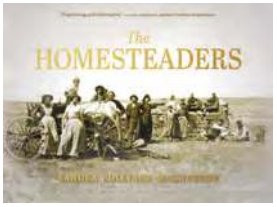

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By Sandra Rollings-Magnusson, foreword by Nadine Charabin

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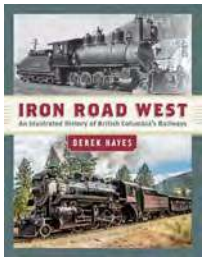

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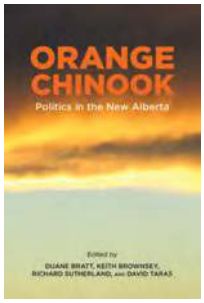

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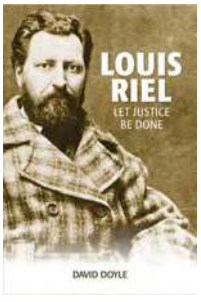

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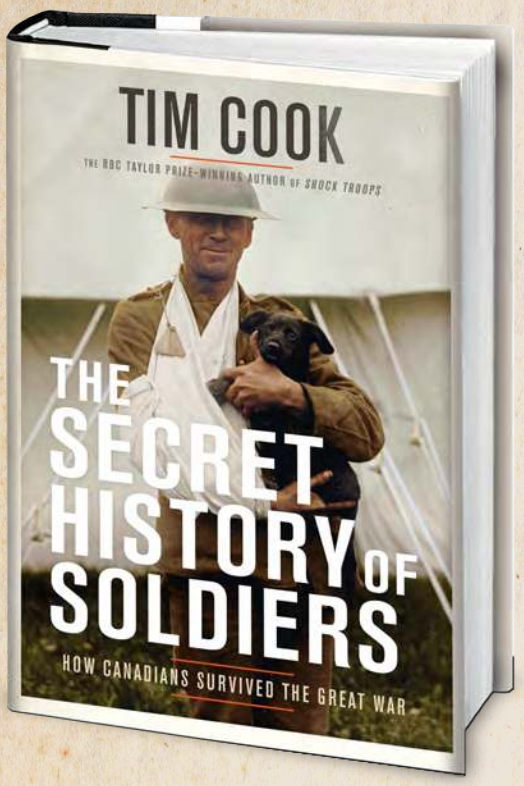

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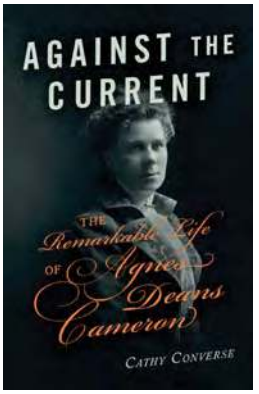

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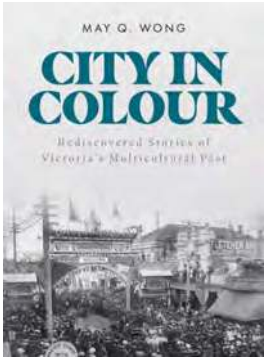

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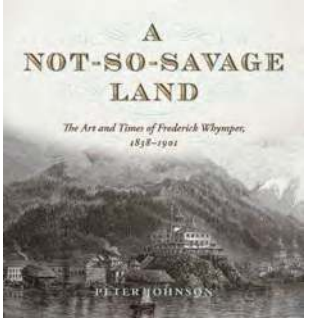

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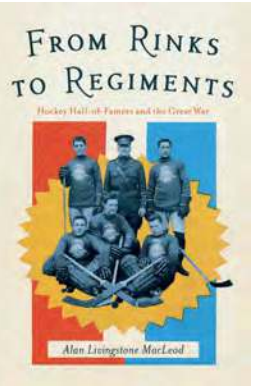

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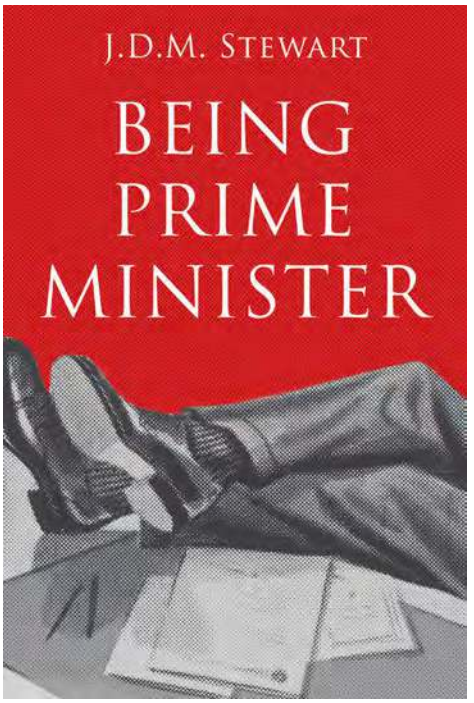


THE DAILY GRIND

Being Prime Minister
by J.D.M. Stewart
Dundurn, 344 pages, $26.99

"I do not want my daily life to become public," pleaded Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier when asked in 1896 for some personal information from a journalist. While the reporter may not have received an answer to his question, he was neither the first nor the last to try to better understand the inner lives of Canadian prime ministers — who have consistently been the subjects of our attention over the past 150 years.

There are dozens of biographies of Canadian prime ministers, almost all of them focusing on prime ministerial acts and deeds, their successes and failures, and the constant re-evaluation of their legacy. While there is space in any book, specialized biography, or high school text for John A. Macdonald's drinking, William Lyon Mackenzie King's spiritualism, and Pierre Elliott Trudeau's irreverence, J.D.M. Stewart's *Being Prime Minister* is entirely devoted to the daily lives of Canada's prime ministers.

A teacher of Canadian history in Toronto, Stewart has written a book that is wonderfully gossipy and is built on anecdotes and stories — "history by the ounce," as historian Barbara Tuchman called it. Stewart tells us much that is new in a number of thematic chapters about the twenty-two men and one woman who have so deeply shaped our country. To weave together the many stories, Stewart has read widely, delved into the archives, and even — somewhat amazingly — interviewed six former prime ministers.

Most striking is the long hours worked by all the leaders, as well as the incredible stamina of many of the older ones. Almost every waking moment was devoted to some task or meeting, or to responding to other politicians, the cabinet, civil servants, or the mass of well-wishers, donors, or patronage seekers. Several of the prime ministers — Macdonald, Robert Borden, and Richard Bennett — almost died from overwork.

> Stewart's wonderfully gossipy book is built on anecdotes and stories

Stewart cleverly compares and contrasts the leaders. In one of many examples, he illustrates the change from the time of Macdonald and Laurier, each of whom wrote dozens of letters a day in response to all manner of requests, to today. Now a modern army of staff supports prime ministers who have trouble simply staying on top of the correspondence that amounts to two million letters and emails a year.

Stewart offers captivating stories ranging from the prime ministers' breakfasts and reading material, to the places they took their vacations, to their interactions with celebrities. Speed-reading through papers, absorbing briefing books, finding time to send the kids off to school, or sneaking in a swim between meetings were all part of the ritualized and rigidly planned day-to-day activities of these leaders who were rarely alone.

Stewart finds humour in all the greats and not-so-greats, ranging from Lester Pearson's folksy charm with American counterparts (and everyone else) to Louis St. Laurent's gentle words with workers at Parliament, and from John Diefenbaker's exuberant charisma on the hustings to Stephen Harper's piercing jokes with his inner circle.

There is almost no venom for the various leaders; Stewart writes with respect and admiration throughout the book, especially as he describes prime ministers dealing with crises over housing, travel, and health. The book includes a revealing chapter on the rise of security details and the incomprehensible incompetence of the RCMP, who all but abandoned Jean Chrétien and his wife to an assassin who broke in to the prime ministerial residence at 24 Sussex Drive in Ottawa.

All authors make choices of omission in a thematic book like this, and I lamented the fact that so little space was devoted to prime ministers' partners. One is struck, for example, by Maryon Pearson's sharp observation that "Behind every successful man stands a surprised woman." More of that, please.

Nonetheless, *Being Prime Minister* is a good read that brings together multiple stories of how the country's political leaders spent their days and nights in the relentless grind they all loved so dearly.

Tim Cook is the author of eleven books, including *The Secret History of Soldiers: How Canadians Survived the Great War* (2018).

EYES WIDE OPEN

Just Watch Us: RCMP Surveillance of the Women's Liberation Movement in Cold War Canada

by Christabelle Sethna and Steve Hewitt
McGill-Queen's University Press, 316 pages, $34.95

Spying on Canadians: The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Security Service and the Origins of the Long Cold War

by Gregory S. Kealey
University of Toronto Press, 286 pages, $29.95

It's not paranoia if they actually are out to get you, and readers of two new books about the history of the RCMP's security service may very well conclude that they are.

Christabelle Sethna and Steve Hewitt's *Just Watch Us* examines RCMP surveillance of the "second wave" feminist movement in Canada over a fifteen-year period beginning in the late 1960s. The core argument of their work is that the RCMP saw the women's liberation movement through the lens of what the authors call a "red-tinged prism." Largely ignorant of feminism and the authentically radical demands of the women's movement, the RCMP instead searched for phantom communists in the movement's ranks.

This in turn was part of a broader effort in the late sixties and the seventies to root out "red" influences in the New Left and its attendant social movements. The RCMP's activities, the authors note, should be of particular concern to Canadians, as the organization invariably targeted and further alienated already marginalized groups. Moreover, surveillance data was gathered not merely for its own sake but for its potential to disrupt, harass, and otherwise repress those communities when the government deemed it necessary to do so.

While Sethna and Hewitt focus on a period of about two decades, Gregory Kealey's collection of essays, *Spying on Canadians*, ranges more freely. Forging links between the history of the security service and working-class Canadians, Kealey argues that unwarranted and often-paranoid domestic surveillance and, at times, outright repression have very deep historical roots, predating the creation of the RCMP and reaching back to the beginning of Canadian statehood. These activities have been persistent over time but have waxed and waned with the times, intensifying in times of war, including during the Cold War and pseudo-wars — such as the "war on terror."

Kealey's essays, while scholarly and academic in tone, are not beyond reach for non-specialists. They focus in particular on the repression of labour and "suspect" immigrant groups. Of particular importance, as Canadians commemorate the end of the First World War, are Kealey's essays on the repression of these same communities in wartime. These chapters raise serious challenges to the uncritical claims, made too often at commemorative events, that the world wars were fought entirely to defend freedom and democracy.

Kealey's essays were written between 1988 and 2003. It is something of a minor miracle that University of Toronto Press agreed to print a collection of papers that have been published elsewhere. But the force of Kealey's indictment — and it is that — is greater when his essays are considered together.

The authors of both works, and Kealey in particular, stress that the issue is not merely passive surveillance but the violation of fundamental civil liberties. Kealey provides ample evidence of egregious acts of repression, directed in particular at organized labour, by the RCMP and its predecessors.

In their book, Sethna and Hewitt note that the redaction and outright destruction of certain records has made it impossible to discount the possibility that the RCMP carried out more serious acts of direct repression against the women's movement and other New Left groups in the sixties and seventies. Similarly — in two concluding chapters and an appendix that I urgently recommend to classes on historical method — Kealey writes at length about the trials, tribulations, and, indeed, risks involved in seeking access to information. As late as the mid-1980s, CSIS cited security concerns in attempting to deny his access to records from 1919 and 1920!

In their respective books, these writers emphasize that the history of the security service's actions must be understood, lest renewed transgressions of the law and of the rights of Canadians be viewed as an aberration.

I began this review with a mild joke, but this is no joking matter. The RCMP's domestic surveillance activities, of course, were not unique: American and British security services engaged in parallel acts and comparable acts of repression. But the revelation of these activities will surprise many Canadians and may even seem like an affront to others. The current political situation in the United States, where the president himself has impugned the loyalty of the intelligence community, has resulted in the paradoxical sight of progressives rushing to the defence of the FBI and other national security agencies whose agendas they have in the past vehemently condemned.

Similarly, many Canadians today admire the bravery of members of the RCMP, embrace the myth of the agency's nobility, and associate its uniforms and pageantry with Canadian identity. But, in their respective works, Kealey and Sethna and Hewitt have established a devastating counter-narrative: that of an RCMP that for decades imperilled the rights of Canadians whose security it purported to defend.

Reviewed by **Graham Broad**, an associate professor of history at King's University College at Western University.

MORE BOOKS

One for the Boys: John Wayne Blake's Extraordinary Story

by Cathy Saint John
Sinjin Publishing, 480 pages, $29.95

Tens of thousands of young Americans fled north to Canada to escape the draft during the Vietnam War. Much has been written about these war resisters, many of whom stayed in Canada following the end of the war.

Less is known about the nearly thirty thousand young Canadians who headed in the opposite direction to enlist in the U.S. military to stop the spread of communism in southeast Asia. Among them was John Blake, a patriotic teenager from the Newfoundland community of Topsail, who in 1968 announced to his family that he was heading off to fight.

Blake did two tours in Vietnam, earning the U.S. Bronze Star Medal along the way. Like so many other Vietnam veterans, he returned home suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and didn't receive the treatment or support he deserved.

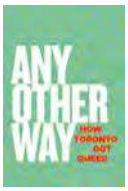
That story alone is worth reading. But it's what happened next that truly elevates Blake's tale. After advocating tirelessly for his fellow veterans, in 1982 Blake decided to march across America to raise awareness of their plight. Dressed in full combat gear and carrying an American flag, the proud Newfoundlander walked alone from Washington State to Virginia, a journey of roughly 5,100 kilometres.

Along the way, he helped to dispel the stigma that unfairly surrounded Vietnam veterans. As American news media picked up on his story, it fostered greater compassion and empathy for all the veterans of that war. The book's final section deals with the fallout of Blake's PTSD, his decision to take his own life, and the heart-wrenching tale of what happened next.

One for the Boys is truly a labour of love for author Cathy Saint John. Blake was her older brother, and his decision to enlist changed their family forever. The book is a poignant reminder of the sacrifices we demand of our veterans and, sadly, of how quickly society can forget about their service. — *Mark Collin Reid*

Any Other Way: How Toronto Got Queer

edited by Jane Farrow, John Lorinc, et al.
Coach House Press, 368 pages, $25.95



This large, varied collection of essays is connected by a desire to uncover Toronto's queer history in all its diversity. To this end, *Any Other Way* begins with a story about Jackie Shane, a queer, black, working-class, trans musician who performed in Toronto's thriving rhythm and blues scene in the 1960s.

There is no single editorial voice. Many essays are personal recollections, some are more standard histories, and still others cannot easily be categorized. One particularly interesting portion of the book reproduces an LGBT magazine's 1979 "Guide to Arrest and Trial."

The book's organization is loosely thematic and non-chronological, frequently jumping from 2017 to 1917 and back again. Given the personal nature of many of these essays, the emphasis is largely on more recent queer histories. Many essays are less than two pages long, making this a fairly approachable book in spite of its often-heavy subject matter.

Because the essays in *Any Other Way* uncover hidden histories in Toronto's streets, parks, bars, and hotels, readers familiar with the city are likely to find this book particularly interesting. — *Alex Judge*

Blood, Sweat, and Fear

by Eve Lazarus
Arsenal Pulp Press, 219 pages, $21.95

Author Eve Lazarus follows up her previous book, *Cold Case Vancouver*, with a book that is just as fascinating. One of Vancouver's top early twentieth-century crime crusaders, Inspector John F.C.B. Vance (J.F.C.B. to his family) was an international legend and earned the nickname "Sherlock Holmes."

Vance invented many of the tools and equipment he needed at a time when forensics was in its infancy, and his approach to forensic investigation is reflected in techniques used today. Lazarus is quick to point out that her book isn't a biography of the man: "It's the story of Vance's extraordinary work in forensic science … a history of the early work in forensics."

Nonetheless, aspects of Vance's character are brought to the fore. According to Lazarus, he was a "white hat" working in an ocean of "black hats." His career began shortly before the Anti-Asiatic riots and continued through prohibition, the Depression, and two world wars. And if the bad guys weren't enough, Vance was employed by two of the most corrupt police chiefs Vancouver ever had.

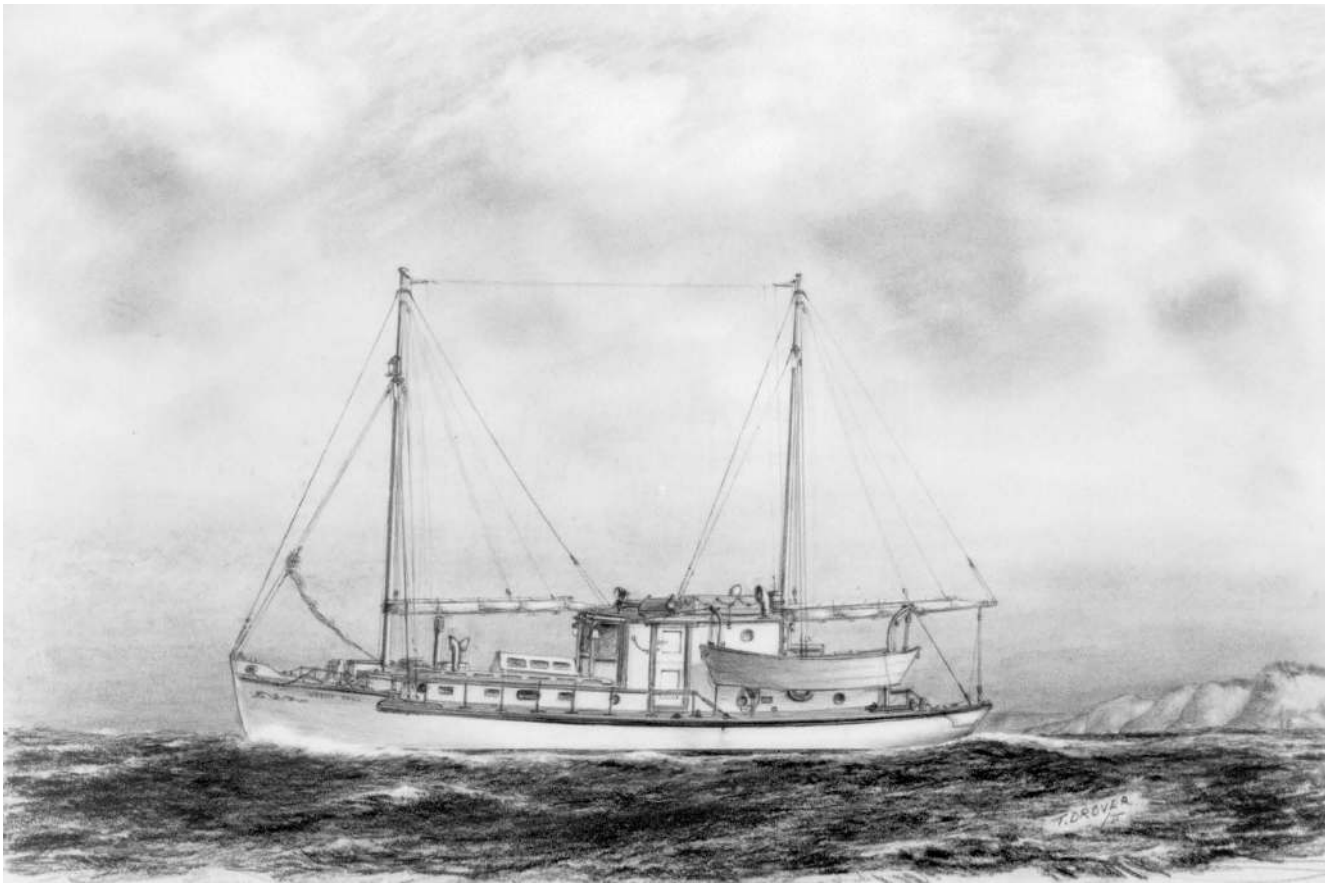
The evidence he obtained led to the successful prosecution of many criminals, but it came with a cost — Vance and his family became targets. In 1934 alone, there were seven assassination attempts; car bombs and mail bombs were the preferred methods of the day.

A rare treat, *Blood, Sweat, and Fear* also presents many images that were provided to the author by Vance's grandchildren. Vance's wife made a scrapbook of all his newspaper clippings, and the case files he kept after retirement were found in a box in their attic. For those who enjoy true crime or murder mysteries, this book is a must-read. — *Tanja Hütter*

Lake Agassiz: The Rise and Demise of the World's Greatest Lake

by Bill Redekop
Heartland, 280 pages, $29.95

Despite being one of the Prairie provinces, Manitoba is undoubtedly also a province of lakes; thousands of them dot its landscape. More than eight thousand years ago,



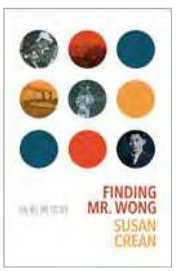
SEAFARING ARTIST The MV *Jessie Cull* was built in 1939 and was purchased by Ted Drover, who registered the vessel in 1943 in St. John's, Newfoundland. Drover and a friend refitted the forty-seven-foot-long vessel for use as a charter boat. It was operated for almost two decades and, like other similar vessels, provided an essential service to communities on the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. But Drover was also a trained artist who studied at the Ontario College of Art, including under Group of Seven member J.E.H. MacDonald. Drover, who died in 1980, had a great love for the sea and planned to publish a book about "seagoing crafts engaged in the fishery and general commerce of the island of Newfoundland and Labrador from about 1850 to 1950." The new book *Ted Drover: Ships Artist* (Flanker Press, 208 pages, $21.95), by his daughter-in-law, Sheilah Mackinnon Drover, presents dozens of Drover's charcoal drawings along with the stories of the vessels he portrayed.

most of the land comprising the present-day province — and regions beyond — was covered by just one body of water: Lake Agassiz.

In his book *Lake Agassiz: The Rise and Demise of the World's Greatest Lake*, former *Winnipeg Free Press* journalist Bill Redekop provides a comprehensive look at a lake that is unknown to many Canadians. With a size larger than all of the Great Lakes combined, it was, perhaps, the largest lake the world has ever known.

Redekop traces Lake Agassiz's history from its formation during a period of glacial melting to its drainage into Hudson Bay. But what truly captures a reader's attention is the way he relates the human history of the region to its environmental history. Redekop interweaves geological and scientific data with the narrative of those who discovered the historical lake and stories of his own exploration of the province.

While doing this, he shows that, while Lake Agassiz no longer exists, it continues to affect people's lives today. Filled with beautiful photographs and packed with information, *Lake Agassiz* is a fantastic read that brings new meaning to the phrase "I'm heading to the lake." — *Brooke Campbell*



FINDING MR. WONG
By Susan Crean

Susan Crean's memoir *Finding Mr. Wong* chronicles her effort to piece together the life of the man she knew as Mr. Wong, cook and housekeeper to her Irish-Canadian family. A Chinese head tax payer hired by Crean's grandfather in 1928, Wong Dong Wong remained on the job following Gordon Crean's death in 1947. The book is an important contribution to a growing body of writings that illuminate the lives of people silenced or otherwise negated by myopic history.

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Recipe for success

Served up fresh, Canada's stories will keep the public hungry for more.

Have you been following the history of apples lately? In Canadian orchards the McIntosh remains number one by far. But after fifty years the Red Delicious has been dethroned as the most-grown American apple by the Gala, a New Zealand variety unknown in North America until the 1970s.

One American food critic celebrated the fall of the Red Delicious. Bland and boring, he called it, saying it was valued mostly for being cheap, durable, and brightly coloured. It is the kind of apple people buy for kids' lunch programs, he wrote. Kids mostly learn that if the Red Delicious is adults' idea of good fruit they should skip fruit altogether.

Around the time I was reading about apples, some new acquaintances asked what line of work I was in. When I told them, they said, "That is great. Our history is so important ... for the kids!"

I know it's well-meant, but I've heard that praise before, and it rankles a bit. It seems to imply that history is like a Red Delicious apple: good enough for kids but not something an adult would bother with.

I'm second to none in believing in the value of history for kids — hey, I've received prizes for children's history books I've written. But I'm a grown-up. I write history mostly for adults. And I think of my interest in history as a grown-up, adult thing.

Lots of Canadians share that adult interest, I know. All over the country, I've been inspired by how committed adult Canadians are to history and heritage. There we are, visiting museums and historic sites, attending book events, and watching documentary films. Adult Canadians are doing genealogy, publishing local history, reading biographies, preserving sites — and supporting this magazine. Sure, we may disagree, and argue, and worry about Canada's history and what it means — but that is what history is: not the past but a constant discussion about the past.

Grown-up history — challenging, surprising, full of questions — can be useful. But it really is a cultural pleasure too, like an appreciation for Mozart, or astronomy, or sport. Historical appreciation should be a normal part of being an adult.

Despite all the vigour and liveliness of grown-up history, Canadians often deny that it exists at all. We declare that Canadians are all horribly ignorant about our history and we pretend that other countries do it better. (They don't.) Every time some historical controversy arises, we rush to blame the schools, or the teachers, or the textbooks.

It's as if somehow it is not an adult responsibility to keep ourselves abreast of historical developments, and if we just ram enough history into Grade 5 kids then somehow we can all forget about it as adults. Ask Canadians what month the October Crisis occurred, goes the joke, and we will probably say, "I don't know — they don't teach enough Canadian history in the schools."

The kids? They notice. The best way to offer kids a lifelong engagement with history is to model it to them — to demonstrate in our own lives that adults know, and appreciate, and enjoy their own history and others'. But if the kids see history as something that adults think is, well, kid stuff, they will see it as a scam and turn away.

Let's keep lots of tart and tasty historical fruit in our own cultural diet, and we will find that the kids have an appetite for it, too.

Christopher Moore comments in every issue of *Canada's History* magazine.

ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Governor General's History Awards

Canada's History Society is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2018 Governor General's History Awards. For more information, visit CanadasHistory.ca/Awards

Governor General's History Awards

Excellence in Teaching

Presented by Canada's History with the support of TD Bank Group

Lisa Howell, Pierre Elliott Trudeau Elementary School, Gatineau, QC

Temma Frecker, The Booker School, Port Williams, NS

Paul Paterson, Westmount Secondary School, Hamilton, ON

Lisl Gunderman, Wildwood School, and Maxine Hildebrandt, Mother Earth's Children's Charter School, AB

Eric Chassé, École Internationale Lucille-Teasdale, Brossard, QC

Jean-François Gosselin, École Marcelle-Mallet, Lévis, QC

Excellence in Museums: History Alive!

Presented by the Canadian Museums Association with the support of Ecclesiastical Insurance

"Footprints: A Walk Through Generations" Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute, Ouje-Bougoumou, QC

Excellence in Popular Media: The Pierre Berton Award

Presented by Canada's History

Bill Waiser, Saskatoon, SK

Excellence in Community Programming

Presented by Canada's History

"Shiloh Centre for Multicultural Roots Oral History Project" Shiloh Centre for Multicultural Roots, Edmonton, AB

"Mon vélo raconte" Société d'histoire et de généalogie de Montréal-Nord et les Artistes en arts visuels du Nord de Montréal, Montréal, QC

Excellence in Scholarly Research: The Sir John A. Macdonald Prize

Presented by the Canadian Historical Association with the support of Manulife Financial

Elsbeth Heaman, *Tax, Order, and Good Government: A New Political History of Canada, 1867–1917* McGill University, Montreal, QC

Other Awards

Experiences Canada Award

Presented by Experiences Canada

Pat Watson, Elgin, ON

Indigenous Arts and Stories

Presented by Historica Canada

Tehatsistahawi Kennedy, London, ON
Beausoleil First Nation

Jared Boechler, Saskatoon, SK
Métis

Leah Baptiste, Brooks, AB
Deline, NT

Shelby Lisk, Belleville, ON
Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory

Kayak Kids' Illustrated History Challenge

Presented by Canada's History with the support of TD Bank Group

Jonathan Chassé, Gaspé, QC

Kaira Picard, Whitby, ON

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A dangerous job

This photograph shows men working on a logjam at the "Bench" on the Terra Nova River at Glovertown, Newfoundland, in the late 1940s or early 1950s. I know that my dad, Nelson Sparkes, was there, and I believe one of the men is Max Blackwood, my dad's right-hand man.

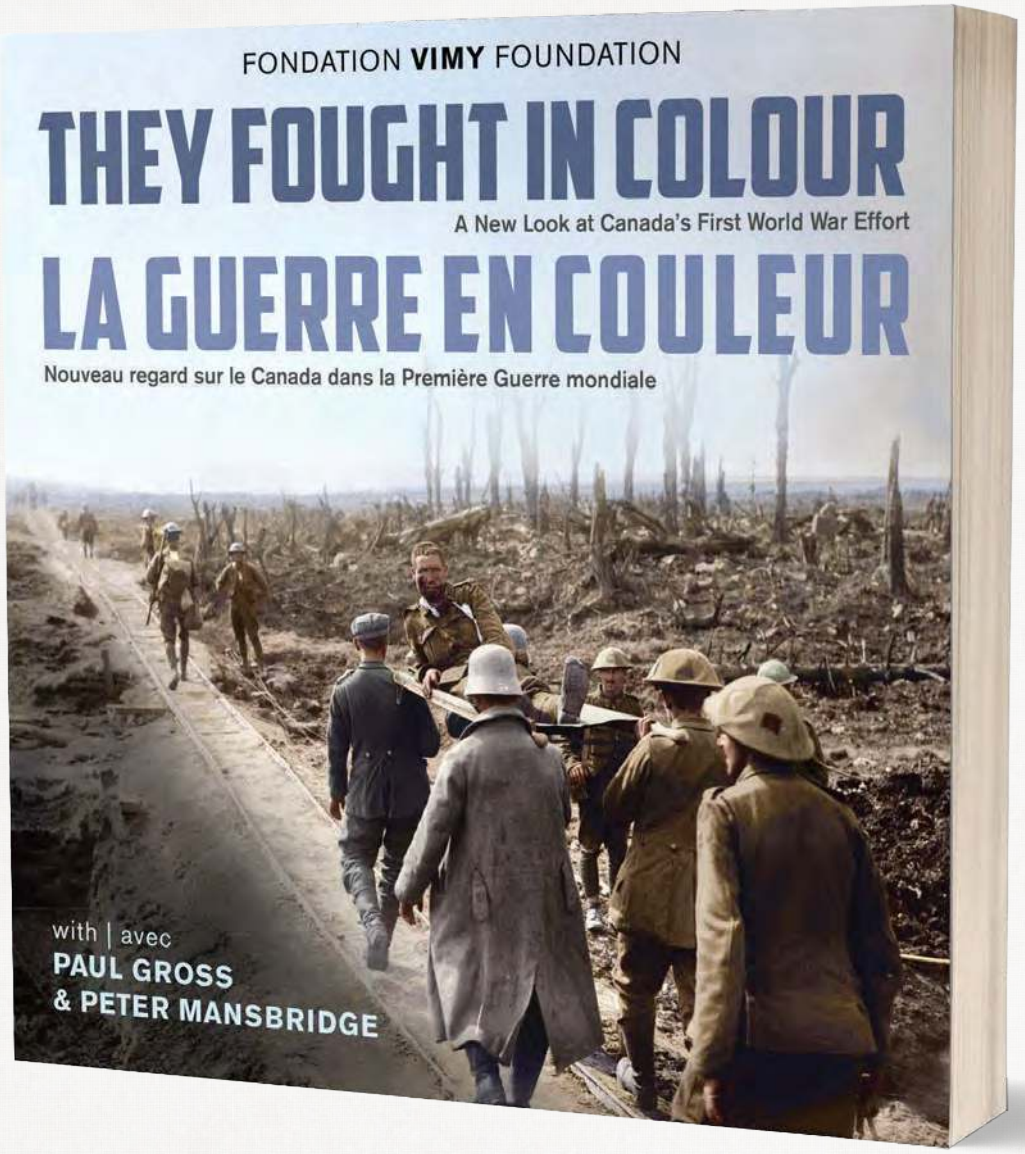
The logs and poles were cut upriver during the winter and were then hauled out by horse or, in later years, by tractor. In the high waters of the spring, they were floated some twelve to fifteen kilometres down to the mouth of the river.

Using pick poles and peaveys the men would gradually clear a jam and send the logs and poles on their way to the salt water of Alexander Bay, where they were captured in a boom and eventually towed to the nearby sawmill for processing into lumber.

Some of the longer poles were used for building wharves, and some went to mining companies as pit props used to support the roofs of tunnels. White pine poles were sometimes sold as schooner spars.

Submitted by R. Wayne Sparkes of Glovertown, N.L., the son of Nelson Sparkes.

Do you have a photograph that captures a moment, important or ordinary, in Canada's history? If so, have it copied (please don't send priceless originals) and mail it to Album, c/o Canada's History, Bryce Hall, Main Floor, 515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9. Or email your photo to album@CanadasHistory.ca. Please provide a brief description of the photo, including its date and location. If possible, identify people in the photograph and provide further information about the event or situation illustrated. Photos may be cropped or adjusted as necessary for presentation in the magazine. To have your posted submission returned, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.



A photographic exploration of Canada's First World War experience, presented for the first time in full, vibrant colour, with complementary essays by some of our country's leading public figures including Margaret Atwood, Tim Cook, Charlotte Gray, Paul Gross, Peter Mansbridge, and many others.

"Scrawled in chalk on a rusty brick Toronto wall--"Don't Forget Us." Five wounded Canadian soldiers, only one willing, or able, to smile, sit beneath the graffiti. This is but one of the extraordinary glimpses of Canadians at home and at the front filled with the tones, tints, and hues of Life and Death during the First World War. The text, and the photographs, in colour for the first time, educate and then haunt us; they are, in fact, quite unforgettable." **— Linda Granfield, historian**

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