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Bringing Art to the People: A Biography of Norah McCullough

by

Dawna Doris Gallagher M.A.

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Arts
in Canadian Studies**

Carleton University

OTTAWA, Ontario

January 13 1997

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The undersigned recommend to the Faculty
of Graduate Studies and Research acceptance of the thesis

"Bringing Art to the People: A Biography of Norah McCullough"

submitted by Dawna Gallagher, B.F.A., M.F.A.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

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Abstract

This thesis is the first project to recover the life and work of Norah McCullough, examining her role as an art educator, and cultural promoter and activist in Canada and South Africa between 1920 and 1968. McCullough is positioned as a catalyst in the Canadian art world, with a lifelong commitment to public education in the visual arts. Interdisciplinary in approach and grounded in a feminist methodology, this thesis integrates aspects of Women's Studies, Art History, Social History, Art Education and South African History and shows intersections of gender, race and class. McCullough's pioneering engagement in a number of art initiatives and arts organizations such as The Child Art Movement, the Picture Loan Society, the Ontario College of Art, The National Gallery of Canada and The Saskatchewan Arts Board is highlighted through a review of her correspondence, published writings and interviews.

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During the writing of this thesis I have received support from a number of individuals. First and foremost I would like to thank my advisors at Carleton University, Professor Katherine Arnup of the School of Canadian Studies and Professor Natalie Luckyj of the School for Studies in Art and Culture, Art History programme.

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The support of family and friends has been invaluable to the completion of this essay. These include my son Lachlan MacLeod, my mother and father Helen and Cameron Gallagher and friends Jessie Paterson, Jane Thacker, Brenda Parris, Marie-Josée Charron, Michael Abraham, Meredith Hutchings, Sharon Chisholm, Jane Butler, Gordon Stokoe, Graham Metson and Cheryl Lean.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	i
Introduction	1
Chapter 1 The Foundation Years: Toronto 1927-1938	13
Chapter 2 Art Has A Social Message: South Africa 1938-1946	64
Chapter 3 Bringing Art to the People: Saskatchewan 1948-1958	100
Chapter 4 Sharing the Nation's Treasures: Western Canada 1958-1968 ...	133
Conclusions	160
Appendices	
Appendix I Abbreviations	171
Appendix II Chronology, Chapter 1	172
Appendix III Chronology, Chapter 2	174
Appendix IV Chronology, Chapter 3	176
Appendix V Chronology, Chapter 4	178
Bibliography	181

Introduction

Artists, teachers, curators and cultural bureaucrats from the Canadian art world who knew Norah McCullough praised her and her work. McCullough was credited with pioneering work in several significant Canadian art projects and institutions. She was respected for her energetic and visionary administrative abilities -- to marshal talent, initiate innovative arts projects and provide practical approaches to community arts programming. She is remembered also for her sparkling personality, social graces, warmth, and inexhaustible enthusiasm. During her lifetime, McCullough's career was well documented in newspapers from Toronto to Vancouver and in the social columns in the major South African newspapers. From the 1940's to the late 1960's she contributed articles to Canadian Art, adult education journals and wrote several National Gallery exhibition catalogues. During the 1940s and 1950s she was heard on CBC broadcasts in Saskatchewan. Despite having a documented and public professional profile, few people, apart from her contemporaries, have heard of Norah McCullough.

She began her career at the Art Gallery of Toronto. She worked there from 1927 to 1937, in Child Art education, first as Arthur Lismer's assistant and then as acting director during Lismer's two year absence. This position led to six years of work in South Africa. During her first two years she supervised the Pretoria Children's Art Centre and its affiliated teacher training programme. In 1940 she left the centre and travelled through the northern Transvaal visiting

native schools.¹ She was then hired as Art Inspectress for Cape Province Department of Education. In this capacity she inspected provincial schools for white and Coloured children and established the Frank Joubert Art Centre in Cape Town.² Upon her return to Canada in 1946 she worked briefly for the National Gallery as a regional representative in Prince Edward Island and Northern Ontario. In 1948 she took up an appointment as the Executive Secretary of the Saskatchewan Arts Board (SAB),³ the first North American Arts Board which was brought into being by the socialist election platform of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) party and was based upon the model of the then fledgling Arts Council of Great Britain.⁴ As the Executive Secretary, she was responsible for the coordination and delivery of SAB programmes. McCullough travelled to numerous small, remote, rural communities, bringing art and craft exhibitions, magic lantern talks on art, film screenings, music concerts and dramatic productions.

In 1956, McCullough left the Saskatchewan Arts Board to work as the Western Liaison Officer for the National Gallery of Canada. In this capacity she travelled to both large urban centres and small towns in Western Canada, bringing travelling exhibitions and speaking on art and the role of the National Gallery.

¹ Ibid., T. 2, S. 2, 16.

² Ibid., 14.

³ NGC, Norah McCullough File (hereafter NM File), vol. 1, Biographical Notes (1968), 2.

⁴ N. Ward, "Saskatchewan: Cultural Life," in The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985).

She completed her career by working in Ottawa curating exhibitions, including a major survey of Canadian crafts for the National Art Gallery. McCullough was instrumental in the establishment of the Canadian Craftsmen of Canada Association (1964) and was the Canadian representative to the first World Congress of Craftsmen in 1964 at Columbia University in New York.⁵

After her retirement in 1968, Norah McCullough began, at sixty-eight years of age, to work on a catalogue raisonné of the art of Arthur Lismer, a project which became an exhaustive fifteen year undertaking. Sadly, this project was never brought to completion. She died on August 9, 1993 having spent a lifetime as an arts interpreter and educator.⁶

This thesis is an interpretive biography of the life of Norah McCullough. It encompasses her early life and education and her career from its beginning until her retirement from the National Gallery in 1968. It begins an interpretation of the facts of Norah McCullough's life and career, considering the social tenets that formed the basis of her work. It is an interdisciplinary project, which encompasses research from the disciplines of women's studies, art history, art education, history and cultural studies. "Bringing Art to the People" is the first comprehensive appraisal of the work and life of Norah McCullough, although numerous newspaper articles, some brief periodical essays and lengthy interviews

⁵ NGC, NM File, vol. 1, Bio. Notes, 1.

⁶ NGC, NM File, vol. 3, "1925 graduate of OCA: Norah McCullough," Obituary, The Globe and Mail (11 August 1993).

on audio tapes outline many of the facts of Norah McCullough's life.

This thesis is organized into four chapters, which parallel four phases of her life. The first chapter, "The Foundation Years: Toronto 1927-1937," begins with McCullough's familial background and the development of her professional career. Norah McCullough's education, career choice, training and entry into the working world are considered in the context of women's history of the period. Her initial relationship to her mentor, Arthur Lismer, the nature of her work at the gallery and other enterprises are also described. These aspects of her life are described in relationship to Toronto, the cultural life of the city and the situation for women during this period. From a description of her own large circle of friends and her activities, a broader picture of Toronto culture, which includes the lives of many young women of the period, along with more well-known figures, is shaped.

Chapter Two, entitled "Art Has a Social Message: South Africa 1938-1946," focuses on Norah's life in South Africa. Norah's personal correspondence with her immediate family is contextualized by a historical overview of South Africa prior to and including the society of 1930s and 1940s. This chapter is an exposition of her private self; her personal reflections and concerns and her professional life. In the latter, the practical details of her Child Art initiative and those of her work as an art "Inspectress" are explained. A central theme, addressed in this chapter, is the conundrum of art and social change, inherent in Lismer's philosophy and McCullough's work within a context of a rigid, racially

segregated society.

"Bringing Art to the People: Saskatchewan 1948-1956," the third chapter, examines Norah McCullough's employment with the Saskatchewan Arts Board within the historical context of Saskatchewan of the 1940s and early 1950s and the changes brought by the newly elected CCF government. McCullough's work and views are situated within the populist approach to culture of postwar Canada which inspired her work and the cultural community within which she circulated.

In the final chapter, "Sharing the Nation's Treasures: Western Canada 1958-1968," McCullough's work as the Western Liaison Officer for the National Gallery is discussed in the context of a prosperous, modern Canada of the 1950s. The growth of cultural nationalism and the role of the National Gallery of Canada in the community are highlighted. The tensions between the movement for grassroots cultural development of the 1940s and the growth of the hegemony of the international modernist paradigm, expressed by regional concerns and McCullough's interest in craft production on the one hand and, on the other hand, by the growth of abstract, formalist painting are contrasted. Issues of gender, including the position of women in the arts institutional infrastructure and the civil service, the image of McCullough as a professional working woman constructed in the press and her relationship with other women and her own reflections on her life during this period are also presented.

Throughout this thesis, I reflect upon the ideologies, philosophies and practices inherent to Norah McCullough's work. While the major influences of

the first half of her career stemmed first from the pedagogical field of The Child Art Movement, her work after 1946 as an adult educator and arts interpreter with the Saskatchewan Arts Board, and the National Gallery reflects an amalgamation of influences. Norah's outlook during this period incorporated ideas from the philosophy and practices of the adult education movement, socialist ideals, developments in museum education, the burgeoning force of Canadian nationalistic cultural sentiment of the Massey era and the presumption of the universality of art as embodied in the western modernist aesthetic.

Interpreting the life and work of Norah McCullough required a number of methodological approaches. My primary objective in constructing a biography of Norah McCullough was two-fold: to bring together both retrieval and interpretation. The basis of this mandate is found in the objectives of feminist art historiography. In the early 1970's, the majority of feminist art historians, of whom Linda Nochlin and Ann Sutherland Harris of the United States are two, were concerned with the retrieval of women artists into the master narratives of western art history. Nochlin's question; "Why have there been no great women artists?"⁷ led to Sutherland Harris' and Nochlin's book Women Artists, 1550-1950.⁸ In response, British art historians Griselda Pollock and Rozika Parker argued that the underlying premises for the formulation of art history as a discipline were inherently patriarchal and that, given the fact that culture is socially constructed,

⁷ L. Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" Chap. 1 in T. B. Hess and E. C. Baker (eds.), Art and Sexual Politics (New York 1971), 2.

⁸ A. Sutherland Harris and L. Nochlin, Women Artists: 1550-1950 (New York 1976).

there must be an examination of women's art -- not in relationship to the existing judgements of inferiority or superiority of their production, but rather, an investigation of the inherently biased theoretical and methodological framework in which cultural production took place.⁹ Nochlin's hope that a feminist critique of art history could lead to "work which would reveal bias and inadequacies, not merely in regard to questions of woman artists, but in the discipline as a whole" which expands to "encompass every accepted assumption of the field," forms a basis for my own pursuit of the topic of Norah McCullough.¹⁰

Texts on feminist methodologies in art history such as Lynn Bell's Hilda Stewart R.M.S.: An Essay in Retrieving History, and Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard's The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History have inspired me, as have books on biographical methods such as Teresa Ileas' All Sides of the Subject: Women and Biography. Articles or books that addressed the role of women as supporters, art educators and interpreters of the arts are invaluable contributions to art history.

In a Canadian historical context Dot Tuer's essay "The Art of Nation Building: Constructing a Cultural Identity for Post War Canada,"¹¹ and "Teaching Canadian History in the 1990s: Whose National Identity Are We Lamenting?" by

⁹ G. Pollock, "Feminist Interventions in the Histories of Art: An Introduction," Chap. 1 and "Vision, Voice and Power: Feminist Art Histories and Marxism," Chap. 2 in Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art (London and New York 1988), 18-43; 1-17.

¹⁰ Nochlin, "Great Women Artists?" 2.

¹¹ D. Tuer, "The Art of Nation Building: Constructing a Cultural Identity for Post War Canada," Parallélogramme, vol. 17, no. 4 (1992), 24-36.

Linda Kealey et al.¹² were helpful, enabling me to understand the role of a centralist versus a non-centralist historical perspective.

These texts, among others, helped to concretely contextualize the development of Norah McCullough's profession and were models for the fulfilment of this project. In approaching the task of retrieval and interpretation, I utilized methods of historical research and interpretive biography and consulted texts which argued both the possibilities and limitations of these methods. In particular, Norah McCullough's career choices and development in relationship to gender and the time period have been explored.

A large volume of the primary research material at the National Archives of Canada (NAC) and the National Gallery of Canada (NGC) was consulted. This included the NAC Norah McCullough and Family Papers, (MG 30 D317) and the NGC audio tapes and transcripts of Madelaine Palko's 1991 Interviews with Norah McCullough. Secondary sources included general Canadian historical information on the periods 1920-1938, 1946-1968 and 1968 to the present, and South African history texts for the period of Norah's sojourn (1938-1946). To understand McCullough's work for the Saskatchewan Arts Board in its historical context, I consulted articles and books which described Saskatchewan of the 1940s and 1950s. Descriptions of the platform and landmark transition to power of the CCF were essential as it was under the aegis of this government that Norah was hired by the Provincial Education Department.

¹² L. Kealey et al., "Teaching Canadian History in the 1990s: Whose National History Are We Lamenting?" Journal of Canadian Studies (Summer 1992), 129-131.

Aspects of McCullough's career have raised important questions about the operation of race and class values. As much of her work was motivated by idealist principles and the rhetoric of art and social transformation, her political ideals, especially those based on Lismer's claim for overcoming class and race barriers, in relationship to Child Art work, are considered in light of her work in South Africa, her writing and Child Art theory. Post colonialist cultural theory on issues of race contributed enormously to the development of an appropriate critical framework for the discussion of race, as did reading historical colonialist writing, anthropology and art history on Africa and ideas of the "primitive." P.

Brantlinger's "Victorians and Africans: the Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent,"¹³ and D. T. Goldberg's, Racist Culture: Philosophy and Politics of Meaning were among several texts which illuminated the historical development of racist discourse and societal institutions which continue to uphold this legacy.

The underlying ideology of Norah McCullough's practice in art education stemmed from the pedagogical movement, The Child Art Movement. This movement was based on humanist and liberal democratic philosophies which, in the post World War I period, American educators such as John Dewey in particular, began to promote as a pedagogy capable of combatting the rise of fascism and totalitarian states. In Canada, Lismer and McCullough emphasized free and equal access to cultural institutions and the free expression of the individual. Art was considered a great leveller, regardless of class or race, an

¹³ P. Brantlinger, "Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent," in H. L. Gates (ed.), Race, Writing and Difference (Chicago and London 1985), 185-223.

agent of change which would touch people of any strata, making them more sympathetic to their fellow humans. The basis of these assumptions presumed both a redemptive and socially constructive quality inherent in "culture," and an unexamined belief in the superiority of the western culture paradigm and the social construction of "taste".

Norah McCullough became an interpreter for what was considered a socially progressive movement, while retaining the privilege and gentility of her class and culture. The populist ideology of the Child Art Movement, as espoused by Arthur Lismer, contributed to the liberalized access policy at the Art Gallery of Toronto which opened art classes to a wider social spectrum of Toronto society. Later, McCullough built on this foundation of accessibility with ideas of the adult education movement. She exposed communities in remote rural areas from Prince Edward Island to Vancouver to "art," assisted by her lantern slide shows and lectures.

While McCullough later became a New Democratic party supporter, her own personal philosophy as expressed through her opinions and actions, profile a woman who may be more accurately described as liberal rather than socialist or even social democrat. This is especially true of her work in South Africa, discussed in Chapter Two. In this regard, it is interesting to note how representative Norah McCullough is of the liberal thinkers of her time. People such as Norah were the members of the intellectual elite who built the cultural institutions and arts education programs in Canada. For both McCullough and

Lismer, their liberal philosophy allowed them to accept the contradictions of espousing the ideology of equality and freedom without instituting radical institutional change. McCullough's work broadened the audience for art in Canada and in South Africa. It did not overcome race and class barriers and it entrenched notions of a western art bias.

McCullough's biography raises questions about the contradictions and failure of the idealistic goals of art interpretation and considers the values inherent to these goals. While many of the claims for art and social good with which McCullough aligned herself seem both naive and extravagant today, they are the principles which guided Canada's most important cultural institutions in the period immediately prior to and just after the Massey Commission (the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences) hearings of 1949-1951.

Norah McCullough's work in the field of visual arts in Canada spanned a period of six decades and intersected with many of the most important developments in the growth of the fine arts in Canada. Throughout her life, Norah was forging a career that combined teaching, fine arts interpretation, writing and civil service. Her career choice reflected the types of white collar occupations that were opening up to women in the first half of the twentieth century. McCullough's life and work reveals much about the development of the fields of art education and arts administration as career sites for women. The construction of Norah McCullough's life history, then, is, a contribution to

Canadian women's history, as well as to art history, contributing to an increasing body of information on the careers of middle class women in the interwar period in Canada, as well as it is a portrait of one woman whose life work was founded on liberal ideals that linked art education with social freedom, enlightenment and progress.

Writing a biography of Norah McCullough, employing an analysis of issues of gender, class and race will, hopefully, expand the discussion of the legacy of Canada's cultural history -- the legacy which includes the ideology of cultural institutions' education programs and questions of access.

Chapter 1

The Foundation Years: Toronto, 1910-1938

In the summer of 1926 Norah McCullough took an important step toward establishing herself in a lifelong career in support of the visual arts. McCullough wrote to Arthur Lismer asking if he could help her find some employment at Ontario College of Art. Lismer, vacationing in Go Home Bay, responded to his former student with a letter that marked the beginning of years of mutual correspondence. He assured "Miss McCullough" that he would "keep her in mind" when he knew "what is being done at the college" and that he would do what he could to assist her.¹

In 1927, Arthur Lismer quit his job as the Vice-principal at the Ontario College of Art and accepted a position at the Art Gallery of Toronto with the Education Committee.² Shortly thereafter, he invited Norah McCullough to join the vigorous young art education staff at the gallery. McCullough accepted Lismer's invitation; a fortuitous decision that "opened up a career" for her.³

Norah McCullough's career can be said to be reflective of the expanding

¹ National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC), Norah McCullough and Family Papers, MG 30 D 317, vol. 1, file 33, A. Lismer to N. McCullough, 27 August 1926.

² J. A. B. McLeish, September Gale: A Study of Arthur Lismer and the Group of Seven (Toronto revised edition 1973), 102. Lismer was invited to the AGT as a member of the Education Committee in 1926. His official appointment as Supervisor of Education occurred in 1929. See L. Darroch, Bright Land: A Warm Look at Arthur Lismer (Toronto and Vancouver 1981), 84-86.

³ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 1 file 33, handwritten note on back of letter A. Lismer to N. McCullough, 27 August 1926. McCullough expressed gratitude toward Lismer throughout her lifetime. See also NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 2, file 7, "Art Educator Extraordinaire," Alumnus (Spring 1983).

role for women both as artists and within the infrastructure of Canadian art institutions between the late 1880s and early 1920s. The ten years McCullough spent at the Art Gallery of Toronto was a time of apprenticeship as an art educator and educational supervisor and a period of development for her educational philosophy. She became a pioneer participant in the Child Art pedagogical movement of which Arthur Lismer was a leading, internationally recognized exponent.⁴ McCullough's friendships and professional associations with notable Canadian artists, intellectuals, bureaucrats and patrons, at the pivotal time of flourishing institutional development, became the foundation of her later career development. This foundation began to be built during her student days at the Ontario College of Art and continued with her work with Art Gallery of Toronto, Hart House Theatre, The Student's Art League and The Picture Loan Society. McCullough's Toronto years provide a profile of Toronto's cultural elite during the 1920s and 1930s and of the lives of the lesser known Canadian women art graduates of the period.

The type of work McCullough chose confirms trends in labour, education and the arts for Canadian middle-class women in the early decades of the century. Yet it was McCullough's unique personality, abilities and combination of interests -- in professional service, education and the arts -- that ensured that her partnership with Lismer was a successful one. Her interests blended concerns of

⁴ Professor Peter Sandiford, professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Toronto felt that "Lismer's work at the Art Gallery of Toronto was one of the most significant things being done in education anywhere in the world." See McLeish, September Gale, 156.

both the era and McCullough's familial background. The McCulloughs, a family with considerable accomplishments in the fields of science, medicine, education, journalism and the arts, provided a remarkable beginning for McCullough's life work in progressive social issues and the arts.

Eleanor Leslie Norah McCullough was born in 1903 in Alliston Ontario,⁵ the third of four children.⁶ McCullough's family was a prosperous one; by 1907 they owned an automobile, employed a "man who attended the horse" as well as a gardener.⁷ McCullough's father, a doctor, "built a very nice house" that included waiting and examining rooms and a lab for his pharmaceutical work.⁸ Humanitarianism, responsibility and liberal social values permeated the McCullough home. Education was a "primary concern."⁹ In addition, professionalism, service to the less fortunate and independent thinking were valued.

Dr. John W. S. McCullough had a private medical practice in Alliston and for a short period held the position of town mayor. He later went on to become Chief Inspector of Health for the Province of Ontario.¹⁰ An innovator in public

⁵ NAC, A. Goddard, Norah McCullough and Family Finding Aid 1920 (Ottawa 1993), iii.

⁶ National Gallery of Canada Library (hereafter NGC), M. Palko, Interviews with Norah McCullough by Madelaine Palko, 1991, audio tape transcript, Tape 1, Side 1, 4.

⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁸ Ibid., 4.

⁹ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰ B. M. Greene (ed.), Who's Who in Canada (Registered) Including the British Possessions in the Western Hemisphere, 1938-39: An Illustrated Biographical Record of Men and Women of the

health administration, he introduced numerous progressive measures.¹¹ In 1916 he introduced the free distribution of a Diphtheria anti-toxin and other biological products throughout the province. He reorganized the Department of Health in 1919, founded travelling tuberculosis clinics in 1923 and set up a chain of Public Health laboratories. In his later career he lectured at the University of Toronto on Public Health Administration and Public Health Law and, as the Secretary of the Royal Commission on Cancer, lectured on cancer and public health.¹² Dr. McCullough also wrote an advice column for mothers which appeared in Chatelaine magazine.¹³ A member of the Conservative Party,¹⁴ he had particularly liberal ideas about the care and education of children. He opposed kindergarten for young children feeling it was too "Germanic" and institutional and advocated free play.¹⁵

Alice Margaret Lawson McCullough, Norah's mother, who had trained as a nurse, sometimes assisted her husband in his duties in rural Alliston.¹⁶ She also wrote stories, "putting down her experiences with country people."¹⁷ Alice's articles

Time (Toronto 1939), 240.

¹¹ Norah was very proud of her father's accomplishments, especially his work with tuberculosis and poor people. Ingrid Jenkner Interview, Halifax, July 1994.

¹² Greene, Who's Who 1938-39, 240.

¹³ In conversation with Prof. K. Arnup, Carleton University, April 1994.

¹⁴ Greene, Who's Who 1938-39, 240.

¹⁵ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 1, 8.

¹⁶ Ibid., 3.

¹⁷ Ibid., 8.

on rural life, entitled "Reminiscences of a Country Doctor's Wife," were published in Saturday Night magazine under the nom de plume Janet Coupar.¹⁸

The Lawsons, a source of considerable cultural and educational influence on Norah's family, included a remarkable number of educated and professionally engaged women.¹⁹ Alice was one of ten children of Scottish parents. Her father, William Lawson, invalidated by a shipwreck, was unable to provide steadily for the family and Alice's mother, Jessie Kerr Lawson, a trained teacher, helped shoulder the financial responsibilities for the large family.²⁰ A plucky woman, Jessie Kerr-Lawson became a columnist for several newspapers and was the author of a book of verse and four novels, including A Colonial Girl, or Fail Me Never.²¹ As Robert Lamb noted, Jessie Kerr Lawson was a prominent woman of her day whose name was included in several dictionaries of Canadian biography. She was also "a driving perfectionist with a passion for education she communicated to her children."²² Not only had Norah's mother, Alice, received professional training in the late 1880s, but two aunts received Bachelor degrees from the University of

¹⁸ NAC, McCullough Papers, J. W. S. and Alice McCullough Papers, vol. 1, file 25. See also NAC, Goddard, Finding Aid, v.

¹⁹ Resistance toward women attending university was prevalent at that time. See J. L'Espérance, The Widening Sphere: Women in Canada, 1870 - 1940 (Ottawa 1982), 8. Until the 1960s only 4% of high school graduates in Canada went on to university. See Canadian Encyclopedia (1985 ed.), S.v. "Educational Opportunity." Female university graduates as a percentage of all students in 1925 was 26.1%. See V. Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada 1919 - 1939 (Toronto 1988), 23.

²⁰ R. J. Lamb, James Kerr-Lawson: A Canadian Abroad (Windsor 1983), 10.

²¹ NAC, Goddard, Finding Aid, iii.

²² Lamb, James Kerr-Lawson, 10.

Toronto²³ and three uncles had received doctorates from the same institution. Norah's aunt Katherine became a columnist and editor for Toronto periodicals²⁴ and two uncles, Andrew and Anstruther Lawson, became "noted scientists."²⁵ The family emphasis on higher education and professional careers carried over to the next generation. Three of the four McCullough children had careers. Norah became an arts educator and Norah's sister, Dorothy,²⁶ and her brother, John,²⁷ became doctors.

Norah McCullough described her parents as "bookish people" who were more inclined to stay at home and read than to go to an art gallery or musical performance.²⁸ Yet, the household was not unfamiliar with the fine arts. James Kerr-Lawson was an uncle of whom Norah was particularly proud.²⁹ Kerr-Lawson was one of the first students to attend the newly founded Ontario College of Art in 1879.³⁰ Later, he became a successful international painter.³¹ McCullough's

²³ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 1, 10.

²⁴ Katherine Lawson Appleby; see NAC, Goddard, Finding Aid, iii. See also NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 1, 10.

²⁵ NAC, Goddard, Finding Aid, iii.

²⁶ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 1, 9.

²⁷ John Andrew Lawson McCullough worked at the Mayo Clinic in Pittsburgh, U.S.A. His first wife was Edna Gardiner. NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 6, file 15, Obituaries, The Globe and Mail, June 1989.

²⁸ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 1, 2.

²⁹ "I was always impressed that I had an uncle who was an artist." See NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 1, 9.

³⁰ Lamb, James Kerr-Lawson, 20.

mother was "a great believer in heredity." Suspecting her daughter had "inherited a great talent"³² she encouraged Norah's interest in the fine arts.

When Norah was seven years old the McCullough family moved away from Alliston and settled in Toronto at 61 Beaty Avenue in the comfortable east end Beaches area.³³ The family found themselves in a changing city. At the time of their return, Toronto was emerging as a supportive and fertile place for the education and health concerns³⁴ which interested the McCullough family.

The city had grown at an enormous pace from the late 1890s onwards.³⁵ At the turn of the century there was a marked shift from rural to urban life throughout Canada. By 1911, 52.2% of the Ontario population lived in cities.³⁶ Toronto's population had increased by 90% since 1901 and stood at 376,000.³⁷ Increased population created increased social problems. Public health, education and labour conditions became areas of growing concerns.³⁸ Associated professions in health, social welfare and education emerged to respond to the social problems

³¹ *Ibid.*, 20. See also D. Reid, A Concise History of Canadian Painting, 2nd ed. (Toronto 1988), 132 and 135.

³² NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 1, 9.

³³ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁴ "Between 1900 and 1920 an elaborate system of institutionalized healthcare developed at all levels of government in Canada." See K. Arnup, Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth Century Canada (Toronto 1994), 27.

³⁵ J. M. S. Careless, "Toronto," in The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985).

³⁶ J. M. S. Careless, Ontario: A Celebration of Our Heritage (Toronto 1993), 176.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 176.

³⁸ See Arnup, "Waging War on Infant Mortality," Chap. 1 in Motherhood, 14-31.

facing the city's populace.³⁹ Education and medicine, the professions of Norah's family, were areas of particular growth.⁴⁰

The McCullough family was typical of the Canadian social elite of the period.⁴¹ People of Anglo-Saxon heritage dominated the social, cultural and financial institutions.⁴² Other immigrants, primarily from Continental Europe, including Jews, Italians, and Ukrainians, comprised 13% of the Toronto population and were under-represented in the city's centres of power.⁴³

With a growing population and a concentration of factories, banks and stores, Toronto was the financial head of Canada during the 1920s.⁴⁴ This increased prosperity led to increased cultural activity, and the establishment of professional and amateur cultural associations was soon followed by the founding of institutions for heritage, education and the arts.⁴⁵

³⁹ Arnup, Motherhood, 27. See also P. J. Rooke and R. L. Schnell, No Bleeding Heart: Charlotte Whitton, A Feminist on the Right (Vancouver 1987).

⁴⁰ J. D. McGinnis, "Public Health," in The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985).

⁴¹ This is based on their ethnic background, class, educational background, and occupations. See J. Porter, The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada (Toronto 1966).

⁴² Careless, "Toronto."

⁴³ Ibid., The majority of the population was British, primarily English with a significant proportion of Ulster Protestant Irish.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Among the institutions established during this period were: The Ontario College of Art, founded in 1876, The Toronto Public Library in 1884, The Royal Conservatory of Music in 1886, The Art Museum of Toronto in 1900, The Ontario Archives in 1903, The Royal Alexandra Theatre in 1907, and The Royal Ontario Museum, which opened in 1912. The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985) S.v. "University of Toronto"; "Ontario College of Art"; "Libraries"; "The Royal Conservatory of Music"; "The Art Gallery of Toronto"; "The Royal Alexandra Theatre"; "The Royal Ontario Museum"; "Archives". For a full discussion of the establishment of Toronto cultural

The growth of this cultural infrastructure directly benefited McCullough. Norah McCullough's art education and subsequent employment corresponded with the early years of both the Ontario College of Art and The Art Gallery of Toronto. McCullough received her early education in Toronto at the Bishop Strachan Academy for girls,⁴⁶ a private Anglican school for Toronto's wealthy. As an adolescent she received four years of art instruction from Mary E. Wrinch,⁴⁷ a painter of watercolour miniatures who shared a studio with Clara Hagarty, a flower painter.⁴⁸ Wrinch, who had attended the Toronto art school,⁴⁹ encouraged Norah to apply to the Ontario College of Art.⁵⁰

Modelled upon the School of South Kensington in London, England, the

institutions see M. Tippet, Making Culture: English Canadian Institutions and the Arts before the Massey Commission (Toronto 1990).

⁴⁶ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 6, file 12, Biographical Notes, 1991, 1.

⁴⁷ Ibid., vol. 2, file 7, "Extraordinaire," 2. See also L. Sherman and A. Grigor, "Interview with Norah McCullough," 3, for Oral History, Montreal Studies, McGill University, 29 August 1982.

⁴⁸ A former private student of George Reid and Laura Muntz, Wrinch had studied at the Grosvenor Art School in London under Walter Donne and Alyn Williams and in New York with Alice Beckington. See M. Miller, George Reid: A Biography (Toronto 1987), 67. She was also the first female Vice-president and treasurer of Ontario Society of Artists (hereafter OSA). See also N. Luckyj, Visions and Victories: 10 Canadian Women Artists 1914 -1945 (London 1983), 109. McCullough described Wrinch as "a person of account...a really competent painter...better than her old man." See NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 1, 15.

⁴⁹ Miller, Reid, 61.

⁵⁰ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 2, file 7, "Extraordinaire," 2 and vol. 2, file 14, P. McCarthy, "Art Leavening Experience Norah McCullough Finds," The Globe and Mail, 24 April 1946, 10. Despite her family's emphasis on education, Norah received poor grades in two or three high school subjects and had to take these subjects at a local high school during her final summer. She recalled "When I was not there taking a class, I would take a Queen streetcar and spend the day and evening at the art school." NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 1, 18.

Ontario College of Art⁵¹ was established in 1876 as an initiative of the Ontario Society of Artists.⁵² By 1882 the college had a programme which emphasized "the practical arts"⁵³ of drawing and the applied arts. It also had centralized examinations, a board of examiners and awarded three types of certificates.⁵⁴ The stated purposes of the College were "the training of students in the fine arts...and in all branches of the applied arts...and the training of teachers in the fine and applied arts."⁵⁵ In 1920, the college, which had been in numerous locations since its inception, received a new site in Grange Park. This was a portion of the land bequeathed to its parent institution, the Art Gallery of Toronto, situated in close proximity to the college. The college opened its new building on September 30, 1921, the first college in Canada to be constructed solely for art education.⁵⁶

The faculty of the school included George Reid, who, in 1912, succeeded Robert Harris as principal.⁵⁷ McCullough considered Reid, an older academician,

⁵¹ Established as the Ontario School of Art and Design, it was renamed the Ontario College of Art in 1912. Tippet, Making Culture, 39.

⁵² Ibid., 39.

⁵³ Art Gallery of Ontario (hereafter AGO), 100 Years: Evolution of the Ontario College of Art (Toronto 1976), 11.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 12.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 15.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 16.

⁵⁷ Miller, Reid, 61. Reid, who studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts with Thomas Eakins was hired by the college as a painting instructor in 1890. He was the principal of OCA until 1929 when he left to join the board of the Art Gallery of Toronto. A painter of murals and genre pictures such as his most well known was *Mortgaging the Homestead*. As the president of OSA he was also instrumental in the campaign to establish the Art Gallery of Toronto (hereafter AGT). See Reid, Concise, 99-103; S. J. Lowery, The Art Gallery of Toronto: Pattern and Process

"pretty stuffy."⁵⁸ Other staff included J. W. Beatty, who taught nude painting.⁵⁹

"Beatty was like me - he would never stop talking about himself."⁶⁰ Herbert Stansfield she described emphatically as "an old-fashioned designer,"⁶¹ an artist who fit "flowers into spaces in the Art Nouveau and Art Decor styles...I found him awfully boring- I felt he hadn't progressed very far in his field."⁶²

The most infamous faculty of the period were J.E.H. MacDonald, Arthur Lismer, A.Y. Jackson and Frederick Varley. They were members of the newly formed Group of Seven whose Symbolist and Post-Impressionist-influenced landscape paintings and nationalist rhetoric caused a public stir after their first exhibition in 1920 at the Art Gallery of Toronto.⁶³ In an art world dominated by the older academicians like the sixty year old Reid, the more youthful Group

of Growth, 1872 to 1966, Masters thesis (Montreal 1985), 30-31; See also Art Gallery of Toronto (hereafter AGO), 100 Years, 12.

⁵⁸ "He was pretty stuffy, he belonged to the old tradition." NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 1, 15.

⁵⁹ Ibid., trans., T. 1, S. 2, 3. See also D. McCarthy, A Fool in Paradise (Toronto 1990), 81. A friend of J. E. H. MacDonald, Beatty studied at Julian's in Paris at the turn of the century. Initially his subject was Dutch peasantry but later, under the influence of Jefferys and MacDonald he painted landscapes. Reid, Concise, 139-41.

⁶⁰ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 1, 3.

⁶¹ Ibid., 4.

⁶² Ibid., 1.

⁶³ The years 1924-1927 at OCA were referred to as "the Group of Seven Years." Reid, Concise, 181. For a full account of the Group see C. C. Hill, The Group of Seven: Art for A Nation (Ottawa 1995). See also F. B. Housser, A Canadian Art Movement: The Story of the Group of Seven (Toronto 1926). See also C. Varley, "Group of Seven," in The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985).

members were a symbol of change.⁶⁴

At OCA McCullough studied colour with Arthur Lismer, sculpture with Emanuel Hahn,⁶⁵ still life painting with A. Y. Jackson and design with J. E. H. MacDonald.⁶⁶ In her third and fourth year she concentrated on drawing and painting.⁶⁷ Lismer taught the Munsell system of colour⁶⁸ and gave his students "terribly interesting exercises with colour washes" in which students discovered the ideas of impressionism and the principles of light refracted through a prism.⁶⁹ Lismer's students also went out to nearby city streets and to the market to sketch. This practice McCullough found "very hard" as she was "a bit self-conscious... about being different, doing something other people did not do."⁷⁰ She took

⁶⁴ "He had been teacher to both MacDonald and Johnston. In 1920 he was 60, a real patriarch in the eyes of the Group whose average age was 37... Reid represented the preceding generation." J. A. Carr, "A Blessed Centre: The Group of Seven and the Arts and Letters Club," in F. Arbuckle et al., The Group of Seven: Why Not Eight or Nine or Ten? (Toronto n.d.), 18.

⁶⁵ Emanuel Otto Hahn (1881-1957) was appointed the head of the OCA sculpture department in 1922. Hahn moved to Toronto from his native Germany in 1888. He studied at the Central Ontario School of Art and Design in Toronto and at the Kunstgewerbeshule and the Kunstakademie-und-Polytechnikum at Stuttgart. After teaching design and drama at the Central Technical School, he was hired by OCA in 1910. He began as an instructor of modelling. One of his most memorable works is *Head of Elizabeth Wyn Wood* (1928), a marble sculpture of his wife in the collection of the NAG. C. S. MacDonald, A Dictionary of Canadian Artists, vol. 2 (Ottawa 1967), 337-341.

⁶⁶ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 2, 3.

⁶⁷ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 2 file 6, Sherman and Grigor, "Interview," 3.

⁶⁸ The Munsell Colour System, introduced in The Munsell Book of Colour, is the most commonly used method for systematic colour measurement. It involves the systematic combining of specific pigments and dyes and organizing according to brilliance, saturation and hue. The Oxford Companion to Art (1970 reprint 1988), S.v. "Colour."

⁶⁹ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, T. 1, S. 1, 19-20.

⁷⁰ Ibid., T. 1, S. 2, 2.

classes with Emanuel "Manni" Hahn for only one or two terms. Hahn's teachings focused solely on modelling clay, often of small figures and did not include carving techniques. She found Hahn "competent" but "not very imaginative about his work or young people."⁷¹ A.Y. Jackson, another life-time friend, taught Norah still-life painting. This was usually with a studio setup; they never worked with figures or outdoors.⁷² J.E.H. MacDonald, McCullough characterized as "a sympathetic and nice man" who taught students how to make a "nice page using design and text."⁷³

Arthur Lismer, the Vice-principal of the college,⁷⁴ was Norah McCullough's favourite instructor as he was for many of the art college students. Lismer had a remarkable ability to communicate with his young students.⁷⁵ Boundless energy, enthusiasm, intellectual curiosity and an interest in new ideas characterized Lismer's teaching style.⁷⁶ Yet, he also expected discipline.⁷⁷ He instigated many memorable student activities at the college. One such event was a student trip to the Albright Museum in Buffalo in 1924 where McCullough and her fellow

⁷¹ Ibid., 1-2.

⁷² Ibid., 2.

⁷³ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁴ Lismer accepted the position in August 1919. G. Kelly, Arthur Lismer: Nova Scotia, 1916 - 1919 (Halifax 1982), 30-31.

⁷⁵ Darroch, Bright Land, 83. "Mr. Lismer had us in fits with his jokes (e.g. celery - sellery). He has a remarkable brain for seizing puns and can never resist them. But he fascinates me. I love to watch and listen to him talk." McCarthy, Paradise, 71.

⁷⁶ Darroch, Bright Land, 83.

⁷⁷ McLeish, September Gale, 101.

students saw Post-Impressionist paintings for the first time.⁷⁸ He also conducted lantern slide shows for the students⁷⁹ and organized highly popular and memorable historical pageants and costume theme balls.⁸⁰

At the college McCullough was active in a network of people who either were, or would become, the cultural elite of English Canadian society. There were sixty students in McCullough's year.⁸¹ Her schoolmates included later notable Canadian artists Carl Schaefer,⁸² Elizabeth Wyn Wood,⁸³ Charlie Goldhammer⁸⁴

⁷⁸ McCullough recalled they saw Gauguin and Sisley paintings and were "bowled over by the exhibition." NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 1, 8.

⁷⁹ OCA staff Charlie Goldhammer helped Lismer with these. NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 2, 6.

⁸⁰ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 2, 13. Three costume ball themes McCullough remembered were Medieval, Egyptian and the Order of Good Cheer. See also Darroch, Bright Land, 84.

⁸¹ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 2, file 6, Sherman and Grigor, "Interview," 2.

⁸² McCullough was in contact with the Schaefer family until her last years. Schaefer was a painter and watercolourist whose work showed affinities with American Regionalism painters. A frequent exhibitor at the Picture Loan Society, he was a member of the Canadian Group of Painters (hereafter CGP). He was the first Canadian artist to win a Guggenheim Fellowship. Reid, Concise, 182-84.

⁸³ A modernist sculptor, Wood studied at OCA and at the Arts Students' League in New York. Her public commissions include The Welland-Crowland War Memorial. She was an active member of numerous arts organizations including OSA, the Sculptors Society of Canada (SSC), Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (RCA) and The Canadian Arts Council (CAC). N. Luckyj, Visions and Victories, 84-91.

⁸⁴ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 2, 5. Goldhammer, RCA; Canadian Society of Graphic Artists (CSGA) hired as OCA staff in 1926, assisted Lismer at his lantern shows and was "awfully good natured" according to McCullough, Ibid. An official war artist, he later taught at the Central Technical School in Toronto for forty-two years. He was influenced by Lismer's teaching methods. See J. Murray, "Goldhammer, Charlie," The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985) and MacDonald, Dictionary, vol. 1, 289.

and Gordon Webber.⁸⁵ The class also included the Langmuir sisters, young women who were "typical" of Toronto's "social families."⁸⁶

During her years there, the student population at the college was predominantly female.

...the first thing that struck me was that the first year was full of girls, young women intending to get married, I suppose, and the parents of children who could not do things because of their backs or their legs⁸⁷ ...there were a lot more girls than men. The men were bent on careers and the women were filling in time.⁸⁸

The acquisition of a fine arts training for young women of the middle and upper classes was a training of genteel refinement that initially was considered to enhance their prospects as wives. The trend had been a part of British and North American society since the 1700s. It grew enormously in the late 1800s as wealthy and middle-class women in Canada found roles for themselves as artists, public patrons and "guardians" of culture, educators and interpreters⁸⁹ including women

⁸⁵ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 1, 19. A member of the CGP, Webber taught with Norah at the Children's Art Centre. He studied at the Chicago School of Design (1939-41) with Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and Gyorgy Kepes of the Bauhaus school. He later became a professor of Design at McGill School of Architecture in Montreal. Reid, *Concise*, 181.

⁸⁶ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 2 file 6, Sherman and Grigor, "Interview," 2.

⁸⁷ These students included those who lost the use of various limbs, through polio and other illnesses. "A lot of children with medical problems were shipped off to medical school because that was considered an appropriate kind of placement." NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 1, 6.

⁸⁸ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 1, 18.

⁸⁹ As Tippet describes, women were instrumental in the establishment of the Victoria College of Art in Halifax and the Winnipeg School of Art and the Winnipeg Art Gallery. In addition, while some preeminent associations such as the Royal Canadian Academy, either did not represent women, or outright excluded them on the basis of their sex, there were a number of art societies, which were founded by women, and whose membership was predominantly female. See Tippet, "Foundations," Chap. 11 in *Lady*. See also Tippet, "An Identity of Tastes and Aspirations:

employed from their homes as art journalists and as art teachers.⁹⁰

While Canadian statistics for females as a percentage of the university population in the field of fine and applied arts for the 1920s are not available, it is estimated to be 91.7% by 1930.⁹¹ The profile of student population, however, was not reflected in the faculty at the Ontario College of Art who were white, male and able-bodied. Although OCA began its first year of operation with Charlotte Schreiber, a noted painter of the period and the sole female artist member of the prestigious Royal Canadian Academy⁹², the representation of women as a ratio of faculty was astoundingly low in relationship to the ratio of the female student population.⁹³ Women staff during McCullough's attendance at the college included Yvonne McKague Housser⁹⁴, who worked as Lismer's assistant, overseeing students' work,⁹⁵ Miss Despard, a painter⁹⁶ and Grace Coombs, a "very

Educating Performers and Their Audience," Chap. 2 in Making Culture, 35-62; Sherman and Holcomb, Interpreters, 16-25.

⁹⁰ These arrangements increased women's income and allowed their work to be adjusted to the demands of family life. Tippet, Making Culture, 38. See also "Women Artists as Educators" in Luckyj, Visions and Victories, 21-22.

⁹¹ A. Prentice et al., Canadian Women: A History (Toronto 1988), 427.

⁹² Tippet, Lady, 39.

⁹³ A situation reflected in the majority of fine arts institutions of the time and one which persisted at OCA into the 1980s. See Tippet, Lady, 39-40.

⁹⁴ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans. T. 1, S. 1, 21. McKague studied at OCA (1921-22, 1924) and in Paris. She taught at OCA until 1946. She was involved with CGP, the Arts Students League and the AGT art education programme. Inspired by Lismer, she went with Isabel McLaughlin to Vienna in 1930 to study Child Art with Cizek. Reid, Concise 182. See also J. Murray, The Art of Yvonne McKague Housser (Oshawa 1995).

⁹⁵ McCarthy, Paradise, 72. See also Luckyj, Visions and Victories, 21.

good watercolourist."⁹⁷

Although McCullough's schoolmates included those women who were "bidding their time until marriage," with "no intention of carrying on a professional career,"⁹⁸ there were also "clever girls" at the college. These were women whom McCullough perceived as serious artists; young women who were ambitious and devoted to their work. Friends Edith Manning,⁹⁹ Ruth McNeil,¹⁰⁰ stained glass artist Yvonne Williams who was "marvellously informed"¹⁰¹ and sculptor Elizabeth Wyn Wood, were among these students.¹⁰²

⁹⁶ Amy Despard, graduated from OCA with an A.O.C.A and from the University of Toronto in Occupational Therapy (Bookbinding). She studied at the School of Fine and Applied Arts in New York and in Europe. At OCA she was the Assistant Instructor for the Department of Design and Applied Art and Interior Decoration and Elementary Art and Teacher Training from 1922 to 1933. She was the college librarian 1935-1952. OCA Prospectus 1922-33 and 1945-52. NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 1, 21.

⁹⁷ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 1, 21. See also McCarthy, Paradise, 69. E. Grace Coombs studied with Rebecca Edwards. She graduated from OCA in 1918 (A.O.C.A.). She taught at Edgehill College in Windsor, Nova Scotia and Havergal College in Toronto, before being hired as an Associate Instructor at OCA in 1921. She went to New York in 1929 and studied at the New York School of Applied Arts. She became a full instructor at the College in 1930. She was a book illustrator and muralist of Indian legends for the National Museum of Canada. MacDonald, Dictionary, vol. 1. She exhibited work in the *Canadian Section of Fine Arts* of the *British Empire Exhibition* in Wembley, England in 1925 and in *The Exposition d'art Canadien* at the Musée du Jeu de Paume, Paris in 1927. Luckyj, Visions and Victories, 103-104.

⁹⁸ According to McCullough they "were there to enjoy life a little, and to learn a little about art and painting and drawing." NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 1, 2. However the students with little talent didn't usually survive the first year. NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 2, file 6, Sherman and Grigor, "Interview," 2.

⁹⁹ Edith Manning Burnett was four years younger than Norah. "A very grave little girl and very talented." Manning studied at OCA and the Arts Student's League in New York. Palko, "McCullough Interviews, trans., T. June 22 1991, S. 2, 10-11 and 14-15.

¹⁰⁰ Ruth McNeil Austen. She later married Austen McNeil who replaced Roy Mitchell as director of Hart House when Mitchell left for New York. Ibid., T. 1, S. 1, 16.

¹⁰¹ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 2, 4.

¹⁰² Ibid., 14-15 and T. 1, S. 1, 19.

McCullough saw Wyn Wood often. Her single-minded professional zeal and her lack of interest in people held little appeal for McCullough. She described Wyn Wood as "not warm -- but ambitious," an artist who was "self-exclusive, not a mixer" and someone who was "not interested in the social side of the college." She was "a perfectionist," who was diligent, had a sense of superiority and "dazed" other students with her costumes for the annual theme balls. McCullough considered the experience of landscape to be one of constant change. Wyn Woods' fixed relief sculpture, to McCullough seemed to be "against nature" and "straining."¹⁰³

McCullough also mentioned Pegi Nicol. On a tobogganing holiday in Ottawa with Kenny Courtice¹⁰⁴ and George and Kay Pepper¹⁰⁵ she met Nicol. "Kay couldn't stand Pegi Nicol; called her an unabashed flirt." She (Kay) dismissed Nicol as a "wild girl." McCullough, however, was not offended by Nicol's behaviour and appreciated the artist's charismatic personality. She felt that Nicol

¹⁰³ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 2, 13-15. For a profile of Wood see Luckyj, Visions and Victories, 84-87.

¹⁰⁴ Rody Kenny Courtice was a member of the CGP (1937-48). Luckyj, Visions and Victories, Appendix III, 106-107. Courtice studied with Lismer at OCA and Roy Mitchell in Toronto and in New York, London and Paris. She worked as a child art educator with Lismer for ten years. Influenced by the Group of Seven and Hans Hoffman, her paintings were exhibited in group shows at the Tate Gallery in London and the Riverside Museum. MacDonald, Dictionary, vol. 1, 49-50.

¹⁰⁵ Graduates of OCA and members of CGP, Kay and George married in 1929. They travelled and painted extensively in Europe and Canada. Kay was best known for her still life and figure painting. After 1934 the couple lived for seventeen years in the famous Studio Building on Severn Street in Toronto. MacDonald, Dictionary, vol. 1. See also Housser, A Canadian Art Movement: The Story of The Group of Seven (Toronto 1926), 66. McCullough described George's work as "a good solid Group of Seven follower - not very inspired, but very competent." NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 2, 12-13.

had "always been a gifted and remarkable painter."¹⁰⁶

During her second year at the college McCullough immersed herself in Hart House Theatre¹⁰⁷ productions where she worked on sets and had small parts in a few of the productions.¹⁰⁸ Like OCA and the Art Gallery of Toronto, Hart House was a newly established cultural enterprise where many of Canada's future talents met.¹⁰⁹ It included Lismer, the Arts and Letters Players,¹¹⁰ and Roy Mitchell, the theatre's first director and an OCA instructor.¹¹¹

In the summer of 1924, prior to graduation from the art college, McCullough inherited a thousand dollars and went on a trip to England with school chum Kay Daly.¹¹² In England she saw little modern art or classical theatre. She was, however, exposed to a finely furnished mansion in Croyden and became

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* For a profile of Nicol see Luckyj, *Visions and Victory*, 58-60.

¹⁰⁷ University of Toronto theatre built in 1918 with monies from the Hart Massey Foundation. J. Lindsey, "Massey, Hart Almerrin," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (1985).

¹⁰⁸ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol., 6, file 2, Sherman and Grigor, "Interview," 3. See also M. L. Bridges, *A Border of Beauty* (Toronto 1977), 28.

¹⁰⁹ Productions included many notable figures including musician Harry Adaskin, actors Raymond Hart and Vincent Massey and playwrights Dora Mavor Moore and Herman Voaden. L. Conolly, "Theatre, English-Language," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (1985). Lismer worked on scenic design. See also McLeish, *September Gale*, 96-99, and Darroch, *Bright Land*, 114-116, and Tippet, *Making Culture*, 9.

¹¹⁰ The Players were part of the "Little Theatre" movement of Canada. They were established in 1905, an offshoot of the Arts and Letters Club, a club of male writers, patrons of the arts and artists and musicians. Productions were innovative and serious. McLeish, *September Gale*, 25-27.

¹¹¹ NGC, McCullough Papers, vol. 6, file 2, Sherman and Grigor, "Interview," 2. A native of Michigan, Mitchell graduated from the University of Toronto in 1906. Author of *Shakespeare for Community Players* (Toronto 1919), he later taught drama at New York University. W. S. Wallace, (ed.), and W. A. McKay, *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 4th rev. ed. (Toronto 1978), 582.

¹¹² Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. June 22, 1991, 1. Kay Daly Pepper. See entry on Kay and George Pepper.

interested in interior decoration.¹¹³ Back in Toronto, she pursued this interest. Norah and some other "very smart..., with it girls" from the college attended evening classes with Ross Stewart, a New York designer who had studied at Parson's School of Design.¹¹⁴ In 1925, McCullough completed the four year programme of the OCA and graduated with an Honours Diploma in Painting.¹¹⁵

The Toronto arts scene was exciting and involved many women students. By 1927, disgruntled OCA students were caught up in the activities of the Students Arts League located at 4 Grange Road. Started with the help of Edna Breithaupt, an OCA student, Theosophist and woman of "means," the independent school was established partially as a protest of Lismer's departure from the college.¹¹⁶ Four years older than the ASL members, McCullough maintained peripheral involvement in the young artists' affiliation.¹¹⁷ She felt that there were several ambitious and dedicated woman artists in the ASL including Mary McKay,¹¹⁸ Tilly Cowan, Audrey Thomas¹¹⁹ and weaver Helen Cluff. Cowan

¹¹³ In London, plays she saw included ones by A. A. Milne and Bernard. She visited with her uncle, James Kerr-Lawson who lived in Chelsea in J. Turner's old studio and went to the Royal Museum. NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 1, 15-16 and T. June 22, 1991, S. 2, 10.

¹¹⁴ These included Janet Langlier and Dora Mann. *Ibid.*, T. 2, S. 1, 6-7.

¹¹⁵ Many students were not passed onto higher grades, having failed the challenging yearly exams. NAC, vol. 2, file 6, Sherman and Grigor, "Interview," 4. NAC, McCullough Papers, Biographical Notes, vol. 6, file 12, 1.

¹¹⁶ Darroch, Bright Land, 84. See also Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 1, 4.

¹¹⁷ "At lunch time I would nip down and have lunch there...see how things were going. We gave them the names of places to buy supplies and that sort of thing..." *Ibid.*, 1-2.

¹¹⁸ A student of Lismer at OCA, she exhibited with the OSA. McKay's art appeared in the Collingwood Enterprise Bulletin. MacDonald, Dictionary, vol. 3, 1036. "...an unfortunate child who

and Thomas later joined the education staff at the Art Gallery of Toronto.¹²⁰

Lismer assisted in securing visiting lecturers for the League from local and international circles. Local celebrities included Dr. Frederick Banting, the co-discoverer of insulin¹²¹ and a friend of A. Y. Jackson,¹²² and writer Fred Housser¹²³ who "talked about The Group of Seven and their philosophy." Lawren Harris and A.Y. Jackson were also invited speakers as were Toronto sculptors Florence Wyle¹²⁴ and Frances Loring.¹²⁵ Wyle, according to McCullough, was "solemn and

had polio, she painted right to the end of her life." NAC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans. T. 2, S. 1, 2.

¹¹⁹ According to McCullough, Taylor left OCA to join ASL without completing her degree. She was, "taken under Lismer's wing. He took her to Ottawa...made a position for her in Montreal." In Toronto she initially "did joe jobs with Erma Sutcliffe and Dorothy Medhurst." NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 2, 11. Taylor exhibited with the CGP in 1936. Luckyj, Visions and Victories, Appendix III, 106-107.

¹²⁰ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 1, 1-2.

¹²¹ M. Bliss, "Banting, Sir Frederick Grant," in The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985).

¹²² Banting was an amateur artist and a member of the Arts and Letters Club. MacDonald, Dictionary, vol. 1, 21-22. He was also known to other OCA alumni. Norah's sister Dorothy, a doctor, interned with Banting. Her AGT colleague Gordon Webber had his leg operated on by Banting. NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 1, 7.

¹²³ Writer and critic, his book A Canadian Art Movement: The Story of the Group of Seven (1926), explained the philosophy of the Group. Housser was the husband of Bess Housser and later Yvonne McKague Housser. MacDonald, Dictionary, vol. 1, 473.

¹²⁴ Wyle created *Head of Norah McCullough*, showing McCullough at twenty-four years of age. NAC, Photography Division, Norah McCullough Files, 1992-G-1-9. Wyle studied at the University of Illinois and the Chicago Art Institute. Her first public commission was from the Canadian War Office Records for which she executed nine bronzes. She exhibited with the OSA and RCA and participated in Wembley exhibitions in England in 1924 and 25. Luckyj, Visions and Victories, 92-101; see also the following footnote.

¹²⁵ Loring executed war memorials in Galt, Ontario, St. Stephen's New Brunswick and at Osgoode Hall in Toronto. A founding member of the SSC, she exhibited with the RCA and the OSA. Loring studied in Geneva, Munich and Paris and at the Chicago Institute and the Boston Academy of Fine Arts. In 1913 she moved to Toronto with Florence Wyle with whom she lived. Their studio home on Glenrose Avenue was a meeting place for Toronto artists, musicians and

preachy," "took herself very seriously" and had "no sense of humour." In contrast, Frances Loring, McCullough recollected as "fun." Other speakers included "people who talked about the New York scene,"¹²⁶ actors and Toronto librarian Mary Baldwin.¹²⁷

International speakers included Rockwell Kent¹²⁸, the American Symbolist painter and the Russian anarchist Emma Goldman.¹²⁹ Goldman's visit, well attended by the press and public, was described with droll humour by McCullough:

She was a kind of questionable figure, you know, she was an activist and a very strong left-winger and full of ideas about social improvement and all that sort of thing. We were all interested in anything that was an improvement; everything that was new and sort of good for us. And Emma Goldman was a rather austere little woman - absolutely no nonsense about her: absolutely not a shred or dash or dot of humour, you know dead

writers. See. Luckyj, Visions and Victories, 49-57. For a full account see R. Sisler, The Girls (Toronto 1972).

¹²⁶ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 1, 9.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 10. Sister of Art Gallery of Toronto Chairman, Martin Baldwin. Libraries, like art galleries were part of the expansion of cultural institutions that occurred in Canada between the 1880s and 1920s. Over one hundred and twenty-five new libraries were built in Canada between 1901 and 1923 with the help of Carnegie grants. The Toronto Public library (1884), which Baldwin represented, "was the largest among the first libraries to choose free status;" a legislated innovation in public access established in 1882. S. Rothstein, "Libraries" in The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985).

¹²⁸ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 1, 8. For an excellent account on this artist see G. Kelly, Rockwell Kent: The Newfoundland Work (Halifax 1987).

¹²⁹ Goldman (1869-1940) emigrated to the United States from Russia in 1886. She published the paper Mother Earth with Alexander Berkman. A radical advocate of the working classes she was imprisoned for inciting a riot, publicly supporting birth control and opposing the draft. In 1921 she left Russia, where she had been deported to in 1919. She came to Toronto where she died in 1940. See The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia (1983), S.v. "Goldman, Emma"; The Canadian Encyclopedia, (1985), S.v. "Anarchism." See E. Goldman, Living My Life (New York 1931; reprint 1970) for a full account.

serious. And we were interested, but it was a solemn evening, so to speak.¹³⁰

After graduation McCullough became concerned with finding a way to support herself. She decided that she had neither the financial means nor the confidence necessary to paint full time. McCullough also felt she lacked the skills required for commercial art. Furthermore, painting was not a "respected profession,"¹³¹ and the thought of establishing herself as a portrait painter "floored her."¹³²

What do you do with a painting skill? A woman at that time? You know my family was not in any position either to set me up or to give me advice. They knew nothing about portrait painting or what one did, and I had never exhibited in a public place. I guess I was a little too timid to make any dramatic change. All the clever people who could draw like anything, who had special rapid skills were engaged by the advertising industry and the really witty ones went down to New York and got jobs down there and the rest of us did what we could.¹³³

For Norah McCullough, the issue of her own economic independence, as well as professional status, were concerns throughout her lifetime. Although few artists in Canada survived solely on income from their art,¹³⁴ economic independence was the measure by which McCullough deemed women artists as

¹³⁰ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 1, 9.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, T. 1, S. 1, 5.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 17.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, T. June 22 1991, S. 2, 8.

¹³⁴ Few women artists in Canada during this time made their income solely from their art. Most supplemented their income through teaching. See Luckyj, *Visions and Victories*, 21-23.

truly "professional" and "serious."¹³⁵

The period in which Norah McCullough entered the workforce was one of significant change for the social, legal and economic emancipation of women in Canada. There were increased educational opportunities for women,¹³⁶ and increased participation in the labour force.¹³⁷ Dress and moral codes were liberalized. The 1920s was a time of the "new" woman who was more physically active, bobbed her hair, wore briefer, less constricting clothing¹³⁸ and, for those who could afford it, drove a car.¹³⁹ Changing attitudes in the post World War I period led to new legislation that increased women's rights. The majority of Canadian women were first given the vote on the federal level in 1917.¹⁴⁰ In Ontario, the Minimum Wages Act for working women was introduced in 1920,¹⁴¹

¹³⁵ For a discussion of the status of women artists see G. Pollock, "Women, Art and Ideology: Questions for Feminist Art Historians," Woman's Art Journal (Spring/Summer, 1983), 39-47.

¹³⁶ M. Vipond, "The Image of Women in Mass Circulation Magazines in the 1920s," Chap. 7 in S.M. Trofimenkoff and A. Prentice (eds.), The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian History (Toronto 1977), 118.

¹³⁷ W. Roberts, "Rocking the Cradle for the World," in L. Kealey (ed.) A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880 -1920 (Toronto 1979).

¹³⁸ Strong-Boag, New Day, 14-15. See also A. Nesmith, "The Household Career: An Official View of Women's Role in the Labour Force in the 1930s." MA research essay (Ottawa 1976), 1-2.

¹³⁹ Both Norah and her sister had their own cars. McCullough's first car was a Chevrolet that she bought from a friend of A. Y. Jackson. "My father thought it a disgrace." NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans. T. June 22 1991, 14.

¹⁴⁰ The right to vote in federal elections was initially granted to female relatives of enlisted men 1917. Canadians who spoke an enemy language, who were naturalized after 1902, status and non-status Aboriginal and Inuit and Asian Canadians were excluded. J. C. Courtney, "Franchise," in The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985).

¹⁴¹ Careless, Ontario, 187.

while the practice of placing a lesser value upon women's labour remained.¹⁴²

McCullough's decision to seek a career reflects the paths of many young women in the 1920s. Between the end of century and the 1920s there was an expansion in the business world that created places for larger numbers of women in the workforce, particularly in the white collar sector.¹⁴³ Young women were, in many cases, encouraged to seek employment before marriage and to cease working once they did marry.¹⁴⁴ The majority of working women were young and single.¹⁴⁵ Work which was favoured for the female sex was that which was "light, clean and non-threatening to their womanhood."¹⁴⁶ Women's participation in the general Canadian workforce as record keepers, librarians, archivists, journalists and secretaries, teachers and nurses began to increase in the first decades of the twentieth century.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² In 1931 the average national wage for women was "as low as 44 per cent in manufacturing to 71 per cent in clerical." Bothwell et al., Canada 1900-1945, 256. See also "Equal Pay in the Canadian Scene," in Dept. of Labour Canada, Equal Pay for Equal Work: The Growth of An Idea (Ottawa 1959), 4-6.

¹⁴³ This change was related to the decline of the family-owned and operated businesses linked to changing market conditions. The "explosion of centralized business administration... generated entirely new work sectors. Between 1890... the clerking sector rose as a percentage of the labour force by 300 per cent." B. D. Palmer, About Canada: Work and Unions in Canada (Ottawa 1988), 12-13.

¹⁴⁴ M. Kinnear, In Subordination: Professional Women 1870 - 1970 (Montreal 1995). See also L'Espérance, Sphere, 53.

¹⁴⁵ There was a 36% increase in the number of employed women during the 1920s. By 1931 32% of single women over 10 were in the workforce, approximately half of these were between 20 and 24 years of age. See Vipond, "The Image of Women," 117.

¹⁴⁶ Prentice et al., Canadian Women, 220.

¹⁴⁷ L'Espérance, Sphere, 3. See also D. J. Wilson, " 'I am ready to be of assistance when I can': Lottie Brown and Rural Women Teachers in British Columbia," from Women Who Taught, A. Prentice and M. R. Theobald (eds.) (Toronto 1991), 206.

McCullough initially found a job writing for an advertising agency which she found "an awful bore," and quit.¹⁴⁸ She then went to work at Eaton's.¹⁴⁹ There, McCullough was employed as a personal shopper in interior design. A demanding job, she was "bullied a little bit," and was required to work long hours shopping for wealthy out-of-town clients and using her skills in interior design.¹⁵⁰ Seeing that there was no room for advancement, she left Eaton's and approached Lismer about doing work in the gallery library.¹⁵¹

Norah was a competent, energetic and astute person, well-suited to her future work. Yet other factors assisted her entry into the Art Gallery of Toronto and an arts administration career. Lismer's recommendation to Dr. Harold Tovell,¹⁵² that McCullough be hired to work in the gallery "to liven the place up"¹⁵³ was essential. It was also important that McCullough had the appropriate pedigree for the small, clubby Toronto social circles, with its shared cultural and class values. The fact that her father was a prominent physician with a public profile was no small advantage.

¹⁴⁸ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 1, 6.

¹⁴⁹ T. Eaton Co., "Canada's largest privately owned department store" at that time, located on Yonge Street in Toronto. J. L. Santink, "Eaton, Timothy," in The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985).

¹⁵⁰ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 1, 7-8.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 11.

¹⁵² Harold Murchison Tovell was the Chairman of the Education Committee of the Art Gallery of Toronto and the person responsible for Arthur Lismer's appointment. A prominent art collector he was married to Vincent Massey's sister, Ruth. Ibid., T. 4, S. 2, 4.

¹⁵³ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans. T. S. ,

... he [Lismer] introduced me to Tovell and Tovell looked me over. And you see, my father was a doctor and he knew who he was, you see. So Tovell gave me the green light to start working.¹⁵⁴

The gallery was established as the result of a long and determined campaign by the Ontario Society of Artists, to promote the advancement of both fine and applied arts in the province of Ontario. It fulfilled the society's objective to "erect buildings devoted to such arts, as a means to encourage public support for the visual arts."¹⁵⁵ The OSA goals included the establishment of both the art college and the gallery. However finding a suitable permanent location and raising funds for the construction of both buildings had taken years to come to fruition.

In 1903 Goldwin Smith¹⁵⁶ spoke with Sir Edmund Walker¹⁵⁷ about leaving the Grange, an elegant brick house built for D'Arcy Boulton Jr. in 1817,¹⁵⁸ to the Society. It was another eight years before the Museum came into possession of the property.¹⁵⁹ In 1919 the Art Museum of Toronto, as it was then named,

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., T. 2, S. 1, 11-12.

¹⁵⁵ Lowery, Art Gallery of Toronto, 51.

¹⁵⁶ An historian and journalist who had taught at Cornell and Oxford. T. Middlebro, "Smith, Goldwin" in The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985).

¹⁵⁷ Sir Edmund Byron Walker (1848-1924) a Liberal banker, he was advisor to the National Gallery of Canada. D. N. Sprague, "Walker, Sir Byron Edmund," in The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985).

¹⁵⁸ Situated on 40 hectares of land bordered by Queen Street and Bloor Street, the building showed "influence(s) of British classical architecture typical of grand colonial homes in the early 19th century." N. Clerk, "The Grange," in The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985).

¹⁵⁹ Lowery, Art Gallery of Toronto, 1-88.

finally moved into its Grange facilities.¹⁶⁰

McCullough described the Art Gallery of Toronto at the time of her 1927 entry:

You know it was dead as a doornail. The man who was running it was an English man, very proper. He was a little Uriah Heapish, always washing his hands, but he was a nice old boy... He was a sort of gentleman clerk... ...a very tame place...the sort of place one took old ladies to have tea...¹⁶¹

Despite McCullough's gloomy assessment, historical records suggest that the gallery had garnered significant and growing public support. Attendance grew steadily; in 1915 attendance at the gallery was 6,272¹⁶² and for the year 1924 was 40,545.¹⁶³ At the time of Norah's entry into the institution new renovations to the building had just been completed. Designed by Frank Darling, the addition of two new galleries and a sculpture court further expanded the gallery's exhibition area and were reflective of a thriving institution.¹⁶⁴ This was also evidenced by the lavish publicity campaign in honour of its 1926 opening.¹⁶⁵ Exhibitions included loan exhibitions from American and British galleries and institutions, annual OSA

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 52-53.

¹⁶¹ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 1, 11. McCullough may be referring to E. R. Greigg, hired in 1912 or his assistant who "acted as an attendant and typist." See Lowery, Art Gallery of Toronto, 60. Uriah Heap was a scheming and ingratiating character in the Charles Dickens novel David Copperfield (1850). The New American Desk Encyclopedia, S.v. "Dickens, Charles."

¹⁶² Lowery, Art Gallery of Toronto, 74.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 100.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 101-104.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 104. 1,200 members of the public were invited and the gallery overspent their budget by \$1,234.

exhibitions, works from the permanent collections and beginning in 1920 and continuing until 1931, annual exhibitions of works by the Group of Seven. In 1926 *Works by Contemporary Russian Artists* were shown and sculpture and drawings by Aristide Maillol. In 1927 the gallery hosted an exhibition of modern art sponsored by the Société Anonyme and modern paintings from India and a selected group of European modern sculpture.¹⁶⁶

Support for the gallery came from Toronto's elite. In 1920 Dr. James MacCallum, a Toronto dentist and patron of the Group of Seven¹⁶⁷ was a member of the Exhibition Committee. H. H. Fudger, a prominent businessman, financed the gallery renovations.¹⁶⁸ In 1927 Vincent Massey, the future Governor General of Canada and head of the important Royal Commission on the Arts, Letters and Sciences, was the Honorary President of the board¹⁶⁹ and R. Y. Eaton was its President.¹⁷⁰ Martin Baldwin, an Architect and member of the Arts and Letters

¹⁶⁶ K. McKenzie and L. Pfaff, "The Art Gallery of Ontario: Sixty Years of Exhibitions, 1906-1966," RACAR, VII (1980), 62-91.

¹⁶⁷ MacCallum was a patron of the Group of Seven and Tom Thomson, welcoming the painters to his Georgian Bay cottage, where they painted their most memorable works. See "Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven 1913 -1931," Chap. 10 in Reid, Concise, 138-155. See also Housser, Art Movement, 38-39.

¹⁶⁸ Lowery, Art Gallery of Toronto, 102-103.

¹⁶⁹ The Masseys, one of the wealthiest families in Toronto, were major patrons of the arts in the city and at the gallery. In 1918 C. D. Massey donated \$25,000 to the gallery. Lowery, Art Gallery of Toronto, 91. For a general profile of the family see The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985), S.v. "Massey, Charles Vincent".

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 114 -115.

Club, was its Curator from 1932 to 1947.¹⁷¹

Norah McCullough's first job at the gallery was to catalogue facsimile prints of European masterworks¹⁷² Dr. Tovell had donated to the gallery.¹⁷³ The job lasted four or five months. Training was improvised. McCullough worked from ten to four in The Print Room.¹⁷⁴ Kathleen Fenwick¹⁷⁵ told Norah about books on the subject of museum cataloguing and registration and McCullough "read an awful lot of books" on these subjects. Using an old typewriter of her father's, McCullough sat on the bathroom floor and taught herself to type up catalogue cards.¹⁷⁶

In art institutions administration and curatorial positions were primarily held by men during this period. Women made their entry into galleries and museums through positions of lesser status, such as registrars of prints and

¹⁷¹ B. M. Greene and G. W. Stratton, Who's Who in Canada (Registered) Including the British Possessions in the Western Hemisphere 1960-61: An Illustrated Biographical Record of Men and Women of the Time (Toronto 1961), 447.

¹⁷² Ibid., 114.

¹⁷³ The prints were another aspect of the gallery's public education programme. Along with some Canadian contemporary art prints, they would become "the first loan exhibition offered to schools, libraries and similar institutions in Toronto." NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 7, file 45, 2. See also Lowery, Art Gallery of Toronto, 138-39.

¹⁷⁴ She described the print room as a "cupboard under the skylight." NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 1, 12.

¹⁷⁵ Fenwick, a contemporary whose career paralleled McCullough's, later joined the staff of the National Gallery of Canada as the Curator of Prints and Drawings; In conversation with Prof. N. Luckyj, Carleton University, Ottawa, 1994; see J. S. Boggs, The National Gallery of Canada (Toronto 1971).

¹⁷⁶ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 1, S. 1, 12.

drawings and librarians.¹⁷⁷ This work had the attraction of being a clean white collar occupation that was respectable, genteel and required educated women.¹⁷⁸ It also offered the possibility of some professional mobility. These jobs were practical, safe, and for the most part, undervalued. They made use of a woman's fine arts education without subjecting her to the insecurity of making a living as an unsubsidized artist in pre-Canada Council Canada. At the same time, they were supportive positions, without the prestige or equal economic remuneration of male-dominated positions, that contributed to the proper management of the institutions.

After completing the cataloguing work, Lismer offered McCullough a position as his assistant. A few of Lismer's former students, graduates from the Ontario College of Art and others were also hired to work in the creative and ground breaking program. Like McCullough, Lismer's staff were intelligent, creative and enthusiastic adults in their early twenties -- and the majority were women.¹⁷⁹ Together with McCullough they formed a warm, dedicated and

¹⁷⁷ Tippet, *Lady*, 40-41. See also Sherman and Holcomb, *Interpreters*, 47-53. Interestingly McCullough had originally approached Lismer about work in the gallery's library. NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 1, 11.

¹⁷⁸ "Genteel professions" were preferred. Strong-Boag, *New Day*, 21. See also Sherman and Holcomb, *Interpreters*, 48.

¹⁷⁹ Aside from Gordon Webber, the other male mentioned was Mr. Mulock. Norah described him as a "sophisticated" friend of Webber's who "helped us for a couple of winters." "Well-to-do, he was related to Cawthra Mulock who owned, with others, the Royal Alex Theatre. Mulock helped the group for "a couple of winters," contributing his knowledge of other cultures to the theme pageants. For a pageant on Indonesia he showed them how the people danced. NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 2, 9. M. A. Wagner, "The Royal Alexandra Theatre" in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (1985).

idealistic coterie of art teachers who felt themselves to be part of an exciting pioneering movement. Many went on to become well-known art teachers, some taught and influenced future well known Canadian artists.¹⁸⁰ Most were connected to a larger circle of Toronto intelligentsia or the cultural scene.¹⁸¹

The AGT educational staff¹⁸² included Gordon Webber, Erma Lennox Sutcliff,¹⁸³ Ethel Curry,¹⁸⁴ Dorothy (Dot) Medhurst,¹⁸⁵ Audrey Taylor, Tillie Cowen, Gwen Kidd¹⁸⁶, Helen Kemp¹⁸⁷, Grace Saunders¹⁸⁸ Freda Pepper¹⁸⁹ and

¹⁸⁰ Former students included Aba Bayefsky, Paul Duval, John Hall, William Withrow and James Houston. Darroch, Bright Land, 88 and 126.

¹⁸¹ Another painter and teacher influenced by Lismar and Child Art was Anne Savage who visited in 1925. See Anne Savage: Story of A Canadian Painter (Montreal 1977), 43.

¹⁸² These are most frequently cited by McCullough and others. The staff was initially a group of five, but by the tenth year had grown to twenty-five. Most were part-time. D. McCarthy wrote that she worked at the programme yet McCullough does not mention her. NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, T. 2, S. 2, 1 and 7. "...teachers came and went..." The programme began in 1928-29 with Courtice, Cowan, Taylor, Curry and Saunders. NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 7, file 45, untitled article, 3-5.

¹⁸³ Lennox was an OCA scholarship student of Lismar's. In 1940 she was the director of the Children's Art Centre. In 1942 she was the Vice-principal of the AGT Education Department under Dorothy Medhurst. In the same year she initiated "The Leader's Course," a wartime effort in response to the growing recreational needs of children of working parents. She was at AGT until 1947. Yanover, Celebration, 13-32. A member of the CGP, she exhibited in the 1939 New York World's Fair. See Luckyj, Visions and Victories, 104-105.

¹⁸⁴ A native of Haliburton, she painted landscapes. She later taught for the Northern Vocational School. R. Sisler, Art for Enlightenment: A History of Art in Toronto Schools (Toronto 1993), 107-108.

¹⁸⁵ Medhurst studied at Toronto's Central Technical School. She was fifteen years old when she started as an AGT "gopher" in 1930. She worked as a teacher from 1931 until the programme's decline in 1946. S. Yanover, The Gallery School 1930 - 1980: A Celebration (Toronto 1980), 13 and 32.

¹⁸⁶ "... very helpful, a friend of Margery Lismar [Lismar's daughter]...They had been to Victoria College together. Gwen was a trained librarian and she also had her education in England. She was an awfully bright woman..." NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 2, 10.

Rody Kenny Courtice. In 1930, Margaret Wilson,¹⁹⁰ from the Toronto Board of Education became a familiar figure to the Education Division.

At the gallery Lismer created a unique atmosphere that he and the young staff thrived in. Based on his own philosophy and the progressive ideas of his time, Lismer embraced a democratic theory of individual expression and excitement for the new with an expectation of discipline and hard work. His methods reflected the social and political ideas of the time. These ideas were about:

¹⁸⁷ Kemp, a person of "wit and personality," studied Art History at Victoria College in Toronto (1937) and at the Courtauld Institute in London, England (1935). Hired as an educational lecturer she also assisted McCullough. In the 1930s she was a contributing and later the art editor for The Canadian Forum and The Star Weekly. Her father, Stanley Kemp was a commercial artist who had worked at Grip and was acquainted with members of the Group of Seven. Her mother was friends with Esther Lismer. In 1937 she married Canadian literary critic and scholar, Northrop Frye. See J. Adamson, Northrop Frye: A Visionary Life (Toronto 1993), 34-37 and J. Ayre, Northrop Frye: A Biography (Toronto 1989), 391-393. "She was a university graduate and she had a better knowledge of history...she used to give these talks to people in the gallery...she had quite a following..." NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 2, 7-8. McCullough saw Kemp and Frye frequently as Frye "...was courting Helen when she was working for me." Ibid., 7.

¹⁸⁸ A retired kindergarten teacher who taught the youngest children. "Grace was a most kindly woman but her ideas of Child Art seemed to the younger teachers, old-fashioned." NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 7, file 45, untitled article on Lismer, 1982, 5.

¹⁸⁹ In 1930 Pepper replaced Saunders. She studied in New York in 1932. She remained at AGT "...until she was whisked away by Mrs. Edsel Ford to start a Child Art centre in Detroit." NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 7, file 45, untitled article on Lismer, 5. She initiated many classes for children with special needs. These included children with Albinism, polio and mental disabilities. NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 1, 3.

¹⁹⁰ Appointed by the Toronto Board of Education she toured four public school classes a day "...a pretty heavy programme, but she did it quite well." "[T]o us she was not exactly young, she was heavily made up...her hair was dipped, too. we were all at the time sort of fresh faced and shiny clean. It was not that we disapproved, but she was a bit of an odd ball out, but we all got along well together." Ibid., T. 2, S. 2, 6. See also Lowery, Art Gallery of Toronto, 138.

...letting young people have a voice in things, and it was socialist in a way, I suppose, you know at least democratic. You know, that these divisions between young and the old were breaking down and methods that were outmoded were crumbling and being questioned and we had a sort of hand in that, you know we were trying out new things all the time.¹⁹¹

Lismer fostered a strong apprentice - mentor. McCullough's training involved listening and observation, as Lismer "disliked any kind of methodology that reflected teacher training systems..." For example, Lismer did not allow students to take notes during staff sessions held after the Saturday morning classes. Direct hands-on experience and involvement were intrinsic to the experience. With the other staff, McCullough worked on Saturdays from 8:30 to one o'clock, with as many as five hundred students. These sessions she described as, "arduous even for the young staff."¹⁹² Once McCullough started to work at the gallery, the pursuit of painting became impossible as the job "became very demanding."¹⁹³

The young teachers learned the method of constantly examining the process. Questions asked included "Did the classes go well? As we planned? Were their changes in the project made by the children? If so, what had we learned?"¹⁹⁴

Initially, McCullough had not considered teaching as a career. "You know,

¹⁹¹ NAC, Norah McCullough Papers, vol. 7, file 45, untitled article on Lismer, 1.

¹⁹² Ibid., 5.

¹⁹³ "After I got immersed in all this Child Art business, I didn't have time or energy to draw or paint, and anyway I wasn't all that skilled." NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. June 22, 1991, 8.

¹⁹⁴ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 7, file 45, untitled article on Lismer, 5.

the idea of my teaching art somewhere never occurred to me."¹⁹⁵ Yet for the majority of middle class women teaching was the first choice of profession.¹⁹⁶ Since the late 1800s a feminization of the teaching profession in Canada had been occurring.¹⁹⁷ Women were considered as suitable teachers of younger children because of an assumed ability as both "natural educators" and "assistants to men." As Clifford states: "...teaching was argued for as within women's sphere -- an extension of the natural role as the child's first and most important education."¹⁹⁸ Considering the high number of women graduates from art colleges and the availability of teaching as a career as socially acceptable for women during this period, the development of the Child Art field and arts interpretation as a career site for women¹⁹⁹ was a predictable development of these sociological trends.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁵ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. June 22 1991, S. 2, 8. While Norah's work throughout the majority of her career was as an interpreter of the arts, she described herself as an "educationist," saying she was not a proper teacher as such, but felt it was an honour to be associated with the teaching profession." See NGC, NM File, vol. 3, "Guest lecturer on National Gallery Thursday May 18," Wadena Saskatchewan News, 18 May 1961.

¹⁹⁶ In the 1920s secretarial work, teaching and journalism, were the job preference of female graduates of McGill, Queens and the University of Toronto. Strong-Boag, New Day, 25. Before World War II "professionals" were understood to include university teachers, physicians, lawyers, school teachers and nurses. See Kinnear, In Subordination, 22.

¹⁹⁷ A. Prentice, "The Feminization of Teaching," Chap. 3 in S. Mann Trofimenkoff and A. Prentice and M. Theobald (eds.), The Neglected Majority, 49-65.

¹⁹⁸ G. J. Clifford, "Daughters into Teachers," in A. Prentice and M. R. Theobald (eds.), Women Who Taught (Toronto, Buffalo and London, 1991), 115-131.

¹⁹⁹ For a discussion of the status of women as art educators, see M. A. Stankiewicz, "A Generation of Art Educators," 205-212, in Wilson et al., The History of Art Education: Proceedings of the Penn State Conference (University Park, Pa. 1985) and M. A. Stankiewicz and E. Zimmerman "Women's Achievements in Art Education," in G. Collins and R. Sandell, Women, Art and Education (Reston, Vir. 1984), 113-128.

²⁰⁰ Sherman and Holcomb, "Social and Cultural Conditions of Women's Involvement with the Visual Arts," in Interpreters, 16-21. For an account of women artists as teachers in Canada see

Norah McCullough possessed many personal qualities which made her an effective public educator. Her ability to communicate clearly and effectively, her high level of energy, her elegant manners²⁰¹ and her interest in aesthetics, people and progressive ideas were important to her profession. She was by degrees, charismatic, clearheaded, no-nonsense and gracious with a sense of humour. She was "an excellent leader." disciplined and hardworking with a professional manner. Highly sociable, McCullough possessed the innate ability to interact with people in a lively and genuinely engaged manner. She was also someone who was "icy-cold to anything fake or unfair, has strong convictions, but an extraordinary ability to sympathize with persons who hold different views."²⁰² However, it was her interest in things that weren't "stuffy" but were "forward thinking and open-minded" that led to her enthusiastic embrace of the educational gospel of Arthur Lismer.²⁰³

Lismer's programme was built upon the tenets of the Child Art Movement, a liberal educational movement which greatly influenced the education programmes of cultural institutions and school art programmes in North America

Luckyj, Visions and Victories, 21-23 and Tippet, Lady, 64.

²⁰¹ Pearl McCarthy wrote "she was a very interesting child whose manners were as impeccably conservative as her mind was independent." NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 7, file 52, P. McCarthy, "Miss Norah McCullough Goes to South Africa," The Globe & Mail (1938), 48. She was described as "elegant as stainless steel." NGC, NM File, vol. 3, J. Lowndes, "Woman in the Ne[ws]: A Seeing Eye of Art in the West," Vancouver Province, 3 March 1967. Her manners were likely an important asset for her work in cultural institutions, where she encountered members and patrons from similar backgrounds as her own.

²⁰² NGC, NM File, vol. 7, file 52, McCarthy, "Miss Norah McCullough," 48.

²⁰³ "...what set Norah apart from the other girls of Bishop Strachan, "was her interest in progressive or forward-thinking ideas, of the kind held by Arthur Lismer, Norah's life-long mentor and friend." NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 2, file 14, McCarthy, "Leavening," 10.

during the first three decades of the Twentieth Century.²⁰⁴ Child Art teaching was built upon the recognition of children's essential humanness and individuality and was intended to challenge the conditions that denied these qualities. The roots of this philosophy can be traced to eighteenth-century European pedagogical movements and social thought. The idea of childhood as an experience separate from that of the adult world, was, in the Western context, introduced by Rousseau in his work Emile of 1762. Rousseau introduced the idea of "four stages of education based on the child's inborn predisposition." Physical activity and expression also formed part of the new pedagogy which dictated "exercise the limbs, senses and organs which are the instrument of the intellect." Formal teaching practice was therefore to be substituted by "directed activities, for example, visual perception should be developed by exercises in judging distance." Rousseau dictated that in drawing "the child must learn from nature."²⁰⁵ Later, continental educators such as Basedon, Pestalozzi and others adopted Rousseau's core idea that "children needed a special education suited to their nature and development."²⁰⁶ They built upon this concept in constructing their own pedagogies. These ideas also influenced art educators such as British teachers Marion Richardson and the Viennese art educator Cizek who insisted that child

²⁰⁴ R. Ott, "Art Education in Museums: Art Teachers as Pioneers in Museum Education" in Wilson et al. (eds.), The History of Art Education: Proceedings from the Penn State Conference (University Park, Pa. 1985), 286-294.

²⁰⁵ S. MacDonald, The History and Philosophy of Art Education (London 1970), 320.

²⁰⁶ See "The Recognition of Child Art," Chap. 13, 320-358, in S. MacDonald, Art Education. See also M. Gillett, A History of Education: Thought and Practice (Toronto 1966).

art be isolated from the interference of adults. Universal access to art education was an issue of Child Art that was nourished by the humanitarian ideas of British thinkers such as John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, the Utilitarian, who felt that "education should bring happiness to the greatest number."²⁰⁷ Other developments in the late 1800s, including the birth of psychology, anthropology, a public interest in "primitive" art and the birth of a modern aesthetic contributed to the public appeal of the Child Art Movement. The birth of these various disciplines also led the development of racial-based racist theories that drew comparisons between children's art and the material culture of native societies at the turn of the century.²⁰⁸

In the 1920s and 1930s in an increasingly faceless, industrialized and secularized society art was bequeathed a moral and civic purpose. The democratization of institutions was followed by the democratization of education and cultural values with the purpose of moulding a better, more "enlightened" citizenship.²⁰⁹ During the post World War I period, in a climate pervaded by a fear of fascism, Child Art was promoted by educators as a modern and democratic pedagogy that would counter the rise of a totalitarian state.²¹⁰ Practically, the

²⁰⁷ MacDonald, "Child Art," 320-358.

²⁰⁸ J. A. Leeds, "The History of Attitudes Towards Children's Art," Studies in Art Education, 30 (1989), 93-103.

²⁰⁹ K. Freedman and T. S. Popkewitz, "Art Education and the Development of the Academy: The Ideological Origins of Curriculum Theory," 19-27, in Wilson et al., The History of Art Education.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

Child Art approach brought a dramatic change to the classroom. Rigid and authoritarian teacher-dominated classrooms that emphasized placid copying as art were transformed to active child-centred environments. Under the influence of educators such as John Dewey,²¹¹ formalized drills were replaced with less authoritarian methods, such as attempts to make lessons more meaningful and an integrated understanding of individual differences in students.²¹² Movement in the classroom was encouraged, as physical as well mental expression was emphasized as it was believed that "the active child was the learning child."²¹³

Lismer was impressed and influenced by the work of Cizek and Dewey. In 1927 he organized an exhibition of the work with Cizek's students at the Art Gallery of Toronto.²¹⁴ Like Cizek, he stressed the non-interference of adults in the children's art.

Lismer assumed both a redemptive and socially constructive quality inherent in culture generally and in art education in particular and conveyed his ideas in his own evangelical style. A member of the Unitarian church and the Theosophists Society, Lismer was exposed to progressive and liberal thinking of

²¹¹ Dewey was an American philosopher whose ideas influenced North American public schools after the 1930s. He taught at the Teachers College of Columbia University, where Lismer taught in (1938-39). Dewey was also a member of the Progressive Educators group to which Lismer belonged and attended many of the same conferences. The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia (1983), S.v. "Dewey, John." See also McLeish, September Gale, 145.

²¹² Gillett, Education, 251.

²¹³ H. Rugg, "The New Psychology and the Child-Centred School," from Education for Complete Living: The Challenge of Today, 587.

²¹⁴ McLeish, September Gale, 119-144.

his time.²¹⁵ He combined the ideas of Child Art education with the concept of a populist or democratic approach and the western premise of art as an ennobling and spiritually uplifting activity. Art was considered to be a great leveller; the "rightful heritage" of all people regardless of age, class or race.²¹⁶

It re-interprets the song of the bird, the budding of the leaf, the suffering and poignance of men and nations. It gives religion an outward form of beauty and an inner side of warmth. It forms in the mind the understanding and sympathies with other peoples everywhere. It seeks to illuminate in every individual something of the cosmic divination and ordering of the stars in their courses and the way of rivers seeking the ocean. It eliminates hatred and class consciousness. It is against racial prejudice because art is the truest barometer of human change of ideals and purpose.²¹⁷

Amongst her papers Norah McCullough kept typescript versions of Lismer's "The Teaching of Art," and "Education for Art for Children and Adults." In these seminal essays three fundamental ideas of Lismer's philosophy are illuminated. The first is the relationship of art, aesthetic and the "masses" in an industrialized world. Lismer felt that good taste was universal, existing outside of class and culture. He believed that the "common experience of art" need not be confined to paintings, but could and should be applied to every aspect of life. Lismer believed that through art education the lives of ordinary people in industrial society would be improved. Lismer wrote:

²¹⁵ H. Pearce, "Arthur Lismer: Art Educator with a Social Conscience," Chap. 13 in Wilson et al. (eds.), The History of Art Education: Proceedings From the Second Penn State Conference (University Park, Pa. 1988), 85-88.

²¹⁶ Kelly, Lismer In Nova Scotia, 35.

²¹⁷ A. Lismer, "Education Through Art," in K. S. Cunningham (ed.), Education for Complete Living: The Challenge of Today (Melbourne 1938), 385.

the ultimate aim of all teaching is the encouragement of higher standards of living...bad slums, vicious spectacles and shoddy entertainment, industrial pollution of the country side... are for the common man to live with and tolerate without any understanding of taste and beauty and a social consciousness of their evil effects on human beings.²¹⁸

Lismer strove to make cultural institutions truly accessible and thus, democratic.

If we believe in the ideals of democracy, we must fight with the only reliable weapons available to common man -- the tools of learning and the keys to the treasure house.²¹⁹

He also emphasized that public access to art and art education must be established for all people.

...it is essential to have children from all ages up to 14 years of age, from different stratas, different nationalities, varied physical and mental capabilities and opportunities.²²⁰

The Child Art programme had a pronounced effect on the relationship between Toronto's public and the art gallery. It resulted in dramatically increased attendance to the gallery and increased public awareness of art during the depression years.²²¹ Although art classes had been conducted prior to Lismer's hiring, these had been restricted to the children of members. Maddened and inspired by the narrow range of cliental, Lismer insisted that the classes be open

²¹⁸ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 2, file 30, A. Lismer, "The Teaching of Art," 400.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ A. Lismer, Education Through Art For Children and Adults at the Art Gallery of Toronto (Toronto 1936), 1.

²²¹ Yanover, A Celebration, 16. With the stock market crash in 1929 Canada entered an economic depression. Produce prices in 1931 fell 50% and in the mid 1930s bread lines and joblines were "a common sight in Ontario towns," with hundreds of thousands of families living on government relief. Careless, Ontario, 238.

to children from across the city, based on their interest.²²² In 1926, 30,000 pamphlets announcing the art educational programme were sent out to schools across the city of Toronto.²²³ In 1931 the enrollment for the Saturday Morning classes was 650.²²⁴ By 1930 the Educational programme, which included the Child Art programme and programmes for adults had drawn 40,000 adults and children to the gallery.²²⁵ For adults this included classes for the unemployed and working class men and women.²²⁶ The Child Art programme specifically drew 12,000 children²²⁷ of various class, ethnic, racial and disability groups during its first ten years.²²⁸ The programme was so successful, it influenced the establishment of similar programmes at the other major galleries in Canada and elsewhere.²²⁹ Exhibitions of children's art were circulated in Canada, the United States and abroad.²³⁰ On the international front, Lismer's work and the Art Gallery

²²² NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 1, 10. Lowery, Art Gallery of Toronto, 138.

²²³ Lowery, Art Gallery of Toronto, 114.

²²⁴ Yanover, A Celebration, 18.

²²⁵ Ibid., 139.

²²⁶ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 1, 4.

²²⁷ McLeish, September Gale, 151.

²²⁸ Yanover, A Celebration, 18

²²⁹ Ibid., 20-21. See also NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 7, file 45, untitled article on Lismer, 1982, 3.

²³⁰ *AGT Child Art Exhibition* (Toronto 1933); *New Educational Fellowship Conferences* (Nice 1932, Cape Town and Johannesburg, 1934); *Pictures of Children* (Ottawa, NGC, 1938) which toured Montreal, Quebec, Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Vancouver and showed the work from eleven art centres; *The International Exhibition of Child Art* (New York, 1935); *Ontario Education Association Exhibition* (Toronto, AGT, 1937) which represented the work of seventeen

programme was garnering the attention of progressive educators from around the world. Lismer and his programmes received financial support from the Carnegie Corporation and requests for public appearances. In 1932 Lismer was invited to speak at the 6th World Conference of the New Education Fellowship in Nice, France.²³¹ In 1933, in a depression economy the education programme received \$10,000 from the Carnegie Foundation.²³² With this money Lismer expanded and founded the Child Art Centre, in a separate building at 4 Grange Road.²³³ Here, Lismer's ideas attracted the attention of Dr. Earnest Malherbe, the Carnegie Foundation educational representative in South Africa who invited Lismer to a new regional new education conference in Cape Town in 1934. In 1936 Lismer was invited on an extended lecture tour of South Africa. In 1937 Lismer was invited to the protectorate of Basutoland, where on duty for the British High Commissioner, he met and spoke with Black African teachers.²³⁴

During Lismer's absences in 1936 and 1937, Norah McCullough became the Acting Education Supervisor for a period of eighteen months.²³⁵ McCullough's

centres. McLeish, September Gale, 140-141, 152, 157-59.

²³¹ McLeish, September Gale, 158.

²³² Carnegie funding for the programme continued throughout McCullough's employment. The AGT Education department received \$10,000 again in 1934-35 and 1935-36; in 1936-37 the programme received \$8,000, 1937-38 it received \$6,000. Yanover, A Celebration, 21.

²³³ Ibid., 16-17.

²³⁴ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 1, file 34, letter from Lismer to McCullough, 3 December, 1936. See also McLeish, September Gale, 158-59. Funding for South African lectures came also from provincial and federal education departments and neighbouring Protectorates. McCullough, Arthur Lismer Watercolours (1987), 1.

²³⁵ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 7, file 45, untitled article on Lismer, 1982, 5.

letters to Lismer during his absence, dutifully full of the minutiae of running the programme,²³⁶ also contained wry accounts of her life and the art world.

Frequently humorous, they also give insight into McCullough's supervisory style of the staff, who were both her friends and peers and narrate the story of her professional development and her relationship to Lismer.

Dear Mr. Lismer, Your last letter arrived on the 21st - very close reckoning on your part. I am beginning to appreciate you more and more now that I have to do some real planning and thinking... I am enjoying life and have a swelled head !²³⁷

Her warm praise of the skills and intelligence of the young women she worked with reflect the affection she felt for "the Gang." "I have a good gang on hand and everything is in order."²³⁸ Referring to her new secretary, Jean Lennox,²³⁹ McCullough wrote: "[she] is an intelligent, bright girl and enthusiastic about the gallery."²⁴⁰ In the same letter she described Dorothy Medhurst: "She is growing into a particularly swell person."²⁴¹ "Helen is a brick and working hard...Helen is a bit wan on account of Norrie leaving for Oxford & away for two

²³⁶ Her duties included contacting school teachers and librarians. Staff supervision and administrative tasks, including meeting with the educational committee and board. She also conducted tours for the public, gave talks on art and worked on the production of publications and exhibitions. *Ibid.*, 3

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, file 8, N. McCullough to A. Lismer, 24 September 1936, 1.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, N. McCullough to A. Lismer, 9 June 1937, 4.

²³⁹ Sister of staff member Erma Lennox Sutcliffe.

²⁴⁰ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 2, file 8, N. McCullough to A. Lismer, 9 June 1937, 5.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

years."²⁴²

In her early experiences of interpreting art to the public at the Art Gallery of Toronto, Norah McCullough tried to develop a speaking technique "of arousing and holding an audience like Lismer did so effectively."²⁴³ Despite her self-deprecatory and humorous assessments of her public speaking efforts, it is apparent from other sources that McCullough's personality and abilities combined to make her a sparkling and effective spokesperson for the visual arts. Like Lismer, what she lacked in historical accuracy, she made up for in rousing enthusiasm. McCullough soon learned to enjoy and even relish a centre-stage position. In 1937 she described the pleasure she found in this aspect of her work:

I gave a talk on radio, which was my best effort this year in the speech line, I think. I felt so uplifted after getting it over. I felt I could conquer the world with both hands tied!²⁴⁴

The degree of difficulty that a professional speaker could encounter in a small town public forum in Ontario during the 1930s was humorously described in one letter. Norah's ability to meet the unexpected and carry on was a valuable asset; one she used throughout her career as a public speaker. Having been persuaded by her co-worker, Dorothy "Dot" Medhurst, that it was her "duty" to speak in Aurora, McCullough worked for a week on the preparation of her talk. It was the "most comical event" she had ever "been in on." The first disconcerting

²⁴² "Norrie" is Northrop Frye, Helen's fiancée. NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 2, file 8, N. McCullough to A. Lismer, 24 September 1936.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, vol. 7, file 45, untitled article on Lismer, 2.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, file 8, N. McCullough to A. Lismer, 9 June, 1937.

aspect was the number of children in attendance who comprised 70% of the audience. "I was not a bit nervous but had trouble to maintain a decent appearance of gravity." Next, the lantern bulb burnt out and then numerous technological failures disrupted the proceedings as McCullough struggled valiantly to carry on. At the end of the event she "was in a very dangerous state." She drove back to Toronto with Dot. Driver and passenger "screamed all the way home."²⁴⁵

There was a mutual comfort in sharing frustrations and insights into the politics of the gallery. Their letters when discussing the gallery board or education committee have the tone of co-conspirators. This was fostered by Lismer who confided his frustration with the conservatism and lack of support the administration gave to his initiatives to make the gallery a more open and accessible place for the broader Toronto public.

I know education meetings are the devil --, the committee are so damnably class-conscious -- they cover their ignorance & indifference with a casual show of interest: they forget as quickly as anything they have [said?] --& there is such collusion -- everything -- everything primed to resist by apathy.²⁴⁶

When conflicts arose over the future direction of the programme McCullough handled them admirably. Soon, Lismer sent words of encouragement and gratitude for her work.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., N. McCullough to A. Lismer, 12 April 1937.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., vol. 1, file 34, A. Lismer to N. McCullough, 3 December 1936.

Hang on to the idea that the art gallery is the main thing - that we are not education nor university yet and if you hear of anything in the way of bargains being made - tell Mr. Band and get him to delay things until October -- Again, let me say I'm Jim Jolly thankful you are on the spot and although you can't do a great deal more than I could -- you are the only one who understands.²⁴⁷

News of Lismer's and McCullough's social and professional world was abundant. "Mr. Massey popped in for a week & brought two Schaeferes. Carl got the Port Hope job."²⁴⁸ Also "The Fairley's"²⁴⁹ are even nicer than before. Duncan is the most adorable child I have ever seen."²⁵⁰ She also sent word of Lawren Harris and Bess Housser.

[T]hey were very glad to see us & were terribly kind. Lawren has done a lot of fine painting, beautiful in colour and design but very cold and unemotional. Bess has done some good things too. She has nothing of his technique, but other qualities which he lacks. I was surprised [sic] to see how good they were. They are so happy and to all appearances even over poor Fred -- an appalling picture of him kept coming up in the midst of all this perfection.²⁵¹

Norah led an exciting and privileged life, one which seemed unaffected by the Great Depression. She spent her weekends at her "country estate" in Calabogie, a large farm house. Here, she entertained "an awful lot of people who

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, A. Lismer to N. McCullough, 3 August 1937, 3.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, file 8, N. McCullough to A. Lismer, 24 September 1936, 2.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, N. McCullough to A. Lismer, 26 June 1937, 9-10. In 1934 Lawren Harris fell in love with Bess Housser, wife of Fred Housser who had left Bess to be with Yvonne McKague. According to Reid they moved to Hanover, New Hampshire, where Harris was artist-in-residence at Dartmouth College "to avoid embarrassing others." Fred Housser died in 1936. See Reid, *Concise*, 200 and MacDonald, *Dictionary*, vol. 2, 472-3.

were important at that time in Toronto" and skied during the winter months.²⁵²

She also travelled extensively, frequently for her work, but also for pleasure. In 1932, after summer classes were over McCullough joined friends²⁵³ in England and then went to visit a friend of the Mannings from the Arts Students League of New York, Laura Bolbabende,²⁵⁴ in Rome. They also travelled to Florence, Sienna and into the Truscan hills.²⁵⁵ In 1934 she studied for seven weeks at the London Courtauld Institute, funded by the Carnegie Foundation.²⁵⁶ In addition, Carnegie grants financed McCullough's trips to the Cleveland Museum, The Albright-Knox Art Gallery, The Museum of Modern Art, the Worcester Art Museum and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.²⁵⁷ In 1935 she went with Audrey Taylor and Isabel McLaughlin²⁵⁸ to New York. In 1937 in New York with McLaughlin she saw a

²⁵² She named Harry Adaskin, the Lismers, Audrey Taylor, Yvonne and Fred Housser, A. Y. Jackson and Charlie Goldhammer. McCullough told Palko that the cottage was paid for by Janet Langlier and Norah paid into it. "She helped me pay the rent and came to the parties too." NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, T. 3, S. 2, 13-14.

²⁵³ Edith Manning and her husband Steven Burnett.

²⁵⁴ An "awfully well-informed woman," Bolabende was a graduate of the University of Chicago in languages. She lived near St. Peter's Square and supported herself and her son, "who had no visible father" as a portrait painter. She later moved to Los Angeles. *Ibid.*, T. June 22, 1991, S. 2, 11-12.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, T. 2, S. 2, 10.

²⁵⁶ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 6, file 12, Biographical Notes, 1991, 1.

²⁵⁷ NGC, NM File, vol. 1, Bibliographic Notes (typescript), 1.

²⁵⁸ An OCA graduate (1925-8), McLaughlin studied in Paris and Vienna, was active in the ASL and was the president of the CGP in 1939. She was the daughter of the wealthy R.S. McLaughlin, a well known art collector Chairman of General Motors Canada. Reid, *Concise*, 182. In the 1930s she explored non-representational dream-like images. Tippet, *Lady*, 114.

Georgia O'Keeffe exhibition and Stieglitz photographs.²⁵⁹ She wrote: " I went to New England in my new 1932 Ford Roadster...also to New York, Hanover, Worcester, Boston, Salem, Marblehead, Cambridge, Buffalo..."²⁶⁰ In 1938 she went to the Chicago World's Fair with McLaughlin and Taylor where artists Charlie Goldhammer and Will Ogilvie²⁶¹ were "tailing" them.²⁶²

In 1936 McCullough was instrumental in pioneering another important art endeavour: the Picture Loan Society. With Rik Kettle²⁶³ and Helen Kemp, she helped establish Canada's first art rental society.²⁶⁴ It was McCullough's enthusiastic response to the art rental idea, coupled with her practical understanding of how to realize the project that the Picture Loan became established. Kettle had "come across the Picture Hire Limited in Brook Street in London" and "had talked about the idea to a number of people, particularly

²⁵⁹ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. June 22, 1991, S. 2, 1.

²⁶⁰ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 2, file 8, N. McCullough to A. Lismer, 3 June 1937.

²⁶¹ Born in 1901 in Cape Province, South Africa, William Abernathy Ogilvie came to Canada in 1925. He studied at Queens College, in Cape Province, with Erich Mayer at Johannesburg and with Kimon Nicolaides at the Arts Students League, New York. In Canada he executed murals for Hart House chapel in 1936 and taught painting at the Art Association of Montreal (1938-41). He was an official war artist in 1942. MacDonald, Dictionary, vol. 5, 1423-1426.

²⁶² NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, T. June 22, 1991, S. 2, 1.

²⁶³ "...a blue coat boy from London...taught art and other related things at Upper Canada College. He made himself known. Helen Kemp and I were hospitable. He came in and had tea in the afternoon or sometimes stayed for lunch and he had a little car..." Ibid., T. 3, S. 1, 4.

²⁶⁴ The society assisted many of Canada's noted artists throughout the depression years. The idea of renting art to the public grew across Canada. Ibid. The history of the Picture Loan Society mentions the presence of the enigmatic, eccentric and charismatic Douglas Duncan while the contribution of others in some accounts is diminished.

Norah McCullough.²⁶⁵ As a result of discussions with Kettle, McCullough wrote an article for Queen's Quarterly on the idea. She suggested to Kettle that they talk to Douglas Duncan about using his space on Charles Street and introduced the two men. Soon, other individuals on the Toronto art scene, including Pegi Nicol, and Norah's colleague at AGT, Gordon Webber, formed the organizing committee that maintained the practical aspects of running the society.²⁶⁶

While overseas Lismer wrote to tell her of the job to develop a children's art centre in Pretoria. His letter began with the bold and underlined statement "This is strictly private and confidential to you alone." He continued:

I want one of ours...there are people whom I think could do the job. first of all and best --yourself--how about it? ... I shall not recommend anyone but our own staff --first I don't want anybody else to get wind of it. But much as I should like to see you take it as being able to do it better than anybody.²⁶⁷

McCullough accepted the post in South Africa and her departure was news. On December 13, 1937 the Globe and Mail newspaper ran the byline "Miss Norah McCullough Goes to South Africa" in its "Art and Artists" column.²⁶⁸ In 1938 she journeyed to New York. Here, she shopped and visited with friends and

²⁶⁵ R. Kettle, "The Picture Loan Society," in Alan Jarvis (ed.) Douglas Duncan: A Memorial Portrait (Toronto 1974), 50-53. See also NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans. T. 3, S. 1, 1.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 1, file 34, A. Lismer to N. McCullough, n.d. In the same letter Lismer advises McCullough on salary and terms.

²⁶⁸ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 7, file 52, McCarthy, "Miss Norah McCullough," 4.

professional associates.²⁶⁹ Departure letters to her family and friends brim with statements of anticipation and enthusiasm. She boarded the White Star R.M.S. "Berengania" and was delighted to be greeted with "flowers...heaps of wine" and letters from the "the gang" in Toronto.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁹ Her time in the city included an encounter with Doug MacKay, a friend who was on his way to lecture in Philadelphia. McKay later became the head of the Art School of San Francisco and a consultant to the White House during the Kennedy years. She also met with Roberta Fansler of the Carnegie Corporation who had recommended the Child Art Project at the Art Gallery of Toronto in 1930. NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 6, file 23, N. McCullough to Mother, n.d.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

Chapter 2

Art Has a Social Message: South Africa, 1938-1946

Speaking to the Canadian press when she returned from the Union of South Africa¹ in 1946, McCullough stated: "Art has a social message." "I believe...that art, quickening the imagination helps people to put themselves in other people's shoes, helps them to realize that people different from themselves are human."² McCullough's work was guided by the principle belief that, by "bringing art to the people,"³ she was helping to create a better society. Yet, in a racially divided South Africa, such a goal seemed implausible. Both Arthur Lismer and Norah McCullough were idealistic art educators, who felt that art had a social message, one which contributed to the betterment of society. Each expressed dismay and concern about racial hatred, yet held an essentially white liberal attitude toward matters of race. Each saw themselves as pioneers, working on initiating "forward-thinking" projects to build a more just world.

McCullough's first assignment in South Africa was to establish and supervise the programme of the first children's art centre in Pretoria. In 1940 she left the centre and was hired to travel through the northern Transvaal with an inspector of native schools.⁴ The following year she became an Art Inspectress for

¹ Formed in 1910 the Union comprised Cape Colony, Natal, Transvaal, Orange River Colony (Orange Free State). Oakes, Real Story, 271.

² NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 2, file 14, McCarthy, "Leavening," 10.

³ See footnote 6 in Introduction.

⁴ Ibid., T. 2, S. 2, 16.

Cape Province. In her final year in South Africa, McCullough worked on establishing another child art centre, the Frank Joubert Centre in Cape Province.⁵

During the six years she spent in South Africa McCullough continued to think of herself as a pioneer in a socially progressive movement. She also continued to see art education as a tool which opened children up to an understanding of the situation of others. Yet these claims seemed fraught with naive optimism in a country that was built upon racial division and inequality. While McCullough went "out of her way to come into contact with Native institutions and Native Schools,"⁶ her position of privilege, her racial biases and those inherent to the Child Art philosophy were other factors which also challenged such claims.

McCullough's major accomplishments in South Africa included developing Child Art education in state institutions in Cape Province and the opening of the centres in Pretoria and Cape Town. It also included affecting the training of, primarily white teachers, in Cape Province and Pretoria in Child Art educational methods. McCullough also encouraged cultural programmes in schools for Cape Coloured children and in several mission-run schools for African children in the Transvaal.⁷

⁵ Ibid. 14.

⁶ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 6, file 16, E.G. Malherbe letter of recommendation, 27 May 1940.

⁷ An offshoot of McCullough's work may also have been the opening of an art centre for Coloured children in Cape Town in 1948, two years after her departure. NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 7, file 52, "Art Centre for Cape Coloured Children," Cape Times, 3 June 1948.

The primary benefits of her South African job were for Norah, administrative experience, responsibility and prestige. She also met many people and travelled extensively. These experiences gave her a new and heightened sense of her own self-worth. McCullough enjoyed her position of privilege and revelled in the professional acclaim that she attracted in South Africa. Her major strengths lay in her organizational ability and energy, her interest in overcoming stultifying educational methods and instigating livelier, more innovative approaches in the art centres and classrooms, and her interest in understanding the varied communities of people and their problems. She earned praise for her work and considered her job in South Africa to be a professional stepping stone to a career back in Canada.

McCullough arrived in Pretoria, South Africa in February 1938⁸. It was a significant time and place in South African history. It was the year when the flames of Afrikaner cultural nationalism were being stirred by a public centenary reenactment of the Great Trek. The event marked the beginnings of the first refuelling of Afrikaner nationalism since the Boer war. These stirrings gained strength throughout the 1940s and culminated in 1948, with the election of the Nationalist party on a platform of apartheid.⁹ It was also a time when wealthy

⁸ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 6, file 23, N. McCullough to Mother, Dad and Do, 3 February, 1938.

⁹ B. Davidson, The Search for Africa: History, Culture, Politics (New York and Toronto 1994), 125-127. When in 1948 the nationalists came to power on a platform of apartheid its task "was in no way to install systematic discrimination, but only to complete what already existed of that kind, while taking additional measures to repress a growing volume of non-white protest." Ibid., 114.

Afrikaners, like McCullough's hosts were supporting efforts to "build an Afrikaner intellectual class."¹⁰

The tenor of this time is effectively illustrated by the passages of McCullough's writing from 1936 to 1946. McCullough's letters document her transformation from a young woman who wishes to understand "the fears and aspirations" of all the groups in South Africa, to an older, more informed and cynical observer of Afrikaner society and its prejudices. The changes in her letters create a synchronicity with the mounting pitch of Afrikaner nationalism and its accompanying racist platform.

While the most severe measures of apartheid were not instituted until 1948,¹¹ two years after Norah McCullough's departure from South Africa, laws restricting the freedom of non-whites which laid the foundation of the apartheid system, were systematically and ruthlessly instituted in the two decades prior to McCullough's and Lismer's arrival. During this period there had been a steady strengthening and entrenchment of segregationist policies.¹² "Race"¹³ categories

¹⁰ W. Beinart, Twentieth-Century South Africa (Oxford and New York 1994), 115.

¹¹ Davidson, Search, 113.

¹² The classification and separation of people as "coloured" and "white" began to be rigidly applied in the latter part of the nineteenth century. See "Every native must have a warren too..." Oakes, Real Story, 312-319.

¹³ Race is a classification system of the human species based on physical characteristics such as skin colour and hair texture. Developed by western civilization it is a system of hierarchical ordering that is ideological, that encompasses cultural presuppositions and "its design and effects are domination." See "Racist Exclusions," Chap 5, 91-115 and "Modernity Race and Morality," Chap. 2, 15-39, in D. T. Goldberg, Racist Culture: Philosophy and Politics of Meaning (Cambridge, Mass and Oxford 1993). See also R. W. Winthrop, Dictionary of Concepts in Cultural Anthropology (New York and Westport, Conn. 1991), 227-232.

"were firmly established by 1902"¹⁴ The census for the year showed African peoples, mainly Zulu and Xhoas,¹⁵ referred to collectively as Native, comprised two-thirds of the population; "Coloured," another artificial and officially designated caste of people of mixed ancestry, made up 8.6 %;¹⁶ Asiatic people, primarily Indian, comprised 2.4% of the total. The white ruling minority of British and Afrikaners¹⁷ represented one-fifth of the population.¹⁸

The institution of several Native acts began in 1905 under Lord Alfred Milner.¹⁹ Justified on a presumption of white cultural superiority,²⁰ these measures, like others before, were really aimed at controlling territory and labour.²¹ In 1913 the Natives Land Act brought the confiscation of native land, the restriction of land ownership, and the establishment of reservations.²² In 1923,

¹⁴ Beinart, Twentieth-Century, 5.

¹⁵ There are many African groups. For example, of 100 million Bantu speakers over three hundred languages are spoken. Bantu language groups included the Nguni, Sotho, Venda and Tsonga and non-Bantu speakers the Khoisan. Sotho speakers included the Basotho, Pedi and Lobedu and Tswana; Nguni speakers included Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondo, the Mfenengu in the eastern Cape, the Ndzundza Ndebele in the southern Transvaal. Oakes, Real Story, 62.

¹⁶ Comprised of peoples of mixed Euro and African background these people were mostly descendants of European settlers, Khoikhoi and slaves from Madagascar and South Asia. The New Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia (1993), S.v. "South Africa: Coloureds."

¹⁷ Two-thirds of this minority were Afrikaners (also called Boers).

¹⁸ Beinart, Twentieth-Century, 5.

¹⁹ British High Commissioner for South Africa and Governor of the Cape Colony and "arch-imperialist." Oakes, Real Story, 239-40.

²⁰ Oakes, Real Story, 266.

²¹ Ibid.

²² 67.3% of the population was allotted 7.5% of the total land. Ibid., 292.

Natives Urban Areas Act enforced further segregation in cities.²³ In 1936 the Native Trust and Land Act imposed further restrictions on black African land ownership.²⁴ The land acts allowed the dominant white minority to gain control of more than 80% of the land base.²⁵ As a result, Africans faced widespread social, economic, and ecological hardship on the reserves²⁶ and off.²⁷ In 1936, the year of Lismar's first visit, the remainder of African common roll vote in South Africa was eliminated, quashing all vestiges of democratic rights to Native Africans.²⁸ "Coloured" people, who had only slightly more freedom, had also experienced decades of degradation.²⁹

Resistance to white oppression increased steadily and included Mohandas Gandhi's organized march to the Transvaal in 1913 to protest the treatment of

²³ Beinart, Twentieth-Century, 121.

²⁴ Davidson, Search, 302.

²⁵ Ibid. See also Oakes, Real Story, 316-317 and New American Encyclopedia (1984), S.v. "South Africa."

²⁶ Oakes, Real Story, 317.

²⁷ Such migrations had begun in the 1880s with the incursion of the Voortrekkers into native territory. Ibid., 88-90. Later, restrictive taxes imposed on black farmers and landowners squelched native agricultural life and forced natives to seek wage dependency on white employers. Ibid. 206-211.

²⁸ Davidson, Search, 117. The "colour blind" vote was "granted to all adult males regardless of race provided they occupied property worth at least £25. In 1892 qualifications for voting were increased because of a whites' fear of increased black voters. Requirements were that they "...occupy premises at least £75 or earn at least £50 a year. In addition each voter had to be able to write his name, address and occupation." Oakes, Real Story, 129.

²⁹ See "Trapped in the Middle: Indian and Coloured Protest Movements," in D. Oakes (ed.), Readers' Digest Illustrated History of South Africa: The Real Story (New York and Montreal 1988), 272-279.

South African's Indian sugar workers³⁰ and, in the same year, the march of Black African women in Bloemfontein to protest the imposition of passes for native Africans³¹. The interwar years were also characterized by a growing militancy. During the 1940s a series of squatter protests in the peri-urban areas of Johannesburg occurred.³² "A broad campaign" of protests against the pass laws took place in 1944, as well as a series of organized bus boycotts in Johannesburg's African "townships."³³ In 1946 there was a major African mineworkers' strike. In the same year, the Africanist movement, characterized by the "rejection of political cooperation with whites"³⁴ and represented by the South African Native Congress (later the ANC), saw the emergence in 1946, of the more radical, Congress Youth League, whose leaders included Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo.³⁵

For whites, the period of McCullough's residency was a time of prosperity as between 1932 to 1940 non-white wages were kept low and South Africa experienced a manufacturing boom. Electoral politics were dominated during the 1930s and 1940s by the fusion government of the United Party initially led by

³⁰ Beinart, Twentieth-Century, 91.

³¹ Ibid., 88-89.

³² Ibid., 127.

³³ In this action "thousands of men and women walked many miles to work and back rather than to submit to an increase in fares." Davidson, Search, 125.

³⁴ Ibid., 80.

³⁵ Beinart, Twentieth-Century, 128.

General Jan Smuts of the Labour Party and General J. B. M. Hertzog's National Party. An English-Afrikaner alliance of the English-speaking white minority, the United Party was considered politically centralist³⁶ and appealed greatly to white liberals who briefly "had greater influence than at any other until 1990."³⁷ Yet as Davidson states, while the overt racism of the Nationalist party that came to power in 1948 was given less voice, it "should not suggest that the party of white 'moderation' was in reality any less racist. "The Union party platform insisted that power must be shared by the English and Afrikaners. As for non-whites, "It is only common sense, to safeguard the rights of the natives, coloured and Asiatic people who live in the Union. The natives in particular are at least an economic asset and the rest have their place in our economy."³⁸

Education in the Union was political and racist in its orientation, serving the interests of the ruling white minority. During McCullough's residency segregation in education, under what was referred to as "the colour-bar," meant separate and unequal facilities, funding and opportunities for each designated racial group.³⁹ Each school system, White, Coloured and Native [sic]⁴⁰, was given

³⁶ FPSF, Time Running Out, 208.

³⁷ Beinart, Twentieth-Century, 134. "Anti-racist gestures by the United Party, in short, were no more than electoral eyewash aimed at appeasing a small but useful white liberal vote in Cape Town and Johannesburg." Davidson, Search, 117.

³⁸ From "A Guide to Politics for Young and Old," signed O. A. Oosthuizen, United Party in Secretary General (1943) in Davidson, Search, 116-117.

³⁹ Oakes, Real Story, 379.

⁴⁰ Also referred to as Bantu which translates as "the people." In anthropology it is a term that was used to collectively describe African tribes in east and south Africa with languages with a shared

financial support on a decreasing scale Education of whites and coloured children was a provincial responsibility, with a similar curriculum and number of facilities, but with marked differences between the budgets afforded to each designated group. McCullough stated that there were eighteen colleges, nine for white and nine for "Coloured."⁴¹ Education of African children, came under federal jurisdiction and occurred in mission schools and in schools situated on farms, built by farmers for the labourers' children.⁴²

McCullough's reactions to the race politics of South African society were mixed, but in essence upheld the tone of white liberalism of the period which gave lipservice toward issues of racial equality. During her first year, she tried to understand the perspective of her Afrikaner hosts, by reading Afrikaner history of the country and wrote sympathetically about their "hardships." By her second year, having observed the interactions of Afrikaners and Africans, she began to comment critically on race relations. By the 1940s, after considerable exposure to all aspects of South African society, the situation of racial hatred clearly repulsed her. However, while she was concerned about injustices, her letters also contained many examples of commonly held eugenic ideas and attitudes.⁴³

The Pretoria children's art centre where Norah began her art education

linguistic patterns. It was also used prior to 1976 by the Nationalist Party to refer to the African population and thus has a negative connotation. Oakes, Real Story, 486.

⁴¹ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 3, S. 1,

⁴² There were approximately 5,000 mission schools. Beinart, Twentieth-Century, 153.

⁴³ For a full account of these ideas see A. McLaren, Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945 (Toronto 1988).

work was sponsored by the Pretoria Parents Association the City Council, the local branch of the New Educational Fellowship and the Transvaal Department of Education.⁴⁴ It offered art courses for children from the local schools. "They were all white children and a few of mixed parentage, but it was not obvious"[sic].⁴⁵

McCullough responded with characteristic optimism to her first assignment. "My job is very embryonic and the committee of charming people very easy-going. I am beginning to feel very energetic again so I have begun to drive them a bit."⁴⁶ About her schedule she wrote that the "1st term starts next week (March 14th)...There is an awful lot of work to do."⁴⁷ "We get up at six. The schools open at eight from now until Easter but there are only morning sessions."⁴⁸ "The teachers here work from 8:30 am to one pm with free afternoons and the civil servants are free to exercise after 4:30."⁴⁹ To her young nieces in Toronto, she wrote excitedly: "My hundreds of children are about to descend on me starting tomorrow. I have lots of ideas ready for them and the Art Centre without kids have been a bit dull."⁵⁰ As the children at the centre faced new experiences,

⁴⁴ McLeish, September Gale, 171.

⁴⁵ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 2, 16. While laws of segregation were in place, the systematic classification of people, based on so called "racial purity," under apartheid was not yet in effect. Under this later system, appearance as well as genealogy was used to determine "race." See Oakes, Real Story, 392-393.

⁴⁶ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 6, file 23, N. McCullough to Pussy, 17 February 1938.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., vol. 6 file 25, N. McCullough to Mother, 19 October 1938.

⁴⁹ Ibid., vol. 6, file 23, Norah McCullough to Family, 25 March 1938.

⁵⁰ Ibid., vol. 6, file 26, N. McCullough to Margie and Anne, 24 January 1939, 2.

McCullough, thrilled, expressed a possessive tenderness toward her new charges.

My little kids, a mere 210 with possible 60 more, are darlings. A few cannot understand English but I have Normal School students in to help with each class and they get me through this difficulty. It is not so serious really because the minute I hand them a paint brush, off they go! I think they all feel like this, such thirsty children.⁵¹

She was surprised at the lack of exposure South African children had to the fine arts. Teaching the children linoleum block printing she wrote:

Today we cut linos and there were the usual self-inflicted wounds, poor kids, they always gash themselves in the excitement of cutting a block. They have never heard of lino cutting!⁵²

About the general standard of Akrikanner educational facilities in Pretoria she wrote:

The schools here are sometimes very good and sometimes very poor. There are one or two school buildings in Pretoria, the one I am in is included, which are a scandal. To think they allow their children to use them for the better part of the day betrays their lack of sensitivity, dirty, ill-lit, depressing, unhygienic building.⁵³

She felt these conditions expressed the unimportance placed on education.⁵⁴

The Art Centre functioned as a showcase for the government of Cape Town province, which increased public and governmental attention and McCullough's satisfaction. She wrote: "I had an exhibition of the year's work and

⁵¹ Ibid., vol. 6, file 23, N. McCullough to Family, 25 March 1938.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., Vol. 6, file 26, 1-2, N. McCullough to Mother, 5 February 1939.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

it went very well, heaps of people came and J. J. Pienaar⁵⁵ opened the show." She continued:

He is a very heavy personage...a sort of executive head of the Transvaal as the different provinces do not have separate governments and provinces as we do. Dr. Malherbe got him to come because they want the Art Centre to receive official attention and perhaps some material assistance when the time is ripe.⁵⁶

For the first time McCullough experienced independence from Lismer's supervision, and her first taste of being treated as a "professional" in her field. Both these situations made a considerable impression upon her. She became a mature public speaker, a teacher, supervisor of staff and administrator. Speaking about her treatment in Pretoria she said "...everybody was terribly nice. I was treated as if I was not only a worthy person, but as a visitor of some account. I was pampered really."⁵⁷ In regards to her own role she commented: "...I feel Pretoria is really a brighter place for a lot of children than it was before I came - some satisfaction in that!"⁵⁸

McCullough received considerable attention in the South African print and broadcast media. She expressed both pride and disbelief with her new status.

⁵⁵ Major J. J. Pienaar was one of four Union Defence Forces leaders that, in 1914, defected and planned to take over the government when Botha joined the war against Germany. Oakes, Real Story, 301.

⁵⁶ Ibid., vol. 6, file 25, N. McCullough to Mother, Daddy & Do, 25 December 1938.

⁵⁷ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 2, 17-18.

⁵⁸ Ibid., vol. 6, file 25, N. McCullough to Mother, Daddy & Do, 25 December 1938.

You would never believe it but I am widely publicized here as a kind of authority on modern education - such newspaper notices and press photographers etc. etc.!! I am accepting invitations to lecture quite airily - just nothing at all. The thing is - the truth is - the little I do know, is infinitely more than most of the people here know, in my brand of work - so this helps me to feel fairly secure and less a fraud.⁵⁹

Aware that this coverage might further her professional aspirations at home she asked her family to bring the articles to the attention of a Toronto press contact.⁶⁰

"[T]ell her the reason I got so much space is that there is absolutely nothing happening here! Except political rows and social functions, and it looks as if I might be included in the latter category."⁶¹

Despite the claim that Child Art education could challenge cultural and class barriers and raise social awareness, the subject matter of the projects at the art centre reinforced the biases of Afrikaner colonialist history.⁶²

Throughout the year of McCullough's arrival, Pretoria and South Africa marked the centenary of the Great Trek⁶³, with the inauguration of a Voortreker memorial. The day marked the hundred year anniversary of the Battle of Blood

⁵⁹ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 6, file 28, N. McCullough to Mom, Dad & Dobie, 14 August 1939. In 1938 she wrote "I have been interviewed and photographed by all the local J'Burg Press morning and evening editions, in Afrikaans and English." *Ibid.*, vol. 6, file 23, N. McCullough to Pussy, 17 February 1938.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, file 26, N. McCullough to Mother, 5 February 1939.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² While it is not clear if these projects were McCullough's initiative, it is clear that they reflected the Afrikaner cultural revival and its rhetoric.

⁶³ Thousands of Afrikaners, dissatisfied with British rule and lacking fertile territory set off in groups with their wagons and their livestock. *Trekboers* eventually established settlements in Upper Natal and on the plateau on either side of the Vaal River." FPSF, *Time Running Out*, 27. Among their grievances aside from lack of land was the British abolition of slavery. *Grolier Encyclopedia* (1993), S.v. "South Africa: Great Trek."

River.⁶⁴ Intrinsic to the celebration was a declaration of a white supremacy. "Daniel Malan the leader of the Purified National Party, told the masses "just as "the muzzeload had clashed with the assegi" at Blood River to preserve the interests of whites, now too it was the duty of Afrikaners to strive to make South Africa a white man's land."⁶⁵ The unveiling of the memorial was the culmination of a symbolic Anniversary Trek reenactment that travelled from Cape Town to Pretoria complete with ox wagons.⁶⁶ Described by its organizer Afrikaner nationalist Hennin Klopper, founder of the Broederbond⁶⁷ as a "sacred happening,"⁶⁸ it was a pivotal cultural event that stirred the fires of Afrikaner nationalism and continued the tradition of a virulent racist interpretation of history.⁶⁹

In the months leading up to the inauguration children at the centre made murals that perpetuated the colonialist myth of the Afrikaner Voortrekkers as downtrodden pioneers setting off into empty land that God had given to them. The mural, McCullough wrote, was:

⁶⁴ The battle occurred after Voortrekkers attempts to take over Zulu land had failed and their leader Piet Retief was captured and killed by Zulu leader Dingane. Three thousand Zulus died at the hands of four hundred and eighty-five Voortrekkers under Andries Pretorius. Afrikaners had three losses. The Ncome River, red with the blood of the dead Zulu warriors, was renamed by the Afrikaners. Oakes, Real Story, 118-119.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 336-337.

⁶⁶ Beinart, Twentieth-Century, 116.

⁶⁷ The Afrikaner Broederbond was an secret Afrikaner society which eventually controlled key areas of industry, finance and culture. Oakes, Real Story, 486.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 336-337.

⁶⁹ See Beinart, Twentieth-Century, 131; Davidson, Search, 115.

...of the Voortrekkers coming up from George, and their various vicissitudes. How they lugged those wagons, huge contraptions solidly made, it must have been heart breaking, all the labour in taking them apart to take them up country through the passes. I have seen one in a museum.⁷⁰

Another project, also made at the height of the Great Trek reenactment retold the events that precipitated the Battle of Blood River, from the Afrikaner point of view:

My little kids are making a puppet show about the Voortrekker Piet Retieff and the Zulu chief Dingane. This country has a heroic, historic background, recent enough to be very close to the people. The Zulu puppet heads made by the children are utterly terrifying. It's going to be difficult to present, getting around the tragic end of Retief and his men because a Punch and Judy show needs a fight in rather than a massacre!⁷¹

During the first year McCullough's concerns were reserved.

...Be careful about expressing my opinions to any South African people because on the whole they are a very good lot and loyal. They suffered terribly in the early days and are easily offended.⁷²

McCullough's administrator, Dr. Ernest Malherbe⁷³ was pleased with McCullough's efforts. In a 1940 letter written to Alice McCullough on the occasion of her husband's death, he wrote:

⁷⁰ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 6, file 23, N. McCullough to Pussy, 7 May 1938. She wrote also that they had plans to "make musical instruments like the Natives use." See also *Ibid.*, vol. 6 file 26, N. McCullough to Margie & Anne, 24 January 1939.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, file 23, N. McCullough to Pussy, May 7, 1938.

⁷² *Ibid.*, vol. 6, file 24, N. McCullough to Dad, 26 April 1938.

⁷³ Malherbe a "noted South African educator," arranged Lismer's and McCullough's visits. He was the president of the South African branch of the New Educational Fellowship, the Director of the National Bureau of Educational and Social Research and the Carnegie representative for South Africa. He went on to become the Vice Chancellor of Natal University, in Durban and had served as Chief Information Officer for the South African Army during the war. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, file 7, "Extraordinaire" and McLeish, *September Gale*, 158-59.

She is doing wonderful work here in South Africa and while we know you must be wanting her to come back, I wish we could keep her indefinitely. She is a great favourite with everybody here and the people are most appreciative of her fine work. She is doing pioneer work which is not always easy.⁷⁴

When she was not working at the centre, McCullough led an active life; "travelling madly all over the place,"⁷⁵ entertaining, socializing and corresponding with her family. In an affectionate stream of letters home to "Pussy, Do and Dad,"⁷⁶ McCullough described her new life. In April, three months after her arrival, she went on a ten day expedition by bus. She wrote "My dear Dad" - telling her father of a "very interesting" trip she had taken to Bechuandaland.⁷⁷ To her mother she wrote the material details of this camping trip of university people and anthropologists, describing her equipment of "five blankets, ground sheet, air mattress and tinned food." During her trip McCullough stayed with Chief of the Machaudi in Bechuandaland in a settlement of 1,600 people. The inhabitants, stated McCullough, were "fairly civilized" as all except the "small fry" wore clothes. She was impressed with the beauty and orderliness of their village and, aware of Dr. McCullough's concern for matters of health and sanitation, she informed her father that "...their houses are made of mud and cow dung and are

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, file 33, E. Malherbe to Mrs. J. W. S. McCullough, 28 January 1941; from a letter of condolence sent to McCullough's mother after the death of her husband.

⁷⁵ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 2, 15.

⁷⁶ Her mother, sister Dorothy, and father. Her mother's nickname, Pussy, came from the phrase "soft as a ...".

⁷⁷ Bechuanaland Protectorate, now Botswana (1966) was a part of a Twswana settlement which was divided by the British in 1885 into Bechuanaland Protectorate and British Bechuanaland. Oakes, *Real Story*, 486.

wonderful structures-very clean..." As to the character of the people, she described the people of the village as "friendly, curious, and very jolly agriculturalists." She was, however, less well disposed to her Afrikaner companions whom she disliked, as they "... made a point of only speaking Afrikaans."⁷⁸

This excursion, her first in her new country, set the pattern for the years ahead.⁷⁹ She camped with friends throughout South Africa and into Zimbabwe, on every available holiday throughout her stay in the country. Even when petrol was rationed because of wartime shortages⁸⁰ she managed to take trips through rural Africa.

In 1946, one of her trips became the subject of a rather large and splashy article in the Canadian publication The Star Weekly. Entitled "A Girl Against the Veldt," the focus of this article was not on McCullough's work as a child educator, but rather on her as a charismatic, attractive, and adventuresome woman who had travelled independently through Southern Africa in her car with a girlfriend,

⁷⁸ NAC. McCullough Papers, vol. 6, file 24, N. McCullough to Dad, 24 April 1938. Afrikaans, the language of Dutch descendants and the Coloured community was as mixture of Dutch, English, Xhosa, Malaysian and Hottentot. Originally considered not fit for middle class whites, it became part of a nationalistic surge after 1905 as a "white's man language." Words that came from African tribal groups were dropped in favour of Dutch words to rid it of "its coloured taint." In 1925 Afrikaans replaced Dutch as an official language of the Union." Ibid., 299.

⁷⁹ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 2, 15. Places McCullough visited during her stay in South Africa include Basutoland, Orange River, Uppington, Kimberley, Zimbabwe, all through the Transvaal, Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg, Fort Victoria, South Rhodesia, Steynesburg, Graff-Reinet, Kilmerton, Bulawago, Victoria Falls, Swaziland, Bechuanaland, Rustenburg, Kalahari Desert, Bain's Koof, Skeleton Gorge and Graff-Reinet.

⁸⁰ Oakes, Real Story, 351.

armed only with a smile and a small dinner knife. The graphic for the article showed a photomontage of Norah's face, a crocodile and a roaring lion. The underlying text of this article addressed white colonialist fears of Africa as a place of danger, particularly for white women. An indirect racism bound the whole article together connecting as it did, Norah's near escape from a river of crocodiles, an angry elephant, and a wall of angry African women, as she deliberately intrudes on an initiation ritual and is told by a hotel owner how she is fortunate to have escaped. Emphasis in this article was placed upon the supposed associated thrilling dangers of both the African wildlife and the people of Africa and the apparent bravery of McCullough as a European female adventurer.⁸¹

McCullough's day-to-day life in Pretoria and Cape Town was filled with her work and social activities with her roommate Helen Kroehler,⁸² and many other friends, and a menagerie of pets. She entertained friends frequently at lively dinner parties and wrote home to tell her mother of the personalities that streamed through her and Helen's apartment and her triumphs as a hostess.

Her accommodation and life reflected the segregated structure of white dominated urban society during the 1930s -- the "high point of segregation."⁸³ The presence of Africans in cities was restricted after Smut's Urban Areas Act of 1923.

⁸¹ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 2, file 14, H. J. Lawless, "A Girl Against the Veldt," The Star Weekly (5 January 1946), 6-8. For a discussion of the origins of ideas of Africa as a fearful place see P. P. Brantlinger, "Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent, in H. L. Gates, "Race" Writing and Difference (Chicago and London 1985), 185-221.

⁸² An American nursery school teacher, she was "...a very substantial and level headed person." NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 6, file 23, N. McCullough to Family, 25 March 1938.

⁸³ Beinart, Twentieth-Century, 120.

Many lived in peri-urban areas of major cities and in city slumyards. In addition they were required to have passes to move in towns. Domestic servants, predominantly black females, were "dispersed through white suburbs in backyard servants' quarters or kayas"⁸⁴ to serve white families.⁸⁵

She wrote to her mother that the "...servants were wretchedly poor -- nothing like our Doreen...it's terrible to see their misery. It is much easier to look the other way and I think that is the general attitude."⁸⁶

McCullough's circle of friends in South Africa was comprised of liberal-minded white middle-class professionals. She took particular pride in her association with people who brought innovation and prestige to their profession, especially those who championed liberal, humanitarian causes. Such individuals inspired her, and reflected her own aspirations.⁸⁷ McCullough frequently noted her friendship with Alan Paton, author of Cry the Beloved Country and the future leader of the Liberal Party.⁸⁸ Paton's novel of Africans displaced in a hostile urban

⁸⁴ Many represented the surge of newly displaced rural Africans who left the overpopulated reserves to seek work and were part of the dislocation of families that occurred as the result of racist state policies. Ibid., 121.

⁸⁵ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 6, file, 23, N. McCullough to Pussy, 7 May 1938; Ibid., N. McCullough to Pussy, 7 July 1943.

⁸⁶ Ibid., vol. 6, file 2, N. McCullough to Mother, 16 February 1941.

⁸⁷ Many of McCullough's friendships initiated during this time would last her lifetime. Keeping documentation of her friends' accomplishments was Norah's hobby; by the end of her lifetime her personal files were full of news clippings on the accomplishments of friends in Canada and South Africa.

⁸⁸ The Liberal party, banned in 1968, was ineffectual at the polls, advocated non-white membership. For a full account see A. Paton, Hope for South Africa (London 1958). Paton was the principal of a reform school for Africans, which he invited Norah to visit. NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 2 file 7, "Extraordinaire." See also New America Desk Encyclopedia (reprint 1984) S.v.

environment epitomized the paternalistic view of liberal whites of the period.

Another well known friend was Dr. Robert Broom, the discoverer of

Plesianthropus transvaalensis, a human skull which "provided the most valuable clues to the origins" of humankind.⁸⁹

McCullough's artistic contacts included members of the New Group considered the "most influential of all artists groups thus far in South African history." The Group⁹⁰ was started by younger modernist artists who had studied in Europe. Returning to South Africa they formed a small elite membership that declared itself ready to "kick against junk" and proclaimed "No Schoolgirl Art."⁹¹

Norah was friends with several of its members including Alexis Preller,⁹²

"Paton, Alan." See also Beinart, Twentieth-Century, 122-123.

⁸⁹ A colourful medical practitioner who was more interested in palaeontology than...medicine." Broom taught zoology and geology at Victoria College in Stellenbosch. He was appointed palaeontologist at the Transvaal Museum located in Pretoria. Broom's discoveries were made during 1936-1939 and 1945-1947. Oakes, Real Story, 17-19.

⁹⁰ The New Group (1938-1953) limited membership to invited professional artists. Their first exhibition on May 4, 1938 in Cape Town showcased seventeen of the country's most modern artists. One thousand people attended and the press focused on Preller's "modernism." Exhibitions were "notable events." In 1947 they represented South Africa in *The Overseas Exhibition of SA Art* at the Tate Gallery, London. E. Berman, Art and Artists of South Africa: An Illustrated Biographical Dictionary and Historical Survey of painters and Graphic Artists Since 1875 (Cape Town 1970), 209-210.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² "[T]he name Alexis Preller is surrounded by glamour..." His work was influenced by Ndebele painting, sculpture of the Congo and European Abstract Expressionism. Exhibitions include: Solo, Pretoria (1935); New Group, CT (1938); Overseas Exhibition, Tate Gallery, London (1948); Venice Biennale (1956) Berman, Art and Artists, 240-243. McCullough owned three Preller paintings, two of which he gave her. NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. June 22, S. 2, 2.

Walter Battiss⁹³ and good friend Jean Welz.⁹⁴ "He used to come and see me when he came down to Cape Town....He was very advanced in his thinking."⁹⁵ At the time of their meeting Welz, who was married with a family, was in need of an income. McCullough, impressed by Welz's talent, arranged to have him start and supervise the Hugo Naudé Art Centre in Worcester.⁹⁶

After her first year of living in South Africa McCullough had changed from a naive, young observer, trying to understand the "hardships" and sufferings of the Afrikaners to a more cynical, informed and critical political commentator. In 1938 she wrote:

Tell Dad that I think the Hertzog-Smuts combine is O.K. they are trying to keep South Africa in cahoots with Great Britain against those who exploit nationalist hates among the Afrikaners to gain office. The sound and liberal people here and the English farmers seem to be with him and Smuts.⁹⁷

⁹³ Although McCullough referred to Battiss (b. 1906) as an anthropologist, he was an artist with a life long interest in the rock paintings and rock engravings that abound in South Africa and considered an authority on the subject. He "regarded Bushman painting as a significant art form, not merely a scientific curiosity." In 1944 he presented Bushman paintings as art. His own semi-abstract paintings used the native hieroglyphic symbols. Berman, Art and Artists, 37-41.

⁹⁴ An Austrian, Welz studied art and architecture at Realschule, Salzburg. In Paris as an architect, he met Le Corbusier, architect of the International Style. Due to illness he left his job in the Dept. of Architecture at the University of Wits, set up a teahouse in the countryside and began to paint. A "poet and a scientist" with a "complex personality," his painting is described as "mystical abstraction." See Berman, SA Art and Artists, 324-328.

⁹⁵ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 3, S. 1, 7.

⁹⁶ "He was an awfully good painter... They are beautiful paintings. He set a kind of standard and I got him to open a little art centre in a place called Worcester...I took this up with de Vos Malan and he said, "Why couldn't we do something and give Jean Welz a job to run it?" So we did that, and Jean Welz got on a small salary ... He had great ideas about this centre." Ibid.

⁹⁷ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 6, file 23, N. McCullough to Pussy, 7 May 1938. Beinart states that "Smuts was a superbureaucrat as much as a politician...While he and Hertzog differed on the details of segregation, Smuts was prepared to compromise to stay in power." Smuts was described as an "elusive figure," who although, separated from the nationalist arena was "too compromised a

By her second year in the country the narrowness of Afrikaner society and the ominous presence of the Nationalist's campaign⁹⁸ had changed McCullough's perception of Afrikaner culture.

As for the people, the greatest majority of nice but dumb people live here. You would think S.A. comprised the whole world. Isolationists describes them perfectly. The Dutch S. A. hates the native (and) the English, the Hollander favours American and the Irishman because they also rebelled. They waste a lot of good time and energy this way and in trying to keep them down instead of doing their own job thoroughly. Not all Afrikanners are like this but many are and there is a politician, an absolute devil named Malan, an erstwhile preacher, who uses all the hate in his platform to rouse ire among the ignorant -- lots of those too !⁹⁹

Like many liberal whites, McCullough seemed to have been cautious in expressing her views on race issues in public. In discussing race issues with her family she wrote:

These remarks favouring Natives would make S.A. (South Africans) froth at the mouth: so don't go spreading my comments around. We have been told our (American) knowledge and opinions are superficial. I think we see things impersonally and impartially and therefore are entitled to our say. Certainly, the Afrikaaner cannot see the situation as clearly as an outsider.¹⁰⁰

One group who received McCullough's scrutiny was poor Afrikaners whom she met in rural areas and as student teachers. This group was the focus of an intensive Carnegie study during the depression years and McCullough's

figure to be taken up by white liberal or African movements...he often seemed to speak with a forked tongue...." Beinart, Twentieth-Century, 112, 133.

⁹⁸ After 1934 the Purified National Party (Herenigde Nasionale Volksparty) under Dr. Daniel F. Malan broke away from the Nationalists, steadily gaining support for its right-wing Afrikaner nationalistic platform. Oakes, Real Story, 367-373.

⁹⁹ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 6, file 27, N. McCullough to Alice and Marg, 7 June 1939.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., vol. 6 file 27, N. McCullough to Pussy, Daddy Do, 10 June 1939.

administrator, Malherbe was a commission member. On the relationship between class, labour, prejudice and white privilege in this group McCullough's remarks share a similarity with the commission's report.

I am beginning to get the people here, understand them better. They are thickly crusted with complacency, those who are prosperous and economically secure. The others are sodden with sunshine and laziness and in-breeding. The poor whites make demands on the govt., breed like rabbits, are degraded and ignorant to a degree - but are WHITE! Therefore they can't work, won't work, just go on reproducing like noxious weeds. They, poor wretches, are the product of ignorance and pride which does not allow them to work with so many black slaves at hand, also the destruction of their homes during the Boer War... But their families still think they are important being white and cling to their own traditions.¹⁰¹

In an effort to understand the country McCullough read books about the country from all sides of the subject; from the African to the Indian to the Afrikaner. She wrote naively to her mother:

I am glad British Labour is in and that there are 21 women in the house. I have just read a Penguin called Coolie by Raj Anand - it is very grim indeed and although the Indian is kept down here, it is infinitely better for him than in India.¹⁰²

When McCullough left South Africa in 1946 the Cape Town paper Trek stated ". . . that all who love children wish her Godspeed and look forward to her

¹⁰¹ Ibid., vol. 6, file 26, N. McCullough to Mother, 20 October 1941. The Carnegie Commission (1929-32) on the impoverished condition of poor whites "reported on the high birth rate" lack of education and unsanitary conditions rampant among this segment of the population. Racism was very much an issue as Afrikaners had an "inborn prejudice against doing a job traditionally reserved for Africans. "Even the most poverty-stricken bywoner considered himself a master and would not stoop to do" work designated for African labour." See "Like spectres from the tombs: Poor Whites and Afrikaner Nationalism" in Oakes, Real Story, 328-337.

¹⁰² NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 7 file 1, N. McCullough to Mother, 26 July 1945. She described Commando, as a "...splendid and moving tale of the Boer War." She wrote that her father should read it to understand the Afrikaner hatred of the British. Ibid., vol. 6, file 24, N. McCullough to Father, 26 April, 1938. About the book I Am Black she wrote, "...the book is first rate and will help the natives." Ibid., N. McCullough to Mother, Dad and Do, 24 May 1939.

return." Pearl McCarthy responded astutely that "All who love children...is a significant phrase in a country which has a complex racial problem of English-speaking Europeans, Afrikaaners, natives and "colours"--not to mention assorted Oriental groups"¹⁰³ She continued idealistically that Norah's presence:

...recalls that Canada has produced educated women who, in addition to being specialists in their own lines, have made their work a force for international and inter-racial understanding.¹⁰⁴

The situation was in fact much more complex. McCullough's presence in South Africa adhered to the mandate of western philanthropic sponsored educational programmes in African countries. This mandate was one which was built on separation, inequality and difference. During the 1930s Carnegie initiated a number of race-related educational projects in areas of black-white tension and British controlled Africa was one of these sites.¹⁰⁵

McCullough's presence in South Africa as an educational expert under the auspices of the Carnegie foundation was an example of specific policies toward the education of "Negroes" and whites in segregated societies. The foundation "believed that organizations engaged in research on blacks or educating them should be supervised, if not by whites alone, then at least by mixed racial

¹⁰³ Ibid., vol. 2, file 14, McCarthy, "Leavening," 10.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ For example, in 1932 the foundation set up a commission to study the conditions of poor white Afrikaners, of which McCullough's supervisor, Dr. Malherbe was the educational representative. It also debated the need for a different type of education for blacks in the united States during the same time period. See Oakes, Real Story and Lagemann, The Politics of Knowledge, 123.

membership."¹⁰⁶ It also believed in exporting western education professionals into Africa, in order to indoctrinate western values, ensuring an imposed cultural hegemony which would, they thought, destabilize Africanist opposition to colonialist regimes.¹⁰⁷

There were several other factors which nullify the claim that Child Art education was "progressive," and capable of promoting racial equality. Aside from the incongruity of applying the principles of the movement in a regime of extreme racial segregation, the movement itself developed from inherently racist premises toward "primitive" people and art. In addition, McCullough, while appalled by the injustices and race hatred she experienced in South Africa, was not without race prejudice. And her position of extreme privilege within the society was an expression of race privilege, which further contributed to a situation of inequality.

Before her arrival in South Africa Norah McCullough received correspondence from Arthur Lismar with lengthy descriptions of his impressions of Africans. In an interview Norah stated:

...Lismar had written me in a letter when he was there, that the Blacks had something to offer which the White man in the early days failed to recognize. I thought we might surely learn something from this in our attitudes to our Canadian natives.¹⁰⁸

Lismar's letters, like McCullough's, reflected ideas about Africans which seemed

¹⁰⁶ E. Condliffe Lagemann, The Politics of Knowledge: The Carnegie Corporation, Philanthropy, and Public Policy (Middletown, Connecticut 1989), 123-151.

¹⁰⁷ For a full account see E. H. Berman, The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy: The Ideology of Philanthropy (Albany, New York 1983).

¹⁰⁸ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 2, file 7, "Extraordinaire," 2.

anthropologically influenced. Lismer described African Blacks as colourful, admirable people, often describing "difference" and revealing a fascination with the "exotic."¹⁰⁹ He told McCullough:

I wish I could write a book while I'm here about the racial impacts in education. It's a terrific subject & the missions have a strange hold on the natives soul & refuse him a mind -- & the gov't picks his pocket for taxes and won't let him rise -- & without the natives the whites might just as well pick up and leave. I'm selling a liberal education --we don't know how 8/10ths of the world live.¹¹⁰

Explaining the different concepts of Child art and adult art Lismer said:

we miss the real character of what the child reaches out for and how he says it if we compare this free expression of the child, unconscious and alive to rhythm and movement, with the conscious, historically and technically cultured adult. The child is closer to the native, the hunter-artist, and to prehistoric man as artist than he is to the professional artist of today. He is sometimes primitive, often poetic, and strangely lyrical, but always alive to the world around, for he is trying, as far as grownups will let him, to make a more harmonious place for his soul.¹¹¹

This quote illustrates the primary ideas of race and children's art. Child art rose to prominence along with the "discovery of "primitive" art of Africa. The growth of appreciation for the aesthetics of children's art "helped to bring children's art within the general range of aesthetic appreciation."¹¹² In 1905 Dr. Theodor Koch-Grunberg "drew scholar's attention to the parallel between

¹⁰⁹ See NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 1, file 34, letters from A. Lismer to N. McCullough. For a discussion of the meaning of "difference" see T. McEvilley, Art and Otherness: Crisis in Cultural Identity (Kingston 1992).

¹¹⁰ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 1, file 34, A. Lismer to N. McCullough, 7 April 1937.

¹¹¹ Darroch, Bright Land, 122.

¹¹² MacDonald, The Recognition of Child Art, 331.

primitive and child art."¹¹³ Art educators also subscribed to evolutionist biogenetic ideas that interpreted primitive cultures as representative of an earlier stage of development.

In December, 1939, McCullough wrote to her parents that she was applying for a position in Native education in Natal. She states what may be her parents' fear that her work with African students would, because of white prejudice, diminish her status:

Don't think I lose face by being in "native education"--It is important here and Natal is a most beautiful country...I shall probably learn Zulu and write a book and will certainly gain prestige both here and at home.¹¹⁴

Awaiting a decision, she researched conditions, writing to her family that she was "reading a profound thesis of Native education."¹¹⁵ In August, McCullough's application to work in Natal was denied. She wrote: "I regret the Natal job -- it would have been a marvellous experience."¹¹⁶

Following this disappointment, Malherbe arranged for McCullough to accompany another educator and visit educational facilities for African children in the northern Transvaal.¹¹⁷ Native education was a federal rather than provincial

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., vol. 6 file, 28, N. McCullough to Family, 22 December 1939.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., vol. 6, file 29, N. McCullough to Family, 27 February 1940.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., vol. 6 file 30, N. McCullough to Family, 10 August, 1940.

¹¹⁷ Because of inconsistent dates in her records about this experience, it is difficult to determine the exact date when her job as Art 'Inspectress' for the Department of Education in Cape Province began. One account states that the tour of native schools lasted for a year, while another record states only that she was hired as inspectress in 1940.

responsibility, and it seems that Malherbe may have provided Carnegie funding for McCullough's tour.

When McCullough began her job in 1940 as Art Inspectress for the Cape Province Department of Education, she visited white and Coloured schools and training institutions, both of which were provincial responsibilities. On occasion, she was invited as an art expert to native schools. Her perceptions of some art education projects in native and "Coloured" schools are described in her article "The Art Centre - A Flourishing Plant." This essay addresses the application of Child Art principles in the South African context. McCullough's descriptions of these facilities provide a picture of the disparities within South African education as well as the Western premises and prejudices of Child Art and Norah's own racism.

McCullough's essay begins by describing Lismer's tenets for an art centre as the foundation of her work in South Africa. She wrote: "Not only would the expression of children be explored of various age levels, but all kinds of children would be given the opportunity for self-expression, black, white, yellow, rich or poor, bright or dull."¹¹⁸ McCullough's original typescript version is heavily edited - a state unusual for her work - and one which seems to indicate the strain of reconciling contradictory positions towards racial equality. The gap between the interracial idealism of the her opening paragraph, and the reality of teaching in a country controlled by whites and built on racial division is noticeable.

¹¹⁸ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 2, file 1, N. McCullough, "The Art Centre -- A Flourishing Plant," annotated (typescript), 1946. 1.

Despite Lismer's pledge of universality, McCullough acknowledged "... that the art centre movement was instigated to improve the education of European children."¹¹⁹ However, it was McCullough's belief that "despite its [the Child Art movement's] prejudices it was possible to make headway amongst the Bantu."¹²⁰ Providing native children with exposure to Child Art was considered by both McCullough and Lismer to be a progressive enterprise.¹²¹ The imposition of Child Art principles in culturally distinct societies ignored the gulf between established Eurocentric aesthetics and cultural hierarchies which separated art from craft and celebrated individual accomplishment and the culturally integrated fabric of African tribal societies and was often paternalistic.¹²² She described the Native centres where the creative approach to art teaching had "taken hold."

Having seen some remarkable art expression from the Cyrene mission near Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia, I personally believe that natives are capable of creating as fine designs in painting as they do in three dimensional materials.¹²³

In some cases she noted similar situations with both Native and white teachers:

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰

¹²¹ Like many western white Christians of the time she considered mission work as an endeavour that brought benefits.

¹²² See J. Chandra, "A Theoretical Basis for Non-Western Art History Instruction," *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, vol. 27, no. 3 (Fall 1993), 73-84; J. Clifford, "Theories of the tribal and the Modern," in The Predicament of Culture (Cambridge and London 1988). See also R. C. Omabegho, "Nigeria: priorities and Problems," 193-209 and J. W. Grossert, "South Africa: Teaching the Zulu," 200-225, in R. W. Ott and A. Hurwitz (eds.), Art Education: An International Perspective (University Park, Pa. 1984).

¹²³ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 2, file 1, "Flourishing Plant," 6.

It was found that with some native teachers the idea of free expression caught on well, whereas with others, there was so natural a thing, so unadult like in the finished product. This is equally true of many European teachers.¹²⁴

When dealing with difference McCullough's response was mixed. When a teacher in a native school pointed out to the students that she was a white lady and they (the students) were black children she expressed her discomfort with this reinforcement of this separation. "I suggested to him that we would prefer to be merely a lighter brown than they."¹²⁵ Yet McCullough's response to Africans, like Lismers, frequently emphasized "otherness."¹²⁶ Her description of an inadequate native educational facility, intended to be sympathetic, instead objectifies the African children with offensive labelling and a presumption of inherent physical adaptability:

...to my eyes this cramped place seemed a hopeless setting for a class in art to be held. But I found that the Piccanins [sic] used to living in mud huts devoid of furniture, had a natural gift for overcoming the spatial problems. They swivelled on their heels, each one taking but a tiny portion sufficient only for balance, the remaining floor space being used for their big papers.¹²⁷

The mention of an unconfining physical space was a matter of considerable importance as it was intrinsic to McCullough's and Lismers' pedagogical approach which emphasized freedom of movement as well as freedom of thinking.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 6, file 28, N. McCullough to Family, 1939.

¹²⁶ See T. McEvilly, Art and and Otherness: Crisis in Cultural Identity (Kingston 1992).

¹²⁷ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 2 file 1, N. McCullough, "Flourishing Plant," 6.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 6.

McCullough stated: "Children will gain enormously in development provided they are allowed to express themselves freely."¹²⁹

Explaining race barriers in South Africa for her Canadian readers, McCullough explains the Afrikaner and British colonizer's perspective, that racial barriers are necessary for maintaining territory because of a perceived threat:

Here in Canada it is difficult to understand the rigidity of the race barriers as they exist in South Africa. The red Indian ceased to threaten our frontiers so long ago, we forgot that the Bantu or native African was still bitterly contending against the penetration of the white man within living memory [sic].¹³⁰

Visiting schools for "Coloured" children, McCullough was impressed by both the need of the community and the dedication of the teachers. She wrote:

Here an ardent quota of bright young people are giving their time on a voluntary basis three nights a week. Three hundred children are gathered from the gutters of their ugly environment to spend a few hours drawing, modelling, singing, dancing and in organized games. The number represents only a small number proportion of the neglected children of the Cape Coloured people. Many, many such centres are needed to serve the educational and social needs.¹³¹

One dedicated teacher at the school who was "giving young people time three nights a week" impressed McCullough. She declared that the teacher's work

¹²⁹ "Lacking ideal equipment, every effort must be made to provide enough space so that children may feel free and unhampered...Children will welcome the relief of standing or moving with the work." *Ibid.*, vol. 2, file 14, Cape of Good Hope Art Instruction for Teachers to Supplement the Art Syllabus for the School of Cape Pretoria by Norah McCullough Art Inspectress. See also H. Rugg, "The New Psychology and the Child-Centred School," in Education for Complete Living: The Challenge of Today, 587. "...the learning child is the active child."

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 4. Historical accounts of S.A. note that "At the centre of the conflict" of African and European people" was the ownership of land and the control of [black] labour." See Oakes (ed.) The Real Story, 96.

¹³¹ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 2 file 1, "Flourishing," 3.

"...has exposed the irresponsibility of the European by a practical demonstration of what is needed and what can be done."¹³² She concludes her essay with a tribute to her own teacher and the continued resolve that art education contributes to creating a better society.

Lisner tenets must be clung to through thick and thin, namely that it is the child and his creativity that are of first importance. In the course of the harvest of this work will be increased human capacity for the genuine things of life, sharpened sensibilities and creative participation in all communal affairs, including politics. Then the arts centre will no longer be relegated to a role in the corner, but have its own place in the sun.¹³³

As Art Inspectress¹³⁴ from 1940 to 1946, she was required to visit stifling, rigid state education schools and teacher training colleges. It was McCullough's least enjoyed assignment. About her responsibilities she wrote:

...taking propaganda along with me to five more T.C.s.[teacher training centres]. The teacher type is so dull but it is not always their fault, as very little that is interesting, constructive and up-to-date is offered to them. I can go on being inspectress (what a word) if I want to next year but I can't say it's a prospect I contemplate with any enthusiasm. I can only feel that I might leaven the dough somewhat, especially as I am the dept.'s white-headed girl and they listen to me as if I were an important authority.¹³⁵

By 1941 the pro-Nazi sentiment in the country and reality of the war began to be felt. McCullough wrote: "We are now hearing bad news of various friends

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid., 7.

¹³⁴ Her official title "Art Inspectress," was one she joked about. "I was called "Inspectress" which just about killed me, like being called a spinstress." NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 2, S. 2, 4.

¹³⁵ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 6, file 33, N. McCullough to Mother, 20 October 1941.

serving in N. Africa. Even in my small circle, I know of three casualties."¹³⁶ With the war came the growth of Nazi sentiment within the country. While the Smuts government tried to quell some of this activity,¹³⁷ "...thousands of Afrikaners...openly backed the cause of Adolf Hitler."¹³⁸ To her family McCullough confided: "I ran into anti-Semitism today, in someone towards whom I could not speak openly.. an educated man in a prominent position...." She commented scornfully:

On the political murder of a Jew, this same man said "Thank god he was murdered." He is seemingly such a mild person -- I'd hate to see what a really vindictive one would rise to.¹³⁹

When her lecture in Steynsburg was postponed in favour of the nationalist speaker Reverend Poptgeiten she maintained the importance of her mission:

Because the thing I preach is the antidote to suppression, regimentation and so on, I will get something alive over to these students! Everthing else they are taught is tinged with hate, suspicion, narrow thinking. They refer to themselves as "free slaves." It would be funny if it were not so dangerous.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Ibid., N. McCullough to Mother, 13 January 1942.

¹³⁷ Oakes, Real Story, 349.

¹³⁸ In 1942 the militant wing of the group began, the Stormjaers, "started a campaign of violence which included blowing up pylons, powerlines, post offices, shops and banks as well as beating up Jews and soldiers." Like Vorster, many who were part of the pro-Nazi Ossewagrandwag would later become prominent in the National party's governments that rose to power in 1948. Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., vol. 6, file 28, N. McCullough to Mom, Dad & Dobie, 14 August 1939.

Disgusted by the atmosphere of ethnic hatred in South Africa, McCullough wrote:

I'm glad I don't have to stay here because I couldn't put up with it for long....The "Nats" are fanatical republicans and fascists at the same time - they embrace Nazi sentiment because it's anti-British. They hate Jews more than the British- they hate the British because they helped the Jews -! ! Golly - I wish I had Irene Spry to smooth my brow - she can always make these things clear to me but I think even Irene would be stumped over S.A.¹⁴¹

McCullough said she stayed in South Africa for so long because World War II made crossing the oceans by boat a dangerous prospect.¹⁴² In correspondence however, it is evident that the absence of an opportunity for professional advancement in Toronto was the primary reason for her decision to remain. As early as the summer of 1938 - six months after her arrival in Africa -- McCullough began to speculate on her return date.

The people here want me to stay another year or even six months. Mr. Lismer says things at the Gallery are very precarious and thinks it a good move for me to stay.¹⁴³

In 1939 Lismer wrote: "I am concerned about your chances there, in Toronto, & am sorry that we have not kept anything status quo for you."¹⁴⁴ He delayed stating that there was little likelihood of an advanced position for McCullough should she return. For the first time in her career McCullough encountered the

¹⁴¹ Ibid. Norah is referring to Irene Spry, wife of Canadian cultural nationalist, Graham Spry.

¹⁴² "...there was a German navy operation in the South Atlantic off the coast of Brazil and ships fighting there. I think there was a big British ship sunk there and I also think the Graf Spree had sunk in the Atlantic. But occasionally we would get news of these things and it scared us silly. the idea of going down in a submarine is something I don't like." NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 3, S. 1, 10.

¹⁴³ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 6, file 25, N. McCullough to Mother, 30 July 1938, 3.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., vol. 2, file 9, A. Lismer to N. McCullough, 2, 15 & 17 April 1939.

"glass ceiling," as her gender restricted her from being considered for a senior, supervisory position at the Art Gallery.

I think you should know exactly how matters stand. No doubt they have been writing to you to find out when you are coming back & I think you should make sure first of all what they will let you do. M.B. has ideas - & one of them is to appoint a man director - not me.¹⁴⁵

McCullough hoped that staying would boost her professional status at home. In 1940 she wrote: "I have reached the stage where I must build up my personal and professional status and not flit from this to that."¹⁴⁶ When she received news of her father's death in 1941 she wrote regretfully:

Sometimes I feel unhappy, wondering especially if Dad knew I stayed because here, I have a far better chance of getting on than in Toronto. I thought if I could stick it out for a bit, I would have a better reputation and a right to go after a good job in a good institution somewhere.¹⁴⁷

While she was anxious to leave and return to Canada, she was leaving with a greater sense of herself and her capabilities. Her "pioneering" Child Art mission, had not overcome race and class barriers as it idealistically claimed. However, her practical approaches to art education had been adopted in many places by the ruling white minority educational system and she had been lauded as an art educational expert. She left South Africa having gained more educational and administrative experience and with an sense of herself as a professional.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., vol. 6 file 30, N. McCullough to Mother, 10 August 1940.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., vol. 6 file 33, N. McCullough to Mother, 14 January 1941.

Before departing in 1946, she wrote:

When I get back with only clothes for my back and absolutely no cash I hope I can earn my keep for a few months as your skivvy! Then I shall go to the National Gallery for a job, failing that Prov. Education -- even the faculty of Ed. at Toronto. No more Art gallery for me unless it's a good offer. I've got ideas about my value you see!¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., vol. 6 file, 33, McCullough Papers, N. McCullough to Mother, 1946.

Chapter 3

Bringing Art to the People: Western Canada, 1946-1956

Returning to a changed society of post-war Canada, McCullough briefly worked for the National Gallery before going to work in 1948 for the Saskatchewan Arts Board (SAB), the first arts council of its kind in North America.¹ The programme of the Arts Board, with its emphasis on adult education and grass roots community contact, reflected ideas emphasized in the socialist platform of the newly elected Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) government which brought the SAB into being. It also reflected the populist approach to culture taken in post-war Canada and specifically in the post-depression, agrarian socialist cultural climate of Saskatchewan under the CCF.

The prairie communities' warm and enthusiastic response to SAB events, increased Norah's perception of herself as an arts "pioneer." The appreciation and need for her work and the respect she felt for the local people inspired her and increased her commitment to her calling. Describing her work McCullough wrote:

Why do we attempt to take art to the people?...Art can add to the lives of people, in enjoyment as much as anything. And with rural people, experience of art has value in breaking down isolationism, in providing a sense of belonging to a greater world and a share in the amenities of living. The lack of art experience amongst laymen is a common pattern not confined to rural people. But in the countryside there is little or no opportunity for finding this experience.²

¹ The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985) S.v. "Saskatchewan: Culture."

² McCullough, "Bringing Art to the People," 298.

It was Norah's belief that by "bringing art to the people"³ she was helping to break down the isolation that existed between Saskatchewan rural communities and the world outside. At the time of her work with the SAB, many communities were difficult to reach in the winter months and their greatest communication link was the radio. But just as she was brightening their lives, so too were they enriching hers. Within these communities Norah was delighted to find homespun warmth and a wealth of native intelligence and talent. Her experiences in prairie communities sparked her interest in craft production and eventually led to further research of European and Scandinavian craft production. More importantly, working for the SAB provided McCullough with another opportunity to apply her skills for developing staff, programmes, and local support in a community arts project at its crucial embryonic stage.

A description of Norah McCullough's life during the eight years she worked for the SAB again provides a picture of the period. Descriptions of McCullough's friendships and professional associations during her years with the SAB create a profile of the leaders of western Canadian art and politics of the 1940s and 1950s. In addition, McCullough's role in delivering culture, provided by the media and in her own and others' accounts brings continued insight into the changing life of the relatively rare professional woman of the 1940s and 1950s.

Enormous changes had occurred in Canada during Norah McCullough's eight year absence. The country had weathered a depression and widespread

³ "Bringing Art to the People," Canadian Art, 8 (Spring 1956), 298-300.

unemployment⁴ and participated in a world war. Gaining strength from the country's strong role in the war and its increased participation in international bodies such as the United Nations,⁵ Canada became a recognized middle power in external affairs. Canadian citizenship was recognized and there were hints that Canada would begin to look more to its place in North America and less to its ties to Britain.⁶ Constitutional changes after the war also gave the Dominion government more autonomy.

On the domestic front federal social welfare legislation, based on Keynesian economics,⁷ was introduced⁸ spurred on by public fear of another depression and the influence exerted by the CCF under J. S. Woodsworth, which after the war had become a formidable opposition party.⁹ The National budget, which in 1939 had been \$2.9 billion, had grown astronomically reaching \$19.4

⁴ Careless, Ontario, 238. See also Bothwell et al., Canada Since 1945: Power Politics and Provincialism, rev. edition (Toronto 1989), 255.

⁵ Ibid., 390-91.

⁶ Bothwell et al., Canada Since 1945, 37.

⁷ British economist John Maynard Keynes, challenged macroeconomic theories that espoused that periodic changes in the economy were small and could be self-correcting. Keynesian economics stressed government expenditures and lower taxes to stimulate domestic output and employment. See R. Wirick, "Keynesian Economics," in The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985).

⁸ King's Liberal government introduced legislation on unemployment insurance, family allowances and proposals for health insurance. B. Neatby, "King, William Lyon MacKenzie," in The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985). Also established was an agency for veterans, a national Health and Welfare Department and a Department of Reconstruction. Bothwell et al., Canada Since 1945, 49.

⁹ In 1944 the CCF led by E. B. Joliffe came close to winning the provincial election and a gallop poll in the winter of 1946 showed support for the CCF had trebled since 1940. W. Young, The Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF 1932-61 (Toronto 1969), 109-110.

billion in 1944. The civil service was becoming a "growth industry," enlarged from 46,000 in 1939 to 116,000 in 1945 and continuing to increase.¹⁰ The Dominion's first White Paper -- on Employment and Income -- was written containing the assurance of "high and stable levels of employment."¹¹ In 1948 Louis St. Laurent became Prime Minister, succeeding MacKenzie King who retired after twenty-two years in office.¹²

The population became increasingly urbanized as migration away from family farms continued. Road building expanded, yet only 36.7% of households owned cars. Televisions, which came on the market in 1948, were still rare, but most homes had a radio.¹³

After 1945 women's participation in the work force had changed dramatically. During the war women had entered the workforce in record numbers replacing male workers who were overseas. Many were employed in non-traditional jobs and many had experience a new sense of independence.¹⁴ With the return of the male labour force after the war the majority of women withdrew from the labour market.¹⁵ Between 1931 and 1961, the latter period of

¹⁰ Ibid., 23 and 53.

¹¹ Ibid., 50.

¹² Ibid., 91.

¹³ For the years 1941-1951 see Bothwell et al., Canada Since 1945, 142.

¹⁴ C. Ramkhalawansingh, "Women During the Great War," in J. Acton et al. (eds.), Women at Work Ontario, 1850-1930 (Toronto 1973), 261-307.

¹⁵ D. G. Forestall, "The Necessity of Sacrifice for the Nation at War: Women's Labour Force Participation, 1939-1946," Histoire sociale/Social History, vol. XXII, no. 44 (November

McCullough's career, there was a marked decline in women's participation in the workforce and in professional occupations.¹⁶ Yet in the same period there was tremendous growth in professional occupations as a percentage of the total work force.¹⁷

For art and culture the 1940s were marked by divergent goals; the beginnings of support for centralized, nationalist culture which supported the elite forms of fine art and individual artists and was based on a fear of American mass culture and patronage¹⁸ and an active movement among many artists and amateur artists for decentralized, grassroots, regional-based development in the arts, spawned by the collectivist and populist ideas spawned during the Great Depression.¹⁹

The arts gained a larger national profile as individual artists and groups from all disciplines became active in lobbying the federal government, bringing their ideas for cultural development to the attention of the politicians and public.²⁰ During the war many visual artists had participated as wartime artists in duty

1989), 333-347. See also Kinnear, In Subordination, 159 and Palmer, About Canada, 18.

¹⁶ Kinnear, In Subordination, 159.

¹⁷ Professional positions increased from 5.5% of the labour force to 7.2% in 1941 and 12.9% in 1961. See Palmer, About Canada, 17.

¹⁸ P. Litt, "The Massey Commission, Americanization and Canadian Cultural Nationalism," Queens Quarterly, 98/2 (Summer 1991), 382. See also Tuer, "Nation Building," 30. Tippet suggests that the impetus for the Massey Commission was "a strategic manoeuvre designed to upstage growing support for CCF policy articulating the importance of national culture." Tippet, Making Culture, 182.

¹⁹ See Tuer, "Nation Building" and Litt, "Massey Commission."

²⁰ Ibid., 33-34.

overseas, recording the events of war.²¹ After the war, striving for more unified support on a federal level, artists and arts advocates entered the discussion of post war reconstruction and made a "landmark" presentation to the House of Commons Special Committee on Reconstruction and Re-establishment in 1944.²² The Artists' Brief called for national co-ordination of the arts and "the establishment of nation-wide community art centres." The brief stated:

Millions of persons living in Canada have never seen an original work of art, nor attended a symphony concert or a professionally produced play. Millions have opportunities neither for realizing their own talent nor for achievement in post-educational fields. On the other hand, thousands of professional, creative minds enjoy a field so limited that they are forced into activities unsuited to their talents. Their energies are consumed in frustration.²³

In 1941 when Canadian artists held a national conference in Kingston, Ontario, proposals for community based art centres were widely favoured.²⁴ The

²¹ See "The Beginning of Co-ordinated Artistic Life: The Second World War and its Aftermath," Chap. 6 in Tippet, Culture, 156-185.

²² Referred to as "The Turgeon Committee," its mandate was to "study and report on the general problems of reconstruction and re-establishment which may arise at the termination of the present war." It was chaired by James Grey Turgeon. Tippet, Culture, 171. The brief read to the committee on June 21, was submitted by sixteen groups including the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, The Canadian Group of Painters, The Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour, The Sculptors Society of Canada, The Canadian Society of Graphic Art and the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada. Tippet, Culture, 170-174. Significant players in the event included Elizabeth Wyn Wood and Herman Voaden. See Luckyj, Visions and Victories, 18.

²³ R. MacKaskell (ed.), Achieving the Modern: Canadian Abstract Painting and Design in the 1950s, Exhibition catalogue (Winnipeg 1993), 17.

²⁴ J. O'Brian, The Flat Side of the Landscape: The Emma Lake Workshops, Exhibition catalogue (Saskatoon, Sask. 1989), 70. It was suggested that the centres would have an art gallery, movie projector and theatre and that they would engage in "an ambitious education program in order to build an informed audience...As well the plan called for a handicrafts office to be located in the National Gallery." See Tuer, "Nation Building," 33-34 and Tippet, Culture, 137.

idea was vigorously opposed by H. O. McCurry,²⁵ the wartime director of the National Gallery of Canada and other influential personages including Vincent Massey, who headed the National Commission on the Development of the Arts, Letters and Sciences in 1948; both advocated federal funding for centralized, national institutions to provide support for the arts.²⁶ The realization of their goal placed the national institutional emphasis on more elite cultural expressions such as opera, symphony and painting as opposed to folk dancing and crafts. These divisions increased the separation between amateurs and professionals, and between individuals and community. In many cases the exclusions of 'amateurs' became exclusions of class, ethnic groups and women.

The reconstructivist approach of teaching democratic ideals, which had gained impetus during the war, continued throughout the forties influencing the ideals of Child Art and education in all spheres. In 1941 a national conference, entitled Education for Citizenship, was held which included ministerial representatives from across Canada. Those attending agreed to:

...stimulate in the minds of all Canadians a greater appreciation of democracy as a way of life to the end that they may better understand the present struggle and thereby make the maximum contribution to the war effort of the nation.²⁷

²⁵ H. O. McCurry, NGC Director (1939-1955). For a full profile see NGC, The National Gallery of Canada: Past and Prologue (Ottawa 1986), 14-18.

²⁶ M. Bell, "Introduction," The Kingston Artist Proceedings, reprint with Introduction by M. Bell and biographical notes by F. K. Smith (Kingston 1991), xv-xvii. See also Tuer, "Nation Building," 34.

²⁷ P. Axelrod, "Higher Education Utilitarianism, and the Acquisitive Society: Canada 1930-1980," M. S. Cross and G. S. Kealey (eds.), Modern Canada: 1930s-1980s (Toronto 1984), 181-182.

By the 1940s Child Art programs were entering the curriculum of many public schools²⁸ and the first director of art in a provincial educational system was hired in Ontario in 1948.²⁹ In 1944, "Adventures in Canadian Painting," a CBC series on Canadian painting tailored for school-age children was broadcast. The series, instigated by National Gallery Director H. O. McCurry,³⁰ was augmented by art reproductions in the form of postcards sent to junior high and elementary schools. By the end of the 1940s the field of child art teachers and museum educators began to be steadily professionalised, concerning itself with accreditation and professional standards³¹ and while the free-spirited and independently-oriented Child Art approach of Lismer survived and continued to gain in popularity with the public, it was facing tough theoretical opposition both in Canada and the United States during the 1940s. The influx of influences from science and psychology³² and museum educators like Thomas Munro of the Cleveland Museum challenged the expressive approach and favoured instead, a more easily standardized and regulated system of disciplined-based art education.³³

Arriving into this changed environment McCullough had to assess what

²⁸ C. D. Gaitskell, "Art in Canadian Schools," Canadian Art (1962), 118.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ NGC, Past and Prologue, 15-16.

³¹ Gaitskell, "Schools," 118.

³² Freedman and Popowitz, "Art Education and Development," 23.

³³ Gillett, Education Thought and Practice, 245 and Ott, "Pioneers in Museum Education," 289.

professional roads were available for her. She could no longer rely on the assistance of Lismer, who was now the Educational Supervisor of the Art Association of Montreal.³⁴

I didn't know what I was going to do. I went to Montreal and saw Arthur. I thought he might have something for me to do in Montreal, but he said there were no positions and he didn't have any money to do anything there.³⁵

Finding satisfactory employment proved to be a challenge. Certainly, McCullough was unimpressed with her first offer, in 1946 at the Royal Ontario Museum. McCullough considered it,

a very poor position that involved an awfully lot of broom sweeping in the museum, a bossy administrative position, not my cup of tea....³⁶

McCullough declined the Toronto museum job later citing "It was a very sort of first effort you know and I had gone through that thing."³⁷ Yet there may have been several reasons for her decision. McCullough's treatment in South Africa, as a privileged person and an expert, had altered her perception of her abilities and worth and she had returned to Canada with maturing professional ambition. As she explained "...I'd been doing quite well. I was a white-haired girl. I got, you know I got anything I wanted done at this Joubert Centre without

³⁴ McLeish, September Gale, 153-154, 174-180. See also Reid, Concise, 179. Lismer continued to work there for a happy thirty years.

³⁵ "Audrey was working for him then, too. He brought her down there, and I think that was all he could manage, you know, in the way of an extra person" NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 3, S. 1, 15.

³⁶ Ibid., 11. Ibid., T. 2, S. 2, 11-12.

³⁷ Ibid., T. 3, S. 2, 16.

any problem...."³⁸ Dissatisfied with the work, she was equally unhappy with the salary.

...and the salary was very poor, about a fifth of what I was getting in South Africa and I said I couldn't possibly take a salary like this, at my age--I was forty -two, you see. No, I have to find something to maintain me better.³⁹

In addition, the job lacked the challenge of others in which McCullough initiated innovative programmes and worked in close contact with local communities. It was in these situations that Norah's ability to organize, rouse enthusiasm and connect individual talent to projects shone. Throughout her career, it was in fledgling arts projects, in an atmosphere of innovation and excitement, that McCullough's strengths were marshalled. Working with established institutions held little appeal for Norah, rather, it was in pioneering projects, that were 'forward-thinking,' that she thrived.

McCullough accepted instead a position as a regional representative for the National Gallery of Canada in 1946. The job involved arranging exhibitions, film screenings and art lectures, and encouraging child art programmes in smaller regional centres in Prince Edward Island and Northern Ontario.⁴⁰

By 1948, a more promising opportunity had come her way. She met David Smith, the newly appointed Director of the Adult Education Division of the

³⁸ *Ibid.*, T. 3, S. 2, 1.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, T. 2, S. 2, 11.

⁴⁰ McCullough showed four or five National Film Board art films in town halls that were sometimes "grubby and untidy." Exhibits were of smaller paintings by artists such as Jacques de Tonnancour and friends Gordon Webber and A. Y. Jackson. "It was an occasion and I was a star, so to speak." *Ibid.*, T. 3, S. 2, 1-5.

Saskatchewan provincial government, in Toronto. McCullough knew Smith from her AGT days when he and his wife worked at the nearby Settlement House.⁴¹ Smith told McCullough about the soon to be formed SAB and urged McCullough to apply for the position of Executive Secretary.⁴² McCullough applied, was promptly hired, and in the winter of 1948, headed west. Once again, McCullough was to be engaged in pioneering art education work that would have enormous influence in strengthening her idealistic attitude of the place of cultural education in society.

Saskatchewan, the place where Norah McCullough began the third phase of her career, was quite possibly the most pioneering place a social reformer with an interest in culture might wish to be in 1948; the social and political climate was unlike any other place in North America. Four years prior to McCullough's arrival, dramatic political and social changes had swept through Saskatchewan.

The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), a socialist democratic party founded in 1932 and one which had emerged as a strong third force in Canadian politics during the depression years, came to power in Saskatchewan in a landslide victory in 1944.⁴³ It was the first socialist government in North

⁴¹ "He and his wife both had things to do at the Settlement House. I do not know what they did exactly. They associated with the Settlement House people that they knew - a man named Cassidy, who was eventually a socialist, you know, and his son is still a socialist living in Ottawa." *Ibid.*, 13-14.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴³ D. E. McHenry, "Saskatchewan under CCF Rule" Chap. VII in The Third Force in Canada: the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation 1932-1948 (Westport, Connecticut 1950; reprint 1976), 208.

America and upset thirty-four years of Liberal government in the province.⁴⁴

Saskatchewan became a topic in the press both nationally and internationally.⁴⁵

Influenced by the ideas of the British Labour movement, the CCF was supported by the United Farmers of Alberta, other western farm associations and labour.⁴⁶

"The party's aim" was "to transform much of Canadian society."⁴⁷ The party stated that "No CCF government will rest content until it has eradicated capitalism."⁴⁸ In 1942, the national chairman, Frank Scott, outlined the cornerstones of the CCF party beliefs:

The first is the primary duty of the state to secure the welfare, both cultural and material, of the people who form the great majority of the population. The second is that this welfare must provide now in very tangible forms, such as health, education, good homes, etc.... the third is that this welfare will be attained only if the state develops the national resources of the country under the general economic plan, free from the dictates of private interests, so that the material foundation for a just society can be securely laid....⁴⁹

Support for the party in Saskatchewan in 1944 was unprecedented. It was so strong that "At the peak of its membership...approximately one in every seven

⁴⁴ Ibid., 208.

⁴⁵ The election of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in 1944 "was a matter of intense interest to Americans as well as to Canadians, and was widely reported in the American daily press, the news weeklies and leftist periodicals (or what remained of them in 1944)." O'Brian, Flat, 29.

⁴⁶ S. M. Lipsett, Agrarian Socialism: The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1950, 2nd edition, 1968) 204. See also Careless, Canada, 361.

⁴⁷ Young, Anatomy of a Party, 109.

⁴⁸ O'Brian, Flat, 71.

⁴⁹ Young, Anatomy of a Party, 109.

families of the province held paid membership in the party.⁵⁰

The spectacular victory of the CCF in Saskatchewan was the result of a combination of factors, including the charismatic leadership of T. C. Douglas and other political leaders such as M. J. Coldwell and G. H. Castledon⁵¹ and the geographic and economic conditions of the province.⁵² Largely agricultural, by the end of the 1930s Saskatchewan had suffered through the depression and a severe drought and crop failure. The poorest province west of Quebec, it had the lowest per capita income of all Canadian provinces for 1933. As a result of these conditions, the population of the province showed a steady decrease between the years 1936 to 1946.⁵³

Education and cultural programmes, including adult education and library programmes, were a strong feature of the CCF election platform.⁵⁴ According to McHenry the party "...regarded education as one of the major roads to a better society." The rationale was that "equality of education opportunity is obviously prerequisite to the social mobility necessary if each individual is to achieve the place in society appropriate to his ability and industry."⁵⁵ Several educators sat in

⁵⁰ This ratio represented a "higher paid up membership than the British Labour party," and, as McHenry speculates, "probably the highest of any democratic party in existence." McHenry, Third Force, 226.

⁵¹ Ibid., 213.

⁵² Ibid., 207-208.

⁵³ Ibid., 206-207.

⁵⁴ Adult education was strongly emphasized. See McHenry, Third Force, 258.

⁵⁵ McHenry, Third Force, 256.

Douglas' 1948 cabinet, including Woodrow Lloyd, a president of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation who continued in his second term of office to hold the position as Minister of Education.⁵⁶ When the party ran for re-election in 1948, they emphasized their record which included agricultural and industrial development, labour, the expansion of social services and educational achievements.⁵⁷

The support for culture, education and rural outreach espoused in the CCF platform soon became a reality. Established in February 1948 by an Order-in-Council,⁵⁸ the Saskatchewan Board (SAB) was the first arts board of its kind in North America. The SAB mandate was:

...to make available to the citizens of the province greater opportunities to engage in creative activities in the fields of drama, visual arts, music, literature, and handicrafts, with qualified guidance and leadership, and to establish and improve the standards for such activities in the province.⁵⁹

The Board also has made it a policy "to give consideration to people living in smaller towns and villages."⁶⁰ As W. A. Riddell,⁶¹ a member of board of

⁵⁶ Ibid., 216-219. Appointed the minister for education in 1944, Lloyd was responsible for rapid improvement of educational opportunities for rural children. See C. H. Higginbotham, Off the Record: the CCF in Saskatchewan (Toronto 1968), 69-71.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 216-217. The federal political platform the CCF also emphasized the importance of adult educational programmes, especially in rural areas. The CCF's 1944 national manifesto, Security with Victory, promised to "promote the arts and crafts and artistic expression in every form by community Centres, by a system of scholarships, by grants to voluntary art institutions and associations, symphony orchestras, choral societies, travelling art exhibitions and the like..." CCF, Security with Victory: CCF Manifesto Dominion General Election 1945 (Ottawa 1944), 27.

⁵⁸ W. A. Riddell, Cornerstone for Culture: A History of the Saskatchewan Arts Board (Regina 1978), 6.

⁵⁹ SAB, SAB First Annual Report (1948).

⁶⁰ Ibid.

governors for the SAB and the Dean of Regina College explained:

In 1951, there were only 832,00 people scattered over an area of 252,000 square miles. Fifteen per cent of the total population lived in Saskatoon and Regina and only twenty percent in centres of over 7,000 people.⁶²

"Aware of the British Arts Council," Smith visualized the SAB developing a modification of that institution's goals."⁶³ The Board had fifteen members, twelve of whom were volunteers, selected for their knowledge and interest in the areas of visual arts, music, drama, handicraft and radio programming.⁶⁴ Committees were established for the "main activities of arts, music, handicraft and literature."⁶⁵

The merger of concerns between adult education and the arts was not wholly acceptable to all the originators of the arts board.⁶⁶ Yet the formation, mandate, constituency and structure of the SAB was very much in keeping with

⁶¹ In 1950 Riddell became the SAB Chairman, a position he held until 1964. Riddell was one of the leading exponents of cultural development in post World War II Saskatchewan. He was the President of the Regina Orchestral Society and a member of the planning committee of the Saskatchewan Centre of the Arts. He was an Officer of the Order of Canada and the author of Cornerstone for Culture: A History of the Saskatchewan Arts Board (Regina 1979). Riddell, Cornerstone, frontispiece.

⁶² Riddell, Cornerstone, 9.

⁶³ SAB, SAB Fourth Annual Report (1951), 5. Adjustments were made to local conditions. In considering its structure, for instance, the concept of arts panels was replaced with a six member board which gave fair representation to the areas of visual arts, music, drama and crafts and had representatives of artists, specialists and community supporters. Riddell, Cornerstone, 6.

⁶⁴ SAB, SAB Sixth Annual Report (1953), 5.

⁶⁵ Riddell, Cornerstone, 6.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 5. W. A. Riddell noted that "Voaden and possibly Lindner" "had a somewhat different concept from that proposed by the government by Smith." Voaden wrote to Smith: "...it is important that this venture should be publicized not as an undertaking of the Adult Education office, but as stemming from the Ottawa briefs, The Canadian Arts Council...." In contrast, the prologue to the 1956 SAB report stated: "Too many of us get into the habit of not learning. The purpose of the SAB is to encourage and conserve the adult capacity for continuous learning...." SAB, SAB Ninth Annual Report (1956), 5.

the broad educational and cultural platform of the CCF party.

The relationship between the newly established Arts Board, and the Department of Education reflected the expansion in the number of government departments, the increased jurisdiction of the departments and the establishment of boards, commissions and crown corporations that occurred under the new CCF government.⁶⁷ While bringing McCullough into the Saskatchewan civil service reflected the larger trend of the CCF provincial government to attract many of the brightest and most talented individuals from other parts of Canada.⁶⁸

Years later David Smith commented: "... the best thing I did for the Board was to get Norah McCullough to be the first director."⁶⁹ For Norah it was the perfect job. "It was real pioneering stuff - it was great."⁷⁰ The amalgamation of adult education, with its community-based orientation, and the arts with the pursuit of improved standards of artistic excellence, was a good match with McCullough's idealistically focused outlook which linked art with education and social change.

⁶⁷ E. Eager, "The Public Service: Its Organization and Personnel," in Saskatoon Government: Politics and Pragmatism (Saskatoon, Sask. 1980), 148-149.

⁶⁸ His [Douglas's] was a government that believed in planning, one that refused to accept the idea that politics had limits...as a direct result, the provincial civil service attracted able, innovative officials. They came to Regina with freshly minted degrees and the best were sent to Harvard and elsewhere to improve their qualifications." Granatstein, Canada 1957-1967: The Years of Uncertainty and Innovation (Toronto 1986), 170.

⁶⁹ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 7, file 22, David Smith to Joy Cohnstaedt, 17 November 1973.

⁷⁰ NGC, NM File, vol. 3, R. Anderson, "Sojourn in Saskatchewan earns 'arts pioneer' an award," The Daily Mercury, 19. February 1989.

As Executive Secretary, McCullough was the managing director of the Board's day-to-day operation. McCullough's salary and expenses were paid by the Department of Adult Education⁷¹ and through the same division, she was supplied with a part-time administrative secretary and an office.⁷² Her duties were wide-ranging, aimed at developing the reception, awareness and appreciation of art through provincially sponsored cultural activities. Extensive travel, judging art, public speaking, organizing, setting up and interpreting exhibits, ordering films, helping with workshops, arranging tours, corresponding with towns⁷³ and writing reports were all part of the job.

The first year of the SAB under McCullough's guiding hand "was remarkably productive"⁷⁴ and continued to grow in success throughout the decade. The initial operating budget for the SAB was only four thousand and four hundred dollars.⁷⁵ Recorded accomplishments of the SAB in this period included giving a grant to the University Stage Society which enabled them to take a play to sixty towns and villages, putting together an exhibition of silk-screen reproductions of paintings by Canadian artists, purchasing and distributing the newly emerged art publication Canadian Art, inviting a lecturer in art education to Moose Jaw and Saskatoon schools, starting a permanent collection of art works

⁷¹ Riddell, Cornerstone, 8.

⁷² Ibid., 7.

⁷³ NGC, NM File, vol. 3, Anderson, "Sojourn."

⁷⁴ Riddell, Cornerstone, 8.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 14.

by Saskatchewan artists, lobbying the government to encourage the commissioning of artwork for public buildings, sending promising vocal artists and classical musicians to give concerts throughout the province, a co-operative project with the Saskatchewan Library Association aimed at promoting reading, publication of a radio listening guide, producing a number of half-hour recordings on the history of art, and an inquiry into developing a system of scholarships to artists and circulating the exhibition throughout the province, with, at many venues, an accompanying talk about the exhibit by McCullough.⁷⁶

McCullough brought music programs, contemporary film, craft displays and craft demonstrations and art exhibits and lectures to remote rural settlements throughout the province.⁷⁷ Travel in the rural Saskatchewan in the forties was challenging. "Funny things happened," McCullough recalled, drolly. Her first trip to a Saskatchewan rural community, in the winter of 1948, was memorable for adversity and hospitality. McCullough travelled "along a snowy track in a car with no heat:" she was without boots and her companion had left his gloves behind.⁷⁸

We had supper at a little hotel there, I showed three films and gave a talk. We had a wonderful repast afterwards...they had gone to a lot of trouble for us. We left at 11:30 and had 80 miles to drive, but we got the car warm going back.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Ibid., 8.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 3, S. 2., 15-16.

⁷⁹ NGC, NM File, vol. 3, Anderson, "Sojourn." NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 3. S. 2, 12 and 15.

McCullough would sometimes be warned "Be sure to come before the frost is out,"⁸⁰ but this was difficult to plan. "Hardly any side roads had gravel then; in the spring you took your life in your hands, as you drove through the gumbo (that's black clay)."⁸¹ In one place residents brought their vehicles as far as they would budge. Then, using planks they "advanced themselves skillfully."⁸² The conditions of the meeting halls, too, could be a surprise and McCullough learned to prepare for the unexpected.

Sometimes one has to arrange one's facial expression quickly when the place of exhibition is revealed. It may be a hall that has, oh so recently, been the scene of a tea meeting, a dance or a public meeting.⁸³

In 1950 the number of exhibitions circulating throughout the province doubled.⁸⁴ Sponsoring organizations paid ten dollars for an exhibition of original painting and five dollars for one of the reproductions; the fee included a lecturer and the community took responsibility for hiring the hall and advertising the event.⁸⁵ Local people looked forward to these evenings out and brought warmth to the halls by sharing proudly their homebaked foods with the visiting art

⁸⁰ Ibid., vol. 1, K. M. H., "By the mud trail: Taking Art to Rural Communities," The Winnipeg Free Press, 18 June 1954.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid. See also NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 4, S. 2, 1.

⁸³ NGC, NM File, vol. 1, K. M. H., "Mud."

⁸⁴ SAB, SAB Third Annual Report (1950), 7. See also NGC, NM File, vol. 1, K. M. H., "Mud."

⁸⁵ NGC, NM File, vol. 1, K. M. H., "Mud."

expert.⁸⁶ This was a time before television had affected rural isolation and community structure. People from remote prairie hamlets came out in record numbers to SAB events.

...an art exhibition, no matter how restricted in scope or badly presented, is an occasion in a small town or village. No matter if it's a women's group or a service club sponsoring the display this is everyone's affair from infants to grandparents. The interest is at a high level and is all pervasive.⁸⁷

The audience comprised a mixture of ages and backgrounds and the reception could often a learning experience for Norah.

Every hamlet, like every big town has its minority of educated and intelligent people, but at exhibitions one frequently meets uneducated and highly intelligent people. They ask sensible questions and make significant comments.⁸⁸

Comments or questions became opportunities for McCullough to educate.

... one is taken aback from time to time by the astonishing innocent remarks such as "This picture has taken a beating-the paint has been rubbed right off," in reference to a watercolour with large areas of white. But such a remark at once provides an opportunity for discussion on kinds of painting, what certain words refer to, how an artist uses his tools. With such discussion comes more respect for the thought and skills which have gone into making a painting.⁸⁹

Museum standards were adjusted to local conditions.

As for presentation, it is obvious that gallery standards must go by the board. Each display raises a new set of problems. When I have no choice I have had to take to a baseboard showing at floor level. I should, however, like to emphasize that these situations must be seized as opportunities. I

⁸⁶ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 3, S. 2, 16.

⁸⁷ McCullough, "Bringing Art," 299.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

pick up a painting and say. This is how to look at a work of art face-to-face with respect. It was created for us as an adornment to living.⁹⁰

Museum and gallery professionals expressed dismay at McCullough's unconventional methods. According to one reporter "moans of Toronto delegates were plainly audible" when, at the annual meeting of the Canadian Museums Association in Winnipeg in June, 1954 Norah described how she allowed school children to handle the sculpture. "Nothing was damaged nothing was cracked or chipped. And the children loved it," McCullough "firmly asserted."⁹¹

In 1951 McCullough was invited to a summer education school at Victoria High School as an "art authority" to advise on the revision of the art teaching curriculum in Victoria, B. C.⁹² In 1955 among other duties, McCullough attended an annual exhibition of the Winnipeg School of Art and took part in a panel discussion led by Dr. Viktor Lowenfeld, "the eminent art educationist from State College, Pennsylvania, "who gave a talk to the Brandon Art Club,"⁹³ and "served on a committee for the Saskatchewan Transportation Company choosing a design for a map-mural to decorate the bus depot at Saskatoon, allotted to William

⁹⁰ Ibid., 300.

⁹¹ NGC, NM File, vol. 1, K. M. H., "Mud."

⁹² NGC, NM File, vol. 1, "Art Curriculum Getting Face Lift From Woman," Times (Victoria), 11. July 1951.

⁹³ SAB, SAB Eighth Annual Report (1955), 11. Lowenfeld, a student of Franz Cizek and author of Creative and Mental Growth (New York 1947) stressed the individual emotional growth of children in connection to Child Art. His work marked a shift in art education away from reconstructionist toward expressionism and was most influential in the 1950s and 1960s. See R. W. Ott and A. Hurwitz, (eds.), Art in Education: An International Perspective (University Park and London 1984), 71; A. D. Efland, A History of Art Education: Intellectual and Social Currents in Teaching the Visual Arts (New York 1990), 234-237.

Perehudoff."⁹⁴

One of the most successful grassroots endeavours that McCullough was involved in was the Board's handicraft activities: activities that strengthened craft networks provincially and nationally. After establishing a committee for handicrafts, the Board began to organize festivals and workshops.⁹⁵ In some rural centres attendance rose to 1,600.⁹⁶ Craft persons with high skill levels were frequently part of the festivals. Here they would demonstrate their increasing interest and knowledge of their craft. Attendance for the festivals, which were eventually organized by the communities themselves was heartening. Conferences amongst craftspeople were also held "to give intensive consideration to the problems facing these workers." Craft experts from other provinces were brought to Saskatchewan to advise the SAB.⁹⁷

The 1949 report noted that "a small exhibition of Saskatchewan handicraft was displayed at the time of the annual meeting of the Co-op women's Guild with an emphasis on Saskatchewan's ethnic groups."⁹⁸ Norwegian, Danish, Native and

⁹⁴ SAB, SAB Sixth Annual Report (1955), 19.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 14.

⁹⁶ Handicraft festivals seemed to have had the greatest response of all SAB activities. In 1953 the SAB handicraft festival in Swift Current drew 1,641 people and 947 items were on exhibit. See SAB, SAB Annual Report (1953), 13. Five handicraft festivals in small centres in 1952 drew 1,000 to 1,600 people over two days. Ibid., (1952). The report noted that "interest was remarkable."

⁹⁷ They included Mlle. Eveline LeBlanc of Montreal, "long associated with the notable development of handicraft in Quebec. NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 4, S. 1, 9 and Mary Black, an outstanding figure in the history of the Canadian craft movement. SAB, SAB Fifth Annual Report (1952) and The Mary Black Gallery, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

⁹⁸ SAB, SAB Second Annual Report, 9.

Ukrainian crafts were among the groups represented in SAB handicraft exhibits. The diversity of ethnic groups in the province was highlighted in the SAB craft programme. In the 1950s fine arts emphasized professionalism, the individual and "borderless" western-based, international modernism, dominated by American white males. In contrast, the handicraft movement focused on the richness of cultural diversity and women who were representatives of communities and cultures. The 1953 SAB Report stated idealistically:

As his excellency, the Governor-General Sir Vincent Massey recently stated it is the differences amongst us, the variety, which gives Canadian culture its distinctive flavour. Resources like these are intangibles: they take form when people sing together, paint pictures, tell stories, make beautiful things for everyday use, act in plays and of course enjoy such activities. The stories, songs, customs; the latent talent in our young people the intermingling of a dozen or more different language groups - the growth and fusion of such things are the concern of the board.⁹⁹

Work with the board brought Norah into contact with the region's most talented emerging and professional talent in the arts. McCullough, "a real mover,"¹⁰⁰ recognized and marshalled leadership and talent on the arts scene. She quickly became a catalyst for Saskatchewan culture. She forged relationships with many individuals who would later become standard names of the Canadian arts.

Through the Saskatoon Art Centre¹⁰¹ and the SAB, McCullough knew

⁹⁹ SAB, SAB Sixth Annual Report (1953).

¹⁰⁰ In conversation with Kenneth Lochhead, Ottawa, 1995.

¹⁰¹ Established in 1944, it incorporated the Saskatoon Art Association, the Saskatoon Archaeological Society and the Saskatoon Art Association. Ibid., 70.

Ernest Lindner,¹⁰² Wynnona Mulcaster,¹⁰³ Reta Cowley,¹⁰⁴ William Perehudoff, Dorothy Knowles,¹⁰⁵ Henry Bonli¹⁰⁶ and others.¹⁰⁷ Ernest Lindner and William Perehudoff were both early SAB board members. McCullough's circle also included Calgary sculptor Eli Bornstein,¹⁰⁸ and friends Vancouver painter Jack Shadbolt¹⁰⁹ and Illingworth Kerr, an alumnus of the Ontario College of Art who

¹⁰² Ernest Lindner, a native of Vienna, was the head of Saskatoon's Technical Collegiate Institute from 1936-1962. During the Emma Lake Workshops of the 1960s he received pivotal criticism from American modernist critic Clement Greenberg (1962) and American colourfield painter Jules Olitski (1963 and 1964). A painter, he is best known for his highly detailed closely focused studies of decay and growth on the forest floor. See Reid, Concise, 284 and O'Brian, Flat, 82-83.

¹⁰³ Mulcaster was an "inspired teacher" who taught at the Saskatoon Teacher's College. Her students included western artists Otto Rogers and Allen Sapp. Her work was purchased by the SAB. Reid, Concise, 350, 361. An enthusiastic supporter of the Emma Lake Workshops, like several other western painters, Mulcaster received encouragement for her work from Clement Greenberg. She was one of four women leaders (the first female leaders in its history) to lead the Emma Lake Workshop (1977). See Tippet, Lady, 128. O'Brian, Flat, 17, 77 and 141-143.

¹⁰⁴ A watercolourist, Cowley (b. 1910) was a lecturer at the University of Saskatchewan. Her work was purchased for the SAB permanent collection. McCullough later curated an exhibition of Cowley's work for WAC. See Tippet, Lady, 147-148 and Reid, Concise, 284.

¹⁰⁵ Knowles and Perehudoff, husband and wife, were amongst the most talented modern prairie painters of the period, who later reached national status. Both attended workshops at Emma Lake in 1956-1957 and with Clement Greenberg (1962), Kenneth Noland (1963), Jules Olitski (1964) and others. Here they received pivotal criticism. MacKaskell, Modern, 156; Reid, Concise, 284, 349. Widely exhibited For Perehudoff's work see MacKaskell, Modern, 160-161; Reid, Concise, 349-350 and O'Brian, Flat, 140-144.

¹⁰⁶ See O'Brian, Flat, 75-76; 141.

¹⁰⁷ N. McCullough, "Western Bounty: An Art Gallery for Saskatchewan," Canadian Art, No. 19 (March-April 1962), 111.

¹⁰⁸ An American born sculpture/painter, Bornstein came to Saskatoon in 1950. He joined the faculty of University of Saskatchewan. An abstractionist and Structuralist, he focused on three-dimensional painted geometric relief constructions inspired by the Russian Constructivists and American Charles Biederman. A co-founder with Dutch artist Joost Baljeu of Structure magazine, he also founded and oversaw The Structuralist (1960-1996). Reid, Concise, 349-50; LeClerc, Crisis, 71-72; O'Brian, Flat, 25.

¹⁰⁹ After a stint as a war artist he returned to VSA as the head of drawing and painting. He studied with Varley at the Vancouver School of Art and in London and Paris and in New

studied under Lismer at the same time as Norah.¹¹⁰

Artists were pleased with McCullough's pioneering work. A. Y. Jackson reported:

I spent the next day in Regina with Norah McCullough and a group of my students. Norah had a big party in her apartment. Your silk screen is the first (?) high(?) decoration in her room and looks very well. She is doing a real job there, but there is never enough funds. They have good intentions in work (?) but they have not the funds.¹¹¹

In Saskatchewan, as in her other homes, she had "lots of friends" and there was "something going on all the time."¹¹² Other friends of the period included Herman Arthur Voaden,¹¹³ playwright, director, educator, editor and first president of the Canadian Arts Council and the Director of the Canadian Conference on the Arts, and W. O. Mitchell, then author of the radio series *Jake and the Kid*¹¹⁴ who was engaged to lead the first SAB radio script writing

York at the Art Students League. His mature paintings emerged after 1947 were primarily abstractions based on the experience of landscape. Reid, *Concise*, 285-286.

¹¹⁰ Kerr worked as teacher at the Calgary School of Art and Technology and the Vancouver School of Art. He also worked as a trapper and harvester and for John Grierson in film in 1936. He became a nominee for the Stephen Leacock Medal of Honour of 1946 for his work *Gay Dogs and Dark Horses*. K. Lavery, "Kerr, Illingworth Holey," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (1985).

¹¹¹ Letter from Alex Jackson to Paraskeva Clark, June 1949.

¹¹² NGC, NM File, vol. 1, K. M. H., "Mud," 2.

¹¹³ Voaden (b. 1903) was considered the "most significant playwright in English Canada following the departure of Merrill Denison to the US in 1931. He was the creator of "symphonic theatre;" which blended poetic choral speech, music, dance and lighting with realism and became a nonrealist alternative to mainstream playwrighting and production style of the 1930s and 1940s. A. Wagner, "Voaden, Herman Arthur," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (1985). Involved in the Arts and Letter Club and Hart House Theatre, Voaden was likely already known to McCullough.

¹¹⁴ Mitchell is a nationally acclaimed novelist and dramatist. His work focuses on life in prairie Canada. In his early career he produced radio plays for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation including the weekly series *Jake and the Kid* (1950 -56), recently produced for

workshop in 1952.¹¹⁵

Women friends gained through her years out west were also leading figures of remarkable strengths and accomplishments. They included dramatist Florence Burton, librarian Marion Gilroy, social democrat Amy Dalglish,¹¹⁶ Nancy Adams, of the Association of Country Women of the World,¹¹⁷ jeweller Helga Palko,¹¹⁸ arts patron and trustee of the National Gallery, Mrs. "Bobbie" Dyde¹¹⁹ and artist and curator Doris Shadbolt.¹²⁰

television. He also worked as a writer for MacLean's magazine. His 1947 novel Who Has Seen the Wind became a classic. C. McLay, "Mitchell, William, Ormond," in The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985).

¹¹⁵ SAB, SAB Fifth Annual Report (1952), 5.

¹¹⁶ (b. 1905, d. 1992) Treasurer and provincial officer of B.C. New Democratic Party. She was active in the early British Columbia second wave feminist movement and was one of the first women to go to court in the 1950s to retain her maiden name. UBC Archives, Interview with Amy Dalglish by Marlene Karnuuk, Special Collection, vol. 159, file 1, 3 May 1973.

¹¹⁷ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 7, file 24, N. McCullough to Dr. W. A. Riddell, 25 May 1976. Nancy Adams (b. 1908 Greasborough, Yorkshire, England). President of the Saskatchewan Homemakers' Club (1948-1959), Federated Women's Association of Canada (1953-1957) and area Vice-President of the Associated Country Women of the World Association (1957-1962). A strong promoter of the provincial library system, she was made a member of the Order of Canada (1975). Saskatchewan Public Archives, November, 1996.

¹¹⁸ Palko (b. 1928) arrived in Regina in 1954 from Austria and later settled in Lumsden, Saskatchewan. She taught SAB enamelling workshops (1956-58). Exhibitions include the *First National Fine Craft Exhibition* (1957) at the NGC and *Canadian Fine Arts*, Canadian Pavilion, Universal and International Exhibition, Brussels (1958). MacKaskell, Modern, 148, 170.

¹¹⁹ Mrs. H. A. Dyde was a member of the SAB board and the board of trustees of the National Gallery of Canada. A generous patron of the arts, in 1954 Dyde donated money for scholarships for artists to attend the Emma Lake Workshops. The money was administered by the SAB. O'Brian, Flat, 70. "She was a promoter in a big way. Oh, she was great...Mrs. Dyde gave me money to turn over to the art school." NGC, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 4, S. 1, 7. See also SAB, SAB Annual Report (1953), 4.

¹²⁰ Shadbolt was the Director of Education (1950-1963) at the Vancouver Art Gallery. In 1963 she became a curator at the gallery and was the VAG Senior Curator and Associate Director (1967-75). She curated Arts of the Raven, a watershed exhibition of B.C. Coastal Native art and in 1971, The Centennial Exhibition of Emily Carr. Vancouver Art Gallery Library, Doris Shadbolt

Florence James was a talented dramatist who came to Saskatchewan in 1950 with her husband, Burton James. Socialist Thespians who had founded the Seattle Repertory Playhouse,¹²¹ they were invited to Regina by McCullough to lead the SAB first drama workshop.¹²² "She came over and she began to make dramatic art hum."¹²³ Persecuted in the United States as subversives by McCarthy -- "that awful fellow who was after everybody, you know, that could possibly be a communist"¹²⁴ who led the Washington Senate Committee on Un-American Activities, the James were targeted because of their "liberal ideas" such as "having Negroes in plays and drama classes and people with foreign names" and having trained in Russia in the Stanislavsky method.¹²⁵ They were blacklisted and forced to leave the Playhouse.¹²⁶ McCullough encountered James, "a great liberal," at a Library Association conference at Banff. Florence, McCullough recalled, was a "very dramatic little woman and quite a fierce personality. I heard her give a

File, Doris Shadbolt Curriculum Vitae, ca. 1988.

¹²¹ O'Brian, Flat, 33. According to O'Brian, the Burtons were the subject of a "witch hunt" by the committee.

¹²² SAB, SAB Third Annual Report (1950), 11.

¹²³ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 4, S. 1, 11.

¹²⁴ Ibid. Joseph McCarthy (1908-1957) was an American Republican senator who led investigations which targeted and persecuted many prominent and innocent people suspected of being communists. The New American Desk Encyclopedia (1984) S.v. "McCarthy, Joseph Raymond."

¹²⁵ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 4, S. 1, 11.

¹²⁶ Ibid. See also O'Brian, Flat, 33.

lecture and just about fell down...."¹²⁷ Norah decided to "invite them to the Arts Board to do work in Saskatchewan."¹²⁸ According to McCullough "they were left-wingers all right, but not terribly absurd or rabid ones."¹²⁹ After Burton James died in 1951, Florence continued to teach for the Arts Board,¹³⁰ settled in Saskatchewan and built a long and illustrious career teaching in the province, making an extraordinary contribution to the development of drama in Saskatchewan.¹³¹

Another cultural and educational pioneer whom Norah befriended was Marion Gilroy. Gilroy was a perfect candidate for McCullough's friendship and admiration. A librarian, educated at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, Gilroy's work in Saskatchewan is documented in a book by prairie author Max Braithwaite entitled Like Being a Millionaire.¹³² Strategically establishing strong alliances with the SAB to reach the community, Gilroy pioneered the first provincial network of

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ McCullough recalled that Florence James was "...terribly trim and neat, you know, very properly dressed and very professional." Ibid. 12.

¹³⁰ Florence James was hired as SAB staff in 1953, "in anticipation of" the province's Golden Jubilee celebrations. SAB, SAB Sixth Annual Report (1953), 11. By this time the staff had grown from "the original small staff of one full time employee to three full time employees and two part-time assistants. Ibid., 7.

¹³¹ "I think Mrs. James was one of the triumphs (of the SAB). Her work goes on." Ibid., T. 4, S. 2, 2. Norah kept track of Florence's career until Burton's death in 1988 which received exhaustive provincial media coverage. See P. Davitt, "Florence James (1892-1988)," Regina-Leader Post, 21 January 1988, 5.

¹³² NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 8, file 5, M. Braithwaite, Like Being A Millionaire, Privately published book (1981).

libraries, along with progressive reading and literacy programmes.¹³³

As a civil servant in a high profile job, McCullough had encounters with many leading CCF politicians. Her association with James brought her briefly in contact with Education Minister Woodrow Lloyd. Lloyd asked McCullough if she thought Mrs. James had any affiliation with the Communist Party and asked Norah for a copy of the Burtons' mandate. When he saw it "He was awfully amused." "It's exactly what the Arts Board is doing," Woodrow commented.¹³⁴

During her time with the board, McCullough practiced discretion about her personal political affiliations, a practice in keeping with her professional attitude toward her responsibilities as a civil servant. In correspondence with her family, however, she continued to discuss her privately held views. A 1993 obituary describes McCullough as a strong supporter of the New Democratic Party,¹³⁵ yet she was evidently not an admirer of provincial leader T. C. Douglas. In a 1948 letter written "To Mother from Nonie" she commented on a photograph taken at a provincial civil servants' party.

Tommy Douglas is at right, the Colburns, David Smith and myself...We found the whole affair amusing - I am really not sneering: I also send a clipping about Frank Scott¹³⁶ and so that you will know the CCF do have

¹³³ Ibid., vol. 6 File 2, material relating to Marion Gilroy, 1981-1984.

¹³⁴ As McCullough noted "it was a great way to damage people to say, "Oh, well, they are communists." The government of Saskatchewan was very alert to this and went to trouble to make sure there was a representation of all kinds of people on the committee."

¹³⁵ NGC, NM File, vol. 3, "Promoter of Canadian Art dies at 90," The Gazette-Montreal, 14 August 1993.

¹³⁶ National chairman of the CCF from (1942-1950), Scott (1899-1950) was "a poet, professor of constitutional law" and a "founding member of the socialist movement in Canada."

some civilized people!¹³⁷

In her personal life McCullough accomplished her goal of independent financial security during these years. With her earnings she purchased a house in Regina. In 1950 she wrote to "Dobie" and Mother, asking for household goods to be sent to her in Regina so she could use them to setting up her new home. She explained that she was beginning to collect Swedish furniture, "not too popular in Saskatchewan." McCullough said she liked "...an uncluttered space after other people's clutter."¹³⁸ She covered the walls in her home with her personal art collection representing many Canadian, particularly western artists.¹³⁹

She also navigated her way through middle-age. Like most professional women of the period McCullough remained unmarried. Indeed, it appeared to be a requirement, written or unwritten,¹⁴⁰ that women remain unmarried in order to

With historian Frank Underhill Scott founded the League for Social Reconstruction, a group that was "the brainchild of the CCF." He was the editor of Canadian Forum and the author of Social Planning for Canada. A Rhodes scholar he was married to painter Marian Scott. K. Richardson, "Scott Francis, Reginald," in The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985). See also Bothwell et al., Canada Since 1945, 309.

¹³⁷ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 7, file 4, To Mother from Nonie, 24 December 1948. In a family of four physicians there was likely a cool reception to Douglas, the Scots-born political firebrand whose strong stance on socialized healthcare met with opposition from the majority of those in the medical community in all provinces. Bothwell et al., Canada Since 1945, 30. Frank Scott, a romantic and stylish figure exemplified the type of individual McCullough was often attracted to.

¹³⁸ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 7, file 5, N. McCullough to Dobie and Mother, 13 August, 1950. Her household furnishings reflected the "modern" international trends in design of the period. For a full account of modern trends in western Canadian art and design at in the period see. MacKaskell, Achieving the Modern: Canadian Abstract Painting and Design in the 1950s. This exhibition catalogue includes the work of many of McCullough's friends, for example, Roy Kiyooka, Helga Palko, Illingworth Kerr and Jack Shadbolt.

¹³⁹ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol.7, File 26.

¹⁴⁰ Women teachers were a case in point. See Strong-Boag, New Day, 22.

retain employment. As Kinnear states "The common mentality assumed that single-minded commitment was the only model for professional work that existed."¹⁴¹ Only a few of Norah's letters remark on her age or marital status.¹⁴² Pragmatic and full of ebullient vitality and optimism, she often spoke humorously about her own situation.

Feelings of disappointment and sadness that surfaced after the age of forty seem to have been health-related. In September 1949 McCullough was forty-six years old and experienced a scare of breast cancer. She wrote to her sister Dorothy from her home in Regina while recovering from the removal of a benign lump in the left breast. She admitted to feeling "blue," an unusual comment for McCullough who seldom seemed depressed.¹⁴³ To her mother she referred to "her old age" and later noted ruefully that "birthdays are for the young" and she is "no longer young."¹⁴⁴

These times seemed, happily, not to have lasted. In 1956, McCullough, fifty-two years old, was awarded a government scholarship to spend a year in France, studying crafts.¹⁴⁵ When she returned in 1958 McCullough resigned as

¹⁴¹ Kinnear, In Subordination, 166.

¹⁴² In an early letter to Lismer, McCullough shared the news about the impending marriage of a colleague, noting, "Miss Kortright has shocked us all to the core, going to be married to Angus Byron McLeod. We are all greatly encouraged." Ibid., vol. 2, file 8, 2, N. McCullough to A. Lismer, 24 September 1936.

¹⁴³ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 7, file 5, "N. McCullough to Dobie, 1 September 1949.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., N. McCullough to Dobie and Mother, 13 August 1950.

¹⁴⁵ She was "interested in everything" and visited paper factories, ceramists, lacemakers, basket makers and weavers throughout the countryside. NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews,

Executive Secretary of the SAB.¹⁴⁶ "I didn't really want to go back to the Arts Board. I felt I had had done my job at the board and other people would pick it up." ¹⁴⁷ As a result of McCullough's and her colleagues' pioneering efforts, the board was now firmly established and flourishing. The range of its projects, was remarkable and included the drama programme under Florence James, handicraft instruction, arts festivals and support programmes for the professional artists and musicians. It was in Saskatchewan, that Norah had been most successful in bringing art to the people and making it a part of everyday living as, Lismer had espoused. Yet, once the "real pioneering stuff," was accomplished, McCullough sought new professional challenges.

Many of the successes of the SAB were a reflection of McCullough's efforts. On 13 February 1989 McCullough received the SAB Lifetime Award for Excellence in the Arts in Regina on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the Board.¹⁴⁸ Acknowledgement also came from both David Smith and Dr. Riddell.

trans., T. 5, S. 1, 5-6. Blodwen Davies, "author and folklorist" was hired to temporarily replace her. SAB, SAB Ninth Annual Report (1956), 13.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. See also SAB, SAB 10 Annual Report (1958), 3.

¹⁴⁷ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 5, S. 2, 1.

¹⁴⁸ NGC, NM File, vol. 3, "Art Community will miss pioneer, Norah McCullough, dead at 90, made impression on Prairies," The Leader Post (Regina, Sask.), 18 August 1993.

Riddell wrote:

As my mind roams back to those early days, your participation and influence is so clear. So often the new ideas were a result of your suggestion, the contact in the communities were those you had made and in all our planning and program your quiet guiding hand was evident.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 7 file 37, Dr. W. Riddell to N. McCullough, 4 February 1989.

Chapter 4

Sharing the Nation's Treasures: Western Canada 1958-1968

In 1958 Norah McCullough was hired as the Western Liaison Officer for the National Gallery of Canada (NGC).¹ As an employee of the NGC, McCullough joined the country's rapidly expanding cultural bureaucracy. McCullough became an interpreter of modern abstract art and a promoter of the nationalist platform of the gallery. While her role continued to be one of bringing art to the people, her message changed to "sharing the nation's treasures." Her most important accomplishments during this time were promoting exhibitions, both large and small, throughout the western region, her contribution to the establishment of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association, of which she later became the Chair, and organizing the NGC exhibition, *Canadian Fine Crafts 1966-67*, an extensive survey of national craft production.

At the time of Norah's appointment, a prosperous economic era had dawned in Canada. Comprehensive support for the arts at the federal level converged with higher education levels,² material prosperity and an explosion of new aesthetic movements that shocked the public. Strong support for the professional artist with a modernist orientation came from institutions and organizations such as the Massey Commission, the Canada Council (1956) and the NGC. On a regional level, this support came from larger centres such as

¹ NGC, NM File, vol. 1, Biographical Notes.

² See Axelrod, "Acquisition."

Winnipeg and Vancouver and in Saskatchewan, from the Emma Lake Workshops which began in 1955. Along with this support divisions between the professional artist and the regional Sunday painter, and between crafts and fine arts, widened.

Nowhere were these conflicts more evident than in the relationship between Norah McCullough and her employer, the NGC. As the Western Liaison Officer, McCullough was kept informed contemporary of trends of modern art and maintained ties to progressive artists. Yet she also remained committed to social democratic ideals of grassroots accountability and communication with ordinary people in small centres. It was here, in the arena of emerging and fledgling art initiatives, that McCullough was able to apply her energetic talent for organizing local talent. In contrast, institutions lacked the fluidity of programming and the capacity for innovation that excited Norah.

Alan Jarvis,³ the director who hired Norah, had encouraged efforts in rural outreach and in craft. McCullough had enjoyed a comfortable relationship with her first administrator, the handsome and urbane Jarvis. "I had known Alan for a long time in Toronto before he ever went to England on his Rhodes Scholarship. Not very closely; but we used to see one another at people's houses, mostly Fairley's [Barker Fairley].⁴ Jarvis favoured McCullough for the position. "I think

³ The Director of the NGC (1955-59). A sculptor and Rhodes scholar, Jarvis was "long a habitue of the London art scene, he was an assistant to Sir Stafford Cripps and an associate of Sir Kenneth Clark. In 1959 Jarvis resigned his position, after European art purchases from the Liechtenstein collection came under criticism from John Diefenbaker's Conservative government. See NGC, Past and Prologue, 20 and J. S. Boggs, National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa 1971), 46-54.

⁴ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, T. 5, S. 2, 1.

he was anxious to have me but he wasn't going to make a great deal of it."⁵

However, Jarvis's troubled tenure forced him to resign from his post in 1959, soon after McCullough's debut. McCullough's relationship with Jarvis' replacement, Charles Comfort, was not a happy one, as McCullough did not respect Comfort.⁶ Dr. Jean Sutherland Boggs⁷ took over the reigns of the gallery in 1965. In contrast to Jarvis, under Boggs' directorship McCullough's interest in local people and local cultural expressions were not supported. By the time of her retirement in 1968 McCullough's approach left her out-of-step with the internationalist, modernist orientation of the NGC. The lack of appreciation for her efforts wounded McCullough who thrived on the praise and appreciation of those clever and "with it" people she admired.

The changes and conflicts that McCullough encountered during the late 1950s and 1960s were the result of many factors. These included shifting economic, demographic and societal conditions which influenced the face of art and culture in Canada and elsewhere.

Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s Canada experienced a period of rapid economic growth, which affected the standard of living, education and

⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁶ "I didn't find him very successful as a director...A lot of his work was done by clerical people and his staff. He was a little full of himself." NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans. T. June 22 1991 S. 1, 8.

⁷ Dr. Jean Sutherland Boggs, MA, PhD, LLD. A scholar, Boggs was a graduate of the University of Toronto in Fine Art and of Radcliffe College and Harvard. See NAC, Past and Prologue, 24; Annual Report NGC 1967/68 Rapport Annuelle (Ottawa 1968), 47, 94-96, 103; Boggs, National, 60.

culture. The Canadian government boasted a 484 million dollar budgetary surplus by 1949.⁸ Buoyed by the Keynesian economic programme of the postwar federal government, the country entered its most prosperous period.⁹ The social safety net widened. Universal pensions for Canadians over 65 appeared in 1951 under the St. Laurent Liberal government¹⁰ and family allowances or baby bonuses were introduced. Real family income increased and the standard of living "raced upwards."¹¹

Demographics changed. Immigration and rural migration increased. And, beginning in the 1940s and reaching a peak in 1959, fertility rates for women soared, creating a "baby boom."¹²

Communities changed. No longer were people isolated as they had once been. Television "emerged as a mass media" and conveyer of popular culture.¹³ Road building continued and highways enhanced travel between communities. The National Housing Act of 1944 which made mortgages available, allowing more families to own single family dwellings.¹⁴ This resulted in large, new suburban

⁸ Bothwell et al., Canada Since 1945, 169.

⁹ 1954-57 statistics based on domestic spending and consumption. Ibid., 174.

¹⁰ Ibid., 148.

¹¹ Palmer, About Canada, 18.

¹² J. L. Granatstein, Canada 1957-1967: The Years of Uncertainty and Innovation (Toronto 1986), 7.

¹³ F. Peep, "Canada and the United States: Comparative Approaches to Broadcast Policy" in Cultures in Collision: The Interaction of Canadian-U.S. Television Broadcast Policies (New York 1984), 20.

¹⁴ Ibid.

communities by the 1950s and 1960s.

The workplace and labour changed. Industry flourished. Family firms of the previous era became corporations controlled by boards of directors.¹⁵ This led to a tremendous expansion of white collar work. Yet opportunities for women were limited.¹⁶

Norah McCullough represented a minority, both as a single working woman and as a professional.¹⁷ By 1951 women made up 22% of the labour force.¹⁸ The number of people working for government increased markedly, expanding from 10% of the labour force at the end of the war, to 25% by the 1970s.¹⁹ Business administration became centralized and the need for office support staff increased and women filled jobs as typists, clerks and receptionists.²⁰ Women entering the work force steadily and slowly increased from 1940 to 1960, the majority were married women re-entering the work force after raising a family.²¹ Men, considered the real "breadwinners," made up the majority of full-

¹⁵ Palmer, About Canada, 12.

¹⁶ Granatstein, Canada 1957-1967, 6-7.

¹⁷ N. Mertz, "Change in Occupational Labour Force," 64-65. See also Department of Labour Canada, "Women at Work in Canada: A Fact Book on the Female Labour Force," (Ottawa 1964), 28-42.

¹⁸ Women's Bureau, Department of Labour Canada, "Changing Patterns in Women's Employment," Report of consultation held 18 March 1966, Sir Wilfrid Laurier Bldg., Ottawa (Ottawa 1966), 6-7.

¹⁹ Ibid., 18.

²⁰ Ibid., 12.

²¹ Kinnear, In Subordination, 158.

time and professional workers and received the highest pay.²² The percentage of professional women in the work force decreased during this period.²³ The average earnings of the female white collar worker were 54 percent of male earnings for managerial positions and 49 percent for professions.

The most significant cultural milestone in the 1950s was undoubtedly the 1951 report of The National Commission on the Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, headed by Vincent Massey. The "Massey Report" recommended federal funding for universities, the extension of public broadcasting from radio to television, and the establishment of a national arts council to support "the production and enjoyment of the arts."²⁴ Remarkably it made "cultural policy a serious interest of the Canadian state."²⁵ The report followed the distinctions between high culture and popular culture, and, for the commissioners "high culture was associated with refinement, education taste and artistic standards."²⁶ Their endorsement of high culture also sprang from a fear, as Paul Litt has

²² Canada Department of Labour, Women's Bureau '69, Three papers (Ottawa 1970), 14.

²³ Kinnear, In Subordination, 158-159.

²⁴ The recommendations of the SAB to the Massey Commission included that the Dominion government consider setting up a national art board "similar to the Arts Council of Great Britain" as an "integrating force for Canadian Culture." Other suggestions were for a scholarship for students in the arts as a way of encouraging Canadian talent. The other suggestion that the NGC provide specialists to schools reflects Norah's concerns and interests. SAB, SAB Fourth Annual Report (1951).

²⁵ Litt, Massey Commission, 375.

²⁶ Bothwell et al., Canada Since 1945, 159.

pointed out, of popular culture, considered destabilizing to democracy.²⁷ They were particularly "contemptuous of U. S. popular culture," which they regarded as a threat to national identity.²⁸ The subsequent establishment of the Canada Council in 1957²⁹ heralded a new era of arts support in Canada. From the late fifties through the sixties, public art galleries, exhibitions, programmes, gallery staff, art publications, art societies, and private dealerships grew exponentially.³⁰

Despite her new national status, McCullough felt she should retain her home in Regina, a decision which reflected her sense of responsibility for maintaining ties with the smaller centres. Alan Jarvis agreed with Norah when she said:

I think it would be a mistake for me to go to a big city because so much goes on in a town like Vancouver or even Winnipeg or Edmonton for that matter, and I would perhaps be absorbed into local projects and the big mainstream out in the woods would be overlooked. You know, and I could be free to go to little places and not be swallowed up in the projects of the big city.³¹

Norah's job interpreting the newest developments in art, kept her in touch with the professional arts scene in the western provinces. During the 1960s McCullough highlighted the work of Canadian artists and tried to balance the

²⁷ Litt, "Massey Commission," 282. The majority of submissions to the Massey Commission came from "the educated and cultured element of society -- intellectuals, cultural bureaucrats, artists and voluntary associations." *Ibid.*, 380.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Bothwell et al., *Canada Since 1945*, 154.

³⁰ A. Davis, "Art Writing and Criticism," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (1985).

³¹ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 5, S. 2, 4.

interests of the public with the necessity of "educating" the public about modern art and the role of the NGC.

Aesthetic trends in the visual arts in Canada which had undergone a radical shift to abstraction in French-speaking Quebec in the 1940s,³² were now changing throughout Canada. The western Canadian visual arts scene expanded rapidly throughout the 1950s and 1960s, as it did throughout North America. Modernist abstraction and divergent art movements caused a furore amongst many sectors of the public who expressed either bewilderment or excitement with the new forms. Artists were divided between those who embraced the art forms and attitudes of international modernism that began to be dominant in Canada and those who wished to claim a regional or national identity in their work.

The most controversial western art show of the period was The *Winnipeg Show* of 1955, organized by the Art Students' Club of the University of Manitoba and the Women's Committee of The Winnipeg Art Gallery. Eight hundred artists were invited and the gallery received four hundred responses from across Canada. Two hundred and sixty-five works were selected representing one hundred and eleven artists.³³ These included members of Painters Eleven, who led the abstract movement in Toronto, The Regina Five and Les Automatistes along with many others of note. Record numbers of people attended the show.³⁴ When the prize

³² See "Paul-Émile Borduas and Les Automatistes 1946-1960," Chap. 14 in Reid, Concise, 226-246.

³³ MacKaskell, Modern, 25.

³⁴ Ibid., 26. See also LeClerc, Crisis, 66.

went to Jean-Paul Mousseau's *La Marseillaise*, a non-objective painting,³⁵ one of the women's committee was "physically nauseated" by the jury selection and the national media declared "a kid could do that."³⁶

Also in 1955, the NGC began a Biennial exhibit of Canadian contemporary painting; an exhibit, which Norah in her new role would promote. Circulated nationally, it highlighted the work of Canada's most innovative painters. Significantly, the Biennial circumvented the long-established control of the Canadian arts scene by the art societies.³⁷

In Regina, the appointment in 1950 of the young Ottawa painter Kenneth Lochhead³⁸ to head the visual arts division of Regina College led to the growth of a lively avant garde. In 1955 Lochhead spearheaded the plan to have summer workshops geared to professional artists at Murray Point School on Emma Lake. He brought in American critics and artists to critique the work of local artists, influencing the direction of several artists' work.³⁹ Jack Shadbolt⁴⁰ was invited to

³⁵ MacKaskell, Modern, 36.

³⁶ Ibid., 26. See also LeClerc, Crisis, 66.

³⁷ MacKaskell, Modern, 24. Circulation of exhibitions to smaller centres and the structure of the Western Canadian Art Circuit was the point of discussion of a 1958 conference on the NGC, held with representatives from exhibition centres in the western provinces. SAB, SAB Tenth Annual Report (1958).

³⁸ Lochhead studied at the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia. He was the recipient of numerous scholarships and awards. Lochhead's work was widely purchased and exhibited provincially and nationally. Art was purchased by the SAB (1954, '55, '58) and exhibited in the NGC Annual Exhibition of Canadian Painting (1953). Reid, Concise, 278; O'Brian, Flat, 70-71; MacKaskell, Modern, 157.

³⁹ MacKaskell, Modern, 157. See also O'Brian, Flat, 15.

lead the first workshop in 1959 and the first of the New York-based American abstract painters, Barnett Newman was hired as workshop leader.⁴¹ As modernist practice and formalism were embraced by many western painters, the face of western art changed dramatically.

In 1961 Ronald Bloore curated an exhibition of young avant garde talent for the Canadian Museums Association Meeting in Regina. Entitled *The May Show* it was held at the MacKenzie Art Gallery. The show featured the work of a group of young western abstract painters, associated with the Regina College of Art and the Emma Lake Workshops with Barnett Newman and Jules Olitski. It included Ronald Bloore, Arthur McKay, Douglas Morton, Kenneth Lochhead and Ted Godwin⁴² as well as associate Roy Kiyooka and architect Clifford Wiens.

A personal friend of Wiens, McCullough had come in contact with several artists in the Regina Five through her previous work in the SAB, and as a NGC representative in contact with the MacKenzie Gallery. She took a special interest in three associated with the "Five." Kenneth Lochhead, the youthful director of the Regina College of Art, Ronald Bloore⁴³ and Roy Kiyooka attracted her

⁴⁰ O'Brian, Flat, 75-78, 140-141.

⁴¹ Ibid., 29-39.

⁴² LeClerc, Crisis, 69; Reid, Concise, 283-284.

⁴³ One of the most "accomplished" of the Regina Five, he was the director of the Norman MacKenzie Art Gallery in 1958. He studied archeology and art history at the University of Toronto and the Institute of Fine Arts in New York and received an MA from Washington University. He also studied at the Courtauld Institute in London. He is best known for his non-objective white on white impasto relief paintings on masonite which explored painterly concerns of material and assertion of the two dimensional plane. See Reid, Concise, 281-282.

attention. Of the three, McCullough was closest to the erudite Bloore whose intellect, refined aesthetic sensibility and personal style appealed to McCullough. Bloore exemplified the new modernist avant garde of Canadian painting. Addressing the audience of the MacKenzie Gallery he said: "Art is a serious, not a casual activity. It cannot be approached simply by the recognition only of the spectator's past experience. Any truly creative work should be a revelation to the beholder, an extension of his experience in life, not a confirmation of what he already knows."⁴⁴ McCullough remarked:

I thought he was quite an interesting man... he was a very good speaker... He's got a marvellous face...he has a crooked shoulder -- again, another person I found attractive because he had something wrong with him.⁴⁵

About Kiyooka⁴⁶ she commented "The man I liked in that group apart from Ron was Roy Kiyooka. "As you know, I had three of his paintings...I always thought it was a mistake that he hadn't been named as one of the "Five"...." ⁴⁷ For the western provinces, McCullough organized a small exhibition of Kiyooka's

⁴⁴ From "Serious Aspects of Art Discussed by Curator," Regina Leader-Post, 11 December 1958, quoted in LeClerc, Crisis, 69, 89.

⁴⁵ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 4 S. 2, 3. "...a serious person but he had a good sense of humour." Ibid., 7.

⁴⁶ Kiyooka studied with Jock MacDonald and Illingworth Kerr at the Provincial Institute of Technical Arts (PITA). In 1956 he became an instructor at the Regina College School of Art. (Reid, Concise, 288). By the time of the next exhibition Kiyooka had left Regina and was at the Vancouver School of Art. His shows of the period include: The NGC *Annual Exhibition of Canadian Painting* (1953) and *First Biennial Exhibition of Canadian Painting, Winnipeg Show* (1955, 1958, 1959); See LeClerc, Crisis, 133; MacKaskell, Modern, 156.

⁴⁷ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 4, S. 2, 9.

work.⁴⁸

In her job, Norah McCullough travelled from Manitoba to Vancouver, setting up exhibitions and speaking on the activities of the NGC and its collection and "interpreting the needs of the west to the NGC."⁴⁹ While some of her talks were on aesthetics, many focused on the role of the NGC. McCullough stated: "The National Gallery is like the railways or radio; it serves as a connecting link with the whole country..."⁵⁰

Her address to Art Club members at the Prince Hotel in Brandon, Manitoba in 1966 gave the history, development and contributions of the gallery.⁵¹ The Victoria Times reported in 1960:

"The National Gallery of Canada belongs to the peoples of Canada- we want all Canadians to share the nation's treasures," says Miss McCullough, the NAG liaison officer for western Canada now visiting Victoria from her headquarters in Regina.⁵²

She saw the opportunities the Gallery afforded for the viewing of actual works of art in many Canadian communities as integral to its function, increasing understanding of art and of the artist in Canadian society. " [Art is] the basis of all understanding and people can't understand art unless they have a chance to see

⁴⁸ NGC, N. McCullough, *Canadian Artists Series VI: Donald Jarvis and Roy Kiyooka*, Exhibition folder (Ottawa 1966).

⁴⁹ NGC, NM File, vol. 1, Biographical Notes.

⁵⁰ Ibid., vol. 3, Winnipeg Free Press, 20 March 1963.

⁵¹ Ibid., vol. 3, "Gives History of Gallery," Sun (Brandon, Man.), 5 April 1966.

⁵² Ibid., vol. 2, "Gallery Credit to City: Art Belongs to the People," Victoria Times, 18 May 1960.

and study it and compare the works of different artists."⁵³

She travelled continuously. A year before her retirement, at sixty-four years of age, Norah maintained a hectic travelling schedule. Speaking to a reporter at the Edmonton Journal she gave her itinerary:

She planned, to go to the Edmonton Art Gallery, then on to Calgary and Lethbridge, from there to British Columbia interior-to Kamloops, Quesnel and Williams Lake and a return to the Winnipeg Festival.⁵⁴

Lowndes reported in The Vancouver Province :

She arrived here from Edmonton, she plans to go to Caribou in a week and a half and also to Vancouver Island--then after a few days back at Regina, she will set off once more for Calgary and southern Alberta. Yet with such an itinerary she remarks wistfully that she would love to go to Yellowknife.⁵⁵

It was reported that in a single year McCullough was responsible for mounting eighteen exhibits,⁵⁶ eight to fifteen of which were redistributed through the Western Art Circuit.⁵⁷ These included exhibitions which were circulated nationally by the NGC and curated by Ottawa staff and smaller exhibits, of art from the eastern, western, central or Quebec regions. This is an exhausting number by today's standards when small galleries mount an average of six to ten

⁵³ Ibid., vol. 3, Winnipeg Free Press, 20 March 1963.

⁵⁴ Ibid., vol. 2, "Gallery Alert on Security," Edmonton Journal, 26 March 1960.

⁵⁵ Ibid., vol. 3, Lowndes, "A Seeing Eye." The leading centres in art at the time were the MacKenzie Art gallery, the first "A" level gallery in Saskatchewan, the Allied Arts Centre in Calgary and the Vancouver Art Gallery. see LeClerc, Crisis, 72-23.

⁵⁶ Ibid., vol. 1, "Reginian is enthusiastic about art exhibits," Regina Leader-Post, 3 May 1958.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

exhibitions a year. With 300 showings,⁵⁸ she estimated that approximately 250,000 people were reached annually.⁵⁹ McCullough organized between 30 and 40 exhibitions during her work with the NGC.⁶⁰ Along with organizing and promoting exhibits, her responsibilities included relaying the needs of the western region to the NGC, inspecting sites for security and submitting reports as well as scouting for talent,⁶¹ and organizing children's art classes.⁶²

McCullough's public professional persona was polished and reshaped to express the broader responsibilities of a federal public servant, representing national cultural interests. As the Western Liaison Officer for the NGC, McCullough emphasized that the national treasure house was the property of the people. Her interviews capture McCullough as a consummate, professional career woman of the 1950s, in her trim suits, standing amidst the current local art exhibition of the day.⁶³ Her interviews focus less on how art could change people and more on the importance of culture for Canadian society, the accountability that the NGC had to the Canadian people, and the interpretation of modern

⁵⁸ Ibid., "Gallery Alert on Security," Edmonton Journal, 26 March 1960.

⁵⁹ Ibid., M. Bletcher, Winnipeg Free Press, 20 March 1963.

⁶⁰ Ibid., vol.3, Edmonton Journal, 4 October 1964. The majority were small exhibits for circulation. NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 4, file 1, Canada Council Application, 26 March 1970.

⁶¹ NGC, NM File, vol. 2, Montreal Star, 16 January 1962.

⁶² Ibid., vol. 2, M. Bletcher, untitled, Winnipeg Free Press, 20 March 1963.

⁶³ Ibid., vol. 2, "Gallery Credit to City: Art Belongs to the People," Victoria Times, 18 May 1960 and "Art group honoured by expert's visit" are two examples of newspaper article headlines from this middle and late career period.

abstract art.⁶⁴

Her ability to interpret modern art was limited yet effective. Although McCullough was widely read and knowledgeable about art, she was not a scholar and her interpretation of art trends and movements was simplistic and limited. "Modern art is a fact of life. It is here to stay."⁶⁵ McCullough delivered earthy unsophisticated talks on contemporary art that made her audiences feel at ease. She applied her ebullient and gregarious sociability to delivering her message. Her primary concern was that people open themselves up to new ideas and new aesthetic experiences and she used a language they could understand. While she admired intellectuals she hated pretence and did not consider herself an intellectual.⁶⁶ In her work, she honed her communication skills. She focused on the needs of the audience and concentrated on relieving the spectator's fears, instilling enthusiasm, and pleaded for acceptance of the "new." Enroute from Saskatchewan to Ontario she addressed the Orangeville Women's Association of the Anglican Church. "Art does not stand still. It is alive; it comes out of people..⁶⁷

Under the Jarvis-Buchanan administration there had been support for craft

⁶⁴ Ibid., vol. 2, "If you can't see modern art just keep looking," The Province (Vancouver), 26 October 1963. See also Ibid., vol. 1, "Island described as 'heaven' for the artists," West Coast Advocate, 23 April 1959.

⁶⁵ Ibid., vol. 2, "Modern art is here to stay says Norah McCullough," Orangeville Banner, 14 February 1963.

⁶⁶ Interview with Ingrid Jenkner, Halifax, July 1994.

⁶⁷ NGC, NM File, vol. 2, "Modern art is here to stay says Norah McCullough," Orangeville Banner, 14 February 1963.

exhibitions, regionalist painters and educational outreach. In fact, Jarvis's administration was notable for having ignored American abstract painting at its height.⁶⁸

In contrast, under Dr. Jean Sutherland Boggs there was a strong shift of focus to a centralized, internationally orientated institution and a staff with high academic accreditations. There was also a greater emphasis on acquisitions. Highlights of Boggs' directorship were exhibitions of European Old Masters including Hans Baldung and Lorenzo Lotto and challenging contemporary American modern art such as sculpture by Dan Flavin and Carl Andre. McCullough commented that Boggs was

...concerned about building up the collection in terms of Old Masters. We had some very good Old Masters already...a small painting with a great name attached to it, that cost some fantastic sum of money...they were about the size of a sheet of paper, letter size, you know.⁶⁹

Boggs was a scholar whose areas of expertise were Picasso and Degas. She had taught at Skidmore College, Mount Holyoke College and the University of California, and had a professorship at Washington University before coming to Ottawa. As an administrator she was responsible for the expansion of staff. For example, in 1965-66, there were ten new positions created. She also placed an emphasis on the professionalization of the staff. Of the nineteen staff listed in the

⁶⁸ Jarvis brought Donald Buchanan, "the gifted westerner" to the gallery as associate director and he "fostered the regional representatives." His purchases included Milne, Harris, Kiyooka, Morrice, Moore, Picasso and Rodin. See Past and Prologue, 20 and Boggs, The National Gallery, 46-54.

⁶⁹ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 22 June 1991, S. 1, 6.

1967-68 report, only three had no academic degrees.⁷⁰

McCullough, like Lismer, was not an art historian nor intellectual. She represented the previous generation of non-academic, imprecise and romantic interpreters of art that dominated the early years of cultural institutions. Her approach is best illustrated by exhibition notes. It is apparent that McCullough's work lacked the scholarly approach which Boggs favoured. During her years with the NGC McCullough curated several exhibitions. These included *Seven Painters from Vancouver* (1964); *Constructions by Montreal Artists 1966-67*; *The Beaver Hall Hill Group* (1966) and *Georges Rouault 1871-1958* (1968) and *(Georges) De Niverille and (Duncan) Dekergommeaux* (1968).

Introductions and notes to many exhibition catalogues were written by McCullough. While Norah McCullough was engaging as a speaker and conversationalist, her writing ranged from clumsy and unsophisticated at its worst and competent but banal at its best. Annual reports and instructional manuals on art education are clearly written and convey efficiency. Essays written for Canadian Art, the Canadian Library Association, and the adult education publication Food for Thought,⁷¹ and for the NGC exhibition catalogues are informative when dealing with practicalities but awkward when they stray into

⁷⁰ See NGC, Past and Prologue, 24; Annual Report NGC 1967/68 Rapport Annuelle (Ottawa 1968), 47, 94-96, 103; Boggs, National, 60.

⁷¹ An adult education publication. During her employment for the Saskatchewan Arts Board Norah also for a period of four years edited Saskatchewan Harvest, a bulletin of the Adult Education Division for the province of Saskatchewan. See NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 4, file 1, Canada Council Application, 26 March 1970.

abstract ideas and theory.

The Beaver Hall Hill Group⁷² is possibly McCullough's most interesting catalogue essay. It presents many of the classic contradictory positions taken by both male and female interpreters and critics in the past in presenting women artists in an art discourse which is male defined. In addressing women artists, this catalogue is unique to Norah's oeuvre and as such gives us a glimpse into some of her own thoughts on women artists and the definition of career.

In her descriptions of artists, either in interviews or in her catalogue essay for the Group, McCullough differentiates between those artists who were singularly and obsessively devoted to their art practice, and who gained financial independence from their art and those who were seen as being "subsidized," either by a husband or relative. McCullough wrote: "By no means careerists, but rather talented gentle folks, nevertheless they were women of superior intelligence and vigorous energy."⁷³ This sentence is a complex web: a statement intended as praise which simultaneously robs the recipients of this praise by diminishing the nature of their accomplishments through the use of qualifying phrases to delimit the scope of the initial endeavour. The contradictions in McCullough's essay are typical of the period and arise from the constriction of the western art paradigm, where the construct of a true artist as a male Bohemian existing outside the

⁷² N. McCullough, The Beaver Hall Hill Group/Le Groupe de Beaver Hall Hill, exhibition folder (Ottawa 1966). Of the group, McCullough's contact was "slight." She had met only Anne Savage "because she was a friend of the Group of seven," and Sarah Robertson, "because Alec was very fond of her." NGC, McCullough Interviews, T. 22 June 1991, S. 1, 3.

⁷³ McCullough, Beaver Hall.

constraints of bourgeois society is collapsed with the idea of genius and the avant-garde. This produces a mythic and singularly obsessive vision of a glorified life of poverty brought about through sacrifice to art. Such a definition poses as a counterpoint to the pattern of women's lives, which may include marriage, children, domestic engagement and bourgeois convention - lives in which art practice commingles with domestic life, rather than existing outside of it.

The change in focus of the NGC, to concentrate its resources on building an international institution, with an academically accredited staff, meant the demise of its regional educational outreach programmes in western and eastern Canada. This diminished emphasis on localized public education under the new directorships was a point of contention for McCullough.

While McCullough curated exhibitions of contemporary art for the western circuit, she also maintained her interest in crafts, folk art, regional artists and to adult education. During the 1960s McCullough became increasingly active in fostering Canadian public awareness of craft production. She was asked by western craftspeople, including silversmith Helga Palko to help organize the artisans, using her NGC office.⁷⁴ Although greatly extended, McCullough helped pioneer another arts initiative, the Canadian Craftsmen's Association in 1964.⁷⁵ McCullough's interest in local cultural expressions in handicraft had been developed during her years with the Saskatchewan Arts Board, but also expressed

⁷⁴ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. June 22, S. 1, 3-4.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Canadian trends of the 1950s. As MacKaskell notes "Developments in industrial design and craft design paralleled the interest in abstraction in 20th century art."⁷⁶ In this period "Art, craft, and design were presented together throughout the 1950s. Exhibitions in Canadian galleries and stores, and events such as the 1958 Brussels World Fair usually included hand-made and machine-made objects as well as art and photography."⁷⁷ At the NGC under Jarvis, curator Donald Buchanan had founded the gallery's Industrial Design Division and "wrote extensively about design in Canadian Art."⁷⁸

McCullough's interest and knowledge of handicraft production developed throughout her career. Her previous contact with talented craftspeople in Saskatchewan and her tours of France, Sweden and South Africa, had given her an understanding of both national, and international craft production.

McCullough subsequently became chairperson of Canadian Craftsmen and a founder of The Canadian Crafts Council. As Canada's representative to the World Craft Council she attended the First World Congress of Craftsmen at Columbia University at New York in 1964. McCullough's awareness of the importance of reaching the grassroots of the global community was her notable contribution. Reporting on the conference, she wrote:

⁷⁶ MacKaskell, Modern, 122.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 119. There was also a renaissance in regional craft production which had begun under post war retraining programmes in places like New Brunswick. Ibid., 120.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

It became evident that if membership was restricted to artist-craftsmen, countries with highly developed folk arts such as Mexico, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Japan and Latin American countries would thus be ineligible. Therefore restricted membership would defeat the purpose of international communication and development...The assembled delegates at the First World Congress then concluded that the strength and variety springing from the "grass roots" could not be discounted.⁷⁹

She continued:

Do Canadian craftsmen agree with my own view that a CRAFTS COUNCIL should seek widely for members that would include the artist-designer, the rural or folk-designer, the amateur and the enthusiastic layman?⁸⁰

The 1960s were a time of flowering for Canadian nationalism. In 1965 as Canadians accepted their new flag, according to Granatstein, "there seemed to be a new mood."⁸¹ Canada celebrated its hundredth anniversary with an international exposition in Montreal. A success, the year's celebrations increased Canadians' sense of national pride.⁸² The NGC hosted the exhibition *Terre des Hommes: Exposition internationale des beaux-arts, Expo 1967*, which featured many of the Canadian avant-garde, including Michael Snow and Jean-Paul Riopelle.⁸³

Impressed by *Canadian Fine Crafts Exhibition* (1958),⁸⁴ organized by NGC

⁷⁹ NGC, NM File, vol. 3, Newsletter to Canadian Craftsmen of Canada membership from chairman (typescript), 3.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 3.

⁸¹ Granatstein, Canada 1957-1967, 213.

⁸² Ibid., 302-304.

⁸³ G. Mainprize, The National Gallery of Canada: A Hundred Years of Exhibitions, List and Index, reprinted from RACAR, vol. XI, 1-2 (1984), 51.

⁸⁴ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. June 22 1991, S. 1, 5.

curator and co-editor of Canadian Art, Donald Buchanan,⁸⁵ McCullough pressed Boggs for a centennial exhibition that would survey Canadian crafts. She was not greatly encouraged by Dr. Boggs who "took a dim view of crafts" as she "didn't feel they were of very much importance in a national gallery."⁸⁶ Despite Boggs reluctance, McCullough organized one of the largest surveys of Canadian Craft of the decade.

Canadian Fine Crafts 1966-67/ Artisan canadien 1966/67, organized by Norah McCullough, showed work from across Canada selected by guest curator Daniel Rhodes of Alfred College.⁸⁷ The exhibit comprised 360 examples of stained glass, textiles, wood-working, metal work and "Eskimo and Indian crafts" and represented 300 craftspeople of diverse ethnic backgrounds.⁸⁸ McCullough "scoured the countryside from coast to coast, personally contacting craftsmen, viewing work and inviting submissions...."⁸⁹ Dr. Boggs wrote: "For the first time the National Gallery has assembled a comprehensive exhibition of handcrafts by

⁸⁵ A 1947 exhibition by Buchanan which featured craft items was *Design for Use in Canadian Products*. Buchanan founded the NGC Industrial Design Division and "wrote extensively about design in Canadian Art." McKaskell, Modern, 120.

⁸⁶ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. 22 June 1991, S. 1, 6 . For a full discussion of the distinctions between arts and craft and the issues therein from a feminist perspective see The Subversive Stitch.

⁸⁷ The State College of Ceramics (founded 1900) is a part of Alfred University in Alfred, New York. It confers B.F.A. and M.F.A. degrees and is known internationally for its outstanding ceramics programme. S.v."Alfred University," Collier's Encyclopedia, vol. 1 (1958).

⁸⁸ NGC, NM File, vol. 3, L. G. James, "Canadian Fine Crafts 1966-67," NGC Press Release, December 1966, 1.

⁸⁹ NGC, Canadian Fine Crafts 1966-67/ Artisan canadien 1966/67, Exhibition catalogue (Ottawa 1966).

inviting submissions from every part of Canada. In doing so, many excellent craftsmen whose work has not been generally known, have been discovered."⁹⁰

The exhibition subsequently toured for a year. McCullough proclaimed this exhibition "one of the most successful exhibitions at the National Art Gallery during the whole time I was there." McCullough added "that it appealed to an awful lot of people."⁹¹

Eventually McCullough stepped down from her position on the Crafts Council.⁹² Changes in structure and membership ensued. "Craftsmen were moving in to run things and I thought this is the way it should be run, not by officials looking in so to speak."⁹³ She encouraged the formation of a crafts council asking the questions:

Would a crafts Council for Canada bring about unity of purpose and provide the craftsman with a voice in directing policy? Would it give national strength to the movement similar to that of other recognized national associations? Would it increase public interest and improve standards of taste? Would it raise the status of the craftsman? Would it be helpful in dealing with arising leisure-time problems?⁹⁴

In contrast to Boggs' focus on collecting and creating an international profile for the NGC, McCullough felt that regional outreach was an important

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, trans., T. June 22 1991, S. 1, 6-7.

⁹² She confessed "...the whole job was much too big for me, but I could contribute to it.." Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., 4.

⁹⁴ NGC, NM File, vol. 3, Newsletter to Canadian Craftsmen of Canada membership from chairman (typescript), 3.

and politically astute programme for the gallery of Canada to be engaged in. When Boggs announced in 1966 that there would no longer be a liaison programme, Norah McCullough was understandably upset.⁹⁵ Not only did she feel that her own work in the field of art education had gone unappreciated, but she also felt that the policy makers of the NGC were making a political error for which they would later pay. McCullough mused that if the gallery had not become so centralized the reaction to "certain difficult abstract works" would be better understood and appreciated by the public, because they would be better informed about the issues of modern art.⁹⁶

For McCullough the role of the NGC and its relationship to the Canadian public was clear.

[T]he role of the gallery is to preserve works of art and make them accessible to the public, the public is the owner of the art acquired by these galleries. She pointed to the fact that the loan system adopted by the galleries enlarges their dimensions and affords invaluable opportunities to the viewer.⁹⁷

McCullough saw extension services as a vital educational link between the gallery and the public and also understood the importance of public relations. In a 1991 interview for the NGC Norah made no bones about Boggs and the gallery

⁹⁵ As part of the gallery programme of increased acquisition, travelling curators replaced regional representatives. This increased the NGC collection in Canadian contemporary and historical art from across Canada and particularly from Quebec. See NGC, Past and Prologue, 26.

⁹⁶ NGC, Palko, "McCullough Interviews" trans., T. 22 June 1991, S. 2, 16.

⁹⁷ NGC, NM File, vol. 3, "Ottawa Gallery Officer," Winnipeg Free Press, 2 November 1959.

restructuring. "I felt Miss Boggs had made a very grave error."⁹⁸ Not only did McCullough feel that her own work in the field was unappreciated by the new director, but she also felt that the potential of regional displays and presentations from a political and propaganda point of view was not perceived.

The only thing I felt was that when the position at the National Gallery was changed they did not take into account the value of propaganda for the National Gallery's work and commitment to the country was not appreciated. I felt I wasn't appreciated as a servant of the National Gallery...⁹⁹

It was her keen sense of the potential of regional and grassroots communication that drove her work.

I felt it was a political error, an error of judgement....I had an idea of how to make the national gallery shine beyond the confines of Ottawa.... We could have had much more support from the public if we had sought it, really went after it.¹⁰⁰

McCullough expressed a vision for the gallery, based on public outreach and regional communication to deliver its mandate as a national institution: "I felt the National Gallery had a marvellous chance to cause a kind of unity between the government in Ottawa and the people out in the country that government was doing this for them."¹⁰¹ In 1991, at 89 years of age, Norah remarked,

Now you see, when the National Gallery does anything, like buying a very curious modern painting, you know everybody -- the press all over the country-- jump on it. If we had an informed public this kind of thing

⁹⁸ NGC, Palko, McCullough Interviews, T. June 22 1991, S. 1, 11.

⁹⁹ Ibid., T. 5 S. 2, 6.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., T. June 22 1991, S. 1, 9-10.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., T. 5, S. 2, 6.

wouldn't have happened, we'd probably have a few pats on the back by the press.¹⁰²

The lack of appreciation for her work was especially important to McCullough who thrived on praise. The real reward she sought was feeling that she had made a difference.

The final years of Norah McCullough's career illustrate changing trends and areas of conflicts of cultural development in Canada from the post World War period to the 1960s. In the wake of the Massey Commission Report, institutions and artists turned away from regionalist, decentralized efforts which incorporated the principles and methods of the adult education movement and characterized cultural programmes of the 1940s. By the 1960s Canada was building a centralized, elite and institutionalized culture that, while influenced by the dictates of "borderless" International Modernism also emphasized the importance of a national culture. McCullough's interests in craft production, folk art, regional painters and outreach, popular under the Jarvis and Buchanan administration, remained strong. These were responses to rural and regional concerns and to Lismer's teaching that were eclipsed by the institutional shift to an international art focus. As a result, by the time of her retirement, McCullough left the NGC feeling unappreciated by the new administration.

McCullough had spent her lifetime "bringing art to the people," and

¹⁰² *Ibid.* T. June 22, 1991, S. 1. 16. McCullough is apparently referring to the national controversy over the NGC of Canada's purchase of Barnett Newman's non-objective painting, *Voice of Fire*.

"opening up the nation's treasure houses." She was motivated by the belief that her work contributed to the fabric of society, that it changed people's lives and created a more cultured and caring society. She helped to brighten people's lives with the beauty and intellectual challenges of music, art and film. Gifted at social communication, she recognized talent and was a catalyst for many projects. She was adventuresome, intellectually curious and was a tireless professional.

Conclusion

Norah's McCullough's story is regional, national and international. Spanning three decades her biography provides insights into women's history, liberal ideology, race issues and Canadian cultural history in different places and at different times. As a profile of a woman with a career as an arts interpreter from the 1920s to the end of the 1960s, McCullough's biography expands the history of professional women of the time. Issues such as access, duties, opportunities for promotion, remuneration, personal life and friendships and portrayal in the press have been discussed within the context of the conditions for women of the period in order to construct this portrait.

Norah McCullough began her career in work which combined teaching, fine arts, journalism and record keeping - all fields in which women were beginning to participate in ever increasing numbers by the 1920s. McCullough's maternal family background, which included a number of highly educated women, must also be considered to be a factor in McCullough's decision to seek a professional career. Her background was also typical of the art institution officials of the period: white, Anglophile, upper-middle class and socially well-connected, she possessed all the privileges of the Canadian elite of the period,¹ privileges that

¹ Porter, The Vertical Mosaic. See also D. Olson, "A Study of the Composition and Characteristics of Canada's Elite Layer of Society 1924 - 1975," unpublished MA thesis, Carleton University, (Ottawa, 1977).

would have afforded easy access to a career as a cultural professional.

Her continuous employment, at presumably reasonable wages throughout the Depression and wartime is worthy of note and reflects her professional acumen, skills and connections in securing suitable and sustaining positions.

As a female professional during the 1940s and 1950s, Norah McCullough's story is important, as this was a period when the number of women with professional status was declining,² despite the expansion of the Canadian civil service and the growth of cultural institutions. Norah's employment as a regional cultural administrator and arts interpreter for the Saskatchewan Arts Board and as a Liaison officer for the National Gallery, illustrates the life of a professional woman after World War II.

The work McCullough chose demanded strong communication, social, organizational and administrative skills. Although the work involved frequent travel, it was clean, cultured and intellectually challenging. Her status as a single woman with post-secondary education, allowed her to make changes in her career, pursuing ever more challenging and financially rewarding opportunities without any of the difficulties of changing the location of employment which a married woman or woman with children during this period may have encountered. It also made possible engaging in work that required continuous travel. As a result her single status arguably allowed her independent ambition as an arts professional to

² Prentice et al., Canadian Women, 426.

flower.

Feminist historiography attempts to describe the achievements of a woman, on her own merit, away from the traditional and paternalistic framing of the subject through the males around her, such as the fathers, teachers or husbands. Yet it would be remiss, as Norah McCullough noted, to describe her career, its development and its underlying social ideals without examining the considerable influence of Arthur Lismer. At the beginning of her career, and at the end of life McCullough emphatically described Lismer as her mentor and friend, to whom she felt gratitude. Always observant and clear about human character, she also unsentimentally described him as paternalistic.

Norah McCullough was one of several women that Lismer assisted in obtaining professional positions and whom Lismer referred to as a colleague. Audrey Taylor and other AGT staff members also benefitted from the opportunity to work with Lismer at the Art Gallery of Toronto. Elizabeth Nutt, a native Sheffielder and the feisty replacement for Lismer at the Victoria College of Art, went to Halifax on Lismer's recommendation.³

Lismer's support of McCullough's work and her unflagging admiration for him are not in themselves enough to fully understand the power dynamics between them. Lismer's zest, enthusiasm, humour, progressive liberalism and

³ Kelly, Arthur Lismer: the Halifax Years, 30. See also R. Stacey and L. Wylie, Eighty /Twenty: 100 Years of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, (Halifax 1988), 56-66.

energy were well matched to McCullough's. Yet there is little doubt that Lismer was a strong supporter and advocate of McCullough's work in its beginning stages. The respect which Lismer showed toward McCullough's contribution and her abilities, was instrumental in her initial pursuit of "this Child Art business." Another factor may have been the unique circumstances of Norah McCullough's family -- her father's pioneering work with the poor and "less fortunate" of society, which she greatly admired and her mother's emphasis on the importance of education - art and a career for women -- provided a sympathetic correlation with the ideals espoused by Lismer, albeit in a different field.

Quixotic and compassionate, Lismer shared the ideal of communicating with all sectors of society about the importance of art as integral to education and he considered such work "pioneering." McCullough shared Lismer's vision of art as a liberating force for the human spirit and discovered a socially meaningful professional role in spreading the message far and wide.

McCullough is an example of a highly documented career woman in the interwar period, as well as an early example of a woman whose professional duties included press relations. She understood the importance of news coverage as a promotional aid both for spreading the art gospel and to enhancing her professional achievements. News coverage, present throughout Norah McCullough's entire working career from child art work in the 1920s to her death in 1993, played a significant role in shaping the portrayal of McCullough as a

working woman. Public profiles of her as a young and glamorous idealist educator and as a mature veteran of the arts and civil servant are abundant.

The ways in which McCullough's image in the media changed in accordance with her age and employment can be characterized in a number of ways. Newspaper and magazine articles in the 1920s portrayed her as an adventuresome, capable, art debutante, heading off on an exciting voyage to South Africa.⁴ Her Toronto family social connections, her youth and her photogenic good looks contributed to this image. Headlines from The Globe and Mail articles from this period include titles such as "Miss Norah McCullough goes to South Africa." This article, similar to the previous Toronto coverage, appeared in the "social" section of the newspaper, a placement which indicated a targeted audience of female readers. During her stay in South Africa the Canadian papers portrayed her as an "adventurer." The article "Girl Against the Veld," in particular, blended sexist and racist ideas about white women in Africa and played on colonialist white fears of Africa. Upon her return to Canada, the newspapers presented McCullough as an expert in the field of Children's Art who linked art education to social concerns. In the latter half of her career, as an employee of the National Gallery, Norah McCullough appeared as the consummate trim-suited career woman of the 1950s and 1960s voicing the nationalistic cultural visions of the Massey Commission inspired era. This documentation in the popular press

⁴ NAC, McCullough Papers, vol. 7, file 52, McCarthy, "Miss Norah. 4.

provides visual and textual support to research on the public image of working women in the Canadian media in the interwar period and is invaluable for analyzing the construction of gender in relationship to work and social status in the popular press of the period.

McCullough was not only a woman with a professional goal, she was also a woman with an idealistic mission. Her continual support of ideas that she perceived to be "forward thinking," led to a marriage of liberal ideology and art education. At the same time as she championed these liberal ideals, her position in the world of art assured that she retained much of the manners, prejudices and privileges of her class and race. Throughout her working career McCullough's guiding slogans changed from the universalism of Child Art to cultural nationalism, yet each platform was given life by sentiments inherent in the liberal humanitarian ideology of the respective periods. Each platform she espoused obtained its strength from a belief in the transforming power of art and culture and the necessity of universal grassroots public access to the arts. The limitations and contradictions inherent in the liberal tenets of the Child Art movement, which blatantly and naively laid claims to overcoming class and race barriers, are ironic and glaringly apparent when considered within the light of the racially segregated confines of South African society in the 1940s.

Race and ideology issues profoundly intersected in McCullough's Child Art education work in South Africa. In Toronto, while many children's experiences

remain voiceless, there is some evidence that the programme for the period of its operation, opened the doors of the institution to children of various ethnic groups and classes. Yet in South Africa it was a different story. Native African peoples were historically objectified as children and then considered to be in need of European based health care, technology, education and religion. These "needs" were shaped by colonial interests toward native African tribal societies and blinded by hostility, prejudice and ignorance. The colonizers rationalized these changes as symbols of material advantage and progress, whereas Africans understood them as part of a systematic programme to colonize and erode black African civilizations in order to maintain land and resources and a non-white labour force.

The idea of Native people as equivalent to "children," was an idea which dominated the post Victorian Western world. This concept was propagated by western anthropologists, art historians and archaeologists from the late 1800's onwards. Much of the assumptions for this connection was based on Biogenetic theories, racist in their evolutionary ideas, that placed the development of the tribal society in an earlier evolutionary stage of "progress" than that of Western European societies.⁵

The ideals of social progress, art education and questions of race in relationship to Norah McCullough's were also influenced by these factors. Lismer

⁵ Goldberg, Racist Culture, 14-40.

and McCullough emphasized inclusion as a fundamental goal of the Child Art Movement. Yet one of the underlying assumptions of Child Art, based on anthropological views, was that there was connection between the art of so called "primitive" societies and western children's art. Cultural theorist Homi K. Bhabha stated that "the current phase of economic and social history" makes us "aware of cultural difference not at a celebratory level of diversity but always at the point of conflict or crisis,"⁶ which is perhaps the key difference between McCullough's time period and the present. The development of the Child Art Movement in the South African context, within the confines of an oppressive and rigidly segregated educational system and the position of white privilege that McCullough held, illustrates the implausibility of Lismer's idealist claim that such a pedagogy was capable of overcoming racial barriers.

While McCullough was interested in "progressive ideas," she also benefitted from a position of privilege through her race, social and class. The methods of the Child Art Movement opened the way for many South African and European children to express themselves as individuals through art; yet the model was a positivistic, Eurocentric one with biases that were shaped by a dominant hegemony. As result, the Child Art Movement was limited and perhaps detrimental in a cross-cultural setting where both the lessons and the instructors, such as Norah McCullough were imbued with a white model of both aesthetics

⁶ Art in America, (September 1991), 81.

and culture.

In her article "Child Art," McCullough stated that "culture transcends national differences and political strains."⁷ This idea was part of what she and Lismer may have perceived as a type of world-wide unifying "fellowship" of a progressive liberalism of the 1920's. With the demise of the hegemony of the Western colonized world view, such a statement in the 1990s, with its presumption of universal values, is seen really as that -- a presumption shaped by a colonizing culture. Yet McCullough's work in South Africa helps us to understand the growth and spread of western art ideologies transplanted into third world cultural settings. In sum, in considering the ideals of the Child art movement and the circumstances of its application in the racially segregated South Africa of the 1930s one can only conclude that art cannot be said to exist outside of a socially and culturally constructed context despite the naive enthusiasm and progressive intentions of Lismer and McCullough.

Norah McCullough's biography enlarges Canadian cultural history from the 1920s to 1960s. It contributes to a more complex understanding of the role and contribution of women in shaping institutions and their practices and carrying out their mandates. McCullough's personal stories about the young graduates of OCA, brings forth a picture of the younger and less well known female graduates. It also highlights the accomplishments of McCullough as an individual contributor to that

⁷ N. McCullough, "Child Art: The Closing of A Chapter," 5, Canadian Art, (Spring 1948).

history.

Norah McCullough's involvement in significant cultural institutions and pioneering projects, from their inception, in addition to her personal and professional associations with so many of the cultural vanguard of Canada is important. She was instrumental in the programme of the Child Art Movement in Canada in the 1930s, at the time when it was shaping the educational programmes of museums and galleries across North America. She was a significant and sometimes overlooked participant in the establishment of the Picture Loan Society, which formed the basis of art rental societies across the country which patronized many of Canada's most talented painters. She carried through the democratic grassroots idealism of postwar Canada in her work with the Saskatchewan Art Board and the Canadian cultural nationalism of the 1960s.

Her friendships with so many other women and men, who were educated and accomplished and who specialized in forging new paths in Canada in the arts, education and politics was remarkable. Norah McCullough knew the most prominent and accomplished in Canadian culture of her time - the Masseys, the Lismers, the Harrises, the Fries, the Fairleys, Frank and Marion Scott, Irene and Graham Spry, Marion Gilroy, Amy Dalgleish, Duncan Douglas, Peggy Nicol, Isabel McLaughlin, Alan Jarvis, the Regina Five, Alan Jarvis, W.O. Mitchell, A.Y. Jackson, and Francis James to name a few. She corresponded with many of these figures for over sixty years. Her friendships with many reflect her own

intellectually curious nature and her admiration for individuals who were compassionate and socially aware and who idealistically contributed to the society in which they lived in. And McCullough's innate ability to distinguish and assist talent, to be a real "mover"⁸ and to adroitly describe individual personalities and incidents of her time with wry humour and without sentimentality, is certainly one of her lasting legacies.

In conclusion, the retrieval of the history of Norah McCullough reflects the new feminist histories of art in Canada which moves beyond the confines of the monographs of individual artists to a consideration of a complexity of factors such as gender and race and the values and conditions which built Canadian cultural institutions and influenced the public attitude towards art and culture. The variety and complexity of factors inherent in the account of Norah McCullough's life therefore provide a unique and rich exploration of women's history.

⁸ Telephone interview with Kenneth Lochhead, Ottawa. March 3, 1996.

Appendix I

Abbreviations

AGT Art Gallery of Toronto

AGO Art Gallery of Ontario

ANC African National Congress

ASL Arts Students League (Toronto)

CBC Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

CCF Co-operative Commonwealth Federation

CGP Canadian Group of Painters

NAC National Archives of Canada

NGC National Gallery of Canada

OCA Ontario College of Art

RCA Royal Canadian Academy of the Arts

SAB Saskatchewan Arts Board

Appendix II

Chapter 1 Chronology

1876	Ontario College of Art founded
1900	Art Museum of Toronto founded
1903	Eleanor Leslie Norah McCullough born in Alliston, Ontario
1906	McCullough family moves to 61 Beaty Street, Toronto
1914-1918	World War I
1918	Canadian women win the right to vote in federal elections
1919	Arthur Lismer appointed Vice-Principal of the Ontario College of Art
	Art Museum of Toronto moves to Grange property
1920	Group of Seven exhibition at the Art Gallery of Toronto
	Ontario Minimum Wages Act for Women is introduced
1924	A. Y. Jackson joins OCA as a part-time instructor
	Group of Seven exhibition in Wembley, England
1925	McCullough graduates from Ontario College of Art
1926	Group of Seven exhibition at the Art Gallery of Toronto
	Toronto Art Students' League founded
1927	Lismer appointed Educational Supervisor at Art Gallery of Toronto,
	McCullough begins employment
	Société Anonyme International Exhibition of Modern Art at AGT
	Exhibition artwork of children taught by Viennese Child Art

- pioneer, Franz Cizek.
- 1929 Stock market crashes and Great Depression begins
- 1931 Last official exhibition of the Group of Seven held in December at Art Gallery of Toronto
- 1932 Arthur Lismer lectures on art and education at the Sixth World Conference of the New Educational Fellowship, Nice, France
- 1933 Lismer's programme receives \$10,000 Carnegie grant; Children's Art Centre is established at 4 Grange Road
- The Group of Seven disbands
- The Canadian Group of Painters which includes Group of Seven members and invited "guests" begins exhibiting
- 1934 Lismer attends educational conference in South Africa
- Art as Experience by John Dewey is published
- Norah receives Carnegie grant to study at the Courtauld Institute
- With Carnegie grants McCullough travels to Cleveland Institute, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, The Albright Gallery, The Museum of Modern Art, The Worcester Art Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
- 1936-37 McCullough is appointed as Acting Educational Supervisor at AGT
- 1936 The Picture Loan Society is established by Rik Kettle, Norah McCullough and Helen Kemp.
- 1938 McCullough departs for South Africa

Appendix III

Chapter 2 Chronology

- 1899-1902 South African War (Boer War)
- 1905 Report of the South African Native Affairs Commission
 Reconstruction government's programme for segregation
- 1910 Union of South Africa formed. South African government led by
 Generals Louis Botha and Jan Smuts
- 1912 South African Native National Congress (ANC) founded
- 1913 Native Land Act passed
 Mohandas Gandhi's march to Transvaal, Indian sugar workers'
 strike; African women march to protest identity passes for non-
 whites in Bloemfontein
- 1919 Botha dies; Jan Smuts become Prime Minister
- 1924 Hertzog's National Party wins election in alliance with white Labour
 party
- 1927 Native Administration Act passed assists in decentralizing authority
 on African reserves
- 1930 South African white women enfranchised
- 1932-40 South Africa leaves Gold Standard; manufacturing boom begins
- 1936 Native Trust and Land Act passed; remnant of Black African vote
 in Cape is terminated
- 1936-37 Lismor tours South Africa, lectures and inspects educational

- facilities: submits report with recommendations
- 1938 McCullough arrives in Pretoria, South Africa. Begins work to establish Pretoria Children's Art Centre
- Lisner takes up visiting professorship at Teachers College at Columbia University, New York
- 1939 Lisner moves to Ottawa in September, awaits word on National Gallery educational programme
- South Africa enters World War II
- McCullough leaves Pretoria Children's Centre
- 1940 McCullough tours African schools and institutions in the Transvaal
- McCullough hired as Art Inspectress for Cape Province Department of Education
- Lisner moves to Montreal, as Director of Education for the Montreal Art Centre
- 1941 Dr. J. W. S. McCullough dies
- 1945 World War II ends
- McCullough develops the Franz Joubert Art Centre in Cape Town
- 1946 McCullough departs for Canada
- Major Black South African mineworkers strike
- 1948 Malan's Nationalists win election on apartheid slogan
- Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country* published in London

Appendix IV

Chapter 3 Chronology

1936	Norman MacKenzie dies leaving a bequest to build a Regina art gallery and also contributes to a school of fine art at Regina College.
1939	Canada enters World War II, Great Depression ends

April 6, Eric Brown, Director of The National Gallery dies and is replaced by H. O. McCurry |
| 1941 | Kingston Artists Conference; community art centres are supported |
| 1944 | CCF party under the leadership of Tommy Douglas wins landslide victory in Saskatchewan provincial election, becoming the first social democratic government in North America

Artists' Brief is submitted to Federal Committee on Reconstruction and Reestablishment

Saskatoon Art Centre is established bringing together the Saskatoon Camera Club, Saskatoon Art Association, Saskatoon Archeological Association

"Adventures in Painting," CBC educational broadcasts on art for elementary and junior high schools, is aired. |
1945	World War II ends
1946	McCullough returns to Canada
1946-47	McCullough works for the National Gallery, in Prince Edward

Island and Northern Ontario

- 1948 William Lyon MacKenzie King retires. Louis St. Laurent, becomes head of Liberal party, and Prime Minister of Canada.
- CCF re-elected in Saskatchewan
- Saskatchewan Arts Board established
- McCullough hired as Executive Secretary of SAB
- 1949 Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, chaired by Vincent Massey, begins hearings.

Appendix V

Chapter 4 Chronology

- 1951 The Massey Commission recommends the establishment of a
federal body to support the arts in Canada

- 1953 The Norman MacKenzie Art Gallery opens as first "A" gallery in
Saskatchewan

- 1955 Alan Jarvis, Rhodes scholar and sculptor, appointed director of
National Gallery of Canada

Saskatchewan Jubilee Celebrations

Emma Lake Workshops begin with Jack Shadbolt and Kenneth
Lochhead

Winnipeg Art Show

NGC curates and circulates the first Biennial exhibition of Canadian
contemporary painting

- 1956 Federal government receives endowments totalling one hundred
million dollars from the estates of Maritime entrepreneurs Izaak
Walton Killam and Sir James Dunn

- 1956-58 Norah McCullough receives federal arts grant to travel to Europe to
study crafts, travels in France and Italy, lives abroad for two years.

- 1957 Resolution for the establishment of the Canada Council moved by
Prime Minister Laurent in the House of Commons January 18, 1957,
Council begins operations in April

- 1957 Conservative John Diefenbaker becomes Prime Minister
- 1958 McCullough is hired by Extension department of National Gallery of Canada as the Western Liaison Officer
- 1959 Barnett Newman, American abstract painter is invited to be the workshop leader at the Murray Point School of Art, Emma Lake; Regina artists and SAB associates Ernest Lindner, William Perehudoff, Dorothy Knowles, Ted Godwin, Art McKay, Roy Kiyooka are among those who attend.
- 1960 Charles Comfort appointed NGC Director
Fire in the Children's Art Centre, Montreal, destroys Arthur Lismer's records of work in child art
- 1961 *May Show* at MacKenzie Art Gallery organized by Ronald Bloore. The exhibition which includes Bloore, Lochhead, McKay, Godwin Kiyooka, Morton and Clifford Wiens, architect is held during the Canadian Museums Association annual meeting.
Richard Simmins of the NGC arranges travelling exhibition of the *Regina Five*: Bloore, Lochhead, McKay, Morton and McKay.
- 1962 Clement Greenberg, modernist American art critic, leads Emma Lake Workshop
- 1963 Liberal Lester B. Pearson, becomes Prime Minister
- 1964 Canadian Craftsman Association is founded, Norah McCullough is the president

- 1965 World Craft Council is held at Columbia University in New York City, Norah is the Canadian delegate.
- 1966 Dr. Jean Sutherland Boggs, scholar and author, appointed Director of National Gallery of Canada
- 1967 Canada's centenary, Expo '67, a world exposition is held in Montreal. Canadian artists are prominently featured, nationalism is at its height.
- NGC *Canadian Fine Crafts 1966-67* exhibition (13 Dec. 1966- 3 Jan. 1967)
- 1968 Norah McCullough retires
- Pierre Elliot Trudeau, Liberal, become Prime Minister of Canada
- 1969 Arthur Lismer dies
- 1970 McCullough receives Canada Council Award to work on catalogue raisonné of Arthur Lismer, becomes fifteen year project, unable to get publisher, project remained incomplete
- 1985 McCullough receives award from The Canadian Association for Adult Education, on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary
- 1988 McCullough receives Life Time Achievement Award for work with SAB
- 1991 McCullough is made Honourary Member of the Canadian Crafts Council
- 1993 August 9th, Norah McCullough dies at home in Guelph

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