

Season's Greetings in Canada  
Gender and Nationalism in Rous and Mann, Limited's  
Canadian Artists Series Christmas Cards, 1923-1929.

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the contribution of Montreal women artists to the Canadian Artists Series of Christmas cards between 1923 and 1929, printed by Rous and Mann Ltd. in Toronto. This promotional project for Canadian art provides a forum through which to examine avenues of access afforded women in fine art and commercial art, women's negotiation of social barriers and the effect of these restrictions on their subject matter. The Christmas card market was dominated by women consumers and led the male Group of Seven artists central to the national art movement in English Canada to domesticate their wilderness landscapes into the cultural landscapes typical of women's and Quebec regionalist art, despite the peripheral position of both to the art canon in Toronto. Despite women's dominance of the market, the careers of these women artists were advanced through contacts with the Group of Seven, A.Y. Jackson and Rous and Mann.

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1	List of Known Contributing Artists to the Canadian Artists Series	118

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAM	Art Association of Montreal
AGT	Art Gallery of Toronto
CAM	Conseils des arts et manufactures (Montreal)
CAS	Contemporary Arts Society (Montreal)
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CGP	Canadian Group of Painters (Toronto)
CNE	Canadian National Exhibition (Toronto)
CPR	Canadian Pacific Railroad
CNR	Canadian National Railroad
GAC	Graphic Arts Club (Toronto)
LAC	Library and Archives Canada (Ottawa)
NCWC	National Council of Women in Canada (Toronto)
NGC	National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa)
OSA	Ontario Society of Artists (Toronto)
OSAD	Ontario School of Art and Design (Toronto)
RCA	Royal Canadian Academy of Arts
SGA	Society of Graphic Art (Toronto)
SCPE	Society of Canadian Painter-Etchers (Toronto)
SCPW	Society of Canadian Painters in Watercolour (Toronto)
TASL	Toronto Art Students' League
TIE	Toronto Industrial Exhibition
VON	Victorian Order of Nurses
WAAC	Women's Art Association of Canada (Toronto)
WAC	Women's Art Club (London, Ontario)
WCTU	Women's Christian Temperance Union (Ontario)

Following World War I, post-Confederation nationalism in English Canada found expression in what was claimed to be a national art movement.<sup>1</sup> Print reproduction programs by the National Gallery of Canada promoted cultural awareness and later disseminated this homegrown art movement across the nation and overseas. At the same period, beginning in 1922, a similar initiative was undertaken in the commercial field by Toronto printing firm Rous and Mann, Limited. This firm produced and sold a series of Christmas cards known as the “Canadian Artists Series.” The Christmas cards were meant to deliver both festive greetings and to promote the work of Canadian painters.<sup>2</sup>

Canadian nationalist discourse from which the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards emerged, appeared to be neutral and inclusive and was so represented at the time the project was undertaken. By contrast contemporary critiques have characterized the nationalist movement as Anglo-Canadian and male-dominated. This thesis will study the Christmas card project in relation to the critique of the totalizing masculine discourse. The production of the visual imagery on the cards will be examined in relation to gender issues, both with regards to the sex of the artist producer and in terms of the commercial market. For example, a female demographic dominated greeting card purchases so a different imagery was required than the one produced by male artists. Nevertheless, women artists had to negotiate the male-dominated commercial and fine art realms to

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<sup>1</sup> Charles C. Hill, *The Group of Seven: Art for a Nation* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995); Linda Jessup, “Bushwhackers in the Gallery: Antimodernism and the Group of Seven,” *Antimodernism and Artistic Experience: Policing the Boundaries of Modernity*, Lynda Jessup, Ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Esther Trépanier, “The Expression of a Difference: The Milieu of Quebec Art and the Group of Seven,” *The True North: Canadian Landscape Painting 1896-1939*, ed. Michael Tooby (London : Barbican Art Gallery, 1991). For a thorough discussion of the rise of nationalist sentiment from imperialist sentiment in Canada post-Confederation, see introduction to Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).

<sup>2</sup> Joyce Sowby and Randall Speller, “Quality Printing: A History of Rous and Mann Limited, 1909-1954,” *The Devil’s Artisan: A Journal of the Printing Arts* 51 (Fall/Winter 2002): 30-31, at 19.

become recognized as professionals. The relative power exercised by women as card consumers contrasts with their relative lack of control in their professional careers.

The interwar years saw shifting gender roles for women in Canada. Changes in the commercial world had already occurred as women, traditionally charged with keeping the household accounts, realized firstly a new buying power in the late nineteenth-century emergence of the department stores and secondly were employed in clerical and sales jobs before marriage.<sup>1</sup> During World War I women took the place of men in the workplace and, with the casualties of war, often found themselves unmarried and pursuing less traditional roles. Rather than maternal feminism of women's volunteer organizations in the nineteenth century and segregated institutions such as the Women's Art Association of Canada (WAAC), the interwar years marked a time when women artists began to mix with men in societies such as the Society of Graphic Artists (SGA) and clubs like the Canadian Group of Painters (CGP). Nevertheless, Canadian society remained intensely patriarchal in its structure and dictates.

In 1920 the Beaver Hall Group of painters formed in Montreal and ten women were amongst the eighteen original members.<sup>2</sup> By this time professional women artists in Canada had developed their own practices and were actively seeking to participate in artists' societies alongside their male contemporaries.<sup>3</sup> Women artists also participated in commercial projects such as the 1942 National Gallery of Canada (NGC) print

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<sup>1</sup> Veronica Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1993), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Natalie Luckyj, *Visions and Victories: Ten Canadian Women Artists 1914-1945*, (London, ON: London Regional Art Gallery, 1983), 14.

<sup>3</sup> For the importance of associate or full membership in the Royal Canadian Academy (RCA) for an artist's career, see Rebecca Sisler, *Passionate Spirits: A History of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, 1880-1980* (Toronto and Vancouver: Clarke, Irwin and Co. Ltd., 1980), 162.

reproduction program, designed to promote Canadian art.<sup>4</sup> As for the women artists included in the Rous and Mann Canadian Artists Series, there were Ethel Seath, Nora Collyer, Beatrice Robertson, Ruth Beatrice Henshaw, Mabel Lockerby, Kathleen Morris, Sarah Robertson and Anne Savage to name a few. If these cards were meant to offer a vision of the nation's painters and their achievement, we are left to question whose vision this was?

Feminist art historian Griselda Pollock has written of an "historical asymmetry," that is, "a difference socially, economically, subjectively" between the experiences of men and women artists.<sup>5</sup> She observed that this difference "determined both what and how men and women painted" and proposed therefore that the work of women artists must be studied with this specificity in mind.<sup>6</sup> Rather than looking at the Canadian Artists Series in terms of man against woman, this study proposes to re-read the evidence which previously located the Canadian Artists Series as representative of "Canadian art" as a whole. Such statements need to be probed to deconstruct the complexity of the contributions and influences rather than accepting them at face value.<sup>7</sup>

### **Selection**

Though Rous and Mann printed their first run of the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards in 1922<sup>8</sup> and their last in 1952,<sup>9</sup> the focus of this study is on the early

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<sup>4</sup> Joyce Zemans, "Envisioning a Nation: Nationhood, Identity and the Sampson-Matthews Silkscreen Project: The Wartime Prints," *Journal of Canadian Art History* 19, 1 (1998): 6-47.

<sup>5</sup> Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and Histories of Art* (London & New York: Routledge, 1988), 55.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Griselda Pollock, *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories* (London & New York: Routledge, 1999), 28.

<sup>8</sup> The first year of production was 1922 and the cards were "letterpress reproductions" of works by past artists Cornelius Krieghoff, Otto R. Jacobi, Paul Kane, Daniel Fowler, William Brymner, Paul Peel, Blair Bruce, F.M. Bell-Smith, James Wilson Morrice and the 'West Wind' in memory of Tom Thomson. 1923 was considered their "first full year of production" and included cards by living artists A.Y. Jackson, Rowley Murphy, Paul Caron and A.J. Casson among others. Graham W. Garrett, "Canadian Christmas

years of the series between 1923 and 1928. The cards were most popular for the first fifteen years of their production from 1922 to 1937, between the First and Second World Wars. Those produced between 1923 and 1928 were created with the innovative *Dell'Acqua* colour process, a stencil technique from France developed by Jean Berte, introduced in Canada a few years earlier by the firm's Art Director Albert H. Robson. This process involved printing an outline of a scene in one colour, upon which a stencil was then laid in order to add watercolour by hand.<sup>10</sup> This method created cards that had the distinct appearance of woodblock prints with simple concepts, flatness and heavy outlines (Figs. 39-100). This process was expensive because of the labour required for colouring, and after 1929, because of the onset of the Depression, Rous and Mann reverted to the more economical letterpress process of printing where both black and coloured ink were applied to a relief image.<sup>11</sup> A few examples of cards by artists from a later era can be distinguished by the difference in their appearance (Figs. 1-2). They have uniform borders and resemble serigraph oil paintings.

The overwhelming majority of cards preserved in the archives I have examined are by artists engaged in the project during the interwar years. Most of the cards are not

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Cards" (Paper held in AGO Library, Toronto, n.d.), 2; Carl Rous, Notes on Rous and Mann Ltd., courtesy of Joyce Sowby, Toronto, Ontario, 9 April, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> The cards sold well for the first fifteen years of their thirty-year run, but the Great Depression reduced the population's expenditures on such things as Christmas cards. As demand dropped, and other business for a variety of clients increased, the cards, to which the top two floors of Rous and Mann's four-floor building had been dedicated, were taking up space and the use of the printing presses. The Series was discontinued and "notices were sent out to the trade on 31 December, 1952 announcing the demise of the Canadian Artists Series cards." Sowby and Speller, "Quality Printing," 19-22.

<sup>10</sup> Sowby and Speller, "Quality Printing," 15; Former antiquarian book dealer and photographic historian Graham Garrett describes this method of printing, "in simple terms, a line-print, or key-plate, is made of the scene, then a stencil is laid over the different parts of the scene and brushed-in with the required colour." Garrett, "Canadian Christmas Cards," 2. A further definition of this process in *An Encyclopedia of the Book* labels the technique "Jean Berte Process" and describes it as "a printing process in which non-metallic blocks (i.e. rubber, linoleum, or composition) are used for printing flat water-colours on matt paper." Geoffrey Ashall Glaister, *An Encyclopedia of the Book*, (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1960), 203.

<sup>11</sup> Garrett, "Canadian Christmas Cards," 2-3.

dated; however, the time period can be hypothesized through a knowledge of when the artists worked on the project as well as the overall similarity of the designs. My analysis will include only those images prepared as original works of art and printed with the *Dell'Acqua* colour process in the early phase of the Canadian Artists Series.

### Sources

The Christmas cards were not found in one comprehensive collection, but were scattered. The ephemeral nature of greeting cards means that people throw them away. Those that are left attract a high price at auction. Nevertheless, I was able to find a good selection among private collections and various fonds in the Library and Archives Canada. From the Library and Archives Canada, I derived this material mainly from the Joan Murray fonds and others from the Naomi Jackson Groves and Mabel Lockerby fonds. Several examples of Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards were also available in the private archive of Joyce Sowby, daughter of H.L. Rous, and the private collection of Beaver Hall Group historian Barbara Meadowcroft, both of whom were generous in providing access.

The only list of participating artists uncovered to date is a small booklet of artists' biographies from 1927, *Who's Who*, prepared by Rous and Mann in response to consumer demand for information about the contributing artists (Fig. 3).<sup>12</sup> These artists and a few others whose cards have been found in archival collections form the corpus for this study. The participation of many more artists can be surmised by a quote from a 1929 *Chatelaine* article about the series stating that "in a single year, as many as a hundred Canadian painters are represented in the series of that year and in many cases represented

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<sup>12</sup> *Who's Who*, (Toronto: Rous & Mann Ltd., 1927).

at their best.”<sup>13</sup> I have been able to document the use of designs by 71 artists of whom 15 are women (Appendix I). Women artists make up 21% of the total artist participants in the project of all names found. Based upon availability, my selection includes examples of 64 cards representing the work of 25 artists. Of these, eight artists are women who created 18 cards, and 17 are male artists with 46 cards; thus the men represent 68% and the women 32% of the available selection. Although the ratios are slightly different because of the specific availability of the cards, these proportionalities are still representative of the gender imbalance of the artists submitting designs to the project.

Women painters are first known to have participated in 1925 and 1926.<sup>14</sup> They are listed in greater number in 1927 in *Who's Who*, several years after the project began. Those from Montreal included Nora Collyer, Mabel Lockerby, Kathleen Morris, Sarah Robertson, Anne Savage, Ethel Seath, Ruth Beatrice Henshaw, and Marjorie Earle Gass.<sup>15</sup> Helen Catharine Carruthers, Edith Booth MacLaren, Georgette Berckmans and Estelle Kerr were from Toronto. Because of their involvement with the Beaver Hall Group, exhibiting careers and friendships with such artists as A.Y. Jackson, many of the Montreal women have received more attention from historians than those from Toronto. This might account for the fact that only cards by women artists from Montreal were uncovered and it will therefore be those upon whom I will focus this analysis.

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<sup>13</sup> This is in contrast to the carefully selected Coutts Painters of Canada Series, initiated by A.Y. Jackson in 1931 in collaboration with William E. Coutts, that specifically represented the work of 30 artists. M. Lovell, “The Story of the Christmas Card and its Distinctive Development by Canadian Artists,” *The Chatelaine* 2 (Dec 1929): 17-18, 61.

<sup>14</sup> Mabel Lockerby received letters from Rous and Mann in regards to her designs for the Series in 1925 and 1926. Letter from Rous and Mann Ltd. to Mabel Lockerby, Toronto, 1 March 1925. Mabel Lockerby Fonds, R10285-0-1-E, LAC; Fred Jacob, “Canada’s Own Christmas Cards,” *Canadian Homes and Gardens* (December 1926): 35; *Who's Who*.

<sup>15</sup> Gass was originally from New Brunswick, but moved to Montreal to train at the AAM.

## Methodology

In examining the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards from the perspective of gender, a number of overlapping issues come to the fore, including male artists' adjustment to female consumers and female artists' negotiation of their careers in a male professional venue. For analysis of the issues of consumption, historical trends in consumerism described in Pamela Klaffke's 2003 book *Spree: A Cultural History of Shopping* will be combined with the theoretical analysis of mass culture in Roland Barthes' *Mythologies*.<sup>16</sup> Barthes provides a theoretical basis for the commercial viability of mythologizing the realities of life and surrounding landscape in terms of the "picturesque." These sources contextualize articles and advertisements relating to the Canadian Artists Series during their time of production in the 1920s and 1930s and demonstrate the external market factors for which the contributing artists had to account.

The examination of how women artists negotiated a male professional venue relies upon historical and theoretical feminist analysis of the experiences of women and women artists in Canada in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. More than simply filling in a missing history of the lives and work of women artists in Canada, the experience of women must be deconstructed to reveal the true nature of the patriarchal structures which pervaded all aspects of society at the time. Griselda Pollock's view of the "feminine" points to prescribed roles in society as well as to the dictates of subject matter deemed appropriate for women artists in their work.<sup>17</sup> Veronica Strong-Boag has examined the stages of life of women in Canada, exposing the reality of the gender

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<sup>16</sup> Pamela Klaffke, *Spree: A Cultural History of Shopping* (Vancouver: Arsenal Press, 2003); Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*. Annette Lavers, trans. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1972).

<sup>17</sup> Pollock, *Vision and Difference; Differencing the Canon*.

constraints in Canadian society during the interwar years.<sup>18</sup> Cindy Nemser has also explored the stereotyping of women's subject matter during the nineteenth century and the prevailing notion at this time of the innate attachment of women to their biological nature, centered on the womb.<sup>19</sup> Feminist theories on women's work and gender stereotyping provide the theoretical framework from which I propose to examine the notion of the "feminine" as constructed in various socio-historical contexts, and the construction of the discipline of art history from the perspective of gender.

### **Literature Review**

There were a number of areas from which resources for this thesis were drawn. Material on the general history of the greeting card and artists' card in Canada provided background information on iconography and motives for Rous and Mann's creation of the Series. Studies of women artists in Canada, women's work, gender stereotyping, and essentialist subject matter provide a critical feminist lens through which to view the contribution of women artists to the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards. Finally, material that critically addressed the nationalist movement in Canada facilitated the assessment of the linkages between the nationalist intentions of the Series and the canonical high art then represented by the Group of Seven.

There have been several articles and papers on the history of the greeting card in Canada during the twentieth century from which women were largely excluded.<sup>20</sup> None of these have examined the place of women designers or the gendered nature of iconography in this industry. Most current North American studies on this subject take a

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<sup>18</sup> Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*.

<sup>19</sup> Cindy Nemser, "Stereotypes and Women Artists," *Feminist Collage: Educating Women in the Visual Arts*. Judy Loeb, ed. (New York and London: Teaching College Press, 1979): 156-166.

<sup>20</sup> For example, Elizabeth Collard, "Canada's Victorian Christmas Cards," *Canadian Antiques Collector* 9 (Nov-Dec 1974): 35-8; and Kenneth Rowe, "Greetings: the Christmas card in Canada," *Canadian Collector* 21 (Nov-Dec 1986): 32-6.

sociological perspective, examining the impact of the images, jokes and messages of greeting cards on the recipient and buyer, or they explore what greeting cards say about senders in the context of contemporary society.<sup>21</sup> Another area of scholarship has focused on the economics of the business: that is, the profitability of the market for greeting cards.<sup>22</sup> Most other sources simply chronicle the origins of the Christmas card, like George Buday's 1964 survey text *The History of the Christmas Card*, which explains the basis of much traditional Christmas card iconography.<sup>23</sup> My study departs from this literature by embarking on an analysis of this Christmas card series from the perspective of gender.

Magazine and journal articles on the Canadian Artists Series written throughout the twentieth century have focused on the production of these greeting cards by professional artists, particularly the fact that the most notable feature of the series was the contributions of the Group of Seven. Fred Jacob and M. Lovell wrote articles about Rous and Mann's Series in the 1920s for *Canadian Home and Garden* and *Chatelaine* magazine respectively. Whereas Jacob's 1926 article mentions the contributions of Anne Savage, Helen Carruthers and Sarah M. Robertson, Lovell's 1929 article only mentions male artists "Gagnon, Brigden, Jackson, Haines, Turner, Casson, Harris, Banting, Bridgewood, Caron, Johnston, Jefferys, MacDonald, Palmer."<sup>24</sup> In the second half of the

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<sup>21</sup> For example, Melissa Schrift, "Icons of Femininity in Studio Cards: Women, Communication and Identity," *Journal of Popular Culture* 28 (1994): 111-122; Stephen Papsion, "From Symbolic Exchange to Bureaucratic Discourse: The Hallmark Greeting Card," *Theory, Culture and Society* 3 (1986); and Nancy Jo Silberman-Federman, "Jewish Humor, Self-Hatred, or Anti-Semitism: The Sociology of Hanukkah Cards in America," *Journal of Popular Culture* (1994): 211-29.

<sup>22</sup> For example, Tad Friend, "Wishing it was just the thought: the business of Christmas cards," *Harper's Magazine* 275 (Dec 1987): 68-9; L. Benoit, "Sentiments à la carte," *L'Actualité* 8 (déc 1983): 16, 18.

<sup>23</sup> George Buday, *The History of the Christmas Card* (London: Spring Books, 1964).

<sup>24</sup> Jacob, "Canada's Own Christmas Cards," 35; Lovell, "The Story of the Christmas Card," 18.

twentieth century, Rous and Mann's Canadian Artists Series was largely omitted from articles or exhibitions calling attention to artist's Christmas cards in Canada.

In the 1950s, articles in *Canadian Art* magazine and *Canadian Geographical Journal* focused on Coutts' Painters of Canada Series.<sup>25</sup> The Coutts' Painters of Canada series of Christmas cards was a short-lived project initiated in 1931 by greeting-card businessman William E. Coutts at the urging of A.Y. Jackson. The Painters of Canada Series focused on the Group of Seven painters and their contemporaries. Unlike the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards, the Coutts project was initiated by A.Y. Jackson at a time when he and the Group had already achieved recognition. By contrast, the Rous and Mann project also proposed by Jackson, began on the eve of the Group's international recognition.

A feature article in the *Globe and Mail* in 1976 dealt with the subject of the "Group of Seven Christmas cards" published by Coutts.<sup>26</sup> Then in 1984 and 1991 the National Archives of Canada (now the Library and Archives Canada) presented an exhibition of the 1931 Coutts' Painters of Canada Series.<sup>27</sup> This singular attention to the Coutts series was supplemented by a short history of artists' greeting cards in Canada, written by photographic historian Graham W. Garrett in 1987-88. His account included a detailed examination of both the Rous and Mann and the Coutts' Christmas card projects.<sup>28</sup> The Christmas card series of the first half of the twentieth century were

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<sup>25</sup> For example Douglas Leechman, "The Canadian Scene in Christmas Cards," *Canadian Geographical Journal* 49 (Dec 1954): 224-9; Paul Arthur, "Recent Christmas and New Year's Greeting Cards by Canadian Artists," *Canadian Art* 15 (Autumn 1958): 288-99.

<sup>26</sup> Michael Mitchell, "Season's Greetings from the Group of Seven," *The Globe and Mail – Weekend Magazine* 28 (Dec 2, 1976): 16-19.

<sup>27</sup> *1931-Painters of Canada Series Exhibition of Christmas Cards*, (Ottawa: Public Archives Canada / Hallmark Cards Canada, 1984).

<sup>28</sup> Garrett, "Canadian Christmas Cards." Garrett was an antiquarian book dealer at the time.

defined as projects in which the Group of Seven painters participated, while other contributors remained largely neglected.

In the last thirty years especially, there have been catalogues and books published on the subject of Canadian women artists. Although women artists from the early twentieth century were critically recognized in reviews of their time, from the middle of the century, these women were written out of art histories for the most part.<sup>29</sup> After 1970 scholars began to re-examine the work of women artists in order to “rectify the gaps in historical knowledge.”<sup>30</sup> Resources on women artists in Canada have consistently grown more numerous as scholars have re-read history to reveal how men and women developed as professional artists in a society structured upon gendered barriers. Natalie Luckyj’s exhibition catalogues examined the lives and work of Canadian women artists Prudence Heward and Helen McNicoll from a feminist critical perspective.<sup>31</sup> Maria Tippett provided a survey text of Canadian women artists in 1992.<sup>32</sup> Barbara Meadowcroft’s book *Painting Friends* has explored the lives of the women of the Beaver Hall Group.<sup>33</sup> Several theses have also been executed in recent years on particular women artists in Canada, including Susan Avon’s work on the Beaver Hall women painters and Susan Butlin’s thesis on Florence Carlyle.<sup>34</sup> Though much remains to be done on individual

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<sup>29</sup> Roszika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, (London, Routledge, 1981), 44-45.

<sup>30</sup> Pollock, *Differencing the Canon*, 23.

<sup>31</sup> Luckyj, *Visions and Victories; Expressions of Will: The Art of Prudence Heward* (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1986); *Helen McNicoll: A Canadian Impressionist*. (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1999).

<sup>32</sup> Maria Tippett, *By A Lady: Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women* (Toronto: Viking, 1992).

<sup>33</sup> Barbara Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends: The Beaver Hall Women Painters* (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1999).

<sup>34</sup> Susan Avon, “The Beaver Hall Group and its Place in the Montreal Art Milieu and the Nationalist Network,” (MA thesis, Concordia University, 1994); Susan Butlin, “Making a Living: Florence Carlyle and the Negotiation of a Professional Artistic Identity,” (MA thesis, Carleton University, 1995).

women artists, together these sources provide a critical picture of the historical role of women artists in Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In terms of historical context, the last fifteen years have seen the publication of a number of thorough studies on the lives of women in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Canada. Ellen E. McLeod's 1999 book *In Good Hands: The Women of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild* discussed women's involvement in the world of volunteer artistic and artisan societies in Canada.<sup>35</sup> In addition to women's involvement with craft and the preservation of craft tradition, she also addressed the transition from a Victorian society in which women were segregated in women-only clubs and societies in order to gain recognition beyond the subordinate status they were granted in male-dominated societies to one in which there was a greater degree of shared recognition within societies of both male and female members in the interwar years. Veronica Strong-Boag's book *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939* provided insight into women's lives at home, their roles in society as primarily mothers, sisters, daughters and wives, and the venturing of middle-class women into the previously male-dominated working world.<sup>36</sup> These resources portray the place from which the women contributors to the Canadian Artists Series were working as women in Montreal and Toronto in the interwar years.

There is little research specifically about Canadian women's place in the art print and commercial art field apart from Rosemarie L. Tovell's 1996 catalogue for the National Gallery of Canada, *A New Class of Art: The Artist's Print in Canadian Art*,

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<sup>35</sup> Ellen E. McLeod, *In Good Hands: The Women of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1999).

<sup>36</sup> Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*; Strong Boag, Mona Gleason and Adele Perry, *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

1877-1920, which provides a thorough history of the artist's print in Canada and includes brief reference to work by women artists.<sup>37</sup> Other literature on these fields focuses on the general situation, rather than from the perspective of gender. Angela E. Davis's 1995 book *Art and Work: A Social History of Labour in the Canadian Graphic Arts Industry to the 1940s* and Michael Large's MA thesis provided information on the commercial field in Canada.<sup>38</sup> Elizabeth Hulse compiled a comprehensive list of printing firms in Toronto in the nineteenth century.<sup>39</sup> In the United States, furthermore, the experience of women in these fields is highlighted in Helena E. Wright's 1995 catalogue *With Pen and Graver: Women Graphic Artists Before 1900* and Anne Stewart O'Donnell's extensive survey of female production of Arts and Crafts greeting cards that appeared in 2003.<sup>40</sup>

Detailed information on Rous and Mann along with a checklist of their publications was provided in a research paper written by Joyce Sowby, daughter of H.L. Rous, in 1969. Sowby's article was never published, but Art Gallery of Ontario librarian Randall Speller uncovered it in 2002 and published it in the *Devil's Artisan* journal. Speller indicates in his "Afterword" that Sowby's paper is valuable because of her access to private papers and financial statements belonging to her uncle C.W. Rous, and because of the disappearance of most of the Rous and Mann archive after 1988.

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<sup>37</sup> Rosemarie L. Tovell, *A New Class of Art: The Artist's Print in Canadian Art, 1877-1920*, (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1996).

<sup>38</sup> Angela E. Davis, *Art and Work: A Social History of Labour in the Canadian Graphic Arts Industry to the 1940s* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill – Queen's University Press, 1995); Michael Large, *Artists and Industry Illustration in Transition in Toronto, 1880-1910* (MA thesis, Carleton University, 1986).

<sup>39</sup> Elizabeth Hulse, *A Dictionary of Toronto Printers, Publishers, Booksellers and the Allied Trades 1798-1900*, (Toronto: Anson-Cartwright Editions, 1982).

<sup>40</sup> Helena E. Wright, *With Pen and Graver: Women Graphic Artists Before 1900*, (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of American History Smithsonian Institute, 1996); Anne Stewart O'Donnell, "A First Look at Arts and Crafts Greeting Cards," *The Magazine Antiques* (Dec 2003): 62-71.

Rous and Mann went through various corporate changes. Although F.M. Mann remained president until 1976, the firm was bought out by Brigdens, Limited. in 1980 and renamed Rous, Mann and Brigdens, Limited. In 1987-88, the firm changed hands again to H. and S. Reliance and, oblivious to the historical importance, equipment and records were removed and thrown out (including records that Joyce Sowby had used and then passed back to the company for safe keeping). Employees were powerless to do anything and “the vast majority of records ended up in Toronto’s garbage. It would appear that the records of Rous and Mann, ..., ended up being destroyed in that final move.”<sup>41</sup> Sowby’s article helps to redress the loss by enriching the historical record of small printing and publishing houses in Canada. By exploring the female contribution to this series of art print Christmas cards, this thesis will study how women were able to gain access to the print realm and the contributions they were able to make. In this way, it responds to the need for research specifically on women’s participation in this industry in Canada: however, much work has yet to be done.

In terms of the male-dominated canon of the day, the work of Lynda Jessup, Esther Trépanier and Joyce Zemans has helped to contextualize the critique of nationalist art in Canada.<sup>42</sup> All have added new perspectives to the discourse initiated in 1926 by Fred Housser and continued through to 1995 by Charles Hill.<sup>43</sup> Zemans’ work has also linked the NGC’s reproduction project to the early twentieth-century mythologies of a

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<sup>41</sup> Sowby and Speller, “Quality Printing,” 28.

<sup>42</sup> Lynda Jessup, “Art for a Nation?” *Fuse* (Summer 1996): 11-14; “Bushwhackers in the Gallery,” 130-52; Esther Trépanier, “Modernité et conscience sociale: la critique d’art progressiste des années trente,” *Journal of Canadian Art History* 8 (1984-85); “The Expression of a Difference”; “Nationalisme et modernité : la réception critique du Groupe des Sept dans la presse montréalaise francophone des années vingt,” *Journal of Canadian Art History*, 17(1996); Joyce Zemans, “Establishing the Canon: Nationhood, Identity and the National Gallery’s First Reproduction Programme of Canadian Art,” *Journal of Canadian Art History* 16, 2 (1995): 6-39; “Envisioning a Nation.”

<sup>43</sup> Frederick B. Housser, *A Canadian Art Movement: The Story of the Group of Seven* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1926); Charles C. Hill, *Art for a Nation*.

Canadian national art and identity. Their works will be key in my own critical examination of the nationalist discourse with regards to the place of women in the Canadian art world of the time and its impact upon the medium of the Christmas card. Trépanier's discussion of Quebec regionalism and criticism of the Anglo-nationalist art of English Canada informs the context in which artists in Montreal worked.

### **Chapter Summaries**

Since the late 1960s, feminist historians have challenged the patriarchal structures that determined the "norms" for society.<sup>44</sup> To demonstrate how the access to training, professional organizations, and recognition was patriarchally structured, chapter 1 will examine the nationalist canon in English Canada and the hierarchies of high and low art as then understood. The Rous and Mann Canadian Artists Series cards will be considered in relation to these patriarchal systems and examined with reference to the commercial and fine art practices of the participating artists. This will demonstrate how the practices and professional lives of men and women differed and how systemic factors, such as women negotiating their careers in the context of a patriarchal professional structure, were pertinent to the project in the first decades of its duration.

The second chapter will employ feminist theory to study the socialization of genders to certain societal roles and the gender interaction within the Canadian Artists Series project.<sup>45</sup> Within a male-structured and dominated society, women artists were socialized to fit into the professional world in a way defined by male ideals. Despite

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<sup>44</sup> Pollock, *Differencing the Canon*, 28. Brenda Lafleur writes that we must "explore how a particular narrative was established as the normative one. I use a problematized 'history' to contest the more dispersed implications of the system of which I necessarily form a part; to interrupt this meta-narrative of referential truth and reality." Brenda Lafleur, "Resting in history: translating the art of Jin-me Yoon," in *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings*, ed. Griselda Pollock (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 217-227, at 226.

<sup>45</sup> Pollock, *Differencing the Canon*, 28.

changes in gender-based barriers, the women largely operated within a society still based on what Griselda Pollock has defined as “spaces of femininity.”<sup>46</sup> This relegated women artists to a peripheral status in group exhibitions as well as in commercial projects such as the Canadian Artists Series cards. Stereotyping also affected the subject matter of paintings by women artists. This chapter will observe how women negotiated these roles while working within a project like the Canadian Artists Series that was deeply embedded in the male-centered nationalist discourse which dominated the high art canon of the period.

In chapter 3 the iconography of the Christmas cards will be examined in detail for distinctive vocabularies employed by women and men artists. The card designs appear to visually reflect the gender distinctions and issues discussed in the previous two chapters. Furthermore, the chiefly female market to which Rous and Mann was catering for sales of its cards series will also be considered as influential in the choice of designs.

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<sup>46</sup> Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, 56.

## CHAPTER ONE

### *Women Artists and Avenues of Access in Fine Art and Commercial Art*

As a vehicle to promote “Canadian art” to the nation, the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards were considered “art prints” rather than simply another product in an ocean of cheap, ephemeral greeting cards. The instigators of the Series were part of a movement to try to move the greeting card market from frivolous “chromos” into serious “art cards.” This served to locate the cards more in proximity to the category of high art, a status demonstrated by their exhibition in the lobby of the National Gallery of Canada (NGC). This raises the questions of who made this decision about the series, who chose the artists to participate in the project and for what reasons?

A.Y. Jackson (1882-1974) had a central role in working with Rous and Mann’s Art Director Albert Robson (1882-1939) to recruit designers from amongst his contemporaries for the Canadian Artists Series project. Networks and contacts were fundamental to inclusion in the venture. Women artists had to have established contacts with Jackson in order to be considered for this promotional project for Canadian art. Furthermore, those selected, both men and women, were generally chosen because their work was seen to be consistent with the character of the project: that is, nostalgic images of the land.

In studying the lives and experiences of women artists, Griselda Pollock has described the need to account for the “matrix” of specificity, referring to the complex interrelation of the situations, contexts and problems relevant to each woman’s career.<sup>1</sup> By examining the different levels of access for men and women to various fields in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, it will be possible to uncover patriarchal barriers,

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<sup>1</sup> Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, 56.

gatekeepers and processes for admission, and to appreciate that the barriers within the world of fine art were consistent with those in other associated fields.

### **“Chromos” to “Art Cards” and the Canadian Artists Series**

Heavily ornamental full-colour chromolithographic cards, or “chromos,” had been popular in the North America between 1870 and 1890.<sup>2</sup> Victorian designs had become increasingly frilly and decorative because of the “unending search for novelty” during this period.<sup>3</sup> In Canada, it was said that local Victorian designs “[did] not reflect contemporary taste,” but were marketed anyway to give Canadians something to send away to people.<sup>4</sup>

The greeting card industry evolved away from “chromos,” and at the turn of the century plainer examples came into use. These were consistent with contemporary postcard designs created under the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement.<sup>5</sup> The major distinction between greeting cards and “chromos” was that the latter emphasized the image and the former focused on overall design-integration of image and text.<sup>6</sup>

Art theorists of the time, including American painter, ceramist and art educator Marshal Fry (1878-1940), saw the naturalistic “pictorial” images of the Victorian-era cards as a “lower” type of design. By contrast, the new greeting cards were seen as “conventionalized” images: that is, human intellect had been used to stylize what was seen, making the image flatter, simpler and more geometric. This included images printed from woodcuts, or those that had the appearance of being so executed. As with Art Nouveau design principles, the heavy outlines and flat colour planes of these cards

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<sup>2</sup> O’Donnell, “Arts and Crafts Greeting Cards,” 64.

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth Rowe, “Greetings: the Christmas card in Canada,” *Canadian Collector* 21 (November / December 1986): 32-6, at 36.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>6</sup> O’Donnell, “Arts and Crafts Greeting Cards,” 64.

were inspired by Japanese print aesthetics. The cards were often hand-lettered, drawn, printed on handmade paper, and coloured by hand with watercolour.<sup>7</sup>

The Canadian Artists Series Christmas card designs were characteristic of the Arts and Crafts greeting cards in appearance, although the latter were in imitation of a rustic and vernacular source and the former were meant to promote fine art. Contributions by Mabel Lockerby (1882-1976) and A.J. Casson (1898-1992), in particular, were highly stylized and strongly influenced by graphic design techniques, and as such quite different from those of many of the other artists outside the Series (Figs. 44 and 46).

Canadian publishers had jumped on the bandwagon of printed Christmas cards as early as the 1870s to compete with foreign printers, as seen in this early example (Fig. 4).<sup>8</sup> Montreal and Toronto boasted printing or publishing companies that considered Christmas cards an essential part of their business. This Canadian-themed card was printed by a Montreal company (Fig. 5).<sup>9</sup> Despite these Canadian printing efforts, sales of Christmas cards in Canada were low, as evidenced in this card printed abroad but with space left for local printers to insert a recognizable city for purchasers, in this case

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 65-66.

<sup>8</sup> The exchange of Christmas cards originated in England in the mid nineteenth century. Collard, "Victorian Christmas Cards," 35. Though the concept quickly spread to Germany, the Christmas card remained "an English phenomenon" for the first two decades after its conception. Leechman, "The Canadian Scene," 226. By the mid-late nineteenth century, the practice had also developed in the United States. Collard, "Victorian Christmas Cards," 35.

<sup>9</sup> Montreal's firms were G. & W. Clarke, J.T. Henderson and Bennett & Co. G. & W. Clarke was one of Canada's most prominent Canadian Christmas card publishers. Though they printed their Canadian winter scenes in England and Germany, this publishing company's records for the year 1881 show sales of 17,000 cards in one season. In contrast to Clarke's use of foreign printing companies, in the 1880s J. T. Henderson created cards publicized as "designed, patented and produced in Canada." Henderson said in 1881: "My cards are all Canadian workmanship. Canadian in sentiment, design and execution." The Toronto companies producing Canadian Christmas cards were Rolph, Smith & Co., James Campbell & Son, and Barber & Ellis. The latter two companies printed their cards abroad, but Rolph, Smith & Co. "did their own colour-printing." Collard, "Victorian Christmas Cards," 36, 38.

“Ottawa” (Fig. 6).<sup>10</sup> North American companies were just beginning, whereas Europeans had already perfected the process and thus could produce cards more cheaply.<sup>11</sup> The American market grew following the invention of the postcard. From 1900 until the Great War in 1914, Canada’s Christmas card market was flooded with imported cards from both Europe and America. In Canada, from 1914 until the Great Depression of the 1930s, the market for locally produced, printed and designed Christmas cards increased steadily.<sup>12</sup> Forty years after the debut of the Christmas card in Canada, publishers finally saw a market for distinctly Canadian Christmas cards.

This coincided with a time of rising nationalist sentiment in other aspects of Canadian life. Canadians wished to send images of Canada, made by Canadian artists, to each other and to their relatives abroad. As journalist Douglas Leechman wrote in a 1955 article, “so it was that paintings by distinguished Canadian artists made their appearance as Christmas cards some thirty years ago.”<sup>13</sup>

Canadian printing companies used artists’ designs for Christmas cards. For example, the Toronto printing company Barber and Ellis produced cards in the 1880s that featured designs by well-known artists. They also held competitions for designs, which were subsequently exhibited in the Art Gallery of Toronto (AGT). The public voted on the best design after paying a \$0.10 admission fee. Artists benefited financially from the opening of this new market, as described by writer Elizabeth Collard: “for Canadian artists, Canadian Christmas cards meant a welcome new source of income.”<sup>14</sup> This

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<sup>10</sup> Jennifer Bunting, “Collecting Greeting Cards,” *The Canadian Collector* (September / October 1973), 18; Rowe, “Greetings,” 36.

<sup>11</sup> *Timeline 1* (December 1984 / January 1985), see item # 714-38, Art Archivist greeting card file, LAC.

<sup>12</sup> Leechman, “The Canadian Scene,” 227.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Collard, “Victorian Christmas Cards,” 38.

referred to both men and women artists, as evidenced by the records of the Roxbury, Massachusetts printing firm owned by Louis Prang, which show women designers winning his card design competitions.

In the interwar years the popularity of Victorian-inspired “pretty cards” waned and the demand for cards with reproductions of artists’ paintings or artists’ designs increased. Printing companies in Canada both responded to the demand for “Canadian cards” and capitalized on the “art card” as the new trend.

The Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards were “art cards.” Although they were reproduced through the mechanical *Dell’Acqua* printing process at Rous and Mann, they were considered “art prints.”<sup>15</sup> This was because Rous and Mann was a printing firm that employed fine artists to produce elite commercial designs, as evidenced by their employment of artists of the future Group of Seven in their art department. The Series consisted of original designs submitted by Canadian artists for reproduction.

The cards were also treated as “art prints” because they were designed to promote Canadian painting and were considered to be miniature artworks in and of themselves. The fact that they were exhibited every year from 1924 to 1928 in the lobby of the NGC attests to this. They were also displayed at the international exposition at Wembley, England in 1924 and 1925.<sup>16</sup> These cards were a complete departure from the earlier “chromos.” In 1926 Fred Jacob wrote about the cards, “in an astonishingly short time, the Canadian Artists’ [sic] Series of greeting cards has won recognition everywhere.”<sup>17</sup> He described that the NGC exhibition of them “testifie[d] to their artistic worth, and to the

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<sup>15</sup> An “art print” was considered a printed work of “original artistic expression” created by an artist without the help of print technology. Tovell, *A New Class of Art*, 25.

<sup>16</sup> Garrett, “Canadian Christmas Cards,” 2.

<sup>17</sup> Jacob, “Canada’s Own Christmas Cards,” 107.

recognized standing of the artists and illustrators who design[ed] them.”<sup>18</sup> These Canadian “art cards” were considered by Jacob as unique, “it was a departure for greeting cards to carry with them so much of the very air and outlook of the land that produced them.”<sup>19</sup> He further observed that: “it was a decided departure for the leading artists of a nation to express themselves, in their typical styles, through the medium of Christmas cards.”<sup>20</sup>

### **Women and Greeting Card Production**

Women had long been regarded as connected to the production of greeting cards. Indeed, the man who was the first manufacturer of Christmas cards in North America, Louis Prang, was known to have been exceptionally supportive of female artists.<sup>21</sup> His 1881 employee list shows over 100 women, including artists Rosina Emmet, Dora Wheeler and Ida Waugh. These three women were all professional artists who found it profitable to design commercially.<sup>22</sup> Many of the women artists also won Prang’s contests for Christmas card designs.<sup>23</sup>

In the United States, greeting card publication was considered within the spectrum of acceptable occupations for women. This was because of the nineteenth-century connection between women and family, including “holiday celebrations, gift card

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Louis Prang was a German immigrant who settled in Roxbury, Massachusetts, and opened a printing company in the United States in 1856. He developed a system to print high-quality lithographs in twenty colours by 1866, and began producing Christmas cards by 1875. Leechman, “the Canadian Scene,” 226. Prang’s “work marked a turning point in the history of the Christmas card” in that “thereafter, Christmas cards no longer solely reflected an English or European cultural bias.” *Timeline*, see item # 714-38, Art Archivist greeting card file, LAC.

<sup>22</sup> Wright, *With Pen and Graver*, 10.

<sup>23</sup> The concept of using artists’ designs on Christmas cards was first initiated by Louis Prang. This was seen as something which would improve the quality of the cards. Prang acquired quality artists’ designs by holding annual competitions with a prize of \$5000 for the best design. Bunting, “Collecting Greeting Cards,” 17. The competitions were also seen as giving “stimulus to many of the artists of his day;” see Leechman, “The Canadian Scene,” 226-27.

production, and graphic arts in general.”<sup>24</sup> Female designers influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement took hold of the greeting card market and introduced new designs by the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>25</sup> In Britain this movement had arisen in the latter half of the nineteenth century in response to the decline in quality workmanship following the Industrial Revolution.<sup>26</sup> In the United States, American women graphic designers were members of handicraft societies which were established to protect quality and to provide a venue for the pursuit of shared aspirations. The Arts and Crafts cards produced in the United States were certainly influential for the designers of the Canadian Artists Series in terms of what they would have perhaps deemed normative for greeting card design.

### **Women and the Print Trade**

Apart from their connection with Arts and Crafts greeting card design, women in North America also participated in the graphic design trade prior to 1900. In the United States, in the early years of the nineteenth century, according to feminist historian Helena E. Wright, women were considered to be naturally “artistic” and middle- and upper-class women were taught amateur painting and drawing as one of the social graces to be practised within the home. This perceived “innate” artistic quality was easily transferred to employment drawing on lithographic stones in family firms for middle-class women,

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<sup>24</sup> Anne Stewart O’Donnell researched the accomplishments of six women - Jessie Haven McNicol and Amy M. Sacker (Boston); Mary Moulton Cheney (Minneapolis); Marion C. Maercklein, Cora Greenwood and Hazel Burnham (later Slaughter) (Hartford, Conn.) - in the American Arts and Crafts movement and their greeting card production businesses. O’Donnell, “Arts and Crafts Greeting Cards,” 67. Just as women were able to volunteer and still remain within a “feminine sphere,” so too were they able to open businesses associated with the Arts and Crafts movement. Good design was viewed as something which could improve the tastes of the masses and moral tone of society. In the early part of the movement, the field of commercial graphic design, like architectural design, was dominated by men. McLeod, *In Good Hands*, 79. By the turn of the century, women were designing as well as labouring in the Arts and Crafts movement. Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London: The Women’s Press Ltd., 1984), 179. This was because of the connection of the movement to elements associated with “the home, everyday objects, social and moral welfare, decoration and handicraft skills,” which were all seen as traditionally feminine. O’Donnell, “Arts and Crafts Greeting Cards,” 67.

<sup>25</sup> O’Donnell, “Arts and Crafts Greeting Cards,” 67.

<sup>26</sup> McLeod, *In Good Hands*, 79.

apprenticing with father, brother or husband. However, after 1850 increasing mechanization transformed family firms into larger establishments where women did not enjoy the same freedom. In the larger firms, while men continued to engrave and print, most women found themselves relegated to menial jobs like colouring, folding, or assembling books in separate rooms (Fig. 7).<sup>27</sup>

In Canada most graphic artists were without formal training and learned through observation and experience.<sup>28</sup> Canadian art schools emphasized fine art skills of drawing, painting and watercolour.<sup>29</sup> One exception was the Conseil des arts et manufactures (CAM) in Montreal, which was set up by the provincial government in 1872 to train commercial artists in techniques such as lithography. In the early years women were excluded from the CAM, as Beaver-Hall-women historian Barbara Meadowcroft explained, “on the grounds that the courses were intended to improve Quebec’s industries, not to provide instruction in fine art.”<sup>30</sup> By contrast, in the United States women were actively encouraged and trained in schools for work in the printing trade from the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>31</sup> In the last two decades of the century many women in

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<sup>27</sup> Wright, *With Pen and Graver*, 3-5.

<sup>28</sup> Tovell, *A New Class of Art*, 53.

<sup>29</sup> The first art school to open in Canada was the Ontario School of Art in 1876. It was modeled after the British system that mingled fine art training with industrial and design techniques. However, it placed more emphasis on fine art, and many commercial artists ended up going there to improve their skills as fine artists. The Hamilton Art School was one of the few at this time that did emphasize commercial training; see Tobi Bruce, “A Common Ground: Early Strategies of the Hamilton Art School, 1885- 1888,” (MA thesis, Carleton University, 1999). The Art Association of Montreal’s school opened in 1880 but emphasized fine art training for both men and women; see Tovell, *A New Class of Art*, 53-54. Education continued to provide more and more opportunities to women in the printing field in the United States. By the 1880s, there were multiple design schools exclusively for women, founded by women or at least open to both sexes. Women of all classes attended these schools and were trained in “drawing, wood engraving, lithography and industrial design.” Wright, *With Pen and Graver*, 6. Once trained, women were more self-sufficient and able to enter the job market as teachers, designers, wood engravers, illustrators or fulfilling design commissions. Wright, *With Pen and Graver*, 7.

<sup>30</sup> Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends*, 39.

<sup>31</sup> Wright, *With Pen and Graver*, 6.

Canada were allowed to attend the CAM and other art schools in Canada.<sup>32</sup> However, the admittance of women to the CAM coincided with the introduction of painting courses, “which had no industrial application.”<sup>33</sup> Thus it was still not considered useful to train women for industry in Canada at this time. Women could enroll in the technical courses, as did Ethel Seath (1879-1963) when she began her studies in illustration and etching at the CAM in approximately 1898.<sup>34</sup>

In the United States by the end of the nineteenth century, more employment opportunities arose for women graphic artists and illustrators with the growing number of magazines, illustrated books and advertisement posters.<sup>35</sup> These were most likely for a female audience, based on the gendering of the subject matter of women graphic designers. The subject matter of women’s commercial art was gendered in that women were often commissioned to illustrate scenes from the social life of the middle class, whereas men chose subjects of poverty, politics and the military.<sup>36</sup> Canadian women artists in the nineteenth century, like Florence Carlyle (1864-1923), recognized the financial potential of complying with such expectations, when she won a contract for twelve reproductions of motherly scenes for a calendar at a \$5000.00 salary.<sup>37</sup> Estelle Muriel Kerr (1879-1971), a participant in the Canadian Artists Series from Toronto, was primarily an illustrator of children’s books and stories, and “specialized” in children’s portraits.<sup>38</sup> Kerr wrote an article in 1913 in *Saturday Night* magazine about the

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<sup>32</sup> Tippet, *By a Lady*, 28.

<sup>33</sup> Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends*, 39.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 213; Tovell, *A New Class of Art*, 134.

<sup>35</sup> Wright, *With Pen and Graver*, 10-11.

<sup>36</sup> Deborah Cherry, *Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists*, (London and New York City: Routledge, 1993), 101.

<sup>37</sup> Butlin, “Florence Carlyle,” 129, 133.

<sup>38</sup> Information copied from the back of a photograph of Estelle M. Kerr. See item # 062849, M.O. Hammond Photograph Collection, Library and Archives, NGC.

advantages for women artists who participated in commercial art. She wrote that this was one way for women to “gain financial independence.”<sup>39</sup>

Women did work on staff as artists in the art departments in printing firms, as in Louis Prang’s Massachusetts firm where women not only embellished and finished work, but also participated in etching and illustration.<sup>40</sup> In the American context, however, Wright has noted that “most women graphic artists struggled for recognition in a world that favored men and respected painting more than works on paper.”<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, women received less compensation for their work, their skills were undervalued, and they did not have access to the same job security as men because they were denied access to trade unions and other organizations set up to protect the male worker and help men to “bargain for wages and benefits.”<sup>42</sup> Wright continues that “the novelty of their employment had some marketing appeal,” but many men resented competition in the printing trade.<sup>43</sup>

The fact that women engaged in illustration and graphic design in the twentieth century is indicated by the activities of some of the women contributors to the Canadian Artists Series cards. Almost all the male contributing artists from Toronto were employed in printing firms such as Grip, Limited or Rous and Mann at one point or another in their careers. Although none of the women contributors were employed in either of these particular firms, some worked for newspapers. Ethel Seath joined the art staff of the Montreal *Witness* in approximately 1895, prior to seeking training in

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<sup>39</sup> Butlin, “Florence Carlyle,” 128.

<sup>40</sup> Wright, *With Pen and Graver*, 10-11.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

illustration at the CAM. In 1901, she joined the art department of the *Montreal Star*.<sup>44</sup> From 1909, she worked as an illustrator for the *Family Herald*, doing etching, pen and ink drawings until 1917.<sup>45</sup> Anne Savage (1896-1971) went to the USA to study at the Minneapolis School of Design in 1919, and began to work for Ronald's Press in Montreal in 1920.<sup>46</sup> None of the other women contributors in my selection worked in the graphic arts industry; however, historian Angela Davis has described Grip and Brigden's, Limited as having "employed men *and women* who later went on to become influential figures in Canadian fine arts."<sup>47</sup> Davis offered no examples of women artists who worked at either of these firms, and there were no women listed amongst the artists working in the Art Department at Rous and Mann in the 1920s. We could hypothesize that the majority of women artists working in commercial art may have worked from their home studios on a contractual basis; however, further work needs to be done on this topic before coming to any conclusions on the matter.

### **Women and Etching**

In her study of the etching revival of the 1880s, former NGC curator Rosemarie L. Tovell noted that engraving was seen as an "essential and highly respectable occupation" for women.<sup>48</sup> As opposed to the commercial nature of lithography, etching was more associated with individual artistic expression.<sup>49</sup> Like drawing, etching became a popular medium for women, because they could also compete more easily with men through their

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<sup>44</sup> Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends*, 213.

<sup>45</sup> In 1917, Seath was appointed art teacher at The Study, a high school for girls in Montreal, founded in 1915 by her friend Margaret Gascoigne. Laureen Hicks, "Well Known Art Teacher Retires After 45 Years," *Montreal Star*, 26 October 1962, see Ethel Seath, NGC doc. file.

<sup>46</sup> Anne Savage, "The National Gallery of Canada – Ottawa – Information Form," (1940), see Anne Savage NGC doc. file.

<sup>47</sup> Davis, *Art and Work*, 99 [emphasis added].

<sup>48</sup> Tovell, *A New Class of Art*, 68.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

admission to etching exhibitions and societies, by contrast with the salon system from which they were often excluded.<sup>50</sup>

Tovell has described the career of Elizabeth Armstrong-Forbes (1859-1912), a Canadian painter-etcher, who worked in England with Mortimer Menpes, an Australian painter within the circle of painter James Abott MacNeil Whistler. She reached high accomplishment in this field, and became “the finest nineteenth-century painter-etcher Canada produced.”<sup>51</sup> Armstrong-Forbes is a singular example of a successful Canadian female painter-etcher in Canada before 1900.

Through these points of access women had openings to the print trade, to work as painter-etchers and to the production of greeting cards.

### **Men and Commercial Art**

While a very few women contributors to the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards worked in commercial art, most of the men were employed as commercial artists in printing firms as a means to financially support themselves and their families. Most of the Group of Seven painters began by working in the commercial field at Grip and later at Rous and Mann. J.E.H. MacDonald (1873-1932) was a designer at Grip for seventeen years, beginning in 1895. He was promoted to head designer in 1911, by which time Arthur Lismer (1885-1969), Tom Thomson (1877-1917), Frank Johnston (1888-1949) and Franklin Carmichael (1890-1945) had all begun working there. Fred Varley (1881-1969) joined them soon after in 1912. When Albert H. Robson, who had been Art Director of Grip from approximately 1908, became Art Director for Rous and Mann in 1912, he brought several of the Grip employees with him, including Thomson and future

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<sup>50</sup> Wright, *With Pen and Graver*, 9.

<sup>51</sup> Tovell, *A New Class of Art*, 68.

Group of Seven members MacDonald, Lismer, Johnston and Carmichael. Varley joined Robson at Rous and Mann just after 1912 and A.J. Casson was hired as Carmichael's apprentice in 1919.<sup>52</sup> Robson directed a team of artists at Rous and Mann, who went on to found a landscape school of modern art in the 1920s, establishing what was then considered to be a new Canadian School of art.<sup>53</sup> Joyce Sowby has written that Robson's connections to the Toronto art scene enabled Rous and Mann to hire some of the best artists of the time creating "an outstanding art department."<sup>54</sup>

Apart from a year-and-a-half stint as a traveling magazine illustrator, Lawren S. Harris (1885-1970) was the only member of the Group of Seven to abstain completely from commercial work, which he regarded with contempt.<sup>55</sup> Harris had the luxury of financial freedom. He and his friend Dr. James M. MacCallum funded the Studio Building in Toronto for fellow painters to encourage them to concentrate on oil painting full time.<sup>56</sup> This underlines the status then attached to what was considered "high" art as opposed to commercial that was still disdained.

Commercial practise had an effect on the fine art of the Group of Seven. Their paintings were characterized by "the formal simplicity and directness required by commercial graphics."<sup>57</sup> *Who's Who* credits MacDonald's commercial work as forming an integral part of his training, noting that he "studied at the Ontario Art School, but mostly *at the bench* in Commercial Art Design in Toronto and London, England" (Fig.

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<sup>52</sup> Hill, *Art for a Nation*, 49; Ann Davis, "A.J. Casson: A Man for Canada's Seasons," *South Western Ontario's Journal of the Arts*, London, ON, March / April 1991, see A.J. Casson NGC doc. file.

<sup>53</sup> At the time it was seen as national, but later as English-Canadian.

<sup>54</sup> Sowby and Speller, "Quality Printing," 14.

<sup>55</sup> Dennis Reid, *A Concise History of Canadian Painting*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), 138.

<sup>56</sup> Hill, *Art for a Nation*, 51.

<sup>57</sup> Large, "Artists and Industry," 24.

8).<sup>58</sup> Carmichael's and Casson's paintings in particular are akin to "the flat, decorative styles appropriate to the poster and lithographic process."<sup>59</sup> Carmichael's paintings are said to have elements of Art Deco and Arts and Crafts graphic design in them.<sup>60</sup> Casson's paintings are seen as being influenced by his commercial design work and by Carmichael's "clean, hard-edged outlines" (Fig. 9).<sup>61</sup> Casson considered his commercial training a benefit and is quoted as saying "I got a wonderful training at Rous & Mann. It was just like a fifteen-year-old being made a member of the Royal Academy in England."<sup>62</sup>

Though A.Y. Jackson had worked in commercial art and actively pursued commercial projects to promote his and his colleagues' careers, like Lawren Harris he believed that commercial art was not real art. In the forties, he strove to keep the Sampson-Matthews' silk-screen project (1942-1963), in which he was a key player, "away from commercial art."<sup>63</sup> Jackson and H.O. McCurry, the Director of the NGC, worried that this project would "fall to the commercial artists" within the Sampson-Matthews design firm.<sup>64</sup> This indicates the difference that Jackson saw between independently working artists creating artists' prints and those artists who worked exclusively in commercial firms doing graphic art. As Zemans has pointed out in the case of the Sampson-Matthews' project, it was only artists who could successfully adapt their paintings to the illustration and design quality required for commercial production who

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<sup>58</sup> *Who's Who*, 20 [emphasis added].

<sup>59</sup> Large, "Artists and Industry," 25.

<sup>60</sup> Sarah Milroy, "A Portrait of Two Artists in One," *The Globe and Mail* (12 January 2002): R5, <http://www.mcmichael.com/web1/exhibitions/exhibit-spcarmichael-reviews-gm.shtml>

<sup>61</sup> Davis, "A.J. Casson," NGC doc. file.

<sup>62</sup> Large, "Artists and Industry," 24.

<sup>63</sup> Letter from A.Y. Jackson to H.O. McCurry, 8 Dec 1942, quoted in Zemans, "Envisioning Nationhood," 28.

<sup>64</sup> Letter from A.Y. Jackson to H.O. McCurry, 23 Nov 1942, quoted in Zemans, "Envisioning Nationhood," 30.

could participate.<sup>65</sup> This would have been the same case with the Canadian Artists Series, as the *Dell'Acqua* colour-printing process likely would only have accommodated images with relatively simplified lines and colour blocks for stenciling.

Male artists in my selection who contributed to the Canadian Artists Series apart from the Group of Seven were also illustrators in the print industry. L.A.C. Panton (1894-1954) worked in the art department of Rous and Mann from 1920 to 1924 along with fellow participant H.W. McCrae (1887-1969), having been hired by Albert Robson.<sup>66</sup> McCrea also illustrated for *Canadian Magazine*.<sup>67</sup> Alexander Scott Carter (1881-1968) of Toronto was primarily a bookplate maker and architectural sculptor.<sup>68</sup> Paul Alfred (1892-1959) was a designer and advertiser as well as a painter and illustrator of "tourist and other publications for the Department of National Resources Canada."<sup>69</sup> Albert H. Robinson (1881-1956) created sketches of news events and political cartoons for the *Hamilton Times* before 1903.<sup>70</sup> Paul Caron (1874-1941) was a designer and illustrator for newspapers and magazines in Montreal, later painting full-time. He created pen and ink drawings for newspapers *La Presse* and the *Montreal Star*.<sup>71</sup> Clarence C. Gagnon (1881-1942) became interested in engraving before any other art form and became renowned as a printmaker.<sup>72</sup> L.L. FitzGerald (1890-1956) worked in an engraver's plant as an art student and worked in various branches of art, including

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<sup>65</sup> Zemans, "Envisioning Nationhood," 36.

<sup>66</sup> Sowby and Speller, "Quality Printing," 14-15; Colin S. MacDonald, *A Dictionary of Canadian Artists*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (Ottawa: Canadian Paperback Publishers, 2000), 1485.

<sup>67</sup> "Canadiana on Canvas," *Bridle & Golfer* 17 (November 1932), see Harold McCrea NGC doc. file.

<sup>68</sup> MacDonald, *Dictionary of Canadian Artists*, 121.

<sup>69</sup> Paul Alfred, "Questionnaire – Who's Who in American Art," (1946), see Paul Alfred NGC doc. file.; MacDonald, *Dictionary of Canadian Artists*, 7.

<sup>70</sup> MacDonald, *Dictionary of Canadian Artists*, 2203.

<sup>71</sup> "Be Heard," *Ottawa Journal*, 9 June 1971, see J.E.H. MacDonald NGC doc. file.; MacDonald, *Dictionary of Canadian Artists*, 118.

<sup>72</sup> MacDonald, *Dictionary of Canadian Artists*, 244-45.

window decoration, scenery painting and graphic art to make ends meet.<sup>73</sup> Despite the active involvement in the commercial art field of these artists, and some acknowledgment of its helpful influence, many of these male participants in the Canadian Artists Series project aimed to abandon commercial art as soon as possible to engage solely in oil painting.

### **Graphic Arts Clubs in Canada**

Because so many artists were dependent upon commercial art work for financial reasons, and because of the etching revival, various societies of graphic artists were formed between 1880 and 1920. These were led mainly by painter-etchers who sought to provide support and exhibition space for the graphic arts. As Tovell has noted, their connection to the print trade meant that women were more readily accepted into etching societies than into painting, sculpting or watercolour societies and circles.<sup>74</sup> However, it was mainly from the turn of the century that women gained increasing access to these societies. For example, the Toronto Art Students League (1886-1904) (TASL) was a sketching club, which “trained almost an entire generation of successful Toronto graphic artists and painters.”<sup>75</sup> Women were admitted as members in the 1889-90 school year, three years after its founding.<sup>76</sup> When the TASL underwent an eclipse in the years before 1904, the Mahlstick Club, which had opened in 1899, took its place. This club, a place to

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 212.

<sup>74</sup> Tovell, *A New Class of Art*, 68.

<sup>75</sup> When the Ontario Art School (OAS) temporarily closed for four years in 1886, the TASL was formed to continue the fine art training from which illustrators and graphic designers in Toronto in the commercial trade had been benefiting. J.E.H. MacDonald was a member, as was Frederick H. Brigden. It was at the regularly held meetings of the League that Canadian graphic artists and painters exchanged ideas about stylistic trends and specialized skills. The League members were made aware of international trends in graphic design in America, Britain and Scandinavia through books on illustration trends, magazines and world fairs. These influences “contributed to their technical evolution and reinforced their desire to use Canadian subject matter,” see Large, “Artists and Industry,” 26, 28, 43-44.

<sup>76</sup> Tovell, *A New Class of Art*, 55.

“pool resources to pay for studio space and models,” was only open to already qualified male members.<sup>77</sup> However, this retrenchment did not last long.

The Mahlstick Club was short-lived and was soon replaced by the Graphic Arts Club (GAC) in 1903, in which women were included as members by 1907.<sup>78</sup> This club even had a principal female member. Dorothy Stevens (1888-1966) learned the skill of portrait etching in Europe and came to Canada in 1911 to provide professional training and encouragement to the printmakers of the Club.<sup>79</sup> Women artists were thus included in these formative discussions in Canadian graphic art beginning at the turn of the century.

In 1912 the GAC attempted to revitalize itself by changing its name to the Society of Graphic Art (SGA) and membership was opened to include illustrators, designers, printmakers and painters across the country. They also decided to hold exhibitions nationwide. In 1918, feeling that the SGA was concentrating more on painters because it began holding the life-classes of the RCA, the Society of Canadian Painter-Etchers (SCPE) was formed, headed by Fred Haines. Whereas the SGA’s membership was broad, the SCPE was the first graphic art society in Canada to focus solely on printmaking. Together with the SGA, they supplied the graphic arts section for the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) that toured the country in 1918.<sup>80</sup>

By the 1910s and 1920s, women were included to an even greater extent in graphic arts societies. Many women were members of, or exhibited with, the SCPE and the SGA. Through the 1920s, these two Toronto societies had a “nationwide membership

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<sup>77</sup> The Mahlstick Club was founded by J.E.H. MacDonald and Fred Haines among others, and was joined by C.W. Jefferys and J.W. Beatty, all contributors to the Canadian Artists Series. *Ibid.*, 98-99.

<sup>78</sup> This was a club of artists and key writers in the Toronto cultural scene, such as Newton MacTavish and Augustine Bridle. They held yearly exhibitions of drawings and water colour. A.H. Robson, along with C.W. Jefferys, were key members of this club, participating in organization and committees. J.W. Beatty and Arthur Lismer were also members, among others. *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 103-106.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

policy” and held annual exhibitions. They were “sponsored by the AGT and were toured across Canada by the NGC, thus giving the art form [etching] a high profile.”<sup>81</sup> Mabel Lockerby exhibited in 1924 and 1925 at the AGT’s *Exhibition of Canadian Graphic Art*, an exhibit organized by the SGA and the SCPE. She showed two works in the January 1924 show, one a pastel and the other a watercolour. Sarah Robertson’s name appears in the 1925 catalogue for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual *Exhibition of the Canadian Society of Graphic Art*.<sup>82</sup> Ethel Seath sent an etching to the RCA exhibition of 1907 and the spring AAM show in 1908. She was a member of Toronto’s SGA in 1913 and exhibited in the AGT’s *Second Exhibition of Canadian Etchers* in 1915.<sup>83</sup>

There were many male artists of the Canadian Artists Series who were also members of the SGA and SCPE. John W. Beatty was a founding member of the SGA. Other members included Harold McCrea, Paul Alfred from 1930, Winnipeg artist L.L. Fitzgerald, Paul Caron as a satellite member from Montreal and L.A.C. Panton. The latter two were also members of the SCPE. In the 1925 catalogue for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual *Exhibition of the Canadian Society of Graphic Art*, Group of Seven members A.Y. Jackson, Arthur Lismer, Lawren Harris, Frank Johnston, Frederic Varley, and J.E.H. MacDonald were all included, along with the women mentioned previously.<sup>84</sup>

Toronto was home to these graphic arts associations, and it was only by the 1920s that painter-etchers began to be encouraged in Montreal. Although there were many collectors of prints in Montreal, printmaking was not taught or encouraged in the main

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>82</sup> *Exhibition of Canadian Graphic Art*, (Art Gallery of Toronto, 1924), Mabel Lockerby Fonds, R10285-0-1-E, LAC; *2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Exhibition of the Canadian Society of Graphic Art* (Art Gallery of Toronto, 1925), Mabel Lockerby Fonds, R10285-0-1-E, LAC.

<sup>83</sup> Tovell, *A New Class of Art*, 135.

<sup>84</sup> *2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Exhibition of the Canadian Society of Graphic Art*, Mabel Lockerby Fonds, R10285-0-1-E, LAC.

centre of art education, the AAM. The Arts Club was created in 1913 in Montreal as an exhibition society for artwork of all kinds, including art prints. This club was an offshoot of the city's exclusively male Pen and Pencil Club, and included members Maurice Cullen and Clarence Gagnon. There were no women listed by Tovell as members of the Arts Club.<sup>85</sup> For the most part, these twentieth-century graphic art clubs offered access to both men and women. Many of the Montreal women were members of the Toronto-based graphic arts societies, however, and this served to connect them with the Toronto commercial art scene, which in part facilitated their participation in the Canadian Artists Series project.

### **Divide Between Fine Art and Commercial Art**

There was an increasing divide between the fields of fine art and commercial art at the beginning of the twentieth century. Wright points out that in the United States, the divide that grew at this time between these two fields led to the negation of much of the etching work done by women, as it was relegated to the sphere of commercial art.<sup>86</sup> In Canada this divide was increased by institutions like the RCA whose membership welcomed fine artists to the exclusion of those who worked strictly in the field of commercial art.

Even successful independent painters often worked for commercial firms, because they needed the remuneration. As Davis points out, so many independent artists were working in the commercial field, that they can be seen as an extremely important factor in the development of Canadian painting. She writes that "Winnipeg became a centre of

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<sup>85</sup> Tovell, *A New Class of Art*, 135.

<sup>86</sup> Wright, *With Pen and Graver*, 9.

Canadian painting and engraving precisely because it was a graphic arts centre.”<sup>87</sup> Davis notes “so many artists worked in both areas that to separate any discussion of their production into the two arenas can only be considered unhistorical.”<sup>88</sup>

Among future members of the Group of Seven, there was a tension between their desire to be separate from the commercial realm, and their dependence on it in order to subsidize their painting. There was a hierarchy of values positing that “authentic” artists did not benefit from commercialism. Lawren S. Harris in particular, as a Theosophist, preferred to link art to a higher cause, such as improving the spiritual standards of the nation.<sup>89</sup> Like the Arts and Crafts Movement in the Britain, the Group saw industry and commercialism as decreasing aesthetic standards and sought to rectify the situation by elevating the public taste, “which would ultimately foster nationality by creating a market for articles of beauty and utility.”<sup>90</sup> Apart from their financial support of contributing artists, the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards would have had to reach a certain standard as “art prints” in order to educate the nation about the “new Canadian art.” Yet, the members of the Group were savvy business-men, well aware of financial gain from spreading their art as the national movement for Canada, through the patronage of

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 84,121; Brigdens of Winnipeg Ltd. was a graphic arts firm in which such artists as L.L. Fitzgerald, Franz Johnston and Charles Comfort worked, see Mary Jo Hughes, *Brigdens of Winnipeg* (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2002).

<sup>88</sup> Davis, *Art and Work*, 11.

<sup>89</sup> Theosophy was founded in the 1870s in New York City by Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. It was expounded in Blavatsky’s many books and, as NGC historian Douglas Ord recounts, “besides presenting a complete metaphysical schema for the immortality of the soul, and for its purification over many lifetimes, theosophy also claimed a spiritually significant and purifying role for geometrical form, for colour and, by implication, for art.” Douglas Ord, *The National Gallery of Canada: Ideas, Art, Architecture*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), 40.

<sup>90</sup> Jessup, “Bushwhackers in the Gallery,” 132.

companies like CPR and CNR.<sup>91</sup> One biographer has noted that the Toronto Group stayed together because they were aware of the commercial advantage of doing so.<sup>92</sup>

### **The Canadian Artists Series Cards and the Nationalist Art Movement in Toronto**

The Toronto printing company Rous and Mann Limited which produced the Canadian Artists Series cards was connected to the nationalist art movement around the Group of Seven painters in more ways than merely having many of the artists on the art staff.

Herbert L. Rous (1879-1964) and Frederick J. Mann (1873-1936) had opened their own printing company, Rous and Mann Limited (later Rous and Mann Press Limited) in 1909.<sup>93</sup> H.L. Rous was the driving force behind Rous and Mann's reputation as an "art-printing" company of the highest quality, for which he was awarded the Association of Canadian Advertisers' silver medal for outstanding service in the graphic arts. F.J. Mann's salesmanship attracted and maintained their client-base. Carl W. Rous (1875-1963), Herbert's younger brother, contributed invaluable business and financial counsel.<sup>94</sup> Albert Robson was in charge of the art department and responsible for initiating the Canadian Artists Series Christmas card project.<sup>95</sup>

Robson was intimately connected to Toronto institutions that supported, formed and propagated the Ontario-centric landscape-based nationalist art movement in

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<sup>91</sup> Jessup, "Art for a Nation?," 14.

<sup>92</sup> Anne McDougall, *Anne Savage: The Story of a Canadian Painter* (Montreal: Harvest House Ltd., 2000), 34.

<sup>93</sup> They met while both were working for Richard Southam at the Mail Job Printing Company in Toronto.

<sup>94</sup> Sowby and Speller, "Quality Printing," 9-14.

<sup>95</sup> Robson later became Managing Director of Rous & Mann in 1930 and remained in that post until his death in 1939. *Ibid.*, 15; MacDonald, *Dictionary of Canadian Artists*, 2220.

Canada.<sup>96</sup> He also worked with many of the Ontario artists central to this art movement. Furthermore, he wrote or initiated numerous publications dealing with the nationalist art movement.<sup>97</sup> As Art Director for the Canadian Artists Series, such associations are indicative of the intentions underpinning the production of the Christmas cards.

From the first printing of the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards in 1922, Rous and Mann were involved in producing numerous publications to do with the nationalist art movement.<sup>98</sup> They published three high-quality art books, *Canadian Drawings by Members of the Group of Seven* (1925), *A Portfolio of Canadian Art* (1926) on Krieghoff and Morrice, and *The Far North* (1927) with black and white reproductions and commentary by A.Y. Jackson. Rous and Mann also reproduced the work of European and Canadian artists on promotional three-sided desk calendars (Fig. 10).<sup>99</sup>

Further indication of the landscape subject matter of the Canadian art Rous and Mann promoted is found in descriptions of the project by company chronicler Joyce Sowby. Apart from its financial potential, Sowby wrote that the intention behind the

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<sup>96</sup> As a student, Albert Robson had studied at the Central Ontario School of Art (now the Ontario College of Art and Design) where he later taught. He was president of the SGA for fourteen years and Vice-President of the Art Gallery of Toronto (AGT), now the Art Gallery of Ontario, from 1935 to 1939. Sowby and Speller, "Quality Printing," 14-15; Zemans, "Establishing the Canon," 23. He was a member of Toronto's Arts and Letters Club, an exclusive male club to which Lawren Harris, J.E.H. MacDonald, Frank Johnston, Arthur Lismer, Fred Varley and art critics Hector Charlesworth and Augustus Bridle, together with future Governor-General Vincent Massey all belonged. Hill, *Art for a Nation*, 50.

<sup>97</sup> Albert Robson collaborated with other like-minded "national culturalists" such as Lorne Pierce (1890-1961), editor of Ryerson Press. Ryerson Press disseminated many publications on Canadian art and Pierce became a driving force in Canadian art history between the years of 1920 and 1950. Nicole Watier, "Lorne Pierce of Ryerson Press and Canadian Art, 1920-1950," *Library and Archives of Canada Bulletin* 35 (July/August 2003), <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/bulletin/015017-0403-05-e.html>. Between 1937 and 1938, Pierce and Robson created sixteen small booklets on Canadian artists called the *Canadian Art Series*, which were printed by Rous and Mann Ltd. Inspired by Rous and Mann's Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards, the booklets were meant to promote Canadian artists with coloured prints by each artist and texts profiling the artists. Robson also wrote a book in 1932 entitled *Canadian Landscape Painters* (Toronto: Ryerson).

<sup>98</sup> Before 1920, publications by Rous and Mann had included books of poetry and centenary publications for institutions such as Dalhousie University.

<sup>99</sup> The selection included both well known and lesser known Canadian artists. Sowby and Speller, "Quality Printing," 17, 22.

Rous and Mann Canadian Artists Series cards was “to make the work of Canadian artists better known.”<sup>100</sup> Sowby observed that, “the new series of paintings of Canadian subjects was immediately successful and the cards sold well for fifteen years. Then the public, tiring of Canadian landscapes, turned to other subjects and gradually sales fell off” by 1937.<sup>101</sup> The card subjects were “Canadian,” but also “Canadian landscapes.” “Canadian subject matter” was thus deemed to be embodied in the landscape, a symbol of post-Confederation nationalism in the eyes of critics since the late nineteenth century. Indeed, Sowby concluded that “during the thirty years that they were sold, the cards had publicized *the new Canadian art* both across and outside the country, and had provided a new market for aspiring Canadian artists.”<sup>102</sup> However, in the terms we will now explore, Rous and Mann actually promoted a very specific definition of “the new Canadian art,” predicated upon unitary concepts of national identity and romanticized concepts of land and nationhood.

The Group of Seven painters were central to the nationalist artistic vision manifest in Central Canada in the 1920s. One of them, A.Y. Jackson, was very involved in organizing commercial schemes to promote their art. Jackson, with Robson, initiated the Series.<sup>103</sup> Because the Canadian Artists Series was centered on this landscape school launched by seven male artists, it is necessary to examine the positioning of male and female artists in relation to the ideals the cards were promoting. From the fine art of the participating artists, one gains insights into how the Canadian Artists Series diverged or remained true to that existing canonical vision.

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Sowby and Speller, “Quality Printing,” 19, 22 [emphasis added].

<sup>103</sup> Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends*, 114.

## Women's Fine Art Painting and Quebec Regionalism

The work of the women whom Jackson invited to participate in the Series adhered to a certain aesthetic based on nostalgia and the land. Despite the Toronto source for the Canadian Artists Series, artists from elsewhere participated, including the women from Montreal. Like the male contributors, the women were professional fine art painters.<sup>104</sup> This was in keeping with the Series' goal of promoting the work of living contemporary Canadian painters. However, the fine art training of the women had taken them in a different direction from that of the Group of Seven.

Nora Collyer, Mabel Lockerby, Kathleen Morris, Sarah Robertson, Anne Savage, Ethel Seath and Ruth Beatrice Henshaw all studied under William Brymner and Maurice Cullen at the Art Association of Montreal (AAM) and exhibited work there. They are described as having descended from a "privileged Anglo-Protestant minority" in Montreal.<sup>105</sup> Their backgrounds were comfortable and many of their fathers were businessmen, as was the case with Savage and Lockerby.<sup>106</sup>

When the Montreal women trained at the AAM, French-Canadian art education was dominated by Quebec regionalist painting.<sup>107</sup> At the time the Group of Seven purported to represent a nationalist art school in Canada in the early 1920s, French Quebecois artists like Marc-Aurèle Fortin, Clarence Gagnon, Maurice Cullen and Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Coté were already considered to have originated a "Canadian art" in

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<sup>104</sup> Professional painters are defined as those who "trained at a recognized art school, exhibited regularly, and sold [their] work," *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>107</sup> In examining French art critics' use of the terms "regional" and "national," Esther Trépanier concludes that Quebec regionalism was defined as nationalistic insofar as it was paintings of the province of Quebec, no matter by Anglophone or Francophone artists, and of varying formal approaches, from academic to modern. See Esther Trépanier, "Nationalisme et modernité," 35.

their province two decades earlier.<sup>108</sup> The “Canadian art” of the Group of Seven was regarded by Francophone art critics in the 1920s to be regionally based in Toronto, even if depicting different aspects of Canada. The Canada of the Group of Seven was rugged, violent and less familiar than the Canada of the Quebec regionalists, who recorded the cultural landscape often in an Impressionist manner.<sup>109</sup>

The Quebec regionalist landscape consisted of rural farms and villages painted in a *plein-air* Impressionist manner. As urban centres expanded, the little villages of the Quebec regionalists were the nostalgic counterpart of works by George Reid and Homer Watson, considered to enshrine “elements of a Canadian [rural] experience that was slowly disappearing.”<sup>110</sup> J.W. Morrice, Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Coté, Clarence Gagnon and Maurice Cullen were “European-trained artists” whom their contemporaries claimed “generally [treated] the winter landscape from a more poetic and subjective point of view” (Figs. 11 – 12).<sup>111</sup>

Maurice Cullen, originally from Newfoundland, developed his career as a Quebec regionalist (Fig. 12), while William Brymner was a practitioner of grand manner Parisian academic *juste-milieu* works, later creating atmospheric Impressionist landscapes.<sup>112</sup> Brymner taught his students to paint directly from nature. Anne Savage claimed that Cullen, more insistent on the importance of adding emotion to a work of art, had greater effect upon his students’ painting than Brymner through his hands-on demonstration

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<sup>108</sup> Jean Chauvin, in *La revue populaire* of 1928, wrote of Fortin and Gagnon as founders of the modern landscape school and as precursors to the Group of Seven and the Beaver Hall Group.

<sup>109</sup> Trépanier, “Nationalisme et modernité,” 36, 38-40.

<sup>110</sup> Hill, *Art for a Nation*, 22.

<sup>111</sup> Jeremy Adamson, *Lawren S. Harris: Urban Scenes and Wilderness Landscape 1906-1930* (Toronto: AGO, 1978), 61.

<sup>112</sup> Reid, *Canadian Painting*, 126.

approach. Both teachers took their students on spring sketching trips.<sup>113</sup> The students were made especially aware of the Quebec regionalist style of painting through Cullen.

The women were part of the Anglo-Montreal artistic scene that had many ties to Toronto. Lifelong associations were formed amongst those artists who had studied at the AAM. All of the women artists from Montreal who contributed to the Canadian Artists Series, except Ruth Beatrice Henshaw and Marjorie Earle Gass, had been part of the Beaver Hall Group which was founded in 1920.<sup>114</sup> Rather than the landscape subject matter emphasized by the Group of Seven, the artists of the Beaver Hall Group were free to paint portraits, genre scenes, and more.<sup>115</sup> The group was founded to share the cost of giving modern, independent artists a place to work, exhibit and teach, thereby promoting creativity and developing a Canadian art. A.Y. Jackson, himself from Montreal, was appointed president and spokesperson for the group, and stated to the press that, “‘Schools’ and ‘Isms’ do not trouble us; individual expression is our chief concern.”<sup>116</sup> The Beaver Hall Group did not last beyond 1922: however, the diverse nature of the subject matter chosen by its members remained. The group was a means to share expenses and contacts rather than a single thematic or methodological approach.

A.Y. Jackson had been a student of Brymner and Cullen at the AAM during the same years as many of the women. He moved to Toronto in 1913 at the request of Lawren Harris and became instrumental in the formation both of the Group of Seven in Toronto and the Beaver Hall Group in Montreal in 1920.<sup>117</sup> Jackson’s acquaintance with Lockerby, Morris, Savage, Robertson, Collyer and Seath was one reason they were asked

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<sup>113</sup> Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends*, 46, 48.

<sup>114</sup> Luckyj, *Visions and Victories*, 14.

<sup>115</sup> Avon, “The Beaver Hall Group,” 4, 40, 46.

<sup>116</sup> “Public Profession of Artistic Faith,” *The Gazette*, 18 January 1921, 2, quoted in Avon, “The Beaver Hall Group,” 90-92.

<sup>117</sup> Reid, *Canadian Painting*, 142.

to contribute to the Series, as he had also “organized the venture” of the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards with Rous and Mann.<sup>118</sup> Another reason these women were invited would have been their depiction of landscape imagery in their work. Landscapes painted by the women artists in my selection of Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards had a distinctly Quebecois regionalist feel, which was noted by critics.

Mabel Lockerby was the first of the women contributors to enroll at the AAM in approximately 1902, where she continued her training for at least another decade and a half.<sup>119</sup> It was there that Lockerby met A.Y. Jackson who had been born the same year. Jackson was friends with Albert Robinson and Randolph Hewton, both considered to be influential upon Lockerby’s work.<sup>120</sup> She painted landscapes that often had close focus upon a house or building (Fig. 13). Lockerby was known to paint city streets and tangled gardens bordering on the abstract later in her career. She also painted children with animals.<sup>121</sup> She combined still-life with landscape on occasion, focusing on a vase of flowers with a landscape visible through a window in the background (Fig. 14).<sup>122</sup> As a result of Jackson’s recommendation, Lockerby began to produce Christmas-card designs for Rous and Mann by 1925 at least (Figs. 42, 44, 47, 53, 58, 63-64, 89). A letter was sent to Lockerby from Rous and Mann inquiring about turning one of her sketches into a black and white line drawing for a 5 x 4” card.<sup>123</sup> A second letter to her from the firm on

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<sup>118</sup> Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends*, 114.

<sup>119</sup> Mabel Lockerby’s sketchbooks are dated until 1918 and the contents, such as studies of nudes, indicated that she continued her training until at least that year. Mabel Lockerby Fonds, R10285-0-1-E, LAC.

<sup>120</sup> Reid, *Canadian Painting*, 139-40; MacDonald, *Dictionary of Canadian Artists*, 881.

<sup>121</sup> Ann Duncan, “Work of Forgotten Artist Resurfaces in Exhibition,” *The Gazette*, Montreal, 13 September 1989, see Mabel Lockerby, NGC doc. file.

<sup>122</sup> Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends*, 126.

<sup>123</sup> Letter from Rous and Mann to Mabel Lockerby, Toronto, 1 March 1925. Mabel Lockerby Fonds, R10285-0-1-E, LAC.

10 March 1926 indicated that a \$10.00 cheque was enclosed as a royalty payment for the sale of 57 cards of her design submitted to them in 1925.<sup>124</sup>

Ethel Seath acquired her first art training on the art staff of Montreal newspapers and then at the Conseil des arts et manufactures (CAM). As art historian Barbara Meadowcroft has described, “Ethel Seath served her ‘apprenticeship’ in the workplace among male colleagues.”<sup>125</sup> Though Seath never regularly attended the AAM, she did participate in some sketching trips with Brymner and Cullen in 1910 and 1911, when Meadowcroft has indicated that she most likely met the other women later involved with the Series.<sup>126</sup> She would have also met Jackson briefly at this time, as he was at the AAM until 1911 when he left for Europe. She was known for her painted landscapes with buildings, figures and flowers in them.<sup>127</sup> She painted mostly in the lower St. Lawrence region and in Montreal (Fig. 15) where others also sought subjects of Quebec regionalism. Apart from her landscapes, Ethel Seath was also known for still life compositions executed in etching, oil and watercolor.<sup>128</sup> Her invitation to contribute to the Series (Fig. 62), would have come through her association with the others in the Beaver Hall Group - most significantly, Jackson.

Sarah Robertson enrolled at the AAM in 1910 and trained there for about a decade. Robertson was friends with Jackson and was selected for the Canadian Artists Series through this connection (Figs. 49, 68). In a letter to Anne Savage in 1933, Jackson wrote

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<sup>124</sup> The cards sold for \$1.00 each. Artists received 10% of the sale of each card of their design as royalty payment, with a guaranteed minimum \$10.00 payment per accepted design. Letter from Rous and Mann to Mabel Lockerby, Toronto, 10 March 1926. Mabel Lockerby Fonds, R10285-0-1-E, LAC.

<sup>125</sup> Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends*, 49.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>127</sup> “Ethel Seath Shows Farms and the Sea,” *Montreal Gazette*, 21 December 1957, see Ethel Seath NGC doc. file.

<sup>128</sup> Laureen Hicks, “Well Known Art Teacher Retires After 45 Years,” *Montreal Star*, 26 October 1962, see Ethel Seath NGC doc. file; “Works by Ethel Seath, Study Old Girls on View until Saturday at Klinkhoff,” *The Westmount Examiner*, 24 September 1987, see Ethel Seath NGC doc. file.

of “Sarah” amongst a list of close women friends.<sup>129</sup> They wrote letters back and forth on topics ranging from exhibitions to the Christmas cards. In January of 1928 Jackson, tiring of the small royalty the artists received from Rous and Mann on the sale of each card, wrote to Sarah Robertson that “this cent a card business is a joke.”<sup>130</sup> Robertson was known for her landscape paintings of rural Quebec (Fig. 16 – 18). Her paintings were seen as “inspired” landscapes, rather than imitations of nature.<sup>131</sup> Her landscapes were close-range; as Jackson wrote in the catalogue for Robertson’s retrospective exhibition in 1951, “for her subject matter she did not go far afield: to Brockville, at the Hewards’ summer home, or across the border into Vermont were the furthest ventures; the subjects of most of her paintings were in or about Montreal.”<sup>132</sup> Her landscapes often included such signs of humanity as haystacks and wooden fences, in the manner of Quebec regionalists. She also often depicted floral arrangements and urban street scenes with colourful flags and buildings.<sup>133</sup>

Kathleen Morris studied at the AAM from approximately 1906 until 1917.<sup>134</sup> She would thus have been a colleague of A.Y. Jackson and known him through the Beaver Hall Group afterwards. In this way she would have secured an invitation to submit a design to Rous and Mann for the Christmas card project (Fig. 57). Morris painted genre scenes of urban life in Montreal. A 1939 article describes her work as typically of winter

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<sup>129</sup> Jackson wrote of “Lil and Prue and Sarah and Frances, Florence and Isabel,” referring to Lilius Torrence Newton, Prudence Heward, Sarah Robertson, Frances Hodgkins, Florence McGillivray and Isabel McLaughlin. Letter to Anne Savage from A.Y. Jackson, 1933, quoted in McDougall, *Anne Savage*, 99-101.

<sup>130</sup> Letter from A.Y. Jackson to Sarah Robertson, 6 January 1928, quoted in Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends*, 114.

<sup>131</sup> Arthur Lismer, A.R.C.A., “Works by Three Canadian Women,” *Montreal Star*, 9 May 1934, see Sarah Robertson NGC doc. file.

<sup>132</sup> MacDonald, *Dictionary of Canadian Artists*, 2195.

<sup>133</sup> Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends*, 126.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

scenes and landscapes, usually containing a figure or horse.<sup>135</sup> Her paintings, influenced by J.W. Morrice, depicted outdoor urban scenes of Old Montreal, Ottawa and Quebec City, and were hardly ever without a village, church, market, people, animals or horse-drawn carriage.<sup>136</sup> As one Montreal journalist wrote, “her nationalism was centred in Quebec” (Fig. 19).<sup>137</sup>

Anne Savage attended classes at the AAM between 1914 and 1919, where she met close friends Prudence Heward and Sarah Robertson. Though A.Y. Jackson moved to Toronto when he returned from Europe in 1913, he frequently visited Montreal and was actively engaged with the painters there; for example, for the opening Beaver Hall Group exhibition in 1921.<sup>138</sup> Jackson and Savage were close and wrote frequent letters.<sup>139</sup> This is undoubtedly how she gained access to the Canadian Artists Series Christmas card project (Fig. 48). In 1931, Jackson wrote to Savage, “would you and Nora Collyer like to send me each a couple of designs to show Rous and Mann .... flat colours or wash. Lively in colour and Canadian motifs...”<sup>140</sup> This was not a letter introducing the idea to Savage and Collyer, as both of their names appear as contributors in the *Who's Who* booklet produced by Rous and Mann in 1927. Nevertheless, this indicates it was Jackson who was the personal liaison between Rous and Mann and Savage and Collyer. In her paintings, Savage endeavoured to depict the Canadian landscape (Fig. 20 – 21).<sup>141</sup> She

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<sup>135</sup> Richard H. Haviland, “Kathleen Moir Morris, A.R.C.A.: Landscape Painter; Noted for Winter Scenes,” *Montreal Standard*, 10 June 1939, see Kathleen M. Morris, NGC doc. file.

<sup>136</sup> “Painter the Public Hardly Knew Dies at 93,” *Vancouver Sun*, 27 December 1986, see Kathleen M. Morris NGC doc. file; “Agnes Etherington Arts Centre Shows Work of Kathleen Moir Morris,” *Gananoque Reporter*, 7 September 1983, see Kathleen M. Morris NGC doc. file.

<sup>137</sup> Wini Rider, “Portrait of the artist as an expression of joy,” *The Gazette*, 16 June 1976, see Kathleen M. Morris NGC doc. file.

<sup>138</sup> McDougall, *Anne Savage*, 29.

<sup>139</sup> Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends*, 90-91.

<sup>140</sup> Letter from Jackson to Savage, 30 January 1931, quoted in McDougall, *Anne Savage*, 72.

<sup>141</sup> Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Media Release “Anne Douglas Savage (1896-1971),” 15 August-21 September 2002, Concordia University, see Anne Savage NGC doc. file

chose to paint the landscapes of the Laurentians and Eastern Townships surrounding Montreal, often showing expansive empty vistas in a style comparable to the work of Jackson or others in the Group of Seven.<sup>142</sup> Savage rarely populated her landscapes.<sup>143</sup> She was not influenced by Quebecois regionalism to the same degree as some of her contemporaries. Her closeness to Jackson in both painting technique and in social contacts surely made her selection for the Canadian Artists Series inevitable.

Nora Collyer also trained at the AAM from 1913 until 1921.<sup>144</sup> Like Savage, she would not have met Jackson at school, but only after his return from Europe in the context of the Anglo-Montreal art scene. Collyer was known to paint mainly Quebec landscapes in the Eastern Townships from her summer home in Foster until 1946 and in Magog from 1950-1969.<sup>145</sup> Of her work, critic Robert Ayre wrote that she “belongs to the landscape tradition stemming from Brymner and Cullen...”<sup>146</sup> In a 1964 review of another exhibition, a critic described her work in terms of its “relationship to the influence of Maurice Cullen and to Quebec ... evident in its soft and yet non-muddy coloring and in its atmosphere of spaciousness and quiet.”<sup>147</sup> Collyer’s landscape works were seen as different from the Group of Seven in their depiction of “rural provincial subjects such as villages, farmhouses, autumn woods and individual trees, or riverscapes of the Lower St. Lawrence region” (Fig. 22).<sup>148</sup> Besides her landscapes, Nora Collyer

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<sup>142</sup> Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends*, 124-25.

<sup>143</sup> McDougall, *Anne Savage*, 33.

<sup>144</sup> Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends*, 203.

<sup>145</sup> Nora F. Collyer, “The National Gallery of Canada – Ottawa – Information Form,” (1979), see Nora F. Collyer NGC doc. file; Robert Ayre, “Gentlemen, the Ladies!,” *Montreal Star*, 25 April 1964, see Nora F. Collyer NGC doc. file.

<sup>146</sup> Ayre, “Gentlemen,” see Nora F. Collyer NGC doc. file.

<sup>147</sup> Lenore Crawford, “Stacked art no aid to viewer,” *The Free Press*, 25 November 1966, see Nora F. Collyer NGC doc. file.

<sup>148</sup> Dorothy Pfeiffer, “Norah Collyer,” *The Montreal Gazette*, 25 April 1964, see Nora F. Collyer NGC doc. file.

also touched on still-life and the urban and everyday. Ayre wrote, Collyer “paints Montreal in the present, as it is ‘today’,” compared to Montreal artist Paul Caron’s nostalgic scenes of the past.<sup>149</sup> Jackson invited her to submit a design to the Series (Figs. 50, 59).

The Montreal participants in the Canadian Artists Series project, mostly the women, remained within the Montreal art context as the project continued throughout the 1930s. Montreal in the 1930s was the hub of anti-academicism and opposition to the nationalism espoused by the Group of Seven.<sup>150</sup> “Progressive art” was defined as urban and genre scenes chosen by such artists as Philip Surrey, Jean-Paul Lemieux, Fritz Brandtner and Marian Dale Scott, artists who saw value in the human being as subject for artistic expression. Esther Trépanier cites evidence of the anti-academicism and anti-landscape art sentiments in Montreal in the writings of John Lyman and Robert Ayre at the time of the 1939 founding of the Contemporary Arts Society (CAS).<sup>151</sup> Mabel Lockerby, Ethel Seath and Anne Savage joined the CAS approximately in 1940. The women were all also members of the Canadian Group of Painters (CGP) by this time. The CGP was founded in 1933 as an expanded version of the newly disbanded Group of Seven. Upon Jackson’s request, CAS founder John Lyman agreed that artists could be members of both societies. Sarah Robertson and Savage were founding members of the CGP in 1933 and Savage was elected to executive in 1939 and president of Montreal

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<sup>149</sup> Ayre, “Gentlemen,” see Nora F. Collyer NGC doc. file.

<sup>150</sup> The economic crisis of the Great Depression that dominated this period was influential in several ways. First, it led to social awareness and a sense of social responsibility amongst artists. Secondly, because artists were traveling to the United States rather than to Europe due to cost, they were made aware of the debate about the social democratization of art prevalent there. In the USA, government programs like the Works Progress Administration’s Federal Art Projects (WPA / FAP) were created to employ artists and give their art a social purpose. This contributed to the democratization of art in its removal from the so-called ivory tower of individualism. Trépanier “Modernité et conscience sociale,” 81.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 85-86.

branch in 1949.<sup>152</sup> Lockerby, Seath and Savage thus had connections to both sides of the debate.

Artists in Montreal, including the women, were conscious of these critics.<sup>153</sup> Montreal in the 1930s was more interested in urban scenes of everyday life or socially realistic reactions to the economic crisis rather than national landscape art. This debate also existed amongst Toronto artists.<sup>154</sup> The women of the Beaver Hall Group, however, were not interested in painting scenes of social realism. They were aware of the social situation surrounding them, and charitable in their actions, but generally did not consider their canvases as the place to address these issues.<sup>155</sup> Such was the climate in Montreal in which many of the women participating in the Canadian Artists Series project worked. They were of the same generation, emerging in their art careers in the early 1920s and they were a select part of the Montreal “progressive” movement but retained the regionalist focus despite the more socially conscious works of artists Marian Dale Scott and Paraskeva Clark. They also had ties to the Toronto nationalist scene through their early association in the 1920s with Jackson and the Group of Seven men, who were gatekeepers of the project.

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<sup>152</sup> Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends*, 134, 204, 206-14

<sup>153</sup> Trépanier, “Nationalisme et modernité,” 46

<sup>154</sup> In an article published in the *Canadian Forum*, Toronto sculptor Elizabeth Wyn Wood defended the depiction of Canada’s wilderness in art against rising left-wing and communist criticism that artists were ignoring social obligations. She wrote that excepting Quebec, Canada was not immersed in the class conflicts of Europe and therefore artists did not have to involve themselves in the current economic crisis. Artists should instead be providing for the spiritual well-being of Canadians by depicting the great nature of the country. Elizabeth Wyn Wood, “Art and the Pre-Cambrian Shield,” *Canadian Forum* 16 (February 1937): 13-15, quoted in Trépanier “Modernité et conscience sociale,” 97-98. Painter Paraskeva Clark responded in an article published in the *New Frontier* in Toronto two months later, calling for artists to stop depicting Canada’s nature when they should be using their craft to illustrate the social strains of the day and join in the fight of their fellow human beings, in defense of civilization and progress. Paraskeva Clark, “Come Out From Behind the Pre-Cambrian Shield,” *New Frontier T.I.*, no. 12 (April 1937): 16-17, quoted in Trépanier “Modernité et conscience sociale,” 98.

<sup>155</sup> Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends*, 122-128.

The women participants in the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards customarily produced a mixture of landscape and urban scenes. Most having studied under Maurice Cullen, their work developed within the context of the Quebec regionalist approach to landscape. They added close-range views, homes, people, animals and objects to their landscapes. With the exception of Anne Savage's landscapes, the rest of the women painted cultural landscapes and not the Canadian wilderness landscape favoured by the Group of Seven painters. These themes were very similar to those chosen for the Canadian Artists Series images.

### **Men's Nationalist Landscape Painting**

By contrast to the Quebec regionalist landscape paintings and genre scenes of the Montreal women participants, most of the male contributors were accustomed to painting the empty landscape. Although there were many of them, from places as far afield as Winnipeg, most were from Toronto. It was in this way that they too were connected with, or part of, the Group of Seven painters.

With the resources of Lawren Harris and his friend Dr. James MacCallum, the Group of Seven painters set a precedent for modern landscape painting in English Canada during the post-WWI period (Figs. 23-27, 32-33).<sup>156</sup> The Group was heavily supported by the NGC, its director Eric Brown, and his associate Sir Edmund Walker, head of the

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<sup>156</sup> Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends*, 68-69; Lawren Harris and J.E.H. MacDonald met at the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto in 1911 and began sketching together. Around 1913, other artists employed at Grip who painted in their spare time, began to discuss ideas about Canadian art, including Tom Thomson, Frank Carmichael, Frank Johnston, Arthur Lismer and Frederic Varley. Soon Harris and his friend Dr. James MacCallum funded the construction of the Studio Building in 1913, which allowed the artists to eventually concentrate full time on painting and reject commercial work. Following a connection with MacDonald, A.Y. Jackson was invited by Harris to join the artists in the Studio Building in that same year. Reid, *Canadian Painting*, 140-42.

Arts Advisory Council.<sup>157</sup> Walker was also Lawren Harris' banker and it was he and Brown who were on especially familiar terms with Harris. The Group was attached to these institutions through personal relationships with key individuals.

At a time when few books on Canadian art existed, *Toronto Star* journalist Frederick B. Housser, a long-time friend of Harris and fellow Theosophist, published *A Canadian Art Movement: the Story of the Group of Seven* (1926). Housser's book entrenched the mythology upon which the "new" art for Canada was created.<sup>158</sup> The artists themselves, Housser, and a generation of later historians characterized the Group of Seven as heroes for painting new ideas in the face of harsh criticism and little support. Housser wrote that they "set their conviction against the entire press of the country and the opinion of those whose word was accepted as authoritative in Canada on questions of art."<sup>159</sup> Frederick Housser wrote that the formation of the Group had no "ulterior motive to promote it other than a wish to make Canada's spiritual life richer."<sup>160</sup> More recent interpretations are more nuanced. Charles Hill noted in his catalogue for the National Gallery's 1995 exhibition *The Group of Seven: Art for a Nation* that "the goals of the artists who would form the Group of Seven in 1920 were idealistic and nationalist in intent, and their prime audience was English Canada."<sup>161</sup>

In recent years, contemporary critics have emphasized and contextualised the Group of Seven as Ontario regionalists. Esther Trépanier has written that the Group of Seven were not the only ones raising questions about dissemination, education and the

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<sup>157</sup> Jessup, "Bushwhackers in the Gallery," 140; The Arts Advisory Council was a three-man body established in 1907 by Prime Minister Sir Wilfred Laurier in response to pressure to improve the quality of art museums, as was happening in Montreal, Toronto and across the United States. Ord, *The National Gallery of Canada*, 67.

<sup>158</sup> Hill, *Art for a Nation*, 171.

<sup>159</sup> Housser, *A Canadian Art Movement*, 146-148.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>161</sup> Hill, *Art for a Nation*, 20.

civic function of art. The French intelligentsia in Quebec were posing the same questions about the need for the professionalization of the art milieu. The difference was that the Group of Seven had the ear of important people interested in English-Canadian nationalism. She writes,

Le Groupe des Sept a, pour sa part, véhiculé ces idées dans une province centrale, relativement prospère, où la conjuncture favorisait l'émergence d'un nationalisme canadien-anglais dans lequel pouvait se reconnaître aussi bien la gauche intellectuelle qu'une certaine bourgeoisie nationale.<sup>162</sup>

Hence, the Group of Seven developed its ideas in a relatively prosperous and centralized province, where this conjunction favoured the emergence of an Anglo-Canadian nationalism in which the interests of left-wing intellectuals and the nationalist elite and bourgeoisie coalesced. Art historian Lynda Jessup also refers to their limited context, stating that in reality, the Group was part of “a small, Toronto-based anglo-Canadian elite.”<sup>163</sup>

Besides lecture tours, travelling exhibitions, and later radio broadcasts on the subject of the Group's work sponsored by the NGC, Brown created a program in 1927 in which Canadian works from the Gallery's collection were reproduced and sent to schools across the country along with lesson plans written by Arthur Lismer.<sup>164</sup> This was another example of the dissemination of “high” art through print. The Canadian works represented in this program, in the words of art historian Joyce Zemans, “focused primarily on the landscape and appear to have been chosen to reinforce the idea of artistic progress culminating in the new ‘national school’ of Canadian painting represented in the

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<sup>162</sup> Trépanier, “Nationalisme et modernité,” 47.

<sup>163</sup> Jessup, “Art for a Nation?,” 14.

<sup>164</sup> Zemans, “Establishing the Canon,” 8-10, 19, 23.

work of Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven.”<sup>165</sup> Not surprisingly, all the members of the Group of Seven participated in the Canadian Artists Series project.

Male artists other than those of the Group of Seven were also invited to contribute to the Canadian Artists Series because of their contact with the Group of Seven and A.Y. Jackson. Many of them were also primarily landscape artists. J.W. Beatty of Toronto (Fig. 28, 39), L.L. FitzGerald of Winnipeg (Figs. 43, 72) and Paul Alfred of Ottawa (Fig. 74) were all associates of the Group of Seven known for landscape painting. Thoreau MacDonald (1901-1989), son of J.E.H. MacDonald, was a “distinguished black and white illustrator.”<sup>166</sup> He received an invitation to contribute to the Series (Fig. 60) as did Harold W. McCrea, known for his landscape paintings (Fig. 82).<sup>167</sup> In the early 1920s, L.A.C. Panton worked at Rous and Mann (Fig. 78). A. Scott Carter joined the Arts and Letters Club in 1917 where he met the members of the Group of Seven (Fig. 86).<sup>168</sup>

Even the male Quebec regionalist painters who designed for the Canadian Artists Series did so because of contact with A.Y. Jackson. Paul Caron (1874-1941) studied at the AAM under Brymner and Cullen, as did A.Y. Jackson and the Montreal women (Fig. 29, 56, 69).<sup>169</sup> Clarence C. Gagnon (1881-1942) also studied at the AAM under Brymner before continuing studies in Europe from 1903 (Fig. 11). Between 1919 and 1924, he sketched in Baie St. Paul with Edwin Holgate and A.Y. Jackson (Figs. 55, 66, 71, 73).<sup>170</sup> Albert H. Robinson (1881-1956), also from Montreal and friends with Jackson, painted Quebec regionalist landscapes “which [included] mountain [views] and village scenes”

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid.,” 12.

<sup>166</sup> Reid, *Canadian Painting*, 182.

<sup>167</sup> “Steelman William Mays dies at home in Florida,” *Toronto Daily Star*, Ontario, 13 February 1969, see Harold McCrea NCG doc. file.

<sup>168</sup> Hugh Anson-Canuxight, “History of the Reredos,” *Household of God -- A Parish History of St. Thomas's Church, Toronto*, <http://www.stthomas.on.ca/rhistory.htm>.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>170</sup> MacDonald, *Dictionary of Canadian Artists*, 244-47.

(Fig. 30, 65).<sup>171</sup> These Quebec regionalist tendencies were more in line with the types of landscapes painted by the women from Montreal. The careers of all contributing artists relied on contacts.

The Canadian Artists Series cards were described as being a illustrative of trends in Canadian art at the time, yet they favoured cultural landscape. Because of their annual exhibition at the NGC, they were treated as art work, so when commercial art began to be regarded as a lower form of art in the twentieth century by fine artists and arts societies, the cards were squarely on the fine art side. As such, women participating in this project were working within the male sphere of fine art rather than the print trade or the Arts and Crafts movement, areas identified by Wright and Tovell as more hospitable to women. Though both men and women relied on contacts to further their careers, women were at a disadvantage for the most part because they were peripheral to a male-dominated field. These connections will be elaborated upon more fully in examining the role of the Group of Seven in inviting the Montreal women to participate in their 1928 and 1929 exhibitions.

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<sup>171</sup> Caption under "Noontime in the Hills," by A.H. Robinson, in *Christian Science Monitor*, 19 February 1949, see A.H. Robinson NGC doc. file.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *Women as Invited Guests*

All agree in recognizing the fact that females exist in the human species; today as always they make up about half of humanity. And yet we are told that femininity is in danger; we are exhorted to be women, remain women, become women. It would appear then, that every female human being is not necessarily a woman; to be so considered she must share in that mysterious and threatened reality known as femininity.

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, xix

Feminist theory in the art historical field often addresses the socialization of genders towards specific societal roles. Griselda Pollock has written that men are just as subjectively “sexed” as women, “yet they [men and women] are subject to marks of distinction where a culture already erected on the difference of sex anticipates as yet unformed subjects with fixed and fixing expectations.”<sup>1</sup> In the 1920s, women artists pursued their careers within a male-dominated society and were socialized to fit into that world according to certain roles. How did the women artists negotiate this role while standing apart from the male-centered nationalist discourse that dominated so much of the artistic production of that period?

Griselda Pollock states that the history of men and women must be regarded as complex and broken down into examinations of specific variables of difference. In her study of nineteenth-century painters Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt, Pollock focused on the issue of feminized space.<sup>2</sup> In Canada in the 1920s and 1930s, concepts of gendered space had evolved considerably, as the Montreal women painted the urban venues formerly restricted to the male *flaneur*. However, the remnants of the different “spaces” depicted by male and female Impressionist painters to which Pollock referred

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<sup>1</sup> Pollock, *Differencing the Canon*, 28.

<sup>2</sup> Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, 56.

still remained. For example, the open wilderness landscape depicted by the Group of Seven and their contemporaries contrasts with the close-range landscapes of the Montreal women painters.

Feminist historian Veronica Strong-Boag has claimed that there was continuity between the experience of Canadian women in the nineteenth and in early twentieth centuries. She writes that despite the hope of social critics for a “New Day” in the post-suffrage decades, the 1920s and 1930s “carried on the steady transformation of a community long grounded in ... the near restriction of women to the private sphere.”<sup>3</sup> This chapter seeks to map the context in which women of the Canadian Artists Series were working, what they were depicting and their status in relation to the male public sphere. In this vein the choices of subject by the women artists will be explored, as will the typical “spaces of femininity” of that time, and women artist’s peripheral status in relation to male-sponsored projects like the Canadian Artists Series.

### **Social Spaces in the Late Nineteenth Century**

Women contributors to the Canadian Artists Series began their careers in Edwardian Canada. It was not until the late 1890s that women started to break free of the private sphere where “they were regarded as daughters, sisters, wives and mothers, but not as public persons in their own right.”<sup>4</sup>

In late nineteenth-century Canada, industrial capitalism created more wealthy bourgeois families in which women were not expected to work. Only lower-class women sought means to supplement family incomes. Within the upper- and middle-class, in terms of social settings, women presided over the home and men over the club or café.

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<sup>3</sup> Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*, 2.

<sup>4</sup> McLeod, *In Good Hands*, 58.

Women headed the private and men the public sphere.<sup>5</sup> Women ruled the private sphere of home and domestic labour. Men had access to the spaces of “productive labour, political decisions, government, education, the law and public service.”<sup>6</sup> In this public sphere, men were less constrained by the morality and responsibility that came with the domestic sphere. For well-bred women to enter the public sphere was considered detrimental or dangerous for the preservation of virtue.<sup>7</sup>

At the turn of the century, the concept of the “New Woman” arose as a challenge to the Victorian notion of the woman as the font of domestic bliss. Middle-class women as well as upper-class women involved themselves in the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the Women’s Institutes and the suffrage movement at this time. For working-class women, the labour movement was strong, especially in Montreal where the Montreal Local Council of Women was very active.<sup>8</sup>

In nineteenth-century Europe, women’s subject matter reflected a dividing line between what society considered feminine and masculine space. Whereas masculine spaces included the public world of the “streets, popular entertainment and commercial or casual exchange,” feminized spaces were limited to “dining rooms, drawing rooms, bedrooms, balconies / verandas, private gardens.”<sup>9</sup> These restrictions were never so prevalent in North America where experiences of pioneer life sometimes superceded the decorum of Europe. This is evidenced in paintings such as *Shooting the Rapids* (c. 1879) in which artist Frances Anne Hopkins (1838-1919) depicts herself and her husband, Chief Factor of the Montreal Department of the Hudson’s Bay Company, as passengers amidst

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<sup>5</sup> Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 151.

<sup>6</sup> Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, 67.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 68-69.

<sup>8</sup> Luckyj, *Helen McNicoll*, 17.

<sup>9</sup> Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, 56, 62.

voyageurs paddling a *canot de maître* down the Lachine Rapids.<sup>10</sup> However, concepts of gendered social barriers did translate across the Atlantic to some extent. According to Pollock, interior spaces have very specific meanings. They refer to “seclusion and enclosure” and also represent the “social confinement of women within the prescribed limits of bourgeois codes of femininity.”<sup>11</sup> These “spaces of femininity” are not only represented on the canvas, but are also representative of how “femininity is lived” in the everyday social lives of upper- and middle-class women. Both the images and the social contexts from which they emerge inform and affect each other, which is why it is essential to examine both.<sup>12</sup>

### **Social Spaces in the Interwar Years of the Twentieth Century**

The decades of the 1920s and 1930s in Canada offered more opportunity to women than ever before. Women had access to higher education, paid work, the legal ability to divorce,<sup>13</sup> and federal voting rights. However, Veronica Strong-Boag contends that “to a large extent, there was no great discontinuity with the past.”<sup>14</sup> In many respects, these interwar years carried on with traditional values and ideas.<sup>15</sup> Strong-Boag’s position contrasts with feminist art historian Kristina Huneault’s assertion that many working-class women already existed in the “public sphere” of the workforce from the 1880s, emerging from the private realm of the home to work in factories. Huneault has

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<sup>10</sup> Tippet, *By a Lady*, 19.

<sup>11</sup> Pollock argues that in the case of the Impressionists, even when women portrayed an outdoor vista, they often angled it in such a way that returned or confined the image in a private, domestic space. Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, 63.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>13</sup> In 1925 federal law stated that women had the same rights as men to divorce their spouse on the grounds of adultery. Marika Morris, “Millennium of Achievements,” *Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women Newsletter* 20 (Winter 2000), [http://www.criaw-icref.ca/factSheets/millennium\\_e.htm](http://www.criaw-icref.ca/factSheets/millennium_e.htm).

<sup>14</sup> Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*, 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3.

emphasized that World War I accelerated women's entrance into the public domain of work, but that this was a trend that had begun earlier. Yet, like Strong-Boag, Huneault wrote that "despite the fact that since the 1880's much of industrial society's most mechanized work had been done by women, women's realm was still constructed as the natural and / or domestic one."<sup>16</sup> Strong-Boag insisted that women were still in a transitional phase of emergence from the private sphere well into the interwar years.<sup>17</sup> Evidence of this is found in the imagery still reflecting the "feminine sphere" in the women's paintings and in some of their designs for the Canadian Artists Series cards, as will be seen in more detail later.

Still, at this time, as Strong-Boag has written, "from birth onward, Canadian women daily worked through the consequences of a gender identity that informed every part of their experience."<sup>18</sup> This touched the kind of education women received, the burdens they assumed at home, and how they were socialized as children. As Strong-Boag observed, the typical "life-course" trajectory for a woman's life at this time (with wide variances) would include: "socialization, paid work, courtship and marriage, domestic labour, childbirth and child rearing and aging."<sup>19</sup> Most women participants in the Canadian Artists Series remained unmarried in order to skip all the subsequent steps that inevitably followed marriage. They prolonged the "paid-work" stage, which went against the norm of the day.

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<sup>16</sup> Huneault characterized the idea that World War I provided new employment opportunities for women in the munitions factories as largely mythologized. Instead, artistic imagery of women war workers commissioned by the government brought women's work into the public consciousness, though it had been a reality since the late nineteenth century. Kristina Huneault, "Heroes of a Different Sort: Gender and Patriotism in the War Workers of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle," *Journal of Canadian Art History* 15 (1993), 26-43, at 28-29.

<sup>17</sup> Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*, 2-3.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

Paid employment had become more common even for middle-class women since the turn of the century, although “systematic discrimination in remuneration and opportunity was the order of the day.”<sup>20</sup> The First World War had both increased and raised the profile of employment opportunities for women.<sup>21</sup> Waged labour in Canada in the 1920s and 1930s came to rely on women’s participation. The middle-class working woman was an increasing trend in the interwar period, but they usually left work when they married. Many women who remained in the workforce regularly found themselves limited or “dead-ended,” at a certain point. Furthermore, even if they were unmarried and working, women were more often called upon to cater to familial responsibilities than their brothers. This is true of numerous professional women painters, many of whom remained tied to their families because they had no other familial responsibilities.<sup>22</sup> Mabel Lockerby, Nora Collyer, Sara Robertson, Anne Savage, Kathleen Morris and Ethel Seath all lived with their parents and unmarried siblings for the duration of their lives.

A woman’s ability to be independent had a lot to do with family wealth and support. Nineteenth-century artist Helen McNicoll (1879-1915) was born into a wealthy family and grew up in the affluent Anglophone district of Westmount in Montreal. This privilege allowed her to visit exhibitions in town, study collections of works, train at the AAM and travel abroad.<sup>23</sup> The Savage family of Montreal also exemplifies familial support for an artist daughter. Helen Savage, mother of Anne Savage, was an active member of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild (formed in 1905 from the Montreal branch of the WAAC). She became Vice-President in 1911 and in 1914 headed a Technical

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Huneault, “Heroes of a Different Sort,” 28.

<sup>22</sup> Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*, 42-43.

<sup>23</sup> Luckyj, *Helen McNicoll*, 19.

Committee which catalogued the organization's collection of crafts. Her daughter, Anne Savage, became a prominent professional painter and contributor to the Canadian Artists Series.<sup>24</sup> Likely, Helen Savage encouraged her daughter in her professional artistic pursuits. Prudence Heward was also from a well-to-do family, her father being a CPR official.<sup>25</sup> Heward was also encouraged by her mother.<sup>26</sup> However, families were not always supportive of a daughter's or sister's decision to remain unmarried and seek professional status.<sup>27</sup>

Apart from recourse to education, wealth was essential for professional women to be freed from domestic and household duties in order to compete in a world of male-dominated professionalism. Strong-Boag has pointed out that "these were the days when 'career women' and 'housewives' were two different things."<sup>28</sup> Anne Savage had a domestic helper in her parent's house, whose presence allowed her to become a professional artist and teacher. Savage saw painting as a full-time job and said "the only handicap women might have [comes] from having to devote time to things like housekeeping."<sup>29</sup> Therefore most women who contributed designs to the Canadian Artists Series were a privileged elite far from representative of the average woman of the day.

Unlike men, women who desired a professional career for the most part had to remain unmarried, as was the case with all the Canadian Artists Series women painters. For women who worked were not freed from their domestic duties, and after marriage

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<sup>24</sup> McLeod, *In Good Hands*, 281.

<sup>25</sup> Luckyj *Expressions of Will*, 27.

<sup>26</sup> Butlin, "Florence Carlyle," 47.

<sup>27</sup> For a thorough discussion of women's difficulties finding familial support for their desire to become professionals, see Butlin, "Florence Carlyle," 60-64.

<sup>28</sup> McDougall, *Anne Savage*, 108.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 108, 120.

had to fulfill two full-time jobs. Strong-Boag cites Emily Carr among others who “refused male suitors because they saw no way of reconciling heterosexual relationships with their need for independence.”<sup>30</sup> Having chosen this non-traditional path, many women were obliged to rely heavily on female friends and relatives for support.

Women artists encouraged each other. Barbara Meadowcroft’s book *Painting Friends* discusses the women of the Beaver Hall Group. Their friendships and associations with one another were vitally important to their development as artists. For example, Kathleen Morris was close friends with Anne Savage, Prudence Heward and Liliias Torrence Newton.<sup>31</sup> Anne Savage met Emily Carr when she traveled West and Carr reciprocated on her first trip East.<sup>32</sup> These friendships provided “emotional reassurance and physical assistance in the practical details of life that allowed the women artists to plunge back into highly competitive and frequently unfriendly male worlds.”<sup>33</sup> These friendships were among the strategies women used to overcome patriarchal barriers.<sup>34</sup>

### **Subject Matter Reflecting Social Space in the Nineteenth Century**

Subject matter in paintings was seen as male or female in reflection of the public or private space that each gender occupied. In the nineteenth century, women’s subjects were generally expected to focus on domesticity, portraiture and still life.<sup>35</sup> These subjects were thought to be innately feminine, an essentialist view deflated by Deborah Cherry in the following terms: “products of complex social forces which designated them

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<sup>30</sup> Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*, 50, 105-6.

<sup>31</sup> “Agnes Etherington Arts Centre Shows Work of Kathleen Moir Morris,” *Gananoque Reporter*, 7 September 1983, see Kathleen M. Morris NGC doc. file.

<sup>32</sup> McDougall, *Anne Savage*, 86.

<sup>33</sup> Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*, 106.

<sup>34</sup> Butlin, “Florence Carlyle,” 53. The importance of female friendships is also outlined by Butlin, 120-24.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 157. For further discussion, see Deborah Cherry, *Painting Women*, 124.

appropriate.”<sup>36</sup> Such themes were often misrepresentative of most professional women painter’s lives, which did not partake of domesticity, nor of motherhood and child relationships shown in their paintings of *maternité*.<sup>37</sup>

Themes of domesticity, everyday life, still-life, backyard landscapes, mother and child (*maternité*) and other aspects of the private realm of the home were deemed appropriate female subjects, as reflections of feminized space. Women artists were forced to reckon with these preconceived notions. For example, Canadian artist Florence Carlyle, whose skills were acquired in the ateliers of Paris, showed talent for figure painting but initially both she and her sister entered still-life paintings in the Ladies Work Department of the Toronto Agricultural and Industrial Exposition (TIE) in 1883. Women artists were aware of what genre of painting was appropriate to this exhibition venue.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, still-life, particularly flower painting, was a category in which women received critical recognition in Europe and North America. Femininity was seen as closely linked to flowers. Women artists were, therefore, seen as having a talent for painting them, because it was “viewed as a decorative art based on manual dexterity not intellectual content.”<sup>39</sup> The depiction of flowers in still-life compositions was considered mere imitation and by mid-century was regarded as innately part of the feminine realm.<sup>40</sup>

Toronto artist Mary Heister Reid (1854-1921) was an elected Member of the OSA from 1887 and an associate member of the RCA soon after. Reid painted “interiors, gardens and flower arrangements” in a polished, truthful style that “won the artist a

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<sup>36</sup> Cherry, *Painting Women*, 12.

<sup>37</sup> Butlin, “Florence Carlyle,” 57.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>39</sup> Cherry, *Painting Women*, 25.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

prominent place in every major art society in Canada.”<sup>41</sup> Following her death, the AGT held a memorial exhibition in her honour, marking the first solo exhibition of the work of a woman artist. Newton MacTavish wrote about this exhibition, “It showed that Mrs. Reid had been a painter of much variety, in subject as well as treatment.”<sup>42</sup> Of her subject matter he noted, “Beginning as a painter of flowers and still-life, she achieved success also in landscapes, gardens, interiors, mural decoration and some figure work.”<sup>43</sup> Reid painted floral still-life paintings knowing that she could achieve recognition if she worked within the space of femininity, despite her skills in multiple other genres.

In the nineteenth century women in Canada did sketch *en plein air*, but they often did so in pairs to satisfy societal convention.<sup>44</sup> Women felt exposed and visible sitting outdoors.<sup>45</sup> Ironically, however, *plein air* sketching was a requirement of professional painters, as was copying from gallery examples and the life class.<sup>46</sup> This combination of social hindrance and professional necessity often barred women from the professional realm. Many women simply depicted their own backyards. There were exceptions, however, especially amongst North American women painters. Contrary to feminist art historian Maria Tippett’s claim that women did not bushwhack and climb like men, Susan Butlin has noted that Florence Carlyle was a member of the Alpine Club, who did just that.<sup>47</sup>

The Impressionist movement in Europe helped to validate previously marginalized subject matter once relegated to the female sphere; that is, “domestic themes

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<sup>41</sup> Tippett, *Painting Friends*, 31.

<sup>42</sup> Newton MacTavish, *The Fine Arts in Canada*, (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1925), 142.

<sup>43</sup> MacTavish, *The Fine Arts in Canada*, 143.

<sup>44</sup> Luckyj, *Helen McNicoll*, 44.

<sup>45</sup> Butlin, “Florence Carlyle,” 186.

<sup>46</sup> Luckyj, *Helen McNicoll*, 44.

<sup>47</sup> Butlin, “Florence Carlyle,” 186.

and subjects previously dismissed as genre.”<sup>48</sup> In fact, in Canada, Britain and North America at the turn of the century, “female imagery became increasingly popular with both male and female artists.”<sup>49</sup> Impressionism embraced scenes of everyday life and images of *maternité* were elevated to higher status.<sup>50</sup> However, it became the fashion to paint middle- to upper-class women as “decadently” lounging in interiors.<sup>51</sup> Men were also competent to contribute images of subjects within the private sphere of the home. Such images were often of women engaged in “leisure” pursuits such as sewing or playing an instrument. From a male perspective, women in these interior scenes were treated in an idealistic or objectified manner as the “angel of the house.”<sup>52</sup>

By contrast to these lounging women, Canadian artist Helen McNicoll painted rural women in France, reminiscent of her experience of rural village culture in Quebec. In sparkling light-filled dabs of colour, she borrowed themes from the Barbizon and Hague schools of painting, depicting farm women and children engaging in rural activity, but her images were uplifting examples of monumental genre with none of the grim angst of the Barbizon peasantry. Painting women and children meant McNicoll was still within Pollock’s “space of femininity.”<sup>53</sup>

### **Greeting Card Subject Matter**

Women were able to find employment as designers for early “chromo” greeting cards, because the subject matter appropriate for greeting cards generally corresponded with that seen as appropriate for women artists. Greeting cards were seen to have a role in promoting “good taste” by the time they were in popular use in 1880. Promoting

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<sup>48</sup> Luckyj, *Helen McNicoll*, 57.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>50</sup> Butlin, “Florence Carlyle,” 164.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>52</sup> Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, 80.

<sup>53</sup> Luckyj, *Helen McNicoll*, 57.

“good taste” involved proper subject matter which depicted appropriate activities and family values.<sup>54</sup>

Children were a frequent motif on Christmas cards because they were associated with Christmas, as they are now. The angelic ideal of a child evoked the ideal of the Christ child. Poor children were also often depicted as an appeal to seasonal charity.<sup>55</sup> Greeting card historian Jennifer Bunting has described cards that showed “children engaged in what were considered to be proper pastimes,” as in boys throwing snowballs and girls watching demurely from the sidelines.<sup>56</sup> At this time, English designer Kate Greenaway (who illustrated children in designs for Christmas cards) had opened the door to other women in the field.<sup>57</sup>

Feminist art historian Cindy Nemser has explored the notion of critical acclaim and commentary accorded the depiction of children by women artists between 1833 and 1958. For example, critics often stated that women artists were innately better at illustrating the subject matter of children. In 1883, J.K. Huysmans wrote in *L'art moderne* that women should *only* paint children. The lasting effects of this type of thought and practice are evident as late as 1958, when critic Alfred Werner wrote that Berthe Morisot had painted the feminine aspects of her nature in her depictions of children, Sunday picnics and young women.<sup>58</sup> Amongst the women artists of the

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<sup>54</sup> Jennifer Bunting, “Tastes Change,” 2, see item # 714-38, Art Archivist greeting card file, LAC.

<sup>55</sup> Buday, *The History of the Christmas Card*, 137.

<sup>56</sup> Bunting, “Tastes Change,” 2, see item # 714-38, Art Archivist greeting card file, LAC.

<sup>57</sup> Kate Greenaway was hired by the firm Marcus Ward and Co. and became hugely popular for her designs of “wide-eyed solemn children.” Frances O’Flynn, “Expressions of the Season,” see Art Archivist greeting card file, LAC. Her father was a well-known wood-engraver and, noticing her talent, got her a job in 1870 with the publishing company Kronheim & Co. She was recognized as having a particular talent for depicting children. Her work was exhibited with other greeting card designs in 1868 in the London Public Gallery. Christmas card historian George Buday wrote, “amongst all Christmas card designers, Kate Greenaway was perhaps the most popular single artist whose name was known to her public and identified with her work for a long time.” Buday, *The History of the Christmas Card*, 145.

<sup>58</sup> Nemser, “Stereotypes and Women Artists,” 159.

Canadian Artists Series, Mabel Lockerby painted children and Estelle M. Kerr was known for her specialization in children's portraits.<sup>59</sup>

By the end of the Victorian period, changing views of society influenced how figures were represented on greeting cards. Rather than being angelic, little girls on greeting cards were drawn to appear as precocious as little boys. Attractive women on cards represented normal people or mothers in daily life, instead of as simply allegories.<sup>60</sup> The Canadian Artists Series cards continued this trend, showing women and children in daily life, particularly in designs by women artists.

Despite their growing professionalism, women artists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were still regarded as subject to biology, supposedly centered on the womb. This "nature" was not only seen as influential in an artist's choice of style, but also in her selection of subject matter.<sup>61</sup> Women greeting-card designers still worked within the "spaces of femininity" and were often expected to depict "appropriate" subject matters.

### **Subject Matter in the Twentieth Century**

As discussed in the previous chapter, the landscape focus of the 1920s was superceded by portraits, still-lives, social commentary, abstraction and scenes of industry in the following decade.<sup>62</sup> When the Canadian Group of Painters (CGP) and the Contemporary Arts Society (CAS) were formed, by contrast to the older societies, they helped in "broadening the definition of Canadian art to include figurative, social and even abstract work, [and] confirmed a fundamental change in outlook on the part of Canadian

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<sup>59</sup> Information copied from the back of a photograph of Estelle M. Kerr. M.O. Hammond Photograph Collection, # 062849, Library and Archives, NGC.

<sup>60</sup> Buday, *The History of the Christmas Card*, 146, 149, 152.

<sup>61</sup> Nemser, "Stereotypes and Women Artists," 159.

<sup>62</sup> Luckyj, *Visions and Victories*, 15.

artists.”<sup>63</sup> Kathleen Morris defined her work with urban images of the public street, similar to the subject matter chosen by male artist J.W. Morrice before her (Fig. 19). There were changing ideas about the “mythic boundaries,” or the intangible division of social space as the twentieth century proceeded.<sup>64</sup> However, nineteenth-century concepts of space and subject matter still had some influence on the types of landscapes and imagery in the paintings of men and women artists, in affirmation of Strong-Boag’s position on the continuity of restrictions in these decades.

In the interwar period particularly following World War I, women artists, freed from many social conventions of the previous century, were able to explore formerly off-limits subject matter. In the twentieth century, women were encouraged to sketch out-of-doors and to work directly from nature. Those women who studied at the AAM took summer sketching trips with Maurice Cullen, a practice they continued in groups throughout their careers.<sup>65</sup> Men were also able to depict subjects previously considered to be exclusively within the female realm. As Katherine Kollar, who also wrote about the Beaver Hall Group, described,

by the 1920’s images such as still lifes and domestic interior scenes had lost their traditional connotations as ‘women’s’ subjects. Women were also less hesitant about tackling the so-called masculine themes like city scenes, harbours [sic] views, pure landscapes and the nude.<sup>66</sup>

Kollar noted of the Beaver Hall women that “it is, in fact, this enthusiasm for a variety of subjects that makes these women significant for their time.”<sup>67</sup> That the women designed landscape themes similar to the men is on the one hand indicative of a use of new subject

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<sup>63</sup> Luckyj, *Expressions of Will*, 23.

<sup>64</sup> Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, 69.

<sup>65</sup> Luckyj, *Expressions of Will*, 31.

<sup>66</sup> Katherine Kollar, *Women Painters of the Beaver Hall Group*, (Montreal: Sir George Williams Art Galleries, Concordia University, 1982).

<sup>67</sup> Kollar, *Women Painters*.

matter, yet on the other hand indicates a continued restriction as a method of acquiescing to the “mainstream” art world defined by the Group of Seven. However, in light of Strong-Boag’s assertion of remnant influences, with some exception, landscapes depicted by women artists maintained influences from the nineteenth-century restrictions described by Pollock.

### **Women and the Landscape**

Women painters, like so many of their male counterparts, had to contend with the dominant position of the Group of Seven and the legacy they were setting forth for themselves in Canadian art.<sup>68</sup> In the words of Anne McDougall,

Jacques de Tonnancour, a Montreal member of the Canadian Group [of Painters] for many years, [said] the women painting at this time found it difficult not to be derivative of the Group of Seven. The pressure was on them to do landscapes and when they did they were competing with the massive paintings of the senior men.<sup>69</sup>

Yet as Charles Hill has pointed out, the Group of Seven represented modern art during the 1920s and directly supported both the Beaver Hall Group and the Ottawa Group.<sup>70</sup>

As highlighted in the 1995 exhibition *Art for a Nation* at the NGC, the idea that the Group was inclusive remains consistent with the view of critic Blodwen Davies who wrote in 1932 that the Group “have gone out of their way to encourage women whose work indicated the same vigorous attitude, the same frank and unconditional conception of the mission of the painter.”<sup>71</sup> Implicit in this characterization, however, was the fact that the Group of Seven dominated the Canadian art scene for decades. In the words of Linda Jessup, the Group was an “old boys club” and their work was presented “as the

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<sup>68</sup> Luckyj, *Expressions of Will*, 23.

<sup>69</sup> McDougall, *Anne Savage*, 120.

<sup>70</sup> Hill, *Art for a Nation*, 30.

<sup>71</sup> Quoted in Jessup, “Art for a Nation?” 13.

standard against which all cultural activity should be understood.”<sup>72</sup> No matter how much the Group is praised for supporting women artists, women – like many of their male contemporaries – were simply peripheral to this group of men.<sup>73</sup> Men dominated the art world and the Group of Seven’s connections brought them success. Those women whose work was most akin to that of the Group of Seven were chosen by A. Y. Jackson as contributors to Rous and Mann for the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards. Those who used different styles or subject matters were not.

The landscape art of the Group of Seven was seen as having influenced many of the Montreal women painters who participated in the Canadian Artists Series. The Group of Seven’s “overall patterned decorative tendency” is said to have resonated in the work of Anne Savage, Nora Collyer, Sarah Robertson and Mabel Lockerby.<sup>74</sup> The women, however, demonstrated their own distinctiveness in that they included traces of human life and culture typical of Quebec regionalism.

Women often used the landscape as a backdrop for something they found more interesting, such as a plough or sleigh or totem pole or church (Fig. 20). Both Savage and Lockerby focus on flowers foregrounded against a sweeping landscape in their painting (Figs 14 and 21). Several women landscape painters, such as Lockerby and Robertson also looked for the abstract in nature, but this again followed the examples of Arthur Lismer and New Zealand artist Frances Hodgkins.<sup>75</sup> Yet, many of the backgrounds in the

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<sup>72</sup> Jessup, “Art for a Nation?” 13.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14.

<sup>74</sup> Kollar, *Women Painters*.

<sup>75</sup> Tippett, *Painting Women*, 75.

works of the Montreal women painters were “serene, ordered and civilized” compared to the wild landscapes of the Group of Seven.<sup>76</sup>

The Montreal women participants were seen as part of the “new Canadian Art movement” fronted by the Group of Seven, with an implicitly peripheral status. Nevertheless they were identified by Albert Robson and Frederic B. Housser as landscape painters. In discussing the school of “modern” painting in Canada, in his book *Canadian Landscape Painters* (1932) Robson wrote about women painters:

an unusual feature is the number of women landscape painters who have contributed to this new school of art. In Montreal a group composed of Annie D. Savage, Kathleen M. Morris, Sarah M. Robertson, Mabel Lockerby, Ruth B. Henshaw, Marjorie E. Glass [sic], Norah F. Collier [sic], Ethel Seath, Prudence Heward and Mabel May all paint in a modern and decorative manner.<sup>77</sup>

Robson thereby acknowledged the participation of the Montreal women in the “new school of art” as landscape painters.

Frederick Housser’s friendship with Lawren Harris and close association with the Group of Seven nuanced his inclusion of the Montreal women in the “new movement,” whom he situated as peripheral to the centrality of the Group of Seven. Housser wrote that “Mabel May, Sarah Robertson and Anne Savage are landscape painters who have made important contributions to modern work in Montreal.”<sup>78</sup> He claimed that they did not have an effect on the Canadian art scene:

whether it was because the backwoods never quite fired their creative genius, they did not, as a group, become an aggressive factor in Canadian art, though many of them individually have painted powerful canvases with the distinctive national note apparent in their Ontario contemporaries.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Luckyj, *Expressions of Will*, 69.

<sup>77</sup> Albert H. Robson, *Canadian Landscape Painters*, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1932), 176.

<sup>78</sup> Housser, *A Canadian Art Movement*, 213.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

Cindy Nemser has written that throughout the nineteenth and into the early twentieth centuries, women artists were often expected to mimic the work of close male associates if they were to be regarded as coming anywhere close to genius. Critics looked at the work of women artists through a gendered lens. The prevailing myth that woman's nature was centered on her biology was seen to influence the way she produced her art. Women's art was usually characterized as delicate, emotional, intuitive, narcissistic and passive. This was in contrast to the adjectives used to describe the work of male artists, also associated with their supposedly biological nature, such as "strong, grand, powerful, forceful, assertive, bold, rigorous, creative, direct, tough."<sup>80</sup> Work by male artists was also said to be "intellectual, intelligent, conscious, logical and structured" though women's work rarely received these compliments.<sup>81</sup> For a women's work to be called "virile" by critics was regarded as a high compliment.<sup>82</sup> The most "acceptable" type of female artist to male and female critics alike was one who applied male technique to female subject matter.<sup>83</sup>

Women were not considered to be creative in their own right. If a woman's artwork was creative or original, it was so because of its link to a man. Nemser wrote that "since a woman's art can never be as good as a man's, the only way for her to make any progress, according to another form of phallic criticism, is to attempt to make an art that looks like his."<sup>84</sup> The closer the work comes to male qualities, the more a woman artist is praised, but like Homi Bhabha's concept of mimicry, a woman artist cannot ever be

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<sup>80</sup> Nemser, "Stereotypes and Women Artists," 161.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> For example, work by Prudence Heward, Anne Savage and Ethel Seath were described by a critic as executed with "unfailing vigour and interest" in their exhibition at Willistead Art Gallery in Windsor, Ontario. Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends*, 159.

<sup>83</sup> Nemser, "Stereotypes and Women Artists," 163.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 157-159, 162.

accepted on the same level as her male counterpart. As Bhabha described the relationship of the colonizing power to those whom it colonizes, “mimicry is at once resemblance and menace.”<sup>85</sup> In the case of women, as Nemser describes, “if her emulation comes too close for comfort, then the woman artist will be condemned for denying her female nature.”<sup>86</sup> These judgments were the kind that women artists of the Canadian Artists Series had to negotiate, as their landscape images were very close to those of their male contemporaries.

### **Women and the Group of Seven Exhibitions**

Women were invited to exhibit with the Group of Seven in greater numbers from 1926 on.<sup>87</sup> With their goal of disseminating a new art for Canada, as described by Charles Hill, the Group “not only exhibited and circulated their own paintings, but consistently included the work of other artists whom they respected and wished to support in their shows.”<sup>88</sup> Anne Savage, whose aesthetic was similar to that of the Group, was invited to participate in the 1926 Group of Seven exhibition.<sup>89</sup>

By 1928 the Group of Seven Exhibition at the AGT contained thirty-seven paintings by young Canadian artists in addition to the fifty-seven Group paintings hung in a separate room. Other artists were invited to display their work in the show because, in the words of Charles Hill, “having consolidated many of their goals and having largely reached a national audience, the Group’s next step was to assure the support of new, non-academic artists.”<sup>90</sup> Among others, Mabel Lockerby, Sarah Robertson, Albert Robinson,

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<sup>85</sup> Homi Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” *The Location of Culture* (London and NYC: Routledge, 1994): 85-92, at 86.

<sup>86</sup> Nemser, “Stereotypes and Women Artists,” 162.

<sup>87</sup> Luckyj, *Visions and Victories*, 13.

<sup>88</sup> Hill, *Art for a Nation*, 30.

<sup>89</sup> Luckyj, *Visions and Victories*, 102.

<sup>90</sup> Hill, *Art for a Nation*, 208.

Thoreau MacDonald and Charles Comfort were asked to exhibit with the Group in this show.<sup>91</sup>

Reviewers noted the contrast between the empty landscapes of the Group and the diverse subject matter of the other contributors. Critic Augustus Bridle wrote:

More vividly than any previous exhibition, this one illustrates the almost complete dehumanization of painting. Epics of solitude, chaos and snow. Not a man, woman or child, nor any beast; scarcely a flower. Only the guest exhibitors show these human things...<sup>92</sup>

For example, works by Sarah Robertson (Fig. 17) and Edwin Holgate (Fig. 31) contain humans and animals in rural settings, in contrast to works by Lawren Harris (Fig. 32) and A.J. Casson (Fig. 33) in the exhibition.

Association with the Group was important for an artist's career in English Canada at this time. It was a mark of success for painters from Montreal to exhibit with the Group who were so central to the Anglo-Canadian artistic world. As Natalie Luckyj pointed out, the inclusion of two works by Prudence Heward "publicly acknowledged her importance as a painter."<sup>93</sup>

Charles Hill has written that "with few exceptions, every important modern painter working in Canada in the late 1920s was encouraged by the Group of Seven and included in their exhibitions."<sup>94</sup> Through inviting other artists to exhibit with them, the Group of Seven offered these artists inclusion in the mainstream and support from leading institutions in English Canada. The Group of Seven was considered by the Toronto press to be "the voice of the mainstream modernists of Toronto and Montreal."<sup>95</sup> Sarah

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Augustus Bridle, "Group of Seven Display Their Annual Symbolisms." *Toronto Daily Star*, 8 February 1928, quoted in Hill, *Art for a Nation*, 209.

<sup>93</sup> Luckyj, *Expressions of Will*, 31.

<sup>94</sup> Hill, *Art for a Nation*, 237.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 209.

Robertson wrote to Eric Brown: “if it had not been for you and the Group of Seven I would surely be sunk in oblivion.”<sup>96</sup> The Group of Seven were the gatekeepers for other artists wishing to be considered as important modern artists at that time.

Outside contributors were again invited to participate in the 1930 Group of Seven Exhibition at the AGT, but on this occasion their work was integrated with that of the Group.<sup>97</sup> This integration foreshadowed the expansion of the Group of Seven into the more inclusive CGP in 1933. In the 1931 Group show, more women than before were included. Sarah Robertson’s *Joseph and Marie-Louise* (Fig. 17) represented peasants on their land, while Anne Savage’s *The Plough* (Fig. 20) suggested human contact within a cultural landscape.<sup>98</sup>

In answer to the criticism of the Group of Seven’s exclusivity, the 1933 CGP exhibition opened the Group of Seven to new members. Of twenty-nine members in this Group, nine were women. Thirteen out of twenty-five invited participants in this initial exhibition were women. Natalie Luckyj wrote that “the Group of Seven’s obsession with landscape was being superceded by a new variety of themes – figure studies, portraiture, still-life, social comment, industrial landscapes and abstraction.”<sup>99</sup> In her words, “the inclusion of work of artists such as Prudence Heward, Sarah Robertson and Anne Savage did much to foster a broader vision of Canadian landscape, as well as to provide women painters with the opportunity to exhibit and be judged in the context of what was considered Canada’s most avant-garde art.”<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Letter from Sarah Robertson, Montreal, to Eric Brown, Ottawa, 2 December 1931, quoted in Hill, *Art for a Nation*, 291.

<sup>97</sup> Hill, *Art for a Nation*, 262.

<sup>98</sup> Luckyj, *Visions and Victories*, 102.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

As a point of contrast, many Canadian women painters were not particularly influenced by the nationalistic modernism of the Group of Seven. Many like Vancouver's Statira Frame, Toronto's Kathleen Munn and Henrietta Shore, Mabel Killam Day from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia and Eva Bradshaw from London, Ontario studied under Robert Henri of the New York Ash Can School. All these women experimented with European styles, such as Post-Impressionism and Cubism, and adhered to Henri's philosophy that "art must be alive, must deal with everyday subjects and must, above all, express the individuality of the artist" (Fig. 34).<sup>101</sup> This is contrary to the Group of Seven's nationalist landscape subject matter. Not surprisingly, these women were not participants in the Canadian Artists Series Christmas card project.

### **The Connections of Art Clubs and Associations**

Women's participation, or lack thereof, in artistic clubs and associations is a demonstration of their peripheral status in Canadian art circles and dependence upon male patriarchal assistance to further their careers in a man's world. As Ellen Easton McLeod has written, "in the nineteenth century, even the arts were seen as the property of men," a circumstance little changed in the early decades of the twentieth century.<sup>102</sup>

It was difficult for women artists of the nineteenth century to achieve professional recognition as artists. Natalie Luckyj has pointed out that "in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, male artists, dealers, and critics dominated the art world with rare exception."<sup>103</sup> Victorian middle- and upper-class women could train in watercolour, singing and needlework, but were only accepted as "amateur." Professionalism was

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<sup>101</sup> Tippett, *Painting Friends*, 51.

<sup>102</sup> McLeod, *In Good Hands*, 59-62.

<sup>103</sup> Luckyj, *Helen McNicoll*, 44.

reserved for men.<sup>104</sup> Also, Luckyj wrote that “art was a fashionable activity for young women” in the early twentieth century.<sup>105</sup> Drawing classes formed an integral part of education in the social graces for young women at this time.<sup>106</sup>

Exhibiting work with established art associations was a mark of prestige as a professional artist. In order to gain recognition, women artists of the nineteenth century had to exhibit their work with “professional art associations, societies of women artists and in professional arenas in Canada and abroad.”<sup>107</sup> Choices were made to exhibit images of *maternité* and still-life paintings of floral arrangements in appropriate exhibitions, as seen with the still-lives of Florence Carlyle and floral arrangements of Mary Heister Reid. Women artists also had to negotiate the notions of “femininity” in order to “be permitted” representation. The Ontario Society of Artists (OSA), Royal Canadian Academy (RCA) and Art Association of Montreal (AAM) were the three primary venues in Canada where artists could exhibit their work. The yearly open-juried exhibitions at the OSA and AAM were where most artists began, aspiring to exhibit with the RCA.<sup>108</sup> Women had to negotiate access to these venues in order to begin to climb the ladder of success in the professional art world. Some like Helen McNicoll gained international recognition when elected to membership in the British Royal Academy in 1913. She was one out of eight new members elected that year, a fact noted by the Canadian press. With her credit established overseas, McNicoll shipped paintings home to be exhibited at the RCA, AAM, OSA and Canadian National Exhibition (CNE).<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Butlin, “Florence Carlyle,” 3.

<sup>105</sup> Luckyj, *Expressions of Will*, 29.

<sup>106</sup> Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends*, 37.

<sup>107</sup> Butlin, “Florence Carlyle,” 97.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 98, 107.

<sup>109</sup> Luckyj, *Helen McNicoll*, 44, 53.

The RCA became Canada's premier exhibiting society. It was at an initial meeting in 1880, the year of its founding, that a clause in their charter that required members to be "men of fair moral character" was amended to omit the word "men" due to the presence of Charter member Charlotte Schreiber.<sup>110</sup> Women were thus, in theory, allowed full membership in the RCA. However there were restrictions for women, as seen in this section of the Constitution:

Women shall be eligible for membership in the Royal Canadian Academy, but shall not be required to attend business meetings nor will their names be placed upon the list of rotation for the Council.<sup>111</sup>

These regulated restrictions were removed in 1913 when the RCA revisited their constitution. Though a handful of women joined the RCA over the years as associate members, it was over fifty years after 1880 before another woman was made a full academician, when Marion Long was elected in 1933.<sup>112</sup>

Mabel Lockerby, Sarah Robertson, Ethel Seath and Anne Savage all exhibited with the RCA, but only Kathleen M. Morris was an associate member. By contrast, many of the male Canadian Artists Series painters were full members, including A.Y. Jackson, C.W. Jeffereys, J.W. Beatty, Alexander Scott Carter, Paul Caron, Albert H. Robinson, Clarence A. Gagnon and J.E.H. MacDonald. Other male contributors were associate members, including A.J. Casson, Arthur Lismer, Robert Pilot, and F.H. Varley.<sup>113</sup> The RCA was a mark of accreditation for artists. The limit on women's attendance at

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<sup>110</sup> Sisler, *Passionate Spirits*, 29.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 29, 37.

<sup>113</sup> Hugh Jones and Edmund Dyonnet, *History of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts*, 1934: 12.2

business meetings was problematic because this meant that they were excluded from decision-making relating to standards for their profession.<sup>114</sup>

The OSA allowed women to become full members: however, prior to 1916, they had no voting privileges and were not allowed to attend business meetings or hold executive office. From its foundation in 1872, it claimed to have an “absolutely open-door” policy and a broad membership for “painters, sculptors, architects, engravers and designers” in Ontario.<sup>115</sup> By 1925 Newton MacTavish noted that the OSA “[gave] women equal footing with men” and [did] not restrict membership as the RCA [did].<sup>116</sup> Estelle M. Kerr was the only female contributor to the Canadian Artists Series who was a member of the OSA. She participated in the public programming of the Society by co-presenting a lecture with Alfred Howell in about 1924 entitled “Dynamic Symmetry.”

Many of the male participants in the Canadian Artists Series were members of the OSA, such as J.W. Beatty, Paul Alfred, F.H. Brigden, Harold W. McCrea, L.A.C. Panton, Charles Comfort and the Group of Seven painters. Joan Murray has pointed out that the OSA was the “parent association” for the Canadian Society of Graphic Arts, the Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour and the RCA, and that “membership in the OSA often ensured an artist’s admission to these other organizations.”<sup>117</sup> It was thus important for painters to be members of the OSA for their professional development. However, due to restrictions on membership outside Ontario, the Montreal painters, including the women of the Beaver Hall Group, were not members of this Society.

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<sup>114</sup> Butlin, “Florence Carlyle,” 103.

<sup>115</sup> The OSA allowed out-of-province members for a time in the beginning, but then it evolved to include only Ontario residents. Joan Murray, *Ontario Society of Artists: 100 Years* (Toronto: AGO, 1972): 5

<sup>116</sup> MacTavish, *The Fine Arts in Canada*, 139.

<sup>117</sup> Murray, *Ontario Society of Artists*, 13.

Canada's earliest artistic organization, the AAM, was founded in 1860. It had a wide membership base from its inception and admitted women artists to study and exhibit. This may account for the fact that the AAM was described in 1898 as an amateur society in the *American Art Manual*.<sup>118</sup> Its Spring Exhibitions were open to all artists, received upwards of 1,500 submissions per year and showed 400 to 500 works at a time, including work by painters, sculptors, engravers, tapestry weavers, china painters, architects and photographers among other artistic professions. Membership was limited to a few local artists and collectors.<sup>119</sup> Among many women enrolled in its Art School, Helen McNicoll studied at the AAM under William Brymner from 1899 to approximately 1902 and first exhibited with the AAM in 1906.<sup>120</sup> Nora Collyer, Mabel Lockerby, Anne Savage, Ethel Seath, Sarah Robertson and Kathleen Morris also all exhibited with the AAM, but are not noted as members.

There were several clubs in which only the male contributors to the Series participated. Many of the male contributors to the Canadian Artists Series were involved with the Canadian Society of Painters and Watercolour (CSPW), for example. This society was founded by Frederick H. Brigden, A.J. Casson and Franklin Carmichael, with Brigden serving as president from 1926 to 1929.<sup>121</sup> Other members included Canadian Artists Series contributors Paul Alfred, Charles Comfort and L.A.C. Panton.

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<sup>118</sup> Butlin, "Florence Carlyle," 108.

<sup>119</sup> Evelyn de R. McMann, *Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, formerly Art Association of Montreal: Spring Exhibitions 1880-1970* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), vii-viii.

<sup>120</sup> Luckyj, *Helen McNicoll*, 19, 23; William Brymner (1855-1925) taught at the AAM between 1886 and his death in 1925. Having studied art in Europe, he was influential in keeping his students aware of international trends in modern art, such as Impressionism. He also encouraged his students to travel abroad to Paris for art instruction. Reid, *Canadian Painting*, 93-5.

<sup>121</sup> Ann Davis, "A.J. Casson: A Man for Canada's Seasons," *South Western Ontario's Journal of the Arts*, London, ON, March / April 1991, see A. J. Casson NGC doc. file.

Many of the male artists were also part of the Toronto associations frequented by the Group of Seven painters, such as the male-only Arts and Letters Club. John W. Beatty was president in 1913, Paul Caron joined as a satellite member from Montreal and Harold W. McCrea and Charles Comfort were also members. In Montreal, the equivalent association was the Pen and Pencil Club frequented by Paul Caron and Albert H. Robinson.

In response to their exclusion from these clubs as well as their subordinate status in the OSA and RCA, women of the late nineteenth century formed societies and clubs for women only. During the 1890s, the Women's Art Association of Canada (WAAC) was formed alongside the National Council of Women in Canada (NCWC) and the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) to name only a few. In the spirit of maternal feminism, nineteenth-century women extended their domestic role into public life and used these volunteer organizations to influence women's issues while remaining within the acceptable "home" realm.<sup>122</sup>

The WAAC was formed in 1890 from the Women's Art Club of Toronto (WAC).<sup>123</sup> It was chaired by Mary E. Dignam, whose focus was to support the exhibition of work by women professional painters. They also held exhibitions of handicrafts and offered art classes.<sup>124</sup> This society was, for women artists, one of three exhibition societies important in the achievement of professional status, along with the OSA and the annual Toronto Industrial Exhibition (TIE) (later CNE).<sup>125</sup> The WAAC consolidated with women's groups from Saint John to Winnipeg in 1894 to provide female artists with a

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<sup>122</sup> McLeod, *In Good Hands*, 59-62.

<sup>123</sup> Butlin, "Florence Carlyle," 103.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*; Tippett, *By a Lady*, 40.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, "108.

place to exhibit and discuss.<sup>126</sup> Mabel Lockerby and Sarah Robertson were both members of the Montreal branch of the WAAC, though this branch was focused more on the promotion of women artisans or producers of handicrafts.<sup>127</sup> In this separate sphere nineteenth-century women found opportunity for themselves, until it became possible for them to gain access on an equal footing to the all male-societies.

Men formed professional links through societies, businesses, governments, unions and clubs. When women began to seek entry to these societies in the 1920s, it meant they could “gain access to sources of information and influence external to the family” that had always been available to men.<sup>128</sup> Women were increasingly included in artists groups and clubs, such as the Beaver Hall Group (1921), the CGP in Toronto (1933), Atlantic Canada’s Maritime Art Association (1935) and the CAS (1939) to name a few.<sup>129</sup>

By the 1930s women’s recognition in Canadian art circles had increased greatly. When the CGP was formed in 1933 as an alternative exhibiting society to the RCA and OSA, it had nine female members in a membership of twenty-nine. Artist Prudence Heward became the second vice-president.<sup>130</sup> Following the social upheavals of WWI, women gained acceptance as officers of associations as well. The CAS, established in 1939 in Montreal at the instigation of John Lyman, included such founding members as Marian Scott and Anne Savage. There were seven women founders out of twenty-six, and the membership and participation of women increased over the years. Women played an important role in these groups “whose artistic tenets extended beyond the Group of

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<sup>126</sup> Tippett, *By a Lady*, 40.

<sup>127</sup> McLeod, *In Good Hands*, 123.

<sup>128</sup> Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*, 70.

<sup>129</sup> Tippett, *By a Lady*, 167.

<sup>130</sup> McDougall, *Anne Savage*, 142.

Seven.”<sup>131</sup> Women were increasingly regarded as equal partners in the new face of Canadian art, according to art critic Blodwen Davies and former Group of Seven member Arthur Lismer.<sup>132</sup>

By the outbreak of World War II, Anne Savage “was recognized as a ranking woman painter in Canada,” having had six critically successful exhibitions by 1939.<sup>133</sup> This was just after the Canadian Artists Series began to diminish in popularity. *The Yearbook of the Arts in Canada 1928-1930* contained “two major critical articles” recognizing the strength of the work of women artists.<sup>134</sup> Women also actively participated at the Kingston Conference of Canadian Artists where, in 1941, artists from across the country gathered with art historians, critics and bureaucrats to discuss the role of artists in society.<sup>135</sup>

Exhibition societies were meant to provide a place for artists to exhibit their works and also to sell them. In the nineteenth century, women were not supposed to aspire to sales of their work, in light of their relegation to amateur status. Sales were linked to waged employment, which was not “feminine.” To aspire to sell one’s work was to cross into the male realm of professionalism. For middle-class women, working for pay at this time was not considered proper.<sup>136</sup> However, it was a necessary step for those women like Florence Carlyle who did want to become professional. Butlin has written that the “public recognition through sales of her work helped to confirm her desire to move beyond amateur status.”<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Luckyj, *Visions and Victories*, 16-17.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>133</sup> McDougall, *Anne Savage*, 142.

<sup>134</sup> Luckyj, *Visions and Victories*, 14.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>136</sup> McLeod, *In Good Hands*, 59-62.

<sup>137</sup> Butlin, “Florence Carlyle,” 46.

In the twentieth century, the National Gallery of Canada (NGC) was a significant institution supporting the careers of the Montreal women. By selecting their work to be shown in international exhibitions of Canadian art, purchasing their work, sponsoring research trips and even supporting commercial ventures to promote their art, the NGC's first director, Eric Brown, was regarded as exceptionally supportive of both modernist and women's art. The NGC bought one of Helen McNicoll's works from the 1912 AAM show for the national collection.<sup>138</sup> In fact, most of the contributors to the Canadian Artists Series also had works in the collection of the NGC by the time Rous and Mann's *Who's Who* booklet came out in 1927. The NGC owned pieces by Paul Alfred, John W. Beatty, Frederick H. Brigden, L.L. Fitzgerald, Harold W. McCrea, L.A.C. Panton and all the Group of Seven members, all of whom were listed in the booklet. The NGC purchased canvases by Emily Carr, Prudence Heward, Statira Frame, Mabel Lockerby and others.<sup>139</sup> When Brown was attacked by the RCA in 1932-33 for supporting Canadian modernism, women artists led the campaign in support of him.<sup>140</sup> Although the Gallery purchased these works and even exhibited them internationally, it did not publicize them among the Canadian School of art with the same gusto as that accorded the Group of Seven. As Joyce Zemans has indicated, this is apparent in the limited selection of artists chosen for the NGC's first poster reproduction program in 1927:

Although the Gallery was collecting broadly in the field of Canadian art, Brown's faith in the redemptive power of art, his commitment to art education as a tool for instilling national pride and his belief in the ability of the work of Thomson and the Group to achieve these aims,

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<sup>138</sup> Luckyj, *Helen McNicoll*, 53.

<sup>139</sup> Tippett, *Painting Friends*, 66.

<sup>140</sup> Luckyj, *Visions and Victories*, 15.

would shape the Canadian artists series [published by the NGC] much more narrowly.<sup>141</sup>

Women professional artists were invited by the NGC to join in the same research trips as their male counterparts. In 1928 Savage and Florence Wyle went to British Columbia under the sponsorship of Marius Barbeau and the National Gallery, to record decaying totem poles in the Skeena River area.<sup>142</sup>

Several women artists were invited by Eric Brown to show their work in the international exposition at Wembley, England, in 1924 and 1925. Amongst those who participated were Savage, Lockerby, Robertson and others. In total, thirty women were asked to participate in 1924 and twenty-three in 1925. This affirmed how much Brown believed these women had contributed to Canadian art.<sup>143</sup> Many of the male Canadian Artists Series participants also exhibited at Wembley, including Paul Alfred, L.L. Fitzgerald, L.A.C. Panton, and the Group of Seven artists. Nevertheless, as Zemans points out, although Brown included other artists in his selection for Wembley, he considered Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven as the initiators of “authentic Canadian painting.”<sup>144</sup>

Despite the changing climate, women were kept in peripheral or inferior positions within the art schools. Women turned to the teaching of art as a way to financially support their practice and studies abroad. Teaching art was considered a proper vocation for unmarried women because it was “seen as an extension of the maternal role.”<sup>145</sup> However, all Directorships at the art schools in Canada were held by men, including

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<sup>141</sup> Zemans, “Establishing the Canon,” 13.

<sup>142</sup> McDougall, *Anne Savage*, 58-60.

<sup>143</sup> Luckyj, *Visions and Victories*, 13.

<sup>144</sup> Zemans, “Establishing the Canon,” 12.

<sup>145</sup> Butlin, “Florence Carlyle,” 58.

Halifax, Montreal, Hamilton, Ottawa and Toronto. Typically most women artists in this discussion were taught by Cullen and Brymner at the AAM. Butlin has written that “this hierarchical arrangement served to reinforce traditional patriarchal relations of power privileging male teachers over female teachers and students.”<sup>146</sup> Of course, several of the women were the art teachers at high schools in Montreal for many years, including Ethel Seath at The Study, Anne Savage at Baron Byng High School and Nora Collyer at Trafalger School for Girls, where they were highly influential in relation to their students.

Although women in the nineteenth century were generally confined to the home and excluded from the professional world, it became increasingly acceptable in the twentieth century for women to become professional painters. Amongst the “unprecedented generation of outstanding single women” according to Strong-Boag are Anne Savage, Emily Carr, Florence Wyle and Frances Loring.<sup>147</sup> To these could be added all the women who produced designs for the Canadian Artists Series and the Beaver Hall Group. These women of the 1920s and 1930s were raised in a society in which they could take advantage of new political and societal opportunities. In the words of Veronica Strong-Boag, they “tested their society’s commitment to equality, supposedly enshrined in the franchise and the right to enter universities and the professions.”<sup>148</sup> Nevertheless, nineteenth-century societal barriers still lingered and these “talented spinsters” were still seen as exceptional and judged as such.<sup>149</sup> The women painters and

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 119-20.

<sup>147</sup> Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*, 105.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

sculptors “struggled to be taken seriously as artists and to avoid dismissal as mere female dilettantes.”<sup>150</sup>

### **Personal Connections**

When professional women artists worked in the commercial field, it was a matter of connections and being invited to participate in something rather than instigating projects themselves. By the 1920s, the frame of reference had changed because women artists were able to build their own reputations. They were exhibiting and being critically received in a comparable manner to their male counterparts. However, the women artists were often dependent upon men to organize the projects or exhibitions in which they might participate. A.Y. Jackson offered help to many women artists of Montreal by inviting them to contribute to the Series. Jackson instigated many such promotional projects, including the Rous and Mann Canadian Artists Series Christmas card project.

One promotional endeavour that underlines how women were not always supported in commercial ventures was the National Gallery’s silk-screen project of 1942. Sponsors had to be found to sponsor the printing of a mass-distribution in poster-format. Designs submitted by Ethel Seath, Anne Savage, Mabel Lockerby, Pegi Nicol McLeod and Prudence Heward were all rejected because no sponsors could be found to support them. The rejection of all these women’s works cannot possibly be coincidental, but may not necessarily be based strictly on gender. Works submitted by male artists such as Rowley Murphy and Philip Surrey also received the response that “there would be no risk-taking” in finding sponsors for “controversial” works.<sup>151</sup> Besides Yvonne McKague Housser, the artists who were invited to submit works for reproduction were mostly men

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Zemans, “Envisioning Nationhood,” 15, 30-31.

like Lawren Harris, L.A.C. Panton and Jock MacDonald. Zemans notes that women artists were included in the project from the beginning, which was a big improvement upon the first reproduction program of 1927 designed for school education, where no works by women artists were solicited. Zemans has noted that “the works selected, [...] reinforce the dominant aesthetic.”<sup>152</sup> Prudence Heward preferred figurative art over landscapes in the 1920s, which was very different from the Group of Seven aesthetic, so she was excluded from the project. The women whose designs were included in the Canadian Artists Series were within the same aesthetic of the Group of Seven.

### **Women’s Perception of Their Role in the New Canadian Art**

The women contributors to the Canadian Artists Series believed that they were contributing towards a Canadian art, but were quick to place emphasis on others rather than being forthright about their own place in this movement. Savage wrote that when “the men” came back from World War I, referring to Jackson, Edwin Holgate and Randolph Hewton, “we knew something exciting was going to happen in the painting field because it was a real nationalistic mission they were on.”<sup>153</sup> Savage began her career as an art teacher in 1922 and her biographer Anne McDougall wrote that when Savage was learning to teach art “far from her thoughts was any idea of painting Canada.”<sup>154</sup> Savage credited Prudence Heward and Emily Carr with having contributed to the formation of a Canadian art and also thought that Marian Scott had helped to develop abstract painting in Canada. However, when she undertook her radio broadcasts on CBC about Canadian art in 1939, Savage talked about the linear trajectory of “Canadian” landscape art stemming from its British roots in the work of John Constable

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 12-13, 31, 35.

<sup>153</sup> McDougall, *Anne Savage*, 25.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 42.

to Canadians Cornelius Krieghoff and Paul Kane to James Wilson Morrice and then to A.Y. Jackson, Arthur Lismer, Lawren Harris and J.E.H. McDonald. She did not place herself, or any other women painters, as an important part of this trajectory. Like so many initiatives this CBC show was “directed” or greatly influenced by Jackson.<sup>155</sup>

In 1941 Anne Savage delivered a lecture to the Montreal Women’s Club about women’s place in the art world in Canada, tracing the history of women artists from the nineteenth century. She said that women artists had now found a place, could paint more than flowers, and could find interesting subject matter around them, which was just as valid as the Great North.<sup>156</sup> To the general audience of CBC she would not dare put herself up against the male painters, but to a female audience she preached empowerment. This is certainly an indication that women were socialized not to forward their own careers in the public realm where men and women were together.

In the twenties and thirties, according to Strong-Boag, the world of professional artists was still structured according to an ingrained male hierarchy.<sup>157</sup> Although women did achieve many steps forward in terms of professionalism at this time, they were still regarded as a minority and subject to discrimination. They often downplayed their own importance as artistic innovators or organizers and were socialized to supporting roles. This socialization is further support of Strong-Boag’s position that nineteenth century stereotypes still remained in the twentieth century. Women were still conforming to existing stereotypes in regards to what were considered “essential” female qualities, such

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<sup>155</sup> McDougall, *Anne Savage*, 120, 130-32, 135

<sup>156</sup> “Distaff Side Active in Art,” *Montreal Star*, 17 March 1942; “Women Have Place in Artistic World,” *The Montreal Gazette*, 31 March 1942, see Anne Savage NGC doc. file.

<sup>157</sup> Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*, 2.

as assuming traits of passivity and submissiveness. This contrasted with their male counterparts who assumed “active” roles as organizers.

Women artists were invited to participate in commercial art projects in Canada if they fostered the right connections, but this still did not translate into consistent support, as is evident from the NGC’s silkscreen project.

Despite early reversals, the Group of Seven achieved its position through friends, mentors, and institutional contacts, including Sir Edmund Walker, Eric Brown and Fred Housser and a variety of clubs and associations. This is indicative of the significant avenues to which men had access in order to achieve positions of centrality. The women had crucial contacts with William Brymner and A.Y. Jackson. However, they were most often assisted by family money and connections with other women that operated separately from the nationalist focus of the Anglo-Canadians in Ontario.

The Group of Seven became what Griselda Pollock has identified as the canonical centre in relation to which women were somehow forced to negotiate their career choices and options. Pollock has written that in challenging the male position of centrality through re-examining contexts, the “feminine” experience is revealed to be just as informed by a “complex, ambivalent, contradictory and precarious subjectivity as the masculine.”<sup>158</sup> The women artists were neither uniform, nor simply emulators of the Quebec regionalist style. Instead, they were influenced by complex mixtures of associations and experiences, both from the Montreal and Toronto environments as well as by the barriers they encountered as women existing in a patriarchal society.

The women worked within a context that was prescribed by ideas of femininity and social divisions. Yet in the twentieth century, they certainly had more freedom to

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<sup>158</sup> Pollock, *Differencing the Canon*, 28

investigate previously-gendered subject matters, such as the national landscape. Residual social divisions and gender stereotypes from the nineteenth century also caused them to remain on the periphery of clubs, associations and professional positions, and to function not as initiators, but rather as peripheral invited guests to exhibitions and commercial ventures, including the Canadian Artists Series, and indeed to their own careers.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *Filling a Market and the Imagery of the Canadian Artists Series*

But although individual cards may represent a sum which is in every way in keeping with their own ephemeral nature, there is nothing insignificant or ephemeral about the industry which produces them, nor can there be anything insignificant about the influence of their design on the public in general when one thinks in terms of the millions and millions of them which are sold each year.

Paul Arthur, "Recent Christmas and New Year's Greeting Cards By Canadian Artists," *Canadian Art* 15 (Autumn 1958): 288-99, at 288.

Masculine and feminine social spheres were manifest in organizations, associations and the segregations of the working environment, as well as in the images produced by male and female artists. The vocabularies employed by the participating artists of the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards enfold the gender divisions and barriers of the early twentieth century. The greeting card market was also largely female and this inevitably had a significant effects on the design of the product.

In order to satisfy the demands of the market for Christmas cards, Rous and Mann accepted images of the Canadian landscape that would appeal to female purchasers on the occasion of Christmas, while at the same time declaring the cards to be a vehicle for the promotion of Canadian art. Despite its goal as a project to promote "Canadian art" of the time, notably the landscape art of the Group of Seven and contemporaries, I suggest that the project in fact responded more to the demands of the market. Hence Rous and Mann took account of a "female aesthetic," prescribed by women's market dominance of Christmas card consumption. The male artists even adapted their imagery to a more domestic side by adding houses to their landscapes to make them appear more nostalgic and "homey" for Christmas.

Griselda Pollock has written that “the socio-symbolic process of sexuality, and the constitution of the subject in sexual difference, itself within the field of history, as it shapes and is shaped in a history of aesthetically crafted visual representations” must be explored.<sup>1</sup> The Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards were informed by Canada’s nationalist landscape art, by Quebec regionalist landscape art and the “spaces of femininity” introduced by women artists into their cards. Therefore, despite their intention of promoting Canadian art based on the landscape art of the Group of Seven, the cards in fact incorporated images of Canada from a variety of sources, the majority of which were centred on images of the land.

### **Market of Female Buyers**

Market trends were a significant aspect affecting the overall design of the cards. Rous and Mann, Limited wanted to promote the work of Canadian artists while keeping themselves in business. They were aware of and responded to the newly opened market for Canadian Christmas cards. Joyce Sowby has written that “the firm’s directors hoped to develop a new product that would capture the imagination of the Canadian public and could be counted on to provide a steady volume of business each year.”<sup>2</sup>

The firm’s goal was achieved for the first fifteen years, according to the notes of Carl Rous on the financial activity the cards generated. The first year of revenue in 1923 saw sales of the cards that brought in approximately \$20,000 out of total sales for the company of \$300,000. Within five years, by 1928, the sales had increased to \$50,000 out of \$400,000 in sales. The following year, the figure rose to approximately \$58,000 and reached a top figure of \$67,000 within fifteen years from the start, whereupon sales began

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<sup>1</sup> Pollock, *Differencing the Canon*, 27.

<sup>2</sup> Sowby and Speller, “Quality Printing,” 19.

to decline.<sup>3</sup> So important was this Series, that Rous and Mann dedicated the top two floors of their four-story building to the printing of the Christmas cards. For this period of time, because of the public's interest in both "Canadian" and "art" cards, the marketing scheme worked.

Artist Avis Fyshe outlined how important it was for greeting card artists to adhere to market trends in a 1944 article in *Canadian Art*. To engage successfully in a greeting card design business, it was necessary to control "the financial outcome, and keep the public interested, and your own soul satisfied" (which was "perhaps something impossible to achieve.")<sup>4</sup> Fyshe noted the importance of marketing: "I was sensing my public and I began to choose with some confidence the designs that would sell."<sup>5</sup> Fyshe wrote of having to adapt the designs to "have some relationship to the trends of the times – to tastes in colours, for instance..."<sup>6</sup> She underlined the need to sacrifice her own idea for a design that would sell. For example, Fyshe stated that "the lettering and illuminating cards I had counted on producing met with no appreciation," but instead comic cards appealing to children were a more successful option.<sup>7</sup> She wrote, "You don't just make Christmas cards. You make them appeal to the needs of particular buyers – 'Mr. and Mrs.', young girls, children, elderly people; you have to think in terms of family, neighbours, friends."<sup>8</sup> The market was an incredibly important factor in the survival of a greeting card business venture like the Rous and Mann Canadian Artists Series. Artists would have been required to bear this in mind for their designs to gain acceptance.

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<sup>3</sup> Carl Rous, notes on Rous and Mann Ltd., courtesy of Joyce Sowby, Toronto, Ontario. 9 April, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Avis Fyshe, "Christmas Cards from an Artist's Point of View," *Canadian Art* 2 (December / January 1944-45): 72-77, at 72.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, advertisers still assumed that because men were the primary breadwinners, they had a role in household purchasing decisions. By the early twentieth century, however, women were forces to be reckoned with as marketers began to target them in advertising campaigns. Department stores of mid-nineteenth-century Europe and North America had spawned a mass-consumer culture and leisure shopping, letting shoppers browse without buying. In England and France, women left the private sphere of their homes to gather in the parlours of the department stores with their friends. Timothy Eaton opened his store in Toronto in 1869, followed by R. Simpson's Dry Goods (later Simpsons) in 1872 which expanded in 1894 to large retail size.<sup>9</sup> In New York City, the shopping district of Lower Manhattan was called the "Ladies' Mile."<sup>10</sup> Between 1911 and 1926, the Hudson's Bay Company opened department stores in Western Canada in Kamloops, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, Victoria, Saskatoon and Winnipeg.<sup>11</sup> By the twentieth century, therefore, entrepreneurs had transformed shopping to suit female buyers.

Pop culture journalist Pamela Klaffke has written that by 1915, "90 percent of spending in the United States was controlled by women and 90 percent of department store customers were female."<sup>12</sup> Women traditionally controlled the household income and the department stores capitalized on the purchasing power. It was even considered a "feminist" intervention by feminist activists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in the United States to embrace consumerism and get out of the home into the

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<sup>9</sup> Pamela Klaffke, *Spree: A Cultural History of Shopping* (Vancouver: Arsenal Press, 2003), 29, 42-43, 166, 45; "The Robert Simpson Company Limited," *HBC - Our History: Acquisitions*, <http://www.hbc.com/hbcheritage/history/acquisitions/retail/simpsons.asp>.

<sup>10</sup> Klaffke, *Spree*, 44.

<sup>11</sup> "Early Stores," *HBC - Our History: Timelines*, <http://www.hbc.com/hbcheritage/history/timeline/early/>.

<sup>12</sup> Klaffke, *Spree*, 167.

shops.<sup>13</sup> Greeting cards were among the new commodities available to individuals shopping for items beyond what was needed for daily living. The Canadian Artists Series cards were in great demand in shops like Liberty's in London, England and other "larger stores" after their exhibition at Wembley in 1924 and 1925.<sup>14</sup> They were also on sale in stationary stores in Canada such as Grand and Toy as demonstrated by this advertisement (Fig. 35).<sup>15</sup> An "office outfitters" business, Grand and Toy were attempting to entice businesses to purchase the cards for their yearly December greetings.<sup>16</sup> The Robert Simpson Company Limited also sold greeting cards, as shown in an advertisement from 1931.<sup>17</sup>

Not only were women the primary shoppers by the time the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards were on the market, but women also made up the majority of purchasers in other respects as well. Writing in 1994 about the United States market, anthropologist Melissa Schrift has noted that "90 percent of greeting card consumers are female" in a \$2.25 billion dollar industry.<sup>18</sup> She has pointed out that the greeting card is a form of mass communication, used mostly by women to maintain social and familial relationships. Greeting card theorist Stephen Papsen has also suggested that greeting card stores themselves are boutique-like feminized spaces.<sup>19</sup>

Besides department store purchases, Christmas cards were sold to women door-to-door by traveling salesmen. A 1946 *MacLean's Magazine* article on the prosperous

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>14</sup> Jacob, "Canada's Own Christmas Cards," 106.

<sup>15</sup> "16 'Canadian Artists' Greetings \$1.00" *The Toronto Star* (17 December 1931): 8.

<sup>16</sup> "About our Company – History," *Grand and Toy Official Site*.

[http://www.grandandtoy.com/?pg=corporate\\_company\\_history](http://www.grandandtoy.com/?pg=corporate_company_history).

<sup>17</sup> This is an advertisement for greeting cards in general, without naming a particular series, and thus may or may not include the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards. "Greeting Cards, 15 in Box" *The Toronto Star* (17 December 1931): 22.

<sup>18</sup> Schrift, "Icons of Femininity," 111.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 112, 121.

business of greeting cards stated that the Christmas card salesmen could be boys selling to neighbours and friends or professional salesmen pulling in a hefty profit each year. Salesmen would offer packages of personalized cards to families each season. The article stated that, “On the average, good agents earn \$300 to \$400 a season on commissions of 30 to 50%.”<sup>20</sup> The Canadian Artists Series cards were sold in this way. The notes of Carl Rous mentioned a traveling salesman and personalized cards were also predominant among the cards selected for consideration here (Fig. 36).

The magazine articles of the 1920s and 1930s offer insights into who was interested in purchasing Christmas cards at that time. An article in *Saturday Night* magazine in 1938 wrote that year about the trend for creating personal greeting cards as having “almost reached epidemic proportions.”<sup>21</sup> The author P.W. Luce noted that “women’s magazines are full of suggestions on how to manufacture one’s own Christmas cards...”<sup>22</sup> To create the family’s yearly Christmas card was likely considered a female task. *Chatelaine* magazine had articles in the November 1928 and December 1930 issues on how to make the most original and personal Christmas cards to send. In the former issue this appeared next to an advertisement for beauty creams, and in the latter its feminine target was affirmed by its proximity to an advertisement for Del Monte Asparagus (“Trust asparagus to make any menu better”).<sup>23</sup>

These articles are indicative that women were regarded as the interest-group for the subject of Christmas cards. An article about the Canadian Artists Series appeared in

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<sup>20</sup> Eric R. Adams, “Ten-Cent Sentiment,” *MacLean’s Magazine* (1 December 1946): 24, 51-54, at 54.

<sup>21</sup> P.W. Luce, “Individual Greetings,” *Saturday Night* 54 (December 1938): 12.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Mary Elizabeth Colman, “Making Your Own Christmas Cards With Original Greetings,” *The Chatelaine* 1 (November 1928): 30, 44; “Wishing You a Merry Christmas,” *The Chatelaine* 3 (December 1930): 33.

the 1926 *Canadian Homes and Gardens Magazine* next to an advertisement for Holt Renfrew, where one might purchase Christmas presents, in which one woman holds a gift and another wears a fur.<sup>24</sup> *Chatelaine* magazine in 1929 also printed an article called “The Story of the Christmas Card: And its distinctive development by Canadian artists.” After outlining the history of Christmas cards in Canada, this article concluded with a discussion about Rous and Mann’s Canadian Artists Series cards. It was nestled between a political article by early twentieth-century feminist and politician Emily Murphy entitled “Now That Women are Persons” and another called “The Promise of Beauty” which discussed the “enticing” beauty product gifts that should be purchased for “mothers, college girls, maiden aunts, younger sisters and grandmothers.”<sup>25</sup> Women were seen as the market to whom the advertisements and interest-articles on the subject of greeting cards were addressed, notwithstanding the diverse gender stereotypes of the day.

A 1954 article in *Canadian Geographical Journal* about the history and business of the Christmas card in Canada agreed that women were the target group for Christmas card marketing. It revealed that “eighty-five per cent [sic] of our Christmas cards, of all greeting cards in fact, are bought by women and the designers keep this fact clearly in mind.”<sup>26</sup> The author continued that purchasers (read “women”) “with relatives in the Old Country who had never known Canada, [sic] were glad to be able to send them cards showing Canadian scenery and the work of Canadian artists...”<sup>27</sup> Women, therefore, had good reason to choose Canadian scenery for their yearly Christmas greeting. What kind

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<sup>24</sup> Jacob, “Canada’s Own Christmas Cards,” 106.

<sup>25</sup> Lovell, “The Story of the Christmas Card,” 61.

<sup>26</sup> Leechman, “The Canadian Scene in Christmas Cards,” 227.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

of Canadian scenery would appeal to women? This was the question that had to be addressed by marketers and translated by the designers.

Despite its promotion of Canadian art, the Canadian Artists Series cards had to adopt imagery associated with Christmas in order for people to buy them. The template for rural landscape and village scenes had already been provided in Quebec regionalist and women artists' vocabularies. The male landscape artists from Toronto adjusted their wilderness aesthetic to Christmas scenes by simplifying their images and adding towns, houses, figures and sleighs (compare Fig. 28 to 39).

Houses or homes nestled amongst snowy hills form the most common visual theme of the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards, both among men and women designers. The scenes set outdoors show a building, either a home or a small town represented by a row of houses, or a church. All suggest places where one might go, or more specifically return to, for the holidays. There are no images of large cities, office buildings or town halls.

In his 1957 book *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes describes the commercial viability of fabricated world views that frame our perceptions according to the ideals of the "picturesque." Barthes' use of the concept of the picturesque is evidenced by his analysis of the *Blue Guide*, a tourist publication that speaks of Spain only in terms of hilly or mountainous country (anything but plains) and "types" of human beings. The love of the mountainous landscape derives from "the cult of nature and of puritanism [regeneration through clean air, moral ideas at the sight of mountain-tops, summit climbing as civic virtue, etc.]."<sup>28</sup> Furthermore the "bourgeois mythology of man" reduces real men and

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<sup>28</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (London: Jonathan Cape, 1972), 74. [Barthes' parentheses].

women to essences or types. For example, in Spain Barthes points out that the reader is expected to note that “the Basque is an adventurous sailor, the Levantine a light-hearted gardener, the Catalan a clever tradesman and the Cantabrian a sentimental highlander.”<sup>29</sup>

The Canadian Artists Series images likewise reduces the Canadian landscape to snowy hills and tiny rural villages with peasants and picturesque *habitants*, all romanticized in the face of the industrial realities of the urban centres. Barthes wrote:

The ethnic reality of Spain is thus reduced to a vast classical ballet, a nice neat *commedia dell'arte*, whose improbable typology serves to mask the real spectacle of conditions, classes, professions.<sup>30</sup>

Just as the inhabitants described in the *Blue Guide* are seen as “charming and fanciful decor,” so are the individuals depicted on the Christmas cards.<sup>31</sup> Barthes noted that the *Blue Guide* answered “none of the questions which a modern traveler can ask himself while crossing a countryside which is real and *which exists in time*.”<sup>32</sup> Likewise, the Christmas cards represented the same picturesque, frozen and nostalgic view of Canada.

From the first year cards with designs by living artists were offered in 1923, they were meant to appeal to “the public’s sentimental perception of their country.”<sup>33</sup> This was the reason for the winter scenes and landscapes that dominated the imagery, according to historian Graham Garrett. “Sentimental” is a word that links the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards to the nostalgia and picturesque described by Barthes. This deliberate mythologizing of reality, according to Barthes, rendered the promoted image as fetishized and meaningless.<sup>34</sup> Was the nostalgia for times of old and quaint family existence promoted in the Canadian Artists Series Christmas card series meaningless in

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. [added emphasis].

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>33</sup> One unnamed artist listed as source, quoted in Garrett, “Canadian Christmas Cards,” 2.

<sup>34</sup> Barthes, *Mythologies*, 76.

relation to the reality of life in the early twentieth century? In relation to the reality of the urban centres in which most Canadians lived at this time, the cards did perhaps illustrate a false perception of Canadian life. However, this false perception was likely welcomed at Christmas: a time when nostalgia prevails and many find idealistic perceptions of life heart-warming. Hence, the snow-laden village landscape and occasional Dickensian references predominate in the imagery of the Canadian Artists Series cards.

### **The Domesticated Snow-Covered Landscape**

Snow is associated with Christmas especially in Canada as the holiday occurs in December. Because of its “winter landscapes,” Canada was considered by some to be “Christmas card country.”<sup>35</sup> Michael Mitchell, a *Globe and Mail* author, claimed that the snowy scene was established in England, where the Christmas card was born. He wrote that “the early cards had established the snowy scene as a stock Christmas image.”<sup>36</sup> Even the artists referred to it as such. In 1924 A.Y. Jackson wrote to J.E.H. MacDonald from Baie St-Paul, Quebec that his surroundings were “Christmas card country.”<sup>37</sup>

It was only in the twentieth century that the snow and ice reality of Canada was regarded with pride. From the mid-nineteenth century, this aspect of the country was considered part of its incivility and some thought it should not even be romanticized in paintings or Christmas greeting cards. The Group of Seven came to be known for images that glorified the true “North,” although such themes have been aligned with the Symbolist landscape movements in Finland, Norway and Sweden that also associated

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<sup>35</sup> Mitchell, “Season’s Greetings,” 18.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Letter from A.Y. Jackson, Baie St. Paul, Quebec to J.E.H. MacDonald, 1924, quoted in Mitchell, “Season’s Greetings,” 18.

nationalism with the great “North.”<sup>38</sup> Housser praised the Group of Seven’s winter landscapes as particularly characteristic of Canada, writing, “The country in winter presents beautiful decorative compositions.”<sup>39</sup> This new acceptance of Canada as a snow-laden wintry place was imbricated in the “new Canadian art” out of which the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards grew. The snowy landscape is found throughout the card images, always in conjunction with a house or other building. J.W. Beatty, A.J. Casson, L.L. Fitzgerald, A.Y. Jackson and Ruth B. Henshaw and Mabel Lockerby all depicted a house or houses in snowy hills with surrounding trees (Figs. 39 – 46).

Despite the predominantly empty landscape images created by Group of Seven members, many also created images of farmsteads. Fred Housser described the Group’s paintings of rural villages as quaint depictions of Canadian life (Figs. 37 – 38). His description of A.Y. Jackson’s paintings of Quebec seemed to typify Christmas card subject matter. Jackson traveled to Quebec to paint villages and rural landscapes (Fig. 37). The only bachelor among the Group, he was free to travel more widely and from 1925 undertook yearly sketching trips to “such villages as St-Tite des Caps, Urbainville and La Malbaie” to paint the rural communities.<sup>40</sup> Housser described Jackson’s horses, cutters, half-melting snow, winter roads, snake fences and noted that “these pictures make one love the French-Canadian people. They depict old and settled communities of home-loving folk where the strain of life is eased by simple faith.”<sup>41</sup> Housser essentialized French-Canadian culture in the same fashion as the Basque, Levantine and Catalan in the *Blue Guide*.

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<sup>38</sup> Brian S. Osborne, “The Iconography of Nationhood in Canadian Art,” in *The Iconography of Landscape*, Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 166, 169.

<sup>39</sup> Housser, *A Canadian Art Movement*, 95.

<sup>40</sup> Adamson, *Lawren S. Harris*, 185.

<sup>41</sup> Housser, *A Canadian Art Movement*, 170.

In his early years, Harris also painted farmhouses, though almost always the buildings alone, with no human presence. He began painting barns in the Laurentians in 1908 (Fig. 38). Prior to 1913, when he commenced his grand excursions to Lake Superior, Harris sketched farm houses and rural land on Ottawa River towards North Bay, with J.E.H. MacDonald.<sup>42</sup> Housser described Harris' old Ontario farmhouses as suggestive of "the cooky-making [sic], pie-baking farm atmosphere which many Canadians associate with their grandmothers."<sup>43</sup> Harris also accompanied Jackson in 1929 on visits to Métis Beach, near Rimouski, where they painted "small cottages and houses set against the green background of the river shore."<sup>44</sup> Jeremy Adamson has characterized the winter works by Lawren Harris in terms of structural interest rather than the cultural landscapes of the Quebec regionalist painters.<sup>45</sup> Therefore even when Harris became known for his depictions of the vast Northland, he was in tune with the more domesticated landscape imagery of the Christmas cards.

For the members of the Group of Seven, these village and rural scenes represented the more intimate side of their artistic practices. However, their main work for which they were applauded came to be centered around the empty landscape. Generally speaking, "the spirit of Canada" and the material upon which their art movement was perceived to centre was in the untouched wilderness. This reflected a desire for the mythic nostalgic "pure" past of the land: untainted wilderness in contrast to cities which were constantly changing and impure.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Adamson, *Lawren S. Harris*, 25, 41, 46.

<sup>43</sup> Housser, *A Canadian Art Movement*, 184; Harris' images of urban houses in Toronto were reflective of his private work, as opposed to the wilderness landscape works he made more public. Adamson, *Lawren S. Harris*, 25.

<sup>44</sup> Adamson, *Lawren S. Harris*, 185.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>46</sup> Hill, *Art for a Nation*, 22.

When it came to Christmas card imagery, the Group of Seven and landscape painters had to turn to this more “domestic” side of their practice (compare Fig. 37 to 51). The male artists from Montreal painting in a Quebec regionalist tradition, like Clarence Gagnon (compare Fig. 11 to 66), Paul Caron (compare Fig. 29 to 56) and A.H. Robinson (compare Fig. 30 to 65) had much less modification to do. Likewise, the approaches of the women artists were more suited to the nostalgic, domestic imagery on the cards, exemplified by Sarah Robertson’s painting by comparison with her Christmas card image (compare Fig. 18 to 49).

Despite the wilderness landscape of the nationalist art movement in Toronto, the home nestled amongst snowy hills on the Christmas cards was described as typical of the school of Canadian painting. M. Lovell praised the series in a 1928 article in *Chatelaine* magazine for showing a distinctly Canadian Christmas scene by Canadian artists of Canadian subject matter. More specifically, Lovell wrote that the national subject matter was the “life and scenery of Canada,” which was described as,

the clarity of its atmosphere, the rugged massiveness of its mountains, the solemn majesty of its forests, the sweet tranquility of its wooded ravines, the golden richness of its fertile prairies, the soft cleanness of its snow-laden landscapes, the zest of its biting storms, the quaint simplicity of its habitant villages, the many aspects of life on its lakes, rivers and seas.<sup>47</sup>

When Jackson, Harris and MacDonald deviated from their empty landscape motif, they painted unpopulated farmsteads. When creating a more “domestic” image of the Canadian landscape for a Christmas card, they utilized this imagery. This is exemplified through comparison of a painting by Jackson of the open landscape (Fig. 23) with one of a village scene (Fig. 37) and finally to one of his Christmas cards (Fig. 51). This

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<sup>47</sup> Lovell, “The Story of the Christmas Card,” 2.

domesticated Group of Seven landscape was similar to the aesthetic of the paintings by those whom Jackson selected to contribute to the Series, among the Beaver Hall women and Quebec regionalist men.

### ***Habitants and Populated Landscapes***

Despite their occasional representation of farming villages, the Group of Seven painters and contemporaries would often leave out the actual inhabitants of the village in their paintings. However, in the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards, there are many people represented. A.Y. Jackson, A.J. Casson and Thoreau MacDonald were amongst those, including Quebec artist Paul Caron and women Mabel Lockerby, Anne Savage, Sarah Robertson and Nora Collyer, who illustrated people approaching a house or town (Figs. 48 – 54, 56). Mabel Lockerby drew a house with smoke rising from the chimney, a sign of habitation (Fig. 47). This is very like the work of the women landscape contributors (Figs. 13 – 22) and the Quebec regionalist painters (Figs. 11 – 12, 29 – 30).

Rural workers typified Canadian life. Although industrialization had occurred in the early twentieth century, Canada still relied on natural resources for its economy. The rough, hard-working Canadian remained an iconic figure. As Charles Hill has described, “agriculture, forestry and logging, fishing and mining symbolized Canadian production, and the logger, the fisherman, and the rural worker came to symbolize the Canadian type.”<sup>48</sup> The “habitant” figure is a nostalgic symbol of the rural worker and the “simpler” life.

Christmas imagery today still includes nostalgic images of the past: fireplaces, homes, lit candles, sleigh rides, evergreens, plum puddings, music and family. Christmas represents to many an ideal time when families are meant to come together, forget

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<sup>48</sup> Hill, *Art for a Nation*, 23.

concerns in their daily lives, and enjoy each other's company. The great industrial changes occurring during the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries led many people to seek solace in reminiscences about simpler times past. Nostalgic images of the past were found on Christmas cards of all kinds. For example, on the cards horse-drawn carriages were still prevalent, in an era when in reality they were being gradually replaced by steam-engines and automobiles.<sup>49</sup> This is apparent in the Canadian Artists Series cards where sleighs and cutters are depicted in numbers. Of his paintings, A.Y. Jackson wrote to Anne Savage that he was adding "little red sleighs in most of them" with reference to his sketches of St-Urbain, Quebec, "as a concession to public demand."<sup>50</sup> The same applied to his Christmas card images (Figs. 45, 51 – 52).

By contrast with the densely populated European landscape, these images suggest the vast space of the Canadian land. The representation of the home is what makes the landscape habitable and appropriate for Christmas. Furthermore, home is the place to which one returns for Christmas.

This modification by the male painters of their landscapes resulted in subject matter similar to the women's imagery in the Christmas cards. Comparing a card by Sarah Robertson (Fig. 49) to one by A.Y. Jackson (Fig. 51) it becomes apparent that the images of sleighs approaching a far-off town over hills and valleys covered in snow are undeniably similar. This similarity demonstrates the influence of the Group of Seven's work on the landscapes done by Sarah Robertson and the other women, combined with the modification of the wilderness landscape to a more female or Quebec regionalist aesthetic.

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<sup>49</sup> Buday, *The History of the Christmas Card*, 132.

<sup>50</sup> Letter from A.Y. Jackson to Sarah Robertson, n.d., quoted in McDougall, *Anne Savage*, 83.

## Private Spaces

Women often had a more acute perspective on scenes of the private and domestic realm than men who focused their creativity on the public sphere. Rather than the essentialist argument in which women are seen as innately and naturally tied to the private and domestic sphere or even to nature through their biology, Griselda Pollock has indicated that their intimacy with feminized space is derived from having to live in it daily. When women paint this space, they do so with “a sureness of knowledge of the daily routine and rituals which not only constituted the spaces of femininity but collectively trace the construction of femininity across the stages of women’s lives.”<sup>51</sup> Women painting women revealed the sitter not as sexualized for consumption, as men often did, but rather in everyday social exchanges and interactions, rituals and pleasures. Many women painters also used their family and friends as models and thus a greater intimacy with the subject came through.<sup>52</sup>

This familiarity carried over into the cards. Women artists tended to depict more intimate portraits of people, such as women and children holding hands and children out alone, or women waiting at home for visitors, but men often painted people engaged in more public activities such as sports or music. The intimate relationships and interactions between people in the works of women are indicative of women’s closer connection to this “space of femininity.”

Nora Collyer, Mabel Lockerby and Kathleen M. Morris (Figs. 57 – 59) all show adults with children. Rozsika Parker refers to idealized mother-daughter relationships in

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<sup>51</sup> Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, 81.

<sup>52</sup> Butlin, “Florence Carlyle,” 159, 161.

the iconography of Victorian embroidery.<sup>53</sup> Although detail is scant in the simpler forms of the Christmas cards, children are depicted hand-in-hand or right next to a mother figure. One male artist in my selection of Canadian Artists Series cards, Thoreau MacDonald, also included the small figure of a child beside what appears to be a woman in a cloak approaching the church (Fig. 60). This appears to borrow from the “spaces of femininity.” Mabel Lockerby (Fig. 64) was the only artist of the Series to draw a scene focusing exclusively on a group of children, whom she positions next to a small dog. This again emphasizes women’s depiction of such subject matter.

In the late nineteenth century, Florence Carlyle’s image *Spinning Woman* (c. 1897) was ridiculed when it was exhibited. The press called the subject of a woman at work “mundane.”<sup>54</sup> A card design by Mabel Lockerby (Fig. 63) showed a peasant woman dressed for the outdoors and holding a bucket in her left hand while standing near some turkeys, which are feeding in a circle beyond a grouping of houses. The woman appears to participate in the “mundane” act of barnyard work, possibly choosing the turkey for the Christmas feast. The image by Lockerby was not published on a Rous and Mann card, but was rather a sketch destined for a card. Other images by women artists do not show such “mundane” tasks by women, but rather images of women shopping, walking, and waiting at home.

Because the home represents a feminized space, scenes of homecoming for the holidays suggest feminized subject matter. Returning home to visit friends and family was another popular theme of the Canadian Artists Series and both women and men artists portrayed this type of theme. Several different women artists depicted scenes with

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<sup>53</sup> Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 138.

<sup>54</sup> Butlin, “Florence Carlyle,” 177.

figures moving towards a small town or house in the snow, either on foot or by sleigh, notably Nora Collyer, Sarah Robertson, Kathleen Morris, Ethel Seath and Mabel Lockerby (Figs. 49 – 50, 53, 57 – 59, 62). Male artists A.Y. Jackson, A.J. Casson and Paul Caron also illustrated this type of scene (Figs. 51 – 52, 54, 56, 61). In the case of Jackson and Casson, this addition of people represented a modification of their usual imagery. Paul Caron, a Quebec regionalist, did not have to alter his usual subject matter of nostalgic images of the past (Fig. 29).

“Seasonal visitors” were popular on Christmas cards from the late nineteenth century until at least 1950.<sup>55</sup> This reinforces the view that scenes stemming from the “spaces of femininity” were closer to greeting card imagery in general. In 1920 the Group of Seven stated in the pamphlet for their first exhibition that, “The great purpose of landscape art is to make us at home in our country.”<sup>56</sup> Sending cards to relatives in England or elsewhere was sending them the message that we had formed a proper and adequate “home” in our country of Canada. The Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards reflected this message.

In cards by A.J. Casson and Ethel Seath in particular, both placed a woman standing on the threshold of the home (Figs. 61 – 62). In Casson’s card, the man stands outside as a point of contrast. Seath’s card gave particular emphasis to the relationship between the woman waiting on the threshold and the approaching sleigh through contrasting colours. Seath’s card emphasized the woman’s embodiment of the private realm of the home and Casson’s used the same motif.

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<sup>55</sup> Buday, *The History of the Christmas Card*, 127.

<sup>56</sup> Brenda Lafleur, “Resting in history,” 225.

## Public Spaces and Activities

With few exceptions in my selection of Canadian Artists Series cards, only male artists depicted people out in public, in couples or alone, or engaging in public activities such as winter sports or making music. Although women artists in the twentieth century had increased access to social realms of public space, this gendering of subject matter in the cards underlines the continuity of past gender roles and the concept of separate spheres despite social changes wrought by the Great War.

Winter sports were a popular theme for Victorian-era Christmas cards. Cards often showed people skating, building snowmen or outdoors playing with dogs, with sprigs of holly in hand for added festivity.<sup>57</sup> Cards by A. H. Robinson, A.J. Casson, Paul Caron and the one exceptional card by Sarah Robertson show couples riding in sleighs for pleasure (Figs. 65 – 69). L.L. Fitzgerald, A.Y. Jackson, Paul Alfred and Clarence Gagnon illustrated men engaged in such activities as hiking across frozen lakes and forests on snowshoes, ski-jumping, sledding and running a dog-sled (Figs. 70 – 74). Paul Alfred and Fitzgerald modified their usual landscapes by adding figures engaging in sports. By contrast, the Quebec regionalist Gagnon has not greatly modified his usual motif for his paintings in the cards (compare Figs. 66, 71, 73 to Fig. 11). This “rugged” aspect of man’s interaction with the landscape was generally not duplicated by women artists in my selection.<sup>58</sup>

Enjoying a sporting activity in an environment means that there is confidence in the ability to either understand or control that environment. These Christmas card images

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<sup>57</sup> Buday, *The History of the Christmas Card*, 136-137.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 146, 149, 152.

illustrate people enjoying sports in the Canadian landscape. In this way, they demonstrate that people in Canada live and enjoy the northern weather in a civilized way.

Men and women artists of the Canadian Artists Series cards differed in who and what groupings of people they chose to illustrate. Where men showed men alone or men and women out together, they rarely included children and never a woman alone. Women artists illustrated women or men alone and children.

Cards by Varley and L.A.C. Panton portray adult men and women musicians performing together in groups of threes (Figs. 75 – 78).<sup>59</sup> A.J. Casson, H.W. McCrea and Fred Varley illustrate Dickensian scenes of couples in public engaged in activities such as shopping or riding in carriages (Figs. 81 – 84). Not one woman artist in my selection designed a card showing a couple out together. This could reflect the lingering result of societal constraints on acceptable subjects to be illustrated by unmarried women, and as such stand as an example of further sacrifice for professional development by women artists. Of these cards showing groups of people, only one (Fig. 75) shows a man flanked by two women; otherwise the groupings are all male. Mabel Lockerby's card of three singing child-carolers (Fig. 64) emphasizes her continued engagement with themes of children, within the "space of femininity." That men regarded it as acceptable to portray couples in public as well as single men, but not single women out alone, is again indicative of societal conventions at the time.

### **Exceptions**

Some irregularities exist within my selection of Canadian Artists Series cards, such as historical themes (Figs. 85 – 86), religious images (Figs. 87 – 88), images of

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<sup>59</sup> Carolers were popular imagery for Christmas cards from the late nineteenth century to about 1950. *Ibid.*, 127.

Santa Claus (Fig. 89), and avian themes (Fig. 90). All have basis in traditional Christmas card icons.<sup>60</sup> However, the majority of Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards focused on themes of Canadian life and scenery in order to fill the niche for both “Canadian” and “art cards.”

Women affected the final outcome of the Canadian Artists Series cards in several ways. As businessmen, Rous and Mann would have been more interested in a financially successful venture than promoting Toronto-based Canadian art. The cards had to appeal to a female market. The women’s market was favourable to Quebec regionalist and women painters’ images of the cultural landscape. The empty landscape ideal was

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<sup>60</sup> Conversation with Joyce Sowby indicated that her father, H.L. Rous, was very interested in historical topics and would have perhaps included such a card out of personal interest. The inside text of Fig. 85 indicates Royal Navy statistics from the Spanish Armada of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The medieval scene of Fig. 86 is reminiscent of fairy tales. These historical scenes represent that link with nostalgia for past, more romantic or better times that the Christmas season brings.

George Buday wrote in his book about the history of the Christmas card that religious scenes were not often depicted despite the increasing religiosity of society in the Victorian age. He calls this “one of the most interesting puzzles in the history of the Christmas card.” He speculates that this is because cards performed a social function rather than forming part of the religious side of the holiday. Buday, *The History of the Christmas Card*, 187-88. Church attendance steadily increased from Confederation in 1867 until the turn of the century, when it began to decline due to an increase in fighting between the various denominations in Canada. It was only after WWII that the Canadian Church received its second boom when Canadians began to return to Church in search of normalcy after the horrors of war. This would account for a lack of interest in religious cards between 1900 and 1939. John Webster Grant, *The Church in the Canadian Era* (Burlington, ON: Welch Publishing Co. Inc., 1988): 65, 87, 160.

Fred Jacob mentions that J.E.H. MacDonald also created religious pictures for the cards, like one in which the Magi worship the infant Christ, fashioned after a Toronto theatre production at Hart House Theatre called *The Chester Mysteries*. In this way, MacDonald linked the religious picture to Canadian content. Fred Jacob, “Canada’s Own Christmas Cards,” *Canadian Homes and Gardens* (Dec 1926): 35.

Santa Claus appeared on Christmas cards in many different guises. His current appearance was invented in 1860 by the American cartoonist Thomas Nast. O’Flynn, “Expressions of the Season,” see Art Archivist greeting card file, LAC.

Birds were a popular subject on Christmas cards. Especially in England, the robin red-breast became popular on cards from 1862. Buday, *The History of the Christmas Card*, 101. A myth recounts that the robin tried to ease Christ’s suffering on the cross by plucking one of the thorns from his crown and a drop of blood fell on his breast colouring it red. Dorothy Dearborn, “Christmas Cards Through the Years,” *The Atlantic Advocate* 66 (December 1975): 21-3, at 22. Summer or spring images in the wintry season of Christmas are speculated to be indicative of the winter solstice tradition. Turkeys and geese (alive or roasted) were shown as well as peacocks to indicate wealth and even dead birds. Buday, *The History of the Christmas Card*, 107-109, 116.

Fig. 90 is the only card that exclusively focuses on wild-life as scenic. Fred Varley’s birds are distinctly Canadian, as nowhere are crows mentioned as being significant symbols of Christmas, but they are certainly birds that one sees in Canada year-round.

modified to be more like women's and Quebec regionalist art, despite the fact that both of these groups remained peripheral, in a sense, to the art canon in Toronto.

Men were the gatekeepers to this project, inviting the women to participate, and choosing women whose aesthetic more or less corresponded to the Toronto landscape style. Then, ironically, it was the men who altered their themes for a female market and seasonal occasion, so that they corresponded more with the aesthetic of the women painters from Montreal.

The Canadian Artists Series reveals the interplay between the feminine and masculine spheres. In their images women rarely went outside their feminized space; that is, they illustrated scenes of the private realm or interactions between mothers and children, homes, villages and domestic landscapes. By contrast, the male contributors adjusted images by illustrating scenes of homecoming and mothers and children holding hands. This exemplifies the access men had to the private realm at the time. Women did not show people or couples out in the public realm engaging in activities, demonstrating that women were still constrained by the public and private social barriers that carried over from the nineteenth century. The "national" Canadian art shown through these cards to the Canadian public and beyond was still inhabited by the stereotypes of a nineteenth-century gendered iconography

## CONCLUSION

The Canadian Artists Series of Christmas cards has provided a fruitful cache for the examination of many larger issues surrounding the way men and women negotiated the intangible, yet very real, social barriers still present in Canada during the interwar years.

The Canadian Artists Series was born at the centre of the national art movement in Toronto, at the printing firm of Rous and Mann where five of the original Group of Seven artists were employed. The Series was largely instigated by the firm's art director, Albert Robson, who had worked with the future members of the Group at Grip. As such, the project was likely from the outset meant to promote a very particular brand of modern landscape art, based on the work of Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven. A.Y. Jackson was the gatekeeper between the artists and Rous and Mann and through connection with him, designs were invited and chosen for reproduction in the Series.

The majority of women artists who contributed designs to the Series, in my selection, were from Montreal. Their paintings were greatly influenced by the Quebec regionalist art imagery and "progressive" stylistic techniques in Montreal under AAM teachers like Maurice Cullen. Quebecois critics at the time were taking a firm stance against the claims to a national landscape movement by the Group of Seven. Those who painted landscapes were seen as distinctly regionalist in style, illustrating close-range and populated land and cityscapes by contrast to the empty wilderness of the Toronto painters.

Despite the highly patriarchally-structured field of professional art, the print trade in Canada prior to 1900 was found to be accessible to women. Moreover, women were also closely associated in the mind of the public with greeting card production.

Consequently, women were more readily accepted into graphic arts societies than fine art

societies. They were thus privy to contacts, discussions and exhibitions that were produced by such associations and were more a part of the print profession than peripheral. Many men worked in commercial art in Canada as well. There were, however, those, including several amongst the Group of Seven, who felt that commercial art was a “lower” form of art. A historical division between “fine” and “commercial” art meant that the latter seen as less worthy of note.

The production of the Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards was found to be affected by this divide. Rather than being associated with the print trade or commercial art, to which women were attached, the cards were treated as miniature versions of fine art, to the extent of their exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada and at the international exposition at Wembley. These “art cards” were thus raised to the level of fine art, a patriarchally-dominated field. Nevertheless, the genre of painting undertaken by the women painters was closer to the images actually accepted for the Christmas cards.

As the Canadian Artists Series was firmly positioned in the domain of fine art, women artists remained peripheral, as invited participants to the project. Griselda Pollock’s definition of the “spaces of femininity” in which women were often bound was reflected in the subject matter of these artists. Remnants of the nineteenth-century relegation of women to the private and men to the public spheres is demonstrated in that their fine art paintings and even commercial design often showed close-range images of the home and private sphere. However the decades of the twentieth century, especially after the First World War, allowed for greater accessibility by both genders to a variety of subject matter, and many of the women painters created landscape images akin to the Group of Seven style. This was seen to be one method for women to gain acceptance within the central artistic discourse of English Canada embodied in the Group. It was

also suggested, following Cindy Nemser's theory, that women often mimicked the art of male colleagues to gain acceptance.

The Montreal women were accepted within the "new Canadian art" because of their close association with the Group of Seven and were included both in exhibitions and in commercial projects such as the Canadian Artists Series. Especially prior to 1930, clubs and associations such as the RCA only provided women with marginal admittance, hindering their ability to be seen as professionals in the same way as men. Women had a tendency to accept this lack of status as they were socialized to supportive roles, as postulated by Veronica Strong-Boag.

The Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards were a profitable business venture for Rous and Mann and as such, they had to require their artists to submit designs that catered to the market that would purchase them. This market was shown to be ninety-percent female by the 1920s. This required artists like the Group of Seven painters to introduce more "domestic" imagery of little village scenes for inspiration for designs, rather than vast empty wilderness landscape. Women artists and Quebec regionalist artists did not have to modify their imagery in the same way. This difference was demonstrated by comparing works of fine art by the artists with their later Christmas card designs. Creating this kind of imagery for Christmas cards meant the artists' reached to nostalgic images associated with the festivity of Christmas, characterized by Roland Barthes as the mythic picturesque. The snowy landscape was domesticated by the addition of a house and further with the addition of *habitant* figures moving about the town and rural landscapes.

The residual social spheres of the nineteenth century were also found in card imagery when women depicted scenes of the private realm, such as the interaction

between mothers and children, not the robust outdoor sport activities or couples out alone in public space. Men borrowed from the “spaces of femininity” in depicting scenes of homecoming, which shows that men were able to glide between the imagery based on the public and private spheres, whereas the women generally remained within their prescribed sphere based on nineteenth-century societal barriers.

The Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards were bought by a relatively large number of people between 1922 and 1937 in Canada, based on Carl Rous’ claim that the cards sold well for the first fifteen years. That is, the cards were bought by a large number of women, as it was established that women were the primary purchasers. On behalf of their families, women sent these cards out to friends and family in Canada and abroad, so this form of “Canadian art” was widely distributed. The images actually publicized an iconography of Canadian art more in common with women’s landscape painting, under the stamp of Rous and Mann’s Canadian Artists Series. These were touted as representative of Canadian art as a whole wherever they were exhibited. Thus, rather than strictly promoting the Canadian art of the Toronto modernist aesthetic, these cards actually served to widen the imagery presented as “Canadian art” at this time.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> There are many more Canadian Artists Series Christmas cards in existence than the ones that I uncovered for this thesis. With a more extensive collection of these cards, the imagery could be analysed for a more comprehensive picture of what women and men artists contributed. In addition, further work remains to be added to that already dealing specifically with women’s participation in the commercial art or print trade in Canada.

## APPENDIX I

### List of Known Contributing Artists to the Canadian Artists Series

#### Women:

1. Georgette Berckmans
2. Emily Carr
3. Helen Catharine Carruthers
4. Nora Collyer
5. Marjorie Earle Gass
6. Ruth Beatrice Henshaw
7. Estelle M. Kerr
8. Mabel Lockerby
9. Edith Booth MacLaren
10. Kathleen Morris
11. Rachel Hess Pilsworth
12. Beatrice Robertson
13. Sarah M. Robertson
14. Anne D. Savage
15. Ethel Seath

#### Men:

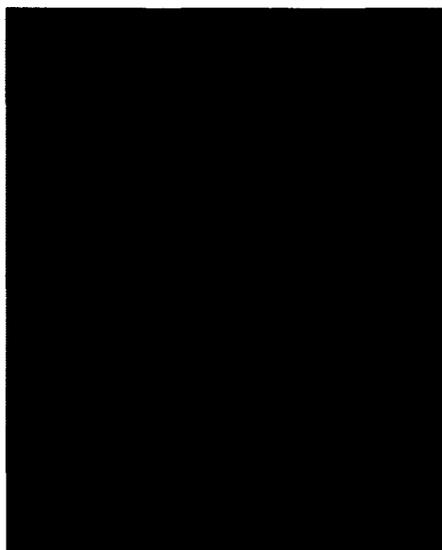
16. Dr. Frederick G. Banting
17. Paul Alfred Meister [Paul Alfred]
18. John William Beatty
19. Norman Beerman
20. Frederick H. Brigdens
21. J. Archibald Browne
22. Paul Archibald Caron
23. Alexander Scott Carter
24. Alfred J. Casson
25. Victor Llewellyn Child
26. Frederick E. Coates
27. Lawrence Arthur Colley
28. Charles Fraser Comfort
29. Hubert Valentine Fanshaw
30. Lionel Lemoine Fitzgerald
31. James E. Frise
32. C.A. Gagnon
33. Robert Ford Gagen
34. Charles Goldhamer
35. Thomas Garland Greene
36. Arthur Gresham
37. Fred S. Haines
38. Lawren Harris
39. Eric Heathcote

40. George Heriot
41. Robert Holmes
42. Walter Edwin Huntley
43. Alexander Young Jackson
44. Charles William Jefferys
45. Frank H. Johnston
46. Paul Kane
47. Arthur Keelor
48. Cornelius Krieghoff
49. Philip Peter Kieran
50. Robertson Mulholland
51. Harold W. McCrea
52. Rowley Walter Murphy
53. J.E.H. MacDonald
54. Thoreau MacDonald
55. David Huron MacFarlane
56. Ralph Spencer McMullen
57. Herbert Sidney Palmer
58. Frank F. Panabaker
59. L.A.C. Panton
60. Robert W. Pilot
61. Walter J. Phillips
62. Herbert Raine
63. Albert Henry Robinson
64. William H. Sadd
65. Carl F. Schaefer
66. Owen Staples
67. Stanley Turner
68. Tom Thomson
69. Frederick Horsman Varley
70. Harry D. Wallace
71. Albert Curtis Williamson

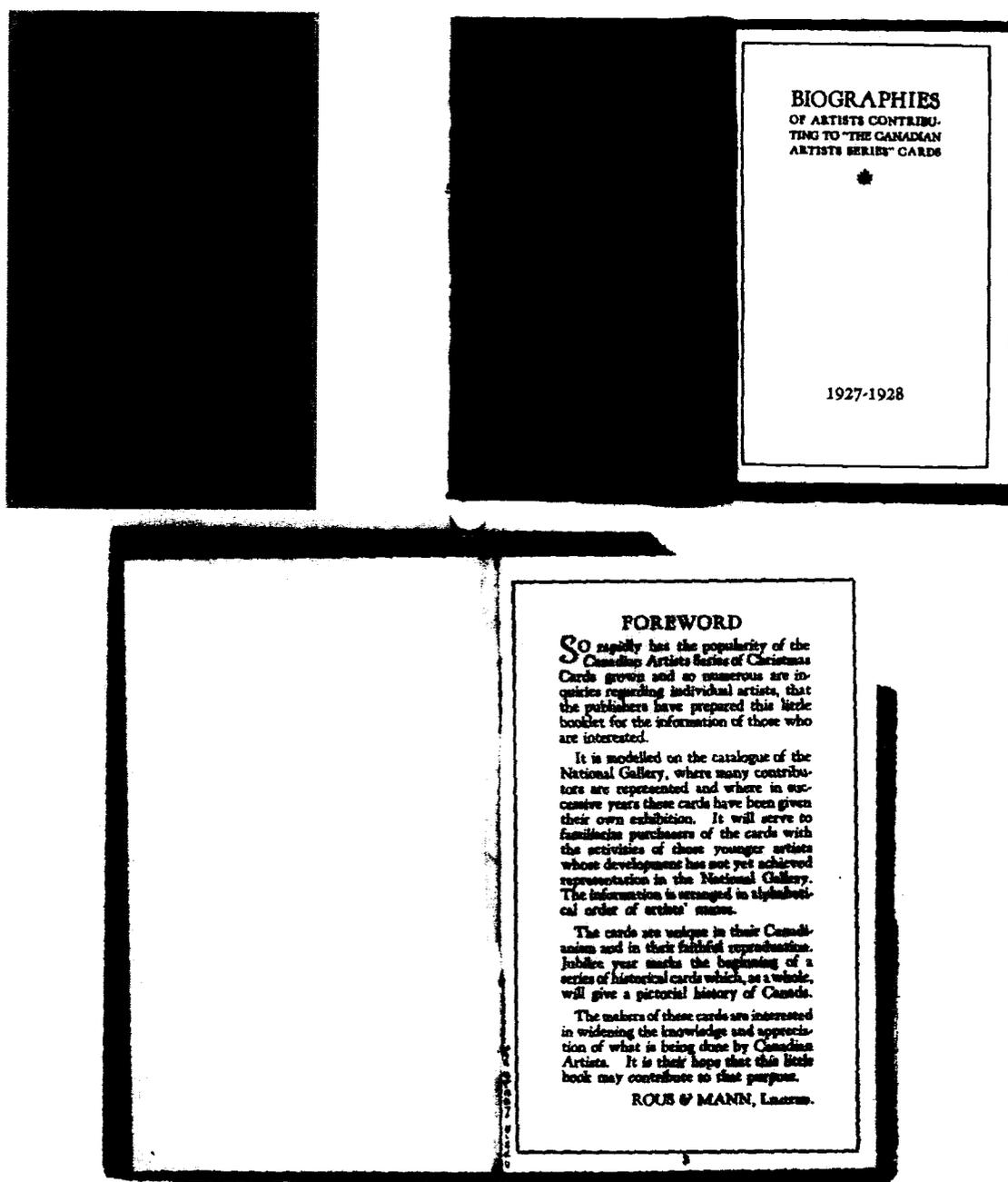
**ILLUSTRATIONS**



**Figure 1**  
Frank S. Panabaker, *The Sentinel*, c. 1940.  
Canadian Artists Series.  
Private Collection, Toronto.



**Figure 2**  
Beatrice Robertson, *Delphinium*, c. 1935.  
Canadian Artists Series.  
Private Collection, Toronto.

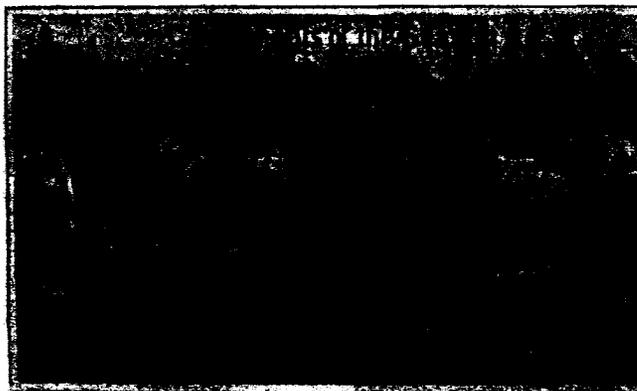


**Figure 3**  
*Who's Who*, Rous and Mann, Ltd., 1927.  
 Library and Archives, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



**Figure 4**

*Young Canada on Snowshoes*, Montreal: G. and W. Clarke, 1878.  
Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.



**Figure 5**

*Canadian National Game Lacrosse*, Montreal: G. and W. Clarke, n.d.  
McGill University Libraries, Montreal.



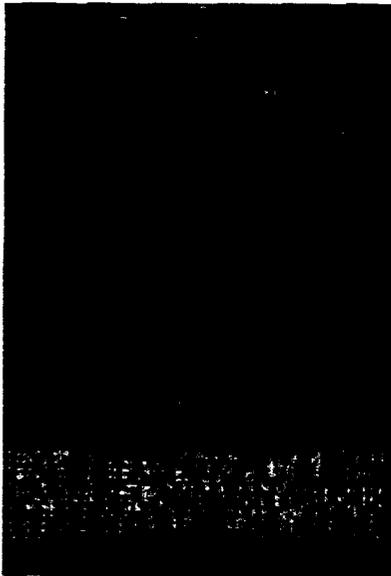
**Figure 6**

c. 1910

Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.



**Figure 7**  
Finishers and embellishers at L. Prang & Co., 1886.



**Figure 8**  
J.E.H. MacDonald, *Canada and the Call*, 1914.



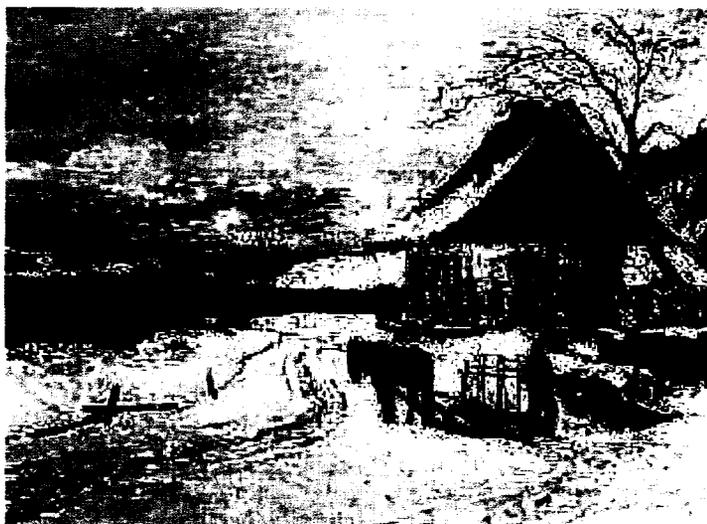
**Figure 9**  
Franklin Carmichael, *Playgrounds in Ontario*, 1934.



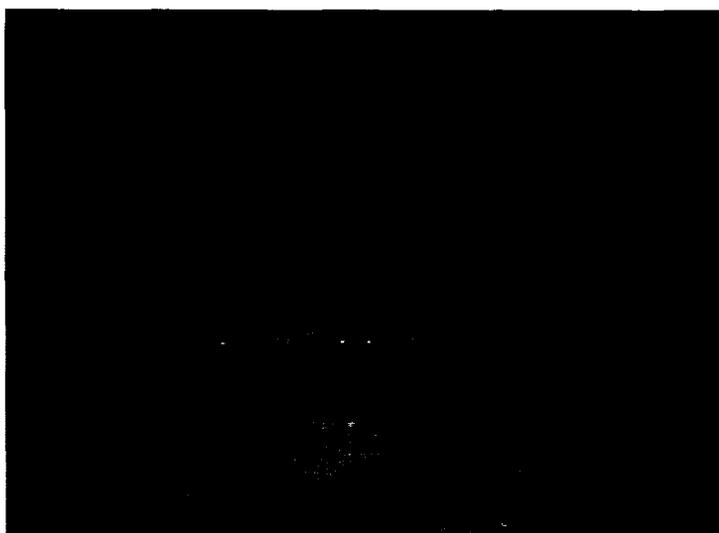
1935		November					1935
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
1st Quar. 3rd	Full Moon 10th	Last Quar. 17th	New Moon 25th		1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	

**Figure 10**

A.Y. Jackson, Desktop Calendar, 1935. Rous and Mann, Ltd., Toronto.  
Courtesy of Graham W. Garrett, Toronto.



**Figure 11**  
Clarence C. Gagnon, *La ferme sur la colline*, 1911.  
Private Collection.



**Figure 12**  
Maurice Cullen, *Ice Cutters, Longeuil*, 1923.  
Private Collection.



**Figure 13**  
Mabel Lockerby, *Old Forts*, 1940.  
Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.



**Figure 14**  
Mabel Lockerby, *The Dahlia*, c. 1940.  
Private Collection.



**Figure 15**

Ethel Seath, *St. James's Cathedral from La Gauchetiere Street* (renamed Mary Queen of the World Cathedral), c. 1925.  
Private Collection.



**Figure 16**

Sarah Robertson, *Storm Como*, n.d.  
Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University, Kingston.



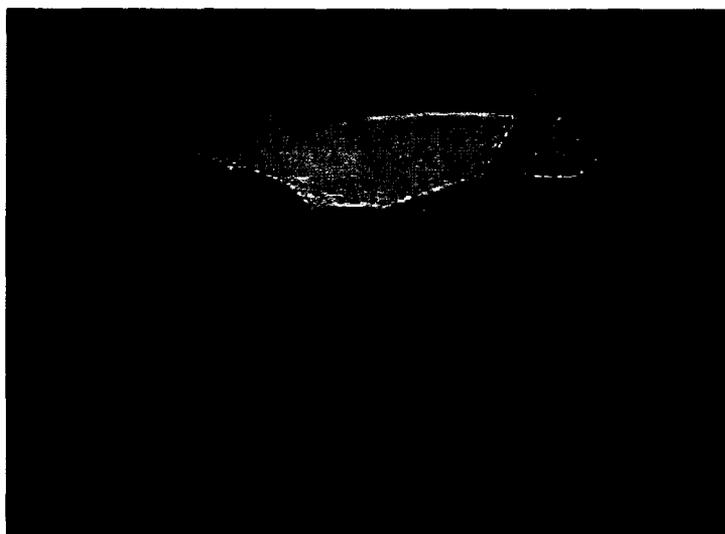
**Figure 17**  
Sarah Robertson, *Joseph and Marie-Louise*, 1929.  
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



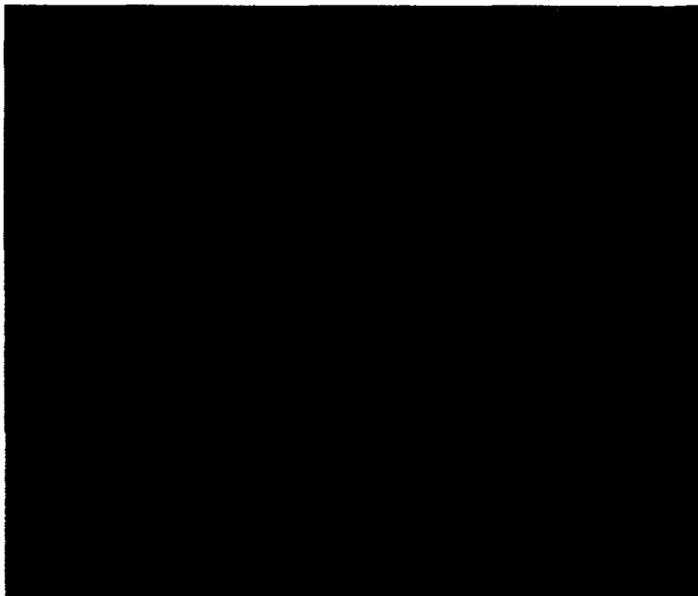
**Figure 18**  
Sarah Robertson, *The Blue Sleigh*, c. 1924.  
Tom Thomson Memorial Art Gallery, Owen Sound.



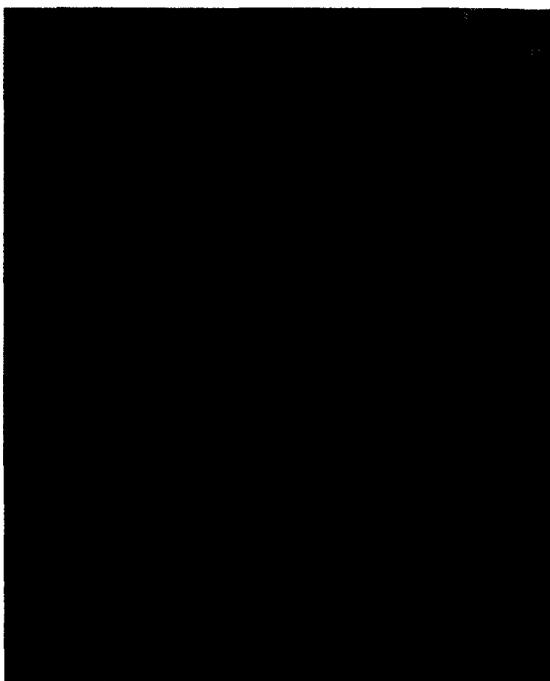
**Figure 19**  
Kathleen Morris, *Bonsecours Market, Montreal*, 1924.  
Private Collection.



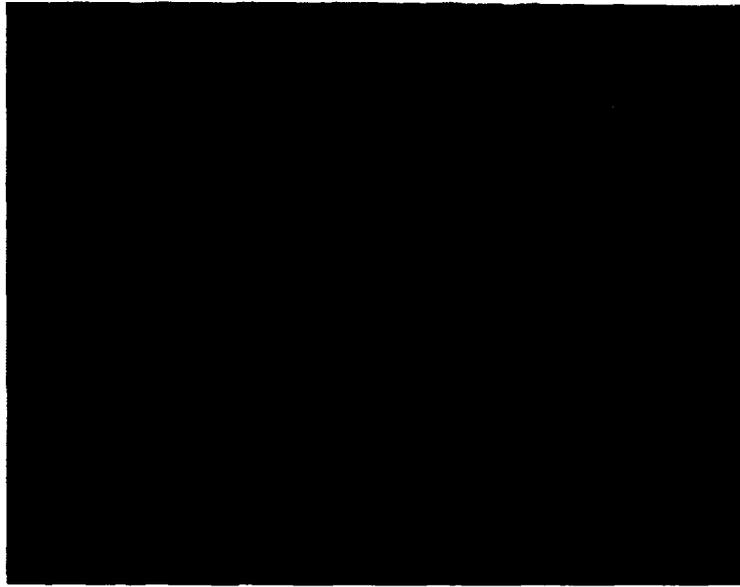
**Figure 20**  
Anne Savage, *The Plough*, 1931-33.  
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.



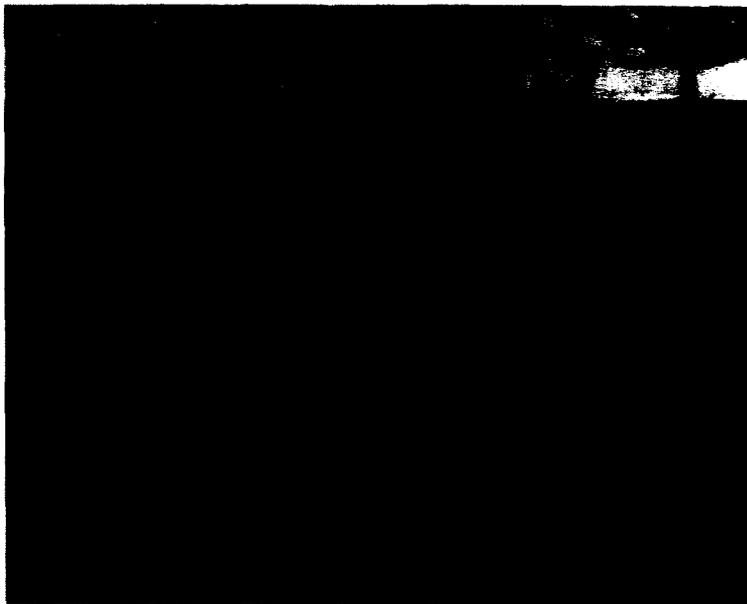
**Figure 21**  
Anne Savage, *Autumn, Eastern Townships (or Autumn)*, c. 1935.  
Private Collection.



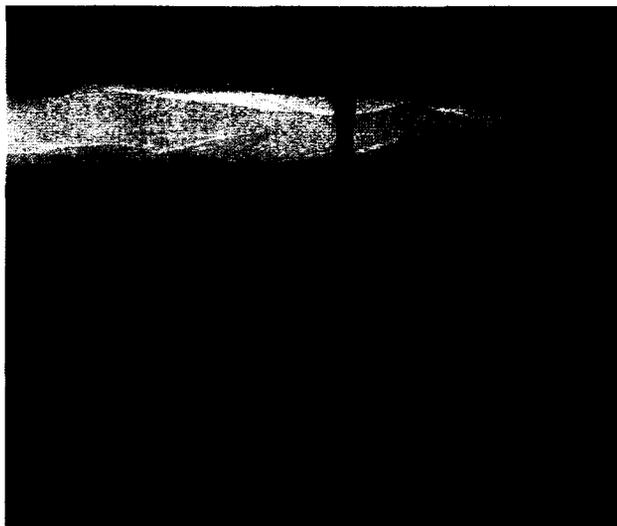
**Figure 22**  
Nora Collyer, *Village Church in Summer*, n.d.  
Private Collection.



**Figure 23**  
A.Y. Jackson, *Lake Cognaschene*, 1920.  
Art Gallery of Windsor.



**Figure 24**  
Arthur Lismer, *Sombre Isle of Pic*, 1927.  
Winnipeg Art Gallery.



**Figure 25**  
Franklin Carmichael, *Evening, North Shore, Lake Superior*, 1927.  
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.



**Figure 26**  
J.E.H. MacDonald, *October Shower Gleam*, 1922  
Hart House Permanent Collection, University of Toronto.



**Figure 27**

F.H. Varley, *Stormy Weather, Georgian Bay*, 1921  
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



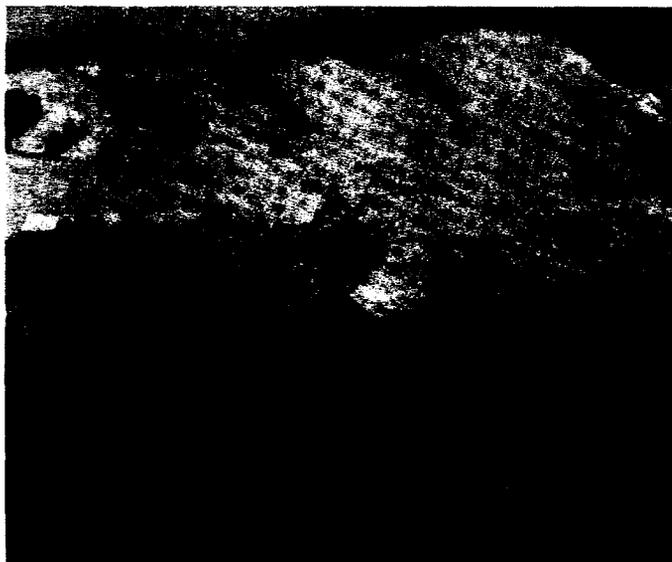
**Figure 28**

J.W. Beatty, *Morning, Algonquin Park*, 1914.  
National Gallery of Canada.



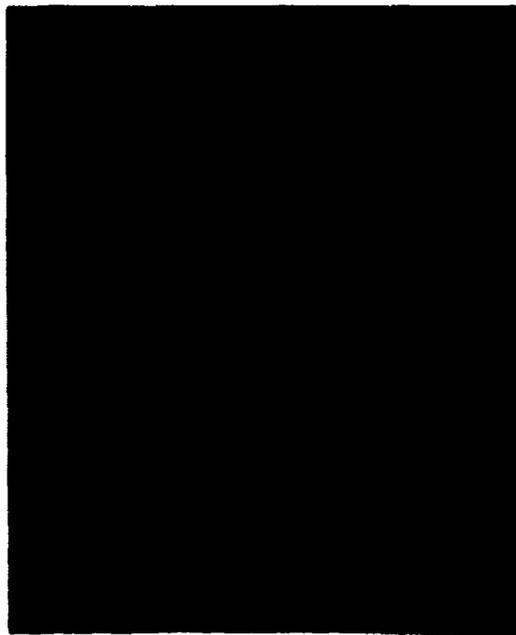
**Figure 29**

Paul Caron, *Vieil Hôtel Rasco, rue Saint-Paul à Montréal*, 1929.  
Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec.



**Figure 30**

A.H. Robinson, *Falling Snow, Les Eboulements*, 1926  
Art Gallery of Hamilton.



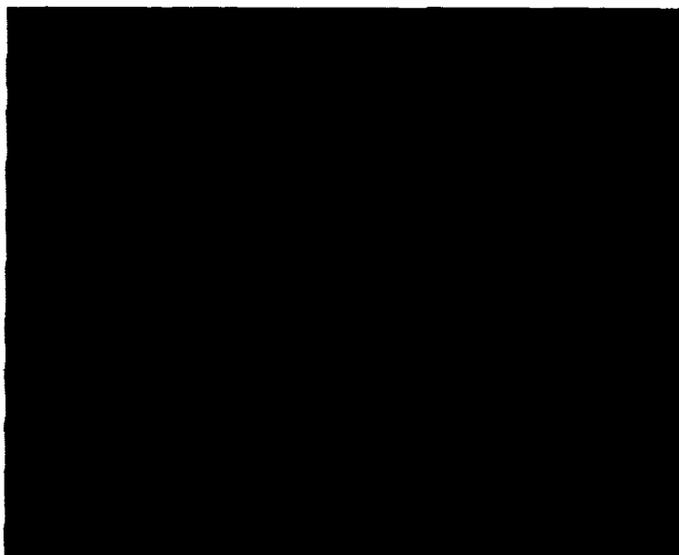
**Figure 31**  
Edwin Holgate, *Lumberjack*, 1924.  
Gallery Lambton, Sarnia, Ontario.



**Figure 32**  
Lawren Harris, *Northern Lake II*, c. 1926.  
Private Collection.



**Figure 33**  
A.J. Casson, *October*, 1928.  
Central Collection, University of Alberta, Edmonton.



**Figure 34**  
Kathleen Munn, *Composition*, 1928.  
The Edmonton Art Gallery Collection.

**16**  
**"CANADIAN**  
**ARTISTS"**  
**GREETINGS**  
**\$1.00**



Typical of the attractiveness and economy of the "boxed assortments" of Christmas cards offered at our stores are these 16 folders from the famous "Canadian Artists" series. Other good values include:

12	Black and white grooves cards .....	.50
15	Beautiful "copperstone etching" folders .....	1.25
12	Lovely folders with verses by Edgar A. Guest .....	1.50

Come in soon. These and other boxed assortments are greatly in demand.

**GRAND & TOY LIMITED**

*Stationers For Fifty Years*

115 YONGE ST. (1st Address)      8-14 WELLINGTON ST. WEST      382 BAY ST. (2d Address)

*Yonge Street Store Open Evenings*

Figure 35  
*The Toronto Star*  
 (17 December 1931): 8



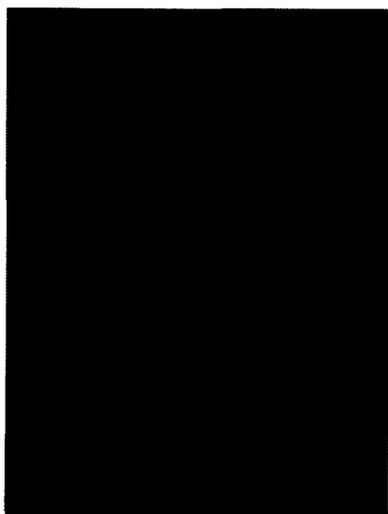
**Figure 36**  
Anne Savage, Canadian Artists Series, Rous & Mann, Ltd.  
Private Collection.



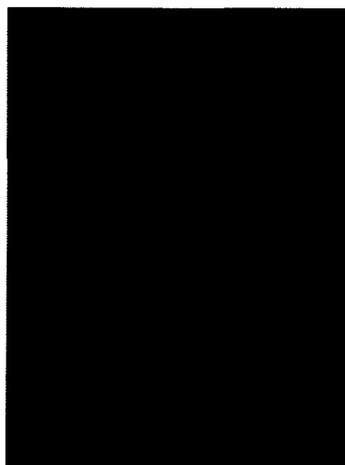
**Figure 37**  
A.Y. Jackson, *Saint-Fidèle*, c.1930.  
Private Collection.



**Figure 38**  
Lawren Harris, *Laurentian Landscape with Barn*, 1908.  
Private Collection.



**Figure 39**  
J.W. Beatty, Canadian Artists Series, n.d.  
Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



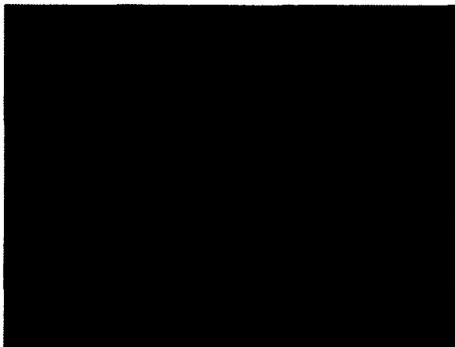
**Figure 40**  
A.J. Casson, Canadian Artists Series,  
n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



**Figure 41**  
Ruth B. Henshaw, Canadian Artists  
Series, n.d., Naomi Jackson Groves  
fonds, Library and Archives Canada.



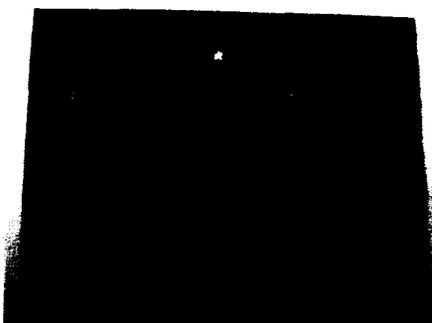
**Figure 42**  
Mabel Lockerby, Canadian Artists  
Series, n.d. Mabel Lockerby fonds.  
Library and Archives Canada.



**Figure 43**  
L.L. Fitzgerald, Canadian Artists Series,  
n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



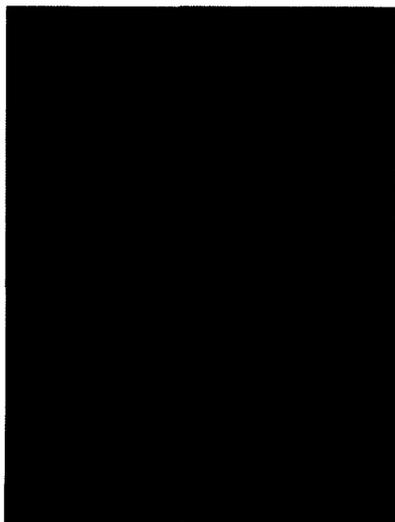
**Figure 44**  
Mabel Lockerby, Canadian Artists  
Series, n.d. Mabel Lockery fonds,  
Library and Archives Canada.



**Figure 45**  
A.Y. Jackson, Canadian Artists Series,  
n.d., Naomi Jackson Groves fonds,  
Library and Archives Canada.



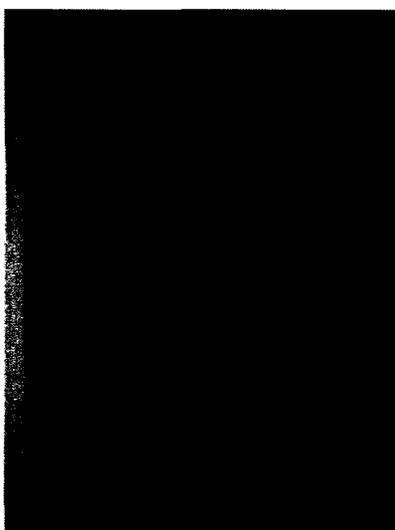
**Figure 46**  
A.J. Casson, Canadian Artists Series,  
n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



**Figure 47**  
Mabel Lockerby, Canadian Artists Series, n.d., Mabel Lockerby fonds, Library and Archives Canada.



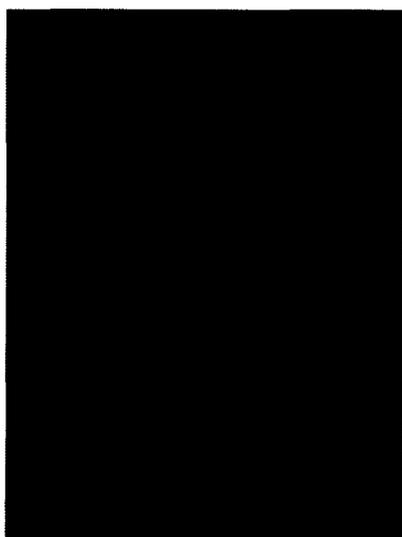
**Figure 48**  
Anne Savage, Canadian Artists Series, n.d., Private Collection.



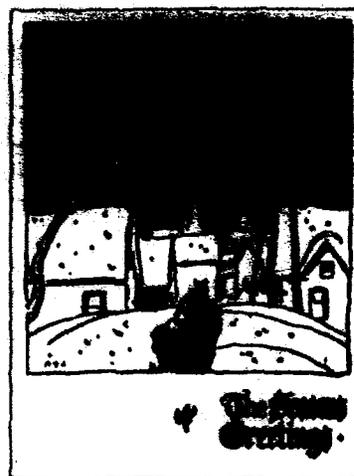
**Figure 49**  
Sarah Robertson, Canadian Artists Series, n.d., Private Collection.



**Figure 50**  
Nora F. Collyer, Canadian Artists Series, n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library and Archives Canada.



**Figure 51**  
A.Y. Jackson, Canadian Artists Series,  
n.d., Naomi Jackson Groves fonds,  
Library and Archives Canada.



**Figure 52**  
A.Y. Jackson, Canadian Artists Series, c.  
1924.



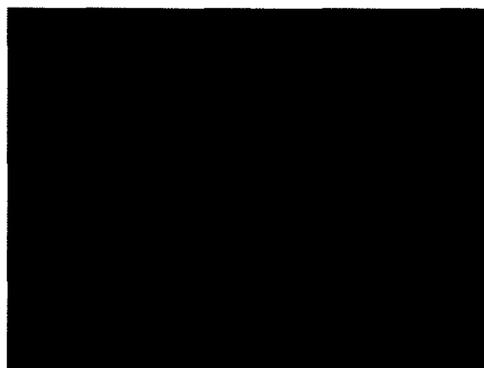
**Figure 53**  
Mabel Lockerby, Canadian Artists  
Series, n.d., Mabel Lockerby fonds,  
Library and Archives Canada.



**Figure 54**  
A.J. Casson, Canadian Artists Series,  
n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



**Figure 55**  
Clarence A. Gagnon, Canadian Artists Series, n.d.



**Figure 56**  
Paul Caron, Canadian Artists Series, n.d.,  
Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



**Figure 57**  
Kathleen M. Morris, Canadian Artists Series, n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library and Archives Canada.



**Figure 58**  
Mabel Lockerby, Canadian Artists Series, n.d. Mabel Lockerby fonds, Library and Archives Canada.



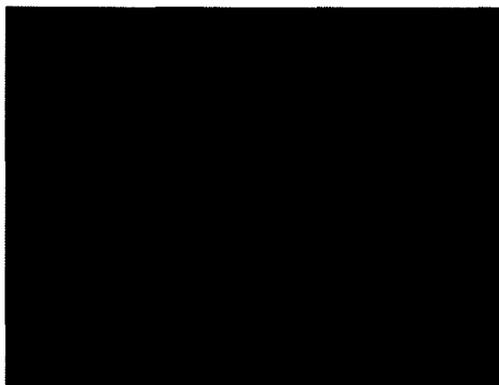
**Figure 59**  
Nora F. Collyer, Canadian Artists Series,  
n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



**Figure 60**  
TM, Canadian Artists Series, c. 1924.



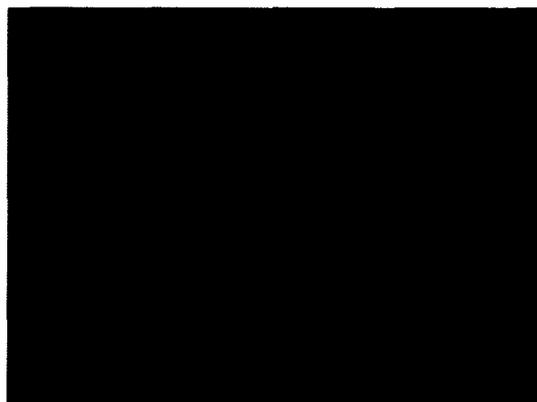
**Figure 61**  
A.J. Casson, Canadian Artists Series,  
n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



**Figure 62**  
Ethel Seath, Canadian Artists Series, n.d.,  
Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



**Figure 63**  
Mabel Lockerby, sketch for a Christmas card, Mabel Lockerby fonds, Library and Archives Canada.



**Figure 64**  
Mabel Lockerby, Canadian Artists Series, n.d., Mabel Lockerby fonds, Library and Archives Canada.



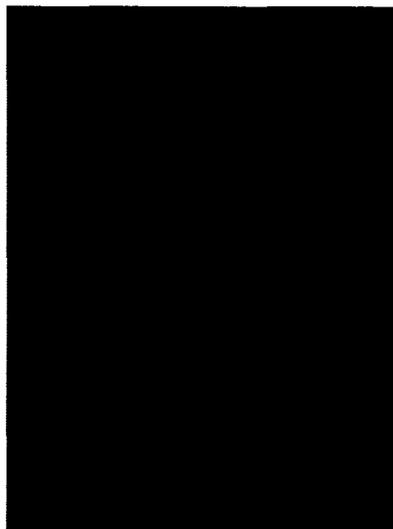
**Figure 65**  
A.H. Robinson, Canadian Artists Series, c. 1924.



**Figure 66**  
Clarence A. Gagnon, Canadian Artists Series, n.d.



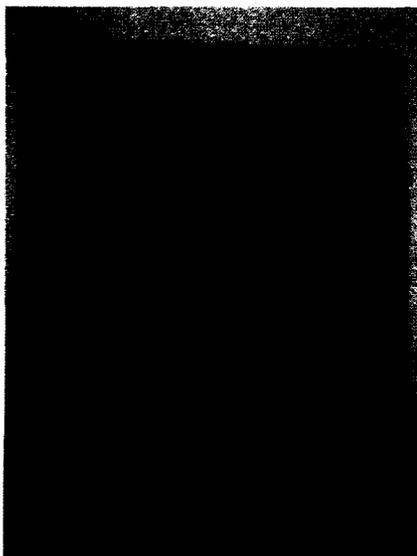
**Figure 67**  
A.J. Casson, Canadian Artists Series,  
n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



**Figure 68**  
Sarah Robertson, Canadian Artists  
Series, n.d., Private Collection.



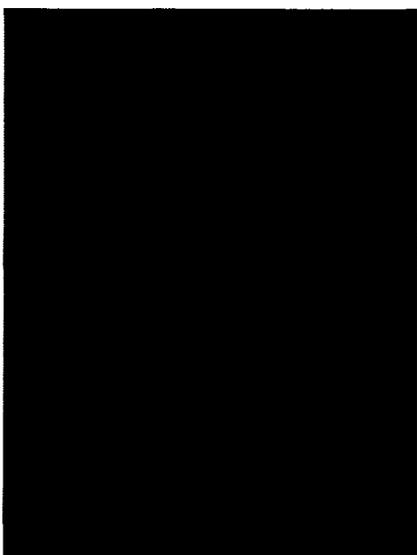
**Figure 69**  
Paul Caron, Canadian Artists Series, n.d.,  
Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



**Figure 70**  
A.Y. Jackson, Canadian Artists Series,  
n.d., Naomi Jackson Groves fonds,  
Library and Archives Canada.



**Figure 71**  
Clarence A. Gagnon, *A Dog Team in the  
Canadian North*, Canadian Artists Series,  
c. 1929.



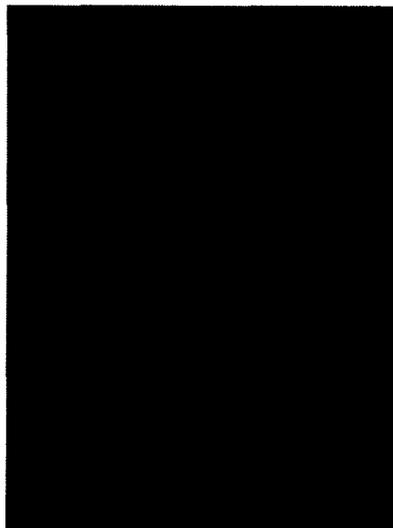
**Figure 72**  
L.L. Fitzgerald, Canadian Artists Series,  
n.d. Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



**Figure 73**  
Clarence A. Gagnon, Canadian Artists  
Series, c. 1926.



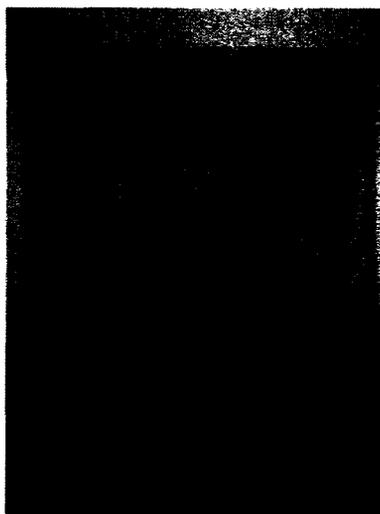
**Figure 74**  
Paul Alfred, Canadian Artists Series,  
n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



**Figure 75**  
Frederick Varley, Canadian Artists  
Series, n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library  
and Archives Canada.



**Figure 76**  
Frederick Varley, Canadian Artists  
Series, n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library  
and Archives Canada.



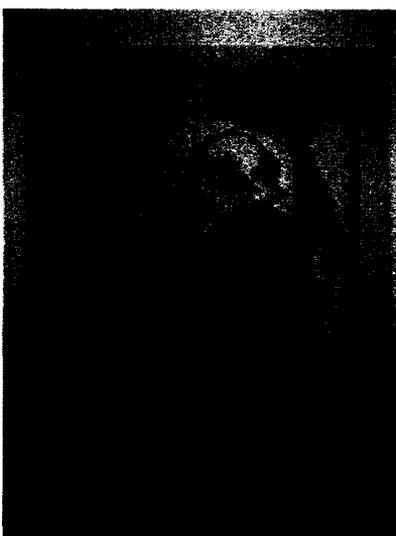
**Figure 77**  
Frederick Varley, Canadian Artists  
Series, n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library  
and Archives Canada.



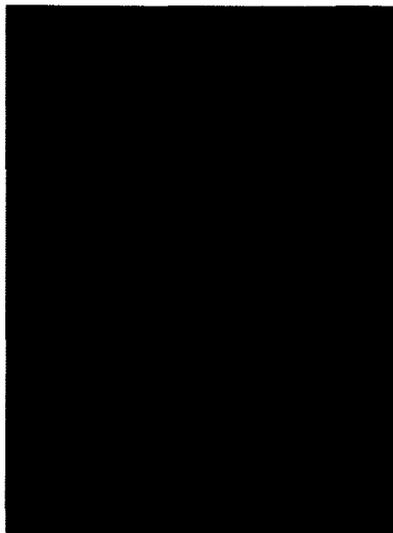
**Figure 78**  
L.A.C. Panton, Canadian Artists Series,  
n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



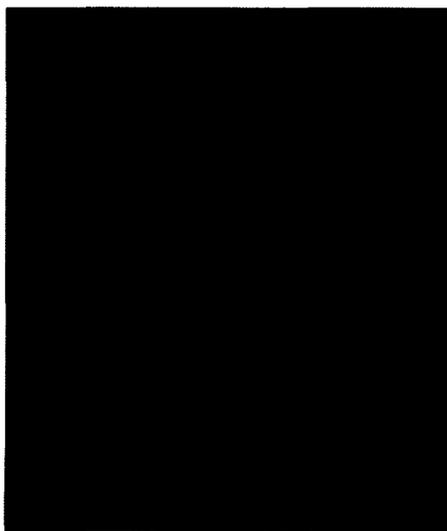
**Figure 79**  
Frederick Varley, Canadian Artists  
Series, n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library  
and Archives Canada.



**Figure 80**  
Frederick Varley, Canadian Artists  
Series, n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library  
and Archives Canada.



**Figure 81**  
A.J. Casson, Canadian Artists Series,  
n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



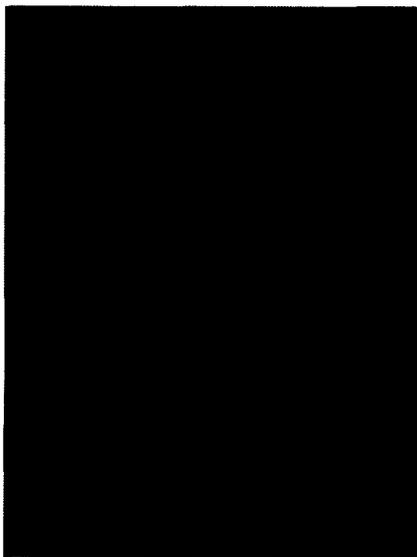
**Figure 82**  
H.W. McCrea, Canadian Artists Series,  
n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



**Figure 83**  
Frederick Varley, Canadian Artists  
Series, n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library  
and Archives Canada.



**Figure 84**  
A.J. Casson, Canadian Artists Series,  
n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



**Figure 85**  
A.J. Casson, Canadian Artists Series,  
n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



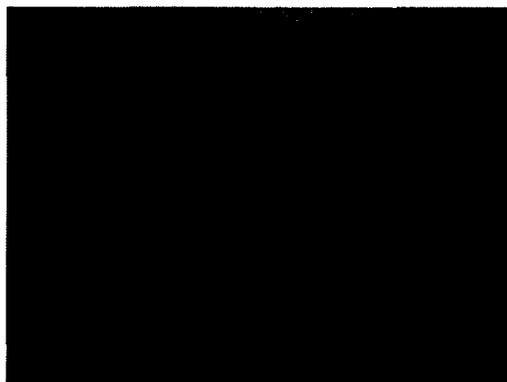
**Figure 86**  
A. Scott Carter, Canadian Artists Series,  
c. 1940, Narcisse Poirier Greeting Card  
Collection, Library and Archives Canada.



**Figure 87**  
Fred Varley, Canadian Artists Series,  
n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



**Figure 88**  
Fred Varley, Canadian Artists Series,  
n.d., Joan Murray fonds, Library and  
Archives Canada.



**Figure 89**  
Mabel Lockerby, Canadian Artists Series, n.d., Mabel Lockerby fonds, Library and Archives Canada.



**Figure 90**  
Fred Varley, Canadian Artists Series, n.d., Naomi Jackson Groves fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

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