



fig. 5 Yvonne McKague Housser, **Evening-Nipigon River**, (detail)
1943, private coll., Ottawa. (Photo: National Gallery of
Canada)

ENVISIONING NATION

Nationhood, Identity and the Sampson-Matthews Silkscreen Project: The Wartime Prints

Between 1942 and 1963, the firm of Sampson-Matthews produced over one hundred silkscreen prints which were widely distributed throughout Canada and abroad and played an important role in shaping the notion of Canadian art. This article, the first of two focussing on the Sampson-Matthews prints, deals with the wartime project undertaken in partnership with the National Gallery of Canada. A future article will consider the post-war phase of the partnership, the last commercial phase of the programme undertaken after 1955 when the Gallery ceased to participate in the programme, and related silkscreen series which have been identified with the Sampson-Matthews/National Gallery project.

INTRODUCTION

Writing which has dealt with the role of reproductions in Canadian history has generally accepted that the wartime Sampson-Matthews Ltd. silkscreen project, undertaken in partnership with the National Gallery of Canada, was largely responsible for shaping our notion of Canadian art and Canadian identity. It also established the Group of Seven and landscape painting as the *sine qua non* of Canadian art, creating the lens or aesthetic filter through which Canadian identity would be defined.¹ In 1948, Blodwen Davies described the wartime silkscreens as an "example of the way in which art becomes a community asset."² As Dennis Reid has pointed out, "A whole generation of Canadians who grew up following the Second World War learned of the Group almost entirely from reproductive silkscreen prints that seemed to hang in every school library, bank and doctor's waiting room in the country."³

Of the one hundred and eighteen images associated with the Sampson-Matthews project over its thirty year history, only thirty-six were actually part of the wartime series, the focus of this essay. (See Appendix for the complete list of wartime prints and dates of publication.) Thirty-six other prints were created as part of the post-war partnership with the National Gallery. After the Gallery's withdrawal in 1955, another fifteen were printed by Sampson-Matthews as a continuation of the project. In addition, images printed by Sampson-Matthews, using the same process and formats as the wartime series, were produced for the Federation of Canadian Artists and the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association and marketed along with the National Gallery/Sampson-Matthews series in the post-war years.

The originators of the project described it as an "incalculable service to the armed service" which would, "at the same time, greatly aid in spreading an understanding and appreciation of Canadian art."⁴ The original target market and *raison d'être* for the silkscreen project was the military. The prints were circulated to military bases across Canada and throughout the world. From the outset, it was proposed that the project be expanded to include schools and "club rooms."⁵

This essay is a sequel to "Establishing the Canon: Nationhood, Identity and the National Gallery's First Reproduction Program of Canadian Art."⁶ Indeed, that text started out as an article about the Sampson-Matthews silkscreens. During my research, however, I was sidetracked by the discovery of the earlier National Gallery reproduction series of Canadian art. The present article, which returns to the Sampson-Matthews project, is intended to address many of the questions about the wartime prints — including how the project was conceived and executed, which and how many prints it included, the artists involved and the audience for the prints. A comprehensive view of the silkscreen project will enable us to better understand the role the Sampson-Matthews prints have played in defining Canadian art in this century.

In an attempt to understand how the project shaped the public understanding of Canadian art and identity, this phase of my research examines the individual works which comprised the wartime series and the manner in which they were selected and disseminated. It identifies the ongoing tension between the need to please sponsors, the military and the general public, and the aesthetic goals that were perceived to underlie the project. It also considers the influence of a small group of well-placed artists, administrators and business people who collaboratively created an institutionalized aesthetic that subsequently appeared as a natural development of an emergent nationalism. In particular, it examines the role of the National Gallery as a partner in the Sampson-Matthews project.

The paper also considers the promise which the silkscreen medium appeared to offer Canadian artists. H.O. McCurry, Director of the National Gallery, and A.Y. Jackson were central to the creation and development of the project. Each strongly believed that original prints were the answer to the limited market for original works of art and that the medium would provide artists with a new source of remuneration, at the same time creating a new audience for Canadian art.⁷

The earlier reproduction programme of National Gallery lithographs had been an essential tool in the Gallery's project to educate Canadians about Canadian art and, in tandem with the nation-building effort of the period, played a critical role in shaping Canadian identity. H.O. McCurry, the Gallery's Director after 1939, would list the original (1928-42) series of colour reproductions as one of his principal achievements in the over forty years he spent at the Gallery. However, the small size of the lithographic images made them more suitable for the classroom than for the wartime quarters of Canada's troops. With reduced

government support for the Gallery during the War, the idea of having "artists paint and donate to the services works which could be reproduced by sponsors" offered a unique solution to a number of problems.⁸

The Sampson-Matthews project, as it came to be known, differed from the earlier reproduction programme in a number of crucial ways. Rather than reproducing works already in the National Gallery collection and the consequent development of a canon of works easily recognizable and identifiable, the wartime programme's stated goal was to create works of art by contemporary Canadian artists specifically designed to reflect the various aspects of Canadian life. Yet even in its earliest phase, the project would include works from public collections by deceased artists, such as Tom Thomson, J.E.H. MacDonald, and Clarence Gagnon. While the earlier series featured a limited number of central Canadian artists, in the wartime project it was considered important to represent Canada geographically in terms of both artists and subject matter. However, as in the 1928 project, landscape was perceived to be the raw material of Canadian identity and the majority of artists would be Ontario-based.

Instead of relying on the relatively small (8" x 10" and postcard-size) lithographic images and expensive printing processes of the 1928-42 project, the Sampson-Matthews serigraphs were based on artists' designs and printed from large, relatively inexpensive screens. Colourful (at least ten oil-based colours) and large (30" x 40" or 40" x 30"), the artist's original painting had to be transferred by a designer to a silkscreen stencil for printing. (In the case of paintings already in public collections, a copy of the painting had to be made in flat colour to guide the screen expert.) Artists were instructed "to work in ten colors, flat and opaque, a blue overlying a yellow or a red remained blue, but a certain amount of variety could be obtained by cross-hatching or dry brushing." Generally, the prints were brightly coloured and attractive. While the first several were relatively simple in the drawing and the number of colours used, by 1943 the prints "progressively became more involved."⁹

Rather than the teacher's guide prepared by Arthur Lismer for the earlier series, the silkscreens, which were intended to be hung in public spaces, were accompanied by "description card[s]." Each card was to be hung alongside the print, briefly describing the subject matter of the image, its stylistic concerns, and biographical information about the artist.¹⁰ More elaborate information sheets containing material similar to that in the earlier publication would later be prepared for teachers' use.¹¹

A.Y. Jackson was generally acknowledged as the guiding force in the development and direction of the programme. He saw it as a unique way to support Canadian artists who had not been selected as official war artists and who had found the limited market for their work further reduced during the war years.¹² In late 1942, observing that artists were being urged by "all the societies" to paint

war pictures for no remuneration, he argued that the silkscreen project represented a much more sensible approach and a "possible solution to the artist's [financial] problems."¹³ Though few of his artist-colleagues shared his faith, Jackson firmly believed that silkscreen prints would revolutionize the art market.¹⁴ He was committed to the potential of the silkscreen medium and, like McCurry, envisioned art created for a "great[er] purpose," an artistic product "along the lines developed under the Works Project Administration in the United States during the previous decade." The project would enhance public access to excellent quality original works of art and provide new markets and new sources of revenue for hard-pressed artists.¹⁵

The National Gallery embarked on the project in large measure to address the numerous requests it had received to supply "suitable pictures for the decoration of recreation rooms in the camps and barracks of the armed forces."¹⁶ For both financial and marketing purposes, the project included a parallel school programme.¹⁷ Sampson-Matthews, the printing firm responsible for the project, argued that combining print runs to serve both the war effort and the educational market would save substantially on the cost of the prints that were destined for the schools. This strategy would also enable the firm to acquire the funds required to pay artists whose work was to be used for the school series.¹⁸ Except for the absence of a credit line recognizing the sponsors in the wartime scheme, the educational prints were identical to those designated for the military.¹⁹

Although Jackson proposed a smaller format for the schools (24" x 30"), in the first instance economies of scale required a single print size from the already prepared screen.²⁰ It was only in late 1943, when the first series of twenty-five was virtually complete, that Matthews advocated the reproduction of the most popular subjects in a smaller size. This, along with a reduced price, "might make for wider distribution — especially in country schools."²¹

By April 1943, the National Gallery was promoting *Canadian Pictures for the Schools* not only to school boards and individual schools but also to other galleries. The Art Gallery of Toronto, Hart House, the Vancouver Art Gallery and the art museum in London, Ontario, were among those that had purchased complete sets.²² A.J. Casson's mockup of the promotional booklet was in McCurry's hands with a recommendation that, although only eight subjects were currently available, the catalogue should be produced and circulated to the schools before the end of term.²³ Matthews suggested that process should be described as the "Colourcraft" [variously spelled "Colorcraft"] process in oil paint, rather than the term silkscreen because the "silk screen process is somewhat in disrepute in some quarters because of poor reproductions."²⁴ In the fall of 1943 a twelve-page brochure with information pertaining to each of the twenty-five prints was in preparation, although the final five prints of the first wartime series would not be completed before March 1944. The brochure described the effects of the prints as

"decorative rather than detailed" (given the requirement for simplification), insisting that each was a "faithful copy of the artist's original [tempera design]." The 40" x 30" size was determined to be excellent for classrooms; prints of this size could be inexpensively framed with a 1 1/2-inch molding, did not require glass and were washable.²⁵ The prints were boxed in sets of five, ensuring some diversity in each group of prints acquired.

The Key Players

Although the roles of the key players would vary over time, it appears that A.Y. Jackson was responsible for the conception of the programme and for providing the initiative and credibility required to get it started.²⁶ A March 1943 article in *The Star Weekly* describes him as a veteran of the Great War reminiscing about the drabness of soldiers' surroundings and of the need to brighten up their living quarters.²⁷ The author of the article recounts that Jackson and A.J. Casson "went to talk to the National Gallery and discussed with the curator the possibility of the Gallery publishing reproductions of famous Canadian paintings."²⁸ However, the artist Peter Haworth wrote to McCurry to "set the record straight," stating that Jackson had first raised the idea in a meeting of the Canadian Group of Painters and that "it was intended as a Canadian Group project." Haworth wrote, "When it was found necessary to expand it (and quite rightly so) I suggested that the project was so universal that it be disassociated from the Group but that the Group co-operate in any way possible."²⁹

In 1942, Jackson contributed the first work to the series which, at every phase of the project, included more works by him than by any other artist. In addition to recruiting other artists, Jackson offered his stamp of approval or concern, consulting regularly with both the Gallery and Sampson-Matthews. He, along with Casson and the staff at Sampson-Matthews, also translated works by other artists into silkscreen designs. Jackson's influence on the project was enormous. Indeed, he regularly discussed Gallery policy with McCurry, advising on all aspects of Gallery business from the silkscreen project to acquisitions and the contents of exhibitions.³⁰

The project was quickly adopted by Sampson-Matthews, which, during the depression years, had seen very little business despite the fact that it was the best equipped commercial studio in Toronto and "probably Canada's leading silkscreen poster-printing establishment between the wars."³¹ It was only in 1941, in large measure due to business generated by the war effort, that the firm returned to prosperity. During the 1930s, A.J. Casson had worked on the refinement of the silkscreen process and he would supervise the production of the prints as well as contributing his own images to the series. A 1944 essay prepared for the Gallery by Jackson described how a medium used primarily for advertising had been transformed to create large quantities of relatively low-cost, large-size designs for

broad distribution by artists who were not experienced in the medium.³² Well-aware of the potential market for low-cost art prints, the firm was prepared to take immediate ownership of the project, with Chuck Matthews managing the financial end and A.J. Casson handling the production side of the operation.³³ They realized that the costs associated with a significant production line for schools and the general market could be covered by sponsorship from businesses anxious to support the war effort and that production for an educational market would provide business opportunities long after the war had ended.

The participation of the National Gallery was crucial. Although it was not prepared to take ownership of the project, it offered the required legitimating imprimatur and credibility. Each of the sponsored wartime prints would bear the imprint "Produced in co-operation with the National Gallery of Canada."³⁴ However, the Gallery made it clear from the beginning that "there is to be no suggestion made that Sampson-Matthews Limited have been specifically commissioned by the Department of National Defence or the National Gallery to undertake this work."³⁵ Jackson and McCurry saw an additional role for the Gallery. Concerned from the first that Casson (and Sampson-Matthews) might take the project in too commercial a direction, Jackson urged the Gallery's Director to ensure quality control. As it turned out, his fears were well-grounded.

In May 1942, before the National Gallery had become an official partner in the programme, Jackson outlined a *modus operandi*. He would head the committee to secure artists who would donate work for reproduction.³⁶ The National Gallery agreed to contribute several works from its collection for reproduction and to be responsible for distribution of the prints. Sampson-Matthews would be responsible for obtaining sponsors for the reproductions and for delivery of the designs.

Obtaining government approval presented a potential problem. McCurry and Jackson were both members of the committee charged with appointing official war artists and the process was an arduous one. In view of this, McCurry expressed concern that they might be "tied up in a military straight-jacket."³⁷ As Jackson described the situation, government efforts to employ art and artists to support the war effort were disorganized at best. (The Army, Navy and Air Force acted independently of one another, as did each of the related departments.)³⁸ Yet without government approval, the programme could not proceed. Co-operation and support were solicited and eventually obtained from the Department of Defence but it was a complicated and time-consuming process. Matthews was in regular correspondence with J.W.G. Clark, a public relations officer in the Department of National Defence. When problems arose, Jackson and McCurry consulted Albert Cloutier, an artist who served as Chief of Graphic Design for the Department of Defence in the early 1940s.

When the Army granted formal approval to the programme in January

1943, the first prints were already in production. Colonel C.R. Hill, Director of Special Services, observed,

From a morale standpoint these pictures have a tremendous value. Perhaps particularly in the case of men who have been away from Canada for two or three years, the display of Canadian scenes will make them conscious of the land and cause for which they are called upon to fight. To those men who are still in Canada but who have to live under Camp conditions the pictures will bring a touch of beauty badly needed to counteract the dullness of their environment.³⁹

Charles Power, the Minister of National Defence for Air, wrote to express his "sincere appreciation for the completion of a plan which will bring beauty and colour into the rather severe interiors of Navy, Army and Air Force recreation rooms in the camps and units in Canada, Newfoundland, and Great Britain...[t]he artists...have made a fine contribution to the war effort."⁴⁰

Interest in the project grew quickly. Shortly after the beginning of production, Jackson received a letter from a Major Macpherson, who had read the article describing the project in *Saturday Night*.⁴¹ Since instructions had been issued that the prints were to be hung only in spaces frequented by enlisted men, Macpherson asked if he might personally purchase prints, promising to share them with his fellow officers.⁴² Not every senior officer was so supportive. In 1943 McCurry would note that "at least three reports had been received from camps that the pictures had not been put up but ... otherwise disposed of by the commanding officer."⁴³ When the British War Office asked for several thousand prints, Jackson gloated that news of the request "should have been published in every paper in Canada. That would choke off the Col. Blinks and the bottlenecks."⁴⁴ He saw an aggressive publicity campaign as a means of consolidating the project's position, conjecturing that publication of the fact that "these prints are already in all the camps" would make any "chumps ... holding them up ... as popular as a skunk."⁴⁵

In response to the request of the British War Office, two thousand prints were made available to the British army through the generosity of corporate benefactor J.S. McLean of Canada Packers.⁴⁶ The Treasury Board approved payment of \$2000 to the National Gallery as its share of the cost. (It was noted that thirty-five percent of the British R.A.F. was, in fact, Canadian.)⁴⁷ An additional \$800 to be used for distribution abroad was authorized by the Wartime Information Board.⁴⁸ Indeed the international distribution programme was so successful that, by May 30th 1944, 2600 pictures were on order and only 2400 prints available. To meet the demand, McCurry recommended reducing the Canadian requirements, given the erratic use that had been made of many of the prints in Canada, and sending one thousand prints to Vincent Massey, Canada's High Commissioner to Great Britain: "After all the prints have made a far better impression and are far more appreciated in England than they evidently are here."⁴⁹ Prints were also

sent to American bases in Newfoundland and to prison camps in Germany, and a collection of the prints was also circulated in Russia.⁵⁰

Not all artists supported the silkscreen project; in many cases, individual artists and associations were involved in their own projects to support for the war effort. As Jackson noted, every art society in Canada was being asked to lend works or put together original exhibitions for the troops and each had its own particular project. The National Gallery put together an "Army Show" of about 75 works in 1944.⁵¹ It also assembled a small exhibition of pictures relating to the Army by artists who were not enlisted.⁵² In one of the earliest documents associated with the Sampson-Matthews project, Harry McCurry bemoaned the quality of the original government scheme to provide posters for the war effort which involved only reproductions and offered few opportunities to Canadian artists. He called for "a comprehensive plan covering posters for all the war departments." It was only in 1942, when Harry Mayerovitch took over the design department of the National Film Board and commissioned original works to "inspire, exhort and inform," that a consistent programme of propaganda posters got underway.⁵³ The President of *The Montreal Star*, J.W. McConnell, declined an invitation to sponsor a silkscreen. He reasoned that the National War Services Board, of which he was a member, had "quite a fine collection of pictures which [were] being shipped and exhibited to all the Services throughout Canada ... wherever the Services manifest an interest in having it set up."⁵⁴ Arthur Lismer envisioned a "scheme for the collaboration of the Canadian Federation of Artists, the Y.M.C.A. and the National Gallery, organizing exhibitions of work by men of the armed forces — a splendid idea [which] must be carried out somehow."⁵⁵ At the same time, the armed forces employed four hundred and fifty war artists to document and record the experience of war.⁵⁶

The fact that the silkscreen project required artists to donate their work was a strong disincentive to participation for already impecunious artists. To convince them to participate, Jackson advised that they should be informed that only two to three hundred prints would be made and that the originals would be returned to the artists and the screens destroyed. Artists were given ten prints for their own sale and were to receive a royalty of fifty cents on each print sold in the school programme.⁵⁷

Production of the Wartime Series

As early as May 1942, the project was in high gear. Assured of the required government approval, production began on Jackson's and Charles Comfort's submissions. It appears that the earliest works associated with the project were selected by Sampson-Matthews — generally in consultation with Jackson. Full-size paintings were created specifically for the project. Jackson believed that once other artists witnessed the success of the project, they would be interested in becoming involved.

Jackson's proposal for the first set in the series included the work of Charles Comfort (*Bon Echo* [fig.7]), A.J. Casson (it would ultimately be an improved version of his *Ontario Village*), Thoreau MacDonald's *Wild Geese* (fig.9), his own *Quebec Village* (fig.8), (in the collection of the National Gallery) and Tom Thomson's *Northern River* (fig.10), (also in the National Gallery's collection and already widely known from the Gallery's first reproduction series of Canadian art), which "lent itself perfectly to the project."⁵⁸ The proposal would be altered slightly, apparently for reasons of geographic representation, replacing the Thomson with Toronto-based B. Coghill Haworth's Cape Breton scene, *Port au Persil* (which Canada Packers had agreed to sponsor).⁵⁹ Writing to McCurry during production, Jackson described Comfort's "very lively [painting] of Bon Echo" and Casson's "very colourful Haliburton" scene. He deemed his own Québec village in winter "too pretty though it should please the boys."⁶⁰

In May, Jackson informed McCurry that the "pictures for the troops business is going right over the top."⁶¹ By July, Jackson had asked McCurry to solicit permission to use an image by the recently deceased Clarence Gagnon, which he felt that was essential to the project.⁶² Later in the month, Sampson-Matthews had received "good" designs from Ethel Seath (*Tadoussac Pier {Dock Scene}*) and Anne Savage (*Sunflowers* and *Apple Orchard*). Although these were the first prints submitted and Jackson had probably solicited the design from Savage, whose work he respected, none of these would find sponsors or be printed. He also noted that Franklin Carmichael was working on "a good one" (*White Water*).⁶³

The discussion concerning Prudence Heward's *Indian Girl* provides insight into the selection process. Although Jackson deemed Heward an excellent artist, he rejected McCurry's suggestion that the painting, which was in the National Gallery's collection, should be used in the series, arguing that the image was better suited for a "French poster."⁶⁴ There would be no risk-taking. Sponsors also had to be pleased, although it is not clear whether, as Jackson suspected, Sampson-Matthews determined not to actively seek sponsorship for potentially controversial works. These works included Ann Savage's *Sunflowers* (which some thought included the representation of an outhouse), Philip Surrey's *Cabaret*, variously called *Juke Box* and *Dancers* (which suggested that Canadians might be guilty of carousing), and Fritz Brandtner's *Potato Pickers* (fig.4), which its critics suggested did not portray the "true" Canadian.

In the early phase of the project, McCurry had reassured the Department of Defence regarding the "excellence" of the programme by stressing that each of the artists who had created work for the project was a full or an associate member of the Royal Canadian Academy. Although this was never an official policy and non-members such as Brandtner, were selected, it appears that this unstated preference imposed a considerable limitation on the range of choice of participants. (In the case of members of the Contemporary Arts Society, the only condition for artist membership was that one not be a member of the RCA.)



fig. 1 Art appreciation class using silkscreen prints from the National Gallery of Canada. Classes sponsored by the Sydney, N.S., Art Club and held Saturday mornings in the Y.M.C.A. building. (Photo: National Gallery of Canada)



fig. 2 London Library, London. Choosing paintings from the Art Gallery for a school display are Principal P.L. Pickles of Byron School, and two of his students. (Photo: National Film Board of Canada)



fig. 3 London Library, London. In the Gallery, a Canadian Girl Guides art group supervised by Laura Gray (standing). (Photo: National Film Board of Canada)



fig. 4 Fritz Brandtner, *Potato Pickers*, 1944, private coll., Toronto. (Photo: National Gallery of Canada)



fig. 5 Yvonne McKague Housser, *Evening-Nipigon River*, 1943, private coll., Ottawa. (Photo: National Gallery of Canada)



fig. 6 Sydney Hallam, *The Plowman*, 1943, private coll., Ottawa. (Photo: National Gallery of Canada)

NATIONAL GALLERY SERIES - (SIZE 30" x 40")



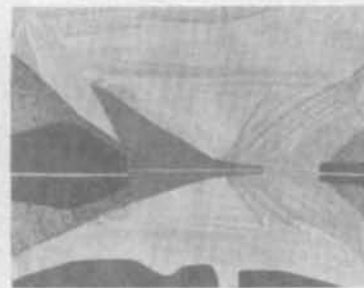
Albert Cloutier, *Sugar Time*
Blue, pink, grey



Charles F. Comfort, *Bon Echo*
Browns, grey, yellow



F.S. Haines, *Beech Woods*
Green, grey, dull purple



Lawren Harris, *Maligne Lake*
Blue, grey, beige

Illustrations of Sampson-Matthews,
Catalogue of Canadian Colour
Reproductions, National Gallery
Series, Ottawa, Department of
External Affairs, Ottawa, c.1948,
p.6, 7, 8, and 9. (Photo: National
Gallery of Canada)



Y. McK. Housser, *Poplar and Spruce*
Light and dark greens
(available only in size 20" x 27")

fig. 7

NATIONAL GALLERY SERIES - (Size 30" x 40")



Jack Humphrey, *Grand Manan, N.B.*
Blue, green, dull yellow



A.Y. Jackson, *Quebec Village*
Blue, white



A.Y. Jackson, *Peace River Bridge*
Dull yellow, red, blue



Arthur Lismer, *Isles of Spruce*
Green, brown, yellow



J.E.H. MacDonald, *Mist Fantasy*
Grey, blue, red



J.W.G. Macdonald, *B.C. Indian Village*
Blue, green, brown

NATIONAL GALLERY SERIES - (Size 30" x 40")



Thoreau MacDonald, *Wild Geese*
Yellow, dull blue



Thoreau MacDonald, *Winter Morning*
Blue, green, white, brown
(also available size 20" x 27")



Isabel McLaughlin, *Blossom Time*
Green, pink, grey



J.W. Morrice, *The Ferry, Quebec*
Green, cream, grey
(also available size 20" x 27")



L.A.C. Pantton, *Windswept*
Brown, grey



L.A.C. Pantton, *Silver Stream*
Brown, white, lavender, grey
(also available size 20" x 27")

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fig. 9

NATIONAL GALLERY SERIES - (Size 30" x 40")



W.J. Phillips, *Victoria Glacier*
Blue, violet, green



Albert H. Robinson, *Return from Easter Mass*
Grey, dull reds, pinks
(also available size 20" x 27")



J.E. Sampson, *Veterans of the Sea*
Warm brown, blue, green



R. York Wilson, *Auction Sale*
Brown, dull red, blue



Yvonne McK. Housser, *Indian Children*
Red, brown, green, grey



Tom Thomson, *Northern River*
Blue, green, red

fig. 10

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Sets of five prints (the minimum number considered necessary to satisfy the goals of the project) were created to include geographically diverse subject matter and the series was promoted as representing "typical Canadian scenes from the Atlantic to the Pacific."⁶⁵ Group A was completed in May 1942. Groups B and C were available by the first of June 1943.⁶⁶ Group B comprised Leonard Brooks' *Haliburton Village*, Yvonne McKague Housser's *Evening-Nipigon River* (fig.5), Sydney Hallam's *The Plowman* (fig.6), Fred Haines' *Beech Woods* (fig.7), and L.A.C. Panton's *Windswept* (fig.9), (deemed a fine design by Jackson).⁶⁷ Group C comprised J.E.H. Sampson's *Veterans of the Sea* (fig.10), Walter Phillips' *Victoria Glacier* (fig.10), J.W.G. Macdonald's *B.C. Indian Village* (fig.8), J.E.H. MacDonald's *Mist Fantasy* (fig.8) and Albert Robinson's *Return from Easter Mass* (fig.10), both in the collection of the Art Gallery of Toronto.⁶⁸ The fourth complete set comprised J.W. Morrice's *The Ferry, Quebec* (fig.9) and Tom Thomson's *Northern River* (fig.10), (both in the National Gallery's collection), Arthur Lismer's *Isles of Spruce* (fig.8) in the Hart House collection, Clarence Gagnon's *March in the Birch Woods*, and Jack Humphrey's *Swallow Tail, Grand Manan* (fig.8). This set had been distributed by the fall of 1943 and Sampson-Matthews was working on the fifth set, which would eventually include two prairie subjects.⁶⁹ This last set included Lawren Harris' *Maligne Lake* (fig.7) in the collection of the National Gallery, Herbert Palmer's *Maple Lake, Haliburton* and Franklin Carmichael's *White Water*. Though these prints were in production by November 1943, the Gallery was unable to find appropriate subjects to meet the needs of two committed sponsors from the west, the Paterson Grain Company and the Western Grain Pool, which sought prairie subjects.⁷⁰ When Sampson-Matthews finally issued the fifth set of prints in March 1944, Fred Brigden's *Assiniboia Valley* and A.Y. Jackson's *Pincher Creek, Alberta* were included to meet the requirements of the western sponsors. (Neither of these works would be reproduced after the war.)⁷¹ W.P. Weston's *Vancouver Lions*, which was ready for distribution, was set aside for the short term.⁷²

Twenty-five prints had been produced of works by twenty-four artists. There were two by Jackson, who had been pressed into service to produce the prairie scene.⁷³ But Sampson-Matthews had new designs (and in some cases prints) available and a ready market. An additional group of five new subjects comprising Leonard Brooks' *North and Barrington Streets, Halifax (Halifax Harbour)*, a new Thoreau MacDonald, *Winter Morning* (fig.9) Isabel McLaughlin's *Blossom Time* (fig.9), W.P. Weston's *Vancouver Lions* and Fritz Brandtner's *Potato Pickers* (fig.4) was issued as the first set in a second wartime series in late September 1944.⁷⁴ Jackson had recommended using Bertram Brooker's contribution, *Laurentian Village*, because he believed it would be of great use to the schools. Although a design was made from it, it was not included in the wartime series.

The image was later included in a post-war series of prints organized by the Federation of Canadian Artists and promoted by the National Gallery in association with the Sampson-Matthews project.⁷⁵

Late in 1944, a seventh set of prints was ready. This second group of the second wartime series comprised Albert Cloutier's *Sugar Time* (fig.7), Yvonne McKague Housser's *Indian Children* (fig.10), R. York Wilson's *Auction Sale* (fig.10), a new design by L.A.C. Panton, *Silver Stream* (fig.9), and a third work by A.Y. Jackson — his *Peace River Bridge* (fig.8), which resulted from his government-sponsored trip to cover the building of the Alaska Highway. By January 1945, the outstanding orders had been dealt with and only a design by Paraskeva Clark, recruited to the project by Harry McCurry in the spring of 1944, remained to be finished.⁷⁶ Paraskeva Clark's *Caledon Farm* was completed in February 1945; it was the thirty-sixth and last work in the wartime series.

Modus Operandi

From the beginning it was understood that each work included in the project would have to obtain government approval and find sponsors prepared to associate their product with the particular image. To meet these conditions, Jackson recognized that the works would have to be "somewhat conventional."⁷⁷ Concerned about the potential interference of sponsors in the selection process, McCurry warned that "the greatest care will have to be exercised now to keep the standard of the works up because many of these firms will try to [have] their own type of thing done and that is what we do not want."⁷⁸ It was clear that the "obvious designs [would] be sponsored more readily than artistic ones." Compromises were also required to prevent the military authorities from "chok[ing]... off [the project] before it gets going."⁷⁹ To address this problem, the programme focussed on landscape paintings that would be suitable for use in service quarters in Canada and overseas. In early 1943, Jackson observed to McCurry that "Chuck Matthews is getting cold feet, worrying about imaginary camp commandants who will refuse to put up anything but Leonard Brookes [*sic*]."⁸⁰ Jackson's response was that they could "get enough publicity to stop any fatheads in the army from acting in an arbitrary way."⁸¹ Jackson's public relations strategy was put in place almost immediately. A rapid succession of articles appeared in the *Standard*, the *Toronto Star* and *Saturday Night*, and later a "notice in *Newsweek*." However, Sampson-Matthews continued to lean heavily on attractive, sometimes mediocre designs (including the majority of work in the second series) that catered to the general market, thus avoiding controversy and ensuring popularity.⁸²

In November 1943, McCurry wrote to Jackson:

There is a real difficulty in keeping up the standard of the designs and I am wondering if we shouldn't tighten up a little on the Selection Committee so that nothing will be accepted that doesn't come up to the standard you and

I should both like to see upheld. There is a tendency to rush out designs to please sponsors, but as the long term effect of those prints on the schools is what we have our eyes on we should see that they are of lasting quality. This is just for your own ear of course because I know Chuck Matthews is doing a great job and Casson too but in spite of themselves their commercial tendencies sometimes get the better of them.⁸³

In 1944, McCurry would describe the work in the Sampson-Matthews series as "commercial products ... turned out for the forces [though] all very well for the purpose for which they were intended."⁸⁴

McCurry fended off unsolicited designs with the reply that a design must "first pass the committee and then be found acceptable to a sponsor." Though publicity referred to an official National Gallery Committee composed of Jackson, McCurry and Casson, there is no record of a formal committee structure.⁸⁵ Sampson-Matthews referred most prints to the Gallery for final approval but in several instances Jackson, McCurry and the printing firm each authorized prints individually — a cause of some concern to Jackson and McCurry. McCurry was, however, given the official responsibility for turning down proffered prints that were deemed unsuitable.⁸⁶

Issues of Representation

The lack of geographic diversity in the selection of artists and subject matter presented ongoing problems. The artists represented in the first two groups of prints were all Toronto-based, and Jackson and McCurry would both express concern that Casson's selection of artists was based more on an Ontario Society of Artists' old boys' network than a serious attempt to broaden the base of artistic representation. In early 1943 Jackson wrote, "it is too bad we have no Maritime artists represented [and] too much Toronto."⁸⁷ The Naval Department of the Department of National Defence would chide that "as far as Naval Establishments are concerned, marine subjects would be in great demand." However, the offer of a marine design by a naval officer was politely refused on the basis that the set of prints was complete.⁸⁸ When the wartime project was complete, Jack Humphrey would be the only east-coast artist in the series, although four works represented east-coast subject matter.

The search for a prairie subject was particularly problematic. Although from early in 1943 at least two sponsors had been willing to reproduce a "typical scene," no appropriate subjects had been identified. Matthews inquired whether these firms really had to have western subjects and proposed switching the Carmichael and the Palmer to their accounts, noting that they could easily find two subjects that would be agreeable to the sponsors. He went on to say that other sponsors "had not been concerned about getting subjects ... related to their business." The Wheat Pool, however, remained adamant. Although C.W. Jefferys'

A Prairie Trail was discussed, it was not included.⁸⁹ In April, Jackson wrote "We need a good western one badly"⁹⁰ McCurry followed up with a letter to Illingworth Kerr observing that there was "a special problem connected with the prairies."⁹¹ He elaborated that though Campbell Tinning had submitted a "charming little water colour of a prairies slough with a village and an elevator in the distance," he [McCurry] was "dubious about its silkscreen possibilities." McCurry wrote, "If it can be successfully used the Wheat Pool will take it but they would like the elevators to be just a little more visible and also the criticism is offered that the sky is not a typical Western one. They would like the sky clearer and the clouds more remote."⁹² (Commenting privately to McCurry, Jackson found it "rather empty.")⁹³ McCurry asked Kerr to "take a shot at something ... using a prairies subject which [would] appeal to the Western boys overseas."⁹⁴ Kerr responded that the "difficulty may be that only prairie people understand prairie pictures.... There is no way to explain the effect of space. It is mystic."⁹⁵ In June, Casson announced that he had made "a small sketch which might be used either by the Paterson Grain Company or the Grain Pool." He acknowledged that he had been influenced by a watercolour by Walter Phillips but assured McCurry that he had "departed in composition far enough so that there could be no feeling of copying." In it, he said, he had tried "to create a feeling of large spaces, bountiful crops and harvest weather."⁹⁶ McCurry, always polite, reported that he would talk the matter over with the grain people; however, a typed note on the letter indicates that he had no intention of doing so. He subsequently advised Matthews that the subject was not acceptable to either sponsor.⁹⁷

The search continued. In July 1943 McCurry wrote Ernest Lindner, soliciting a "good western scene which could be sponsored by the Grain Pool or some grain company. Something of good design showing a typical prairie scene with perhaps wheat stooks, elevators, railway, small town, etc. etc."⁹⁸ A few months later, Lindner forwarded with apologies a sketch, *The Golden West*, which though not yet what he would have liked, could, he felt, be developed into a large painting.⁹⁹ It was not acceptable either. In January 1944 Jackson provided a new sketch, *Pincher Creek, Alberta*, which the Paterson Grain Company agreed to sponsor, though not without observations about how they believed the work might be improved to better represent the west.

Reflecting on the representation of national and provincial parks as a potential marketing angle, Jackson wrote, "We have the Harris which is Jasper Park, the Phillips — Banff ... then there is Thomson's of Algonquin Park and I think the Weston is a provincial park."¹⁰⁰ Seeking to expand the market for the prints, McCurry would follow up with a report to the Lands, Parks and Forest Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources' Superintendent of Publicity and Information that the series included representations of both Banff and Jasper National Parks.¹⁰¹

By December 1942, discussion was underway concerning the need for representation from French Canada. The situation was complicated by the conflict between the National Gallery and John Lyman over the American-curated exhibition of contemporary Canadian art, held in Andover, Massachusetts that year, which stressed the "vital new scene and deliberately played down Group landscape ideals."¹⁰² Jackson had written to McCurry: "There are a lot of distinguished people who would like to make trouble for the National Gallery ... I think that bird Lyman would like to use the French Canadians to make trouble by insisting they are not getting their share of patronage ... I am glad the Andover show is not going to have official sanction."¹⁰³

In fact, Lyman and the "moderns," as Jackson called them, were never really considered for the wartime silkscreen project, in part out of concern for marketability but also because of the aesthetic rifts in the Canadian art community. Unlike their Québec counterparts, Jackson, Casson, and the Sampson-Matthews staff were quite clear that "Canadian" did not include artists who were influenced by contemporary European developments. Concerning a 1944 art exhibition, Jackson advised McCurry, "I think it is important to make [the exhibition] feel Canadian." He added, "Lyman calls it *provincialism*."¹⁰⁴ It would later be suggested that Philip Surrey's antagonism to the silkscreen project was based on his position as a member of the Contemporary Arts Society and its derision of the Group of Seven.¹⁰⁵ However, it is far more likely that he was responding to the rejection of his own work, which he believed to be appropriately representative of the Canadian experience. Artists whose work was influenced by European art, the "French derivatives" as Jackson called them, were still considered too foreign for the project.¹⁰⁶ Writing to McCurry in 1944 about contemporary Montréal painting, Jackson mentioned the "Jewish School" whose interests are of "French derivation." He went on to suggest that they might include "a Pellán and a Borduas to show that we have followers of the French school too."¹⁰⁷ Not surprisingly, no action was taken. (Pellán was the only one of the "moderns" to be included in the entire series and that was in the 1950s.) A wartime description of the programme makes this cautious stance clear: "The style of painting selected by the committee is one which avoids extremes either of photographic realism, on the one hand, or of modernism on the other. The aim has been to enable the soldiers to get *wholesome understandable* pictures that they would be most likely to appreciate."¹⁰⁸

Rather than the "moderns," Québec was once more to be represented by the rustic image of the jolly habitant. (Jackson had originally proposed including a Krieghoff in this series designed to support contemporary artists!) Seeking a French-Canadian artist, Jackson recommended Albert Cloutier, who was Chief of the Graphic Art Section in the Department of National Defence. Cloutier had been responsible for the production of Canadian war posters between 1940 and

1943 and had helped get Jackson and McCurry through the Defence Department bureaucracy when the silkscreen programme was initiated.¹⁰⁹ Rather than a "serious landscape," Jackson suggested Cloutier provide one of "those amusing farm scenes in gay color slightly verging on caricature."¹¹⁰ In fact, Cloutier would be the only living French-Canadian included in the wartime series. His work complemented the other habitant scenes in the series which were accompanied by descriptions that reinforced stereotypical notions of Québec and habitant life. Jackson's *Quebec Village* (fig.8) was described as portraying "a typical Habitant Village ... a picture which has quiet contentment and natural charm."¹¹¹ A later text, probably dating from 1945, emphasized Jackson's Québec roots, stating that "most of his work and much of his reputation has been created in Quebec, where he is affectionately known as *Pere Raquette*, Old Man Snow Shoe." This text describes *Quebec Village* as a depiction of "the legendary quaintness of rural Québec in winter."¹¹² Albert Robinson's *Return from Easter Mass* (fig.10) was described as a "sympathetic glimpse of French Canada [which] recalls the opening scenes of Hémon's famous novel, *Maria Chapdelaine*."¹¹³ In 1943, Clarence Gagnon's *March in the Birch Woods* was added to the series. It was described as "the complete story of rural Canada ... [with] a picturesque setting for this homely illustration of the habitant busy at his task of hauling wood."¹¹⁴ Jackson reported on the task of turning Gagnon's painting "into flat color ... quite a job [since] there is not a square inch of flat colour in the original."¹¹⁵ He would later agree with Gagnon's widow that the print was less than faithful, describing it as "greatly simplified" and "awfully woolly in treatment." Although he had emphatically requested that the imprint should read "Adapted from the Painting of Clarence Gagnon," this never happened.¹¹⁶ In December 1942 Jackson had advised that rather than a Gagnon illustration from his *Maria Chapdelaine* series, they consider Morrice's *Quebec Ferry*.¹¹⁷ The Morrice would, he wrote, "push the whole thing in the right direction, away from commercial art."¹¹⁸ By the end of 1943, *March in the Birch Woods* was in print and the Morrice was being reprinted in a second edition.

Jackson's concern about lack of representation of artists from Québec was evident in his support of Brandtner's *Potato Pickers* (fig.4).¹¹⁹ Not surprisingly, the Brandtner which Jackson deemed the most radical work in the series, was not endorsed by Matthews.¹²⁰ Jackson worried, however, that without the Brandtner, Montréal would not be represented at all unless Anne Savage's *Sunflowers*, which had not yet found a sponsor, was used.¹²¹ Brandtner was frustrated by the lack of action on his design and wrote an angry letter to McCurry about the poor treatment afforded artists and the long delay in payment.¹²² He must have been particularly upset, given what Jackson described as the unfair handling of his original submission. Because of its complicated design and colour, Sampson-Matthews had determined that eighteen colours would be required. According to Jackson, instead of asking Casson to simplify the design as he had with a number

of other works, Matthews sent it back to Brandtner to "flatten out the colour."¹²³ McCurry wrote, "the Brandtner has been butchered (by Sampson-Matthews). It has very little relationship to the original charming sketch ... I think Brandtner will have to do it again."¹²⁴ At McCurry's diplomatic urging, Brandtner did indeed rework the design and the result was eminently more satisfactory. Reflecting on the process, Jackson blamed Sampson-Matthews for not properly explaining what needed to be done or simply asking Casson to work on it, as had been done in other cases.¹²⁵

The situation was exacerbated when Matthews suggested that Brandtner's figures looked European rather than Canadian and asked him to prepare a description of the work emphasizing its "Canadian" aspect to provide a convincing argument for prospective sponsors as to its relevance to the project. The request solicited an impassioned response:

As regards to the people in the picture I just think of them as good Canadians. The sketches to this picture have been done in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The background of these people working the fields may be European (Poles, Ukrainians, Rumanians, Norwegians, Scotch, etc.) but when I painted this picture I only saw Canadian peasants harvesting from the rich soil of Canada. If we talk so much about the new Democracy, any sponsor should be happy and glad to have an opportunity to show that he is really believing in a new and better future. Narrow nationalism will not do the job. Throughout the West of Canada (and there is where our main power lies) you see thousands of these mixed nationalities working together in the fields and on the farms to produce food for this new country they have chose to live in; and to me this is the new democracy we are fighting for.¹²⁶

After unsuccessful attempts to obtain a local sponsor for the Brandtner print, Dr. C.F. Martin, the President of the Art Association of Montreal, wrote to McCurry: "I am feeling pretty hopeless about trying to get a sponsor for the silk screen reproduction and am very much humiliated."¹²⁷ In the end, although McCurry had agreed that the Gallery would sponsor the print if no one else could be found, he persuaded Harry S. Southam, the Chair of the National Gallery's Board of Trustees, to sponsor it.¹²⁸

Commercialization and Control

Although the Gallery did not want ownership of the project, it was prepared to lend its authority on the understanding that it would have final control. To encourage sponsorship among the business elite, McCurry wrote a letter for Sampson-Matthews' use, indicating the Gallery's approval of "this constructive undertaking" and its willingness to participate: "I feel confident that Canadian businessmen and others in a position to do so, will gladly lend their support to complete what we have started, having full assurance that such contribution

will do an incalculable service to the armed forces and at the same time greatly aid in spreading an understanding and appreciation of Canadian art."¹²⁹

From the beginning, the business as well as the artistic potential of the project was evident, influencing the original decision to focus on landscapes and the unwillingness to develop unconventional designs. Although Matthews claimed that this would not be the "ordinary run of commercial art," his actions were largely determined by his belief that "the project [had] a 'big future'" and significant market potential.¹³⁰ Jackson recognized immediately that for Matthews, "it [was] a straight business proposition."¹³¹ McCurry and Jackson were not appeased by the design firm's reassurances and worried that the project would "fall to the commercial artists."¹³² McCurry would later complain of the "difficulties that arise from lack of adequate control of the project."¹³³ And Jackson regularly reiterated his concerns about artistic quality:

a stricter supervision should be kept over the artists invited to make designs. Sampson is a bad influence... he likes all the obvious stuff. Matthews had no idea when it started where it would lead to.... They make much more effort to find sponsors for cheap designs than for good ones. Matthews is a real good head but he has been selling commercial art all his life, and he likes things that we loathe.¹³⁴

Sampson's work was, according to Jackson, "good in its way, very competent, but there is always something lacking, no divine spark, the kind of thing an advertising man would fall for but which would repel a person who was sensitive."¹³⁵

Control of the project was an ongoing issue. Decisions were made without Gallery approval and Jackson regularly complained about works that had been included. Jackson was particularly concerned that McCurry had been persuaded to purchase an additional one hundred copies of each print for sale to schools. Worried that the Gallery might end up with "a load of junk," he urged McCurry not to buy anything he had not seen and approved: "One way to check this is to refuse to have extra prints made for the National Gallery of any designs you don't think worthy."¹³⁶ The complaints were ongoing:

On several occasions [Matthews] has gone over our heads and asked for designs from artists we don't want. I believe he has one now by Brigden and he has talked of Manly Macdonald. We can't stop it but you [McCurry] can by refusing to allow the National Gallery to endorse them. The whole series is such a success that it is possible to slip in a weak artist and carry him along with it. The game they will work is to have a punk design sponsored before we see it.¹³⁷

Despite the limited number of submissions received, a number of designs were never printed, some because they did not find sponsors, others because they were rejected on artistic grounds. Works by Anne Savage and Ethel Seath, Mabel Lockerby, Philip Surrey, Pegi Nicol Macleod and Rowley Murphy which did not

find sponsors were never produced.¹³⁸ McCurry vetoed John Hall's submission and rejected two designs by Jack Shadbolt, pending Jackson's comments. Although Jackson was generally impressed by Shadbolt's work, his designs were never included in the series.¹³⁹ In the case of Charles Scott, Jackson concurred with McCurry that "we must reject Scott's feeble effort."¹⁴⁰ Although Jackson had suggested that unsponsored works might later prove useful in the school programme, none of these works was included in later production runs.

In addition (and as already noted), McCurry had earlier rejected prairie scenes submitted by Campbell Tinning and Ernest Lindner, as well as A.J. Casson's reworking of Walter Phillips' image. It is likely that McCurry's objections also precluded the production of Joachim Gauthier's design, although Gauthier was employed by Sampson-Matthews. (His work would be included in the post-war series after the Gallery had withdrawn its participation.)

Jackson had proposed that artists whom he felt were capable of meeting the design requirements should be asked to submit works. They included Jack Humphrey, Lawren Harris, B. Coghill Haworth, L.A.C. Panton, Yvonne McKague Houser, Thoreau MacDonald and J.W.G. Macdonald. While many of the invited artists did submit designs, a number of prominent artists did not respond to the request for work. They included André Biéler (from whom they had sought a Québec rural scene), Henri Masson (who, Jackson, wrote, "took no notice of [the request for a Gatineau subject or Quebec genre])," Edwin Holgate (who was asked for a Labrador subject or lumbering), and LeMoine Fitzgerald who was asked for a Manitoba landscape).¹⁴¹ The difficulty of obtaining what were considered appropriate subjects seems to have contributed to the reliance on tried and true subjects by Group members and their contemporaries, despite the stated mission of the wartime project to provide new opportunities for Canadian artists.

Although the sponsorships required for the war prints had led to artistic compromises in the selection of the work, Jackson projected a "higher standard" for the schools series.¹⁴² Rather than the "commonplace designs" Sampson-Matthews had included to satisfy sponsors' requirements, he proposed that the school series should employ "only the best designs," a number of which did not find sponsors for the war effort.¹⁴³ J.E. Sampson's view of a fishing village, *Nova Scotia (Veterans of the Sea* [fig.10]), was accepted for the war project but wouldn't, Jackson suggested, be good enough for the schools. The print was, however, used regularly to illustrate the series. The list of questionable works also included Fred Haines' "poisonous" *Beech Woods* (fig.7). Although Jackson reported he had "lied to [Haines] about the technical difficulties" the work presented, so as to explain its possible exclusion, he appears to have been overridden by Casson.¹⁴⁴ There was also "a hell of a looking thing" — Leonard Brooks' *Haliburton Village* (which had already found a sponsor in Christie Brown and so could not be rejected). Jackson

also had strong reservations about the "pretty bad" design by Syd Hallam — *The Plowman* (fig.6).¹⁴⁵ Jackson would later write that it was a "poor design" which "look[ed] like an advertisement."¹⁴⁶ Casson had approved Brigden's *Assiniboia Valley* (which would not be reprinted in the 1950s) without consulting McCurry or Jackson.¹⁴⁷ The list of problem works also included York Wilson's *Auction Sale* (fig.10), which neither McCurry nor Jackson liked, though Jackson noted it had subsequently been reworked and improved.¹⁴⁸ On May 30th, 1944, an exasperated McCurry wrote that he had vetoed Matthews' proposal to add a portrait of the King by Sampson and asked Jackson to back his decision.¹⁴⁹

Broadening the Audience: The School Programme and Marketing the Prints

With sponsorships for the promised twenty-five prints for the Department of National Defence in place by May of 1943, Matthews was anxious to formally launch the school programme. In early 1944, he wrote to McCurry, urging him to encourage Martin Baldwin at the Art Gallery of Toronto to mount an exhibition of framed school prints to coincide with the forthcoming meeting of the Ontario Association of Teachers of Art. He suggested that Walter Abell, Supervisor of Education at the National Gallery (1943-44), should present the "proposition" to the group.¹⁵⁰ Earlier Jackson had expressed concern that the listing of the prints in the 1943 National Gallery of Canada catalogue of reproductions implied that they were available to the public. In fact, participating artists had been assured that they would benefit from individual sales and that those sales would be the responsibility of either the artist or Sampson-Matthews, acting on the artist's behalf. McCurry assured Jackson that the silkscreens handled by the National Gallery were to be sold only to schools.¹⁵¹ Moreover, in response to Jackson's concern, McCurry recommended that the National Gallery suspend sales for a period of six months to allow the artists to dispose of their prints.¹⁵² At the same time, Matthews advised that the Gallery should deal only in the sale of complete sets, though he included sales to the private sector and other public institutions as well as schools.

Initially Sampson-Matthews' over-the-counter sales were taken from the artists' personal stock and the artists were reimbursed for each print sold.¹⁵³ Additional prints from "surplus quantities" (print runs which exceeded the military and institutional and schools requirements) were also sold on an individual basis.¹⁵⁴ The early sales of the prints appear to have been brisk. McCurry wrote Jackson that "it is a poor day that doesn't see a couple of dozen silk screen reproductions placed somewhere in a public institution."¹⁵⁵ By the fall of 1943 the prints were being promoted for private sale across the country in venues such as Eaton's display windows.¹⁵⁶ At the end of May 1944 the Gallery considered printing 500 additional copies of some prints for its own use and, in September 1944,

ordered between 190 and 300 copies of each of the 25 images in the first series.¹⁵⁷

In keeping with the project's initial goal to offer new opportunities to Canadian artists and to make Canadian art more widely known and appreciated, Jackson worried that the images would become stale if there were too many in circulation. Consequently, he advised commissioning new designs rather than reprinting existing works. However, it is clear that Sampson-Matthews did not share these concerns. In a number of cases works that found sponsors' approval were reprinted, despite both Jackson's and McCurry's reservations. Insisting that there was more value in producing new works, Jackson started work on his *Peace River Bridge* (fig.8) in early 1944. The sketch was the result of a government-sponsored trip in late 1943 to document the construction of the Alaska Highway. Convinced that the construction of the bridge had important political connotations and that it "should be known all over Canada," he wanted to commemorate "a fine gesture on [the] part of the Americans to build it under such difficult conditions and then present it to Canada."¹⁵⁸

Reruns and new editions were marketed simultaneously. In an annotated list, Jackson proposed revisions to improve the artistic merit of second editions.¹⁵⁹ By February 1944 the Lismer, Morrice, Phillips, Thoreau MacDonald, Casson and Thomson prints were being rerun.¹⁶⁰ (Matthews suggested a rerun of 300 of the Morrice for the armed services and another 300 for the National Gallery use.)¹⁶¹ The Humphrey, Sampson, Robinson, Haines, Housser, Haworth, Comfort and J.E.H. MacDonald prints were also scheduled for reprinting at that time.¹⁶² Jackson and McCurry considered reprinting the other works to be questionable or unadvisable.

Always on the lookout for new opportunities to promote the prints, Jackson suggested that Matthews should bid to place a selection in the new Ontario government offices that were being opened in London, England.¹⁶³ Willing to adapt his argument to the most expedient position, Jackson, who had publicly championed the series as a "national" programme, now recommended promoting it on the basis of the preponderance of Ontario-based artists and the significant number of subjects representing Ontario scenes. In May 1944 McCurry confirmed that the "Prime Minister of Ontario" was sending Ontario House in London a set of twelve reproductions.¹⁶⁴

Conclusion

Paraskeva Clark's *Caledon Farm*, the final print in the wartime series, was run in January 1945. Matthews wrote to Joseph Clark, Director in Chief of Public Relations for the Armed Forces, that the requests from the Navy, Army, Air Force and Auxiliary Services had been "fully taken care of."¹⁶⁵ Thirty of "Canada's leading artists" were represented by a completed series of 36 different subjects, of which 29 were painted for the project and seven were adapted from paintings in

the permanent collections of the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Toronto and Hart House.¹⁶⁶ The National Gallery sponsored five of the reproductions, four firms each sponsored two different subjects and seven firms sponsored a second reproduction of the same subject. A total of 30 individual firms contributed approximately \$33,000. 2000 prints were sent to the British Army Overseas courtesy of Mr. J.S. McLean; 1000 were shipped to the R.A.F. by the National Gallery of Canada. The Navy received a total of 1781 prints, the Army 3000, the R.C.A.F. 3000, and the Auxiliary Services 2727. The balance went overseas.¹⁶⁷ In addition, "a very considerable quantity ha[d] been supplied by the National Gallery for Government Offices in various parts of the world including Russia, China and South American countries."¹⁶⁸ Thirteen of the thirty-six subjects had been rerun. In addition to the sponsored prints the Gallery had ordered a total of 17,111 reproductions with its own imprint. In January 1944 Chuck Matthews calculated that the Gallery's profit on the 1,300 prints remaining would be over \$3000.¹⁶⁹ In October 1944 he calculated the Gallery's indebtedness to Sampson-Matthews for productions of the prints and Matthews estimated the Gallery's total volume of sales to date to be over \$36,000. He argued, "Those subjects now out of print or in short supply should be put into work at once. They will still further add to your potential profit."¹⁷⁰

The way in which the wartime print series has been remembered is particularly striking. Several generations of Canadians recall "Group of Seven" silkscreens that were displayed in exhibitions across the country or hung in the corridors and the classrooms of their schools, in public buildings, in banks and in private offices. Few remember the other artists associated with the project. It is true that Jackson, J.E.H. MacDonald, Lismer, Harris, Carmichael and Casson, as well as Thomson, were all represented by at least one print in the wartime series. Indeed, only one of the first five groups of prints in the series did not include at least one work by an actual Group member, though it did include Housser's *Evening - Nipigon* and Panton's *Windswept* — images reminiscent of the Group in subject and style.¹⁷¹ Despite the fact that, in the early years, schools were required to purchase the prints in sets in which the classic "Group" images were always complemented by a prairie scene, an east coast image or a western mountain scene, it is the Group images that are most imprinted on our collective memory.

Retrospective conflation of the wartime prints and the post-war series certainly accounts for some of the confusion. Popular images such as Emily Carr's *White Church*, Harris' *Algoma Country* and five of the Thomson adaptations, as well as familiar works by artists like Jackson and Thoreau MacDonald were printed in the late forties and early fifties. Yet they, as well as silkscreens created by the Federation of Canadian Artists in the late 1940s, which included two works by Harris, one by Jackson and one Thomson, have been associated with the wartime project. As well, in the post-war years schools and public institutions were no

longer required to purchase the works in sets, and sales records affirm the popularity of works by members of the Group.

Abstraction, social realism and any work that might be considered politically or aesthetically controversial were outside the parameters of the project which, as Jackson had clearly stated, sought a middle ground. No thought at all appears to have been given to the possibility of including Native artists. Jock Macdonald's *B.C. Indian Village* (fig.8) and Housser's *Indian Children* (fig.10) reinforced the dominant colonial rhetoric, representing "the Native" in the Canadian imagination through depiction of a picturesque lifestyle and adorable children. These images were disseminated widely in classrooms across the country, affirming the social construction of the Native experience as outside of contemporary life and practice, codifying and legitimizing the construction of Native as Other.

Despite Jackson's interest in the work of a number of women artists, proposed works by Mabel May, Ethel Seath, Anne Savage and Pegi Nicol Macleod were never printed. The representation of women artists does, however, suggest incremental progress since the Gallery's earlier lithographic series. Unlike the earlier reproduction series, this project included women artists from the beginning. The works selected, however, reinforced the dominant aesthetic: Yvonne McKague Housser was the only woman artist to have two works included in the wartime series. Isabel McLaughlin's *Blossom Time* (fig.9) and Paraskeva Clark's *Caledon Farm* were printed in limited quantities. In March 1943, Princess Alice visited the National Gallery and admired the prints, asking what arrangements had been made to supply the women's barracks to which she was "devoting special attention." Although McCurry followed up with a letter asking Matthews whether the women's quarters were "being covered," there seems to have been no particular consideration for this concern and the question remained unanswered.¹⁷² In the post-war period Carr's *White Church* would be included, along with an additional work by Housser. Still anxious to include prairie imagery, Jackson was thrilled, in the early 1950s, to discover the "young Saskatchewan artist" Ruth Pawson, whose prairie design he translated for the silkscreen process. The audience for the wartime series was, however, perceived as primarily male. The "Canadian scenes" were intended to enhance the consciousness of "the land" amongst our men at war, far from home.

Jackson would have been the first to admit that his dream of a series of prints representing Canadian artists from coast to coast had not been fully achieved. Although the text for a public address on the prints stressed that the committee had "taken care to see that all parts of Canada were covered" in its selection of "both the artists and their subjects," 26 of the 36 wartime images were by artists then based in Ontario.¹⁷³ The cautious, market-driven stance of the printing house effectively determined the selection of the works. Compromises were the order of the day. The need for works that would reproduce

well in "poster" form contributed to what McCurry deemed the "commercial" nature of the work, favouring images by artist-illustrators or designers rather than more gifted artists who were unskilled in the requirements of designing for the silkscreen process. Jackson's professed commitment to ensure that the later school series would accommodate the more artistic and innovative images which had not found sponsors during wartime would be overridden by the continuing need to provide popular, saleable images.

The conservative nature of the programme was certainly influenced by Casson's and Sampson-Matthews' concern for the marketability of the work selected. However, it was also affected by the dominance of the Group, by the landscape tradition in Canadian art, and especially by the roles of both Jackson and Casson and their unwillingness to include the "moderns" within their definition of what was Canadian. Jackson was concerned about quality, but his definition of Canadian art remained narrowly conventional and landscape-oriented. The implementation of the programme was also driven by the projected responses of sponsors, the military, and the general public.

Other voices challenged the project for grounding nationalism in nature. Philip Surrey's somewhat plaintive cry that servicemen might like to see a reflection of their own experience rather than stereotypical landscape images was reinforced in a letter to the editor of *Canadian Art* by National Film Board editor Harry Mayerovitch.¹⁷⁴ He urged the Gallery to canvass servicemen for their reactions to the silkscreen prints in order to establish a guide for future work. No survey was ever undertaken, nor was Surrey's work included. The position of those Canadian artists who believed that art must be integrated more fully into everyday life remained unheard. In 1942, before taking up his position at the National Gallery, Walter Abell had articulated this position. He criticized Canadian artists for their failure to depict the human condition, treating "the human being, if at all, as a 'figure' rather than a spirit, an object to be composed rather than a being to be interpreted" — a critique most certainly applicable to the figurative subjects included in the series.¹⁷⁵ In Montréal, John Lyman and the Contemporary Arts Society offered a very different definition of what constituted Canadian art. Despite the fact that the Gallery's own collecting policy, particularly in the post-war years, was much more broadly based, that breadth was not reflected in the silkscreen project.

For the artists, institutions and critics who endorsed the silkscreen programme, particularly during wartime, the landscape defined a cultural expression that was uniquely Canadian. Uninfluenced by European modernist trends, it represented the logical fulfillment of the historical evolution of Canadian art. For Jackson and his colleagues, landscape paintings embodied the essence of the Canadian experience. This nationalistic defensiveness was a key element in the ongoing search for cultural definition during a period in which national unity and

the enhancement of patriotism were clearly espoused goals. As a military officer observed, "through the display of Canadian scenes, [the silkscreen project will make our men] conscious of the land and the cause for which they are called upon to fight."¹⁷⁶

Indeed, although the project professed that its mission was to broaden the representation of artists and subject matter, proposing a diverse rather than a homogeneous view of the Canadian experience, the series would continue to be dominated by the Group and the landscape tradition. In the Sampson-Matthews project, the nation/nature paradigm was reasserted in large and attractive images that would be disseminated to public places, especially primarily schools, throughout the country.¹⁷⁷ Although the politically charged notion of the "wilderness" aesthetic was contested by artists and critics in various parts of the country and some alternative approaches to landscape representation were included in the series, they were less important to the larger project. The images of works by Group of Seven artists and Tom Thomson would remain the most popular subjects throughout the life of the series, reinforcing commonly held notions of identity and reaffirming the popular understanding of Canadian art.

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Notes

1 I am indebted to Cyndie Campbell, Archivist; Murray Waddington, Head, Library, Archives, Fellowship Program; and Charles Hill, Curator of Canadian Art, at the National Gallery of Canada; Randall Speller, Documentalist at the library of the Art Gallery of Ontario; and Cynthia Storey, research assistant, for their invaluable assistance. I would also like to thank Fred Turner who has generously shared his collection and documentation with me.

2 Blodwen DAVIES, *Youth Speaks its Mind* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1948), 161-2. I am indebted to Alicia Boutilier for this reference.

3 Dennis REID, *The Group of Seven: Selected Watercolours, Drawings and Prints from the Art Gallery of Ontario* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1989), 23.

4 Jackson to McCurry, 8 Oct. 1942. Unless otherwise noted, all citations refer to documents in the library of the National Gallery of Canada. (See Sampson-Matthews files and individual artists' files.)

5 *Ibid* and, 13 May 1942.

6 Joyce ZEMANS, "Establishing the Canon: Nationhood, Identity and the National Gallery's First Reproduction Program of Canadian Art," *The Journal of Canadian Art History* XVI, no. 2 (1995): 6.

7 Jackson to McCurry, 21 May 1942. McCurry to Lawren Harris, 26 Oct. 1943.

- 8 Gregory CLARK, "Dominion's Art and Artists," *The Star Weekly*, 27 Mar. 1943.
- 9 Matthews to McCurry, 20 Dec. 1943. According to Matthews who was responsible for the printing, "Simple = Comfort, Casson, Humphrey, Jackson, Palmer, Panton and Housser. Complicated as to drawing and number of colours = Carmichael, Morrice, Thomson, Robinson, Sampson, J.E.H. Macdonald and Haworth. Between the two were Haines, Phillips, Lismer, Thoreau MacDonald, J.W.G. Macdonald, Hallam, Brooks, Harris and Gagnon."
- 10 The copy for these texts was prepared in most cases by the National Gallery.
- 11 Matthews to McCurry, 19 Jan. 1945.
- 12 McCurry was a significant voice in establishing the war artists programme in World War II and was chair of the Canadian War Artists Committee in 1942. See Maria TIPPETT, *Art in the Service of War* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1984), 111.
- 13 Jackson to McCurry, 2 Dec. 1942. See also 10 and 27 July 1942.
- 14 Jackson to McCurry, 6 Jan. 1944. Jackson writes that he and Casson think they "must keep making new designs and not reprinting the others, it will make them commonplace." He wrote, "if we saturate the market people will lose interest in them and the artists will not gain the experience in a new medium which may revolutionize the artist's way of living." Jack Humphrey appears to be one of the few artists who continued to explore the medium on his own (Humphrey to McCurry, 27 Oct. 1943).
- 15 McCurry to Lawren Harris, 1 May 1944, MG30 D208, Vol. 1 Corr., National Archives of Canada, 1941-47.
- 16 *National Gallery Annual Report 1942-43* (p.10) notes that the problem has been "engaging the Board and it is expected that with the generous aid of Canadian artists and public spirited Canadian firms, a satisfactory series of silk-screen prints will shortly be developed without expenditure of public funds." The *Report* also noted (p.4), "A series of prints was commenced in 1928, mainly for schools but have been found to be very popular with the general public also. Already more than 200,000 prints have been distributed and the sale this year was 20% greater than the high figure of last year."
- 17 Matthews to McCurry, 18 Nov. 1942.
- 18 *Ibid.* Matthews strongly recommends that the NGC include 100 prints to be used for the school project in their standard order. He points out that a re-run of a screen requires all the work for the original run to be repeated. An additional 100 prints added to the first run could be produced at a price of \$1.00 (plus sales tax). Whereas the original Jackson run of 300 prints cost \$525, a later run of 100 would cost \$325.
- 19 Jackson to McCurry, 21 May 1942.
- 20 *Ibid.* On 11 Dec. 1942, Jackson wrote to McCurry, "I was thinking about the prints for the schools. They should not go too cheap as it would lessen the value of the gift to the troops if the prices were publicized. They might be sold for \$2.00, forty cents going to the artists, or for \$2.50 with fifty cents going to the artist."
- 21 Matthews to McCurry, 1 Nov. 1943.
- 22 Matthews to McCurry, 9 and 13 Apr. 1943. A "P.S." (9 Apr.) refers to articles in the *Standard*, *Saturday Night* and the *Toronto Star* discussing the wartime project. Individual orders were referred directly to the artist concerned.
- 23 Matthews to McCurry, 8 Apr. 1943.
- 24 Matthews to Jackson, 8 Apr. 1943.

- 25 Jackson to McCurry, 27 Oct. 1943. The brochure was 6" x 9" to conform with "other pieces." There were 12 pages, a foreword and general information. The last page was to have notes on each artist and space for 24 small reproductions. (*Northern River* the only upright image was illustrated on page 4.) The *General Information* sheet prepared on the process notes that an average of eleven colours were used in these earlier prints.
Matthews to McCurry, 14 May 1943. Matthews reported that in light of their success in attracting sponsors, 24 prints would be available for the 1943-44 school year. The label on the reverse of the prints reads: "This art print is a facsimile of the artist's original painted for this series. Its reproduction has been a matter of pride to the craftsmen who have worked on it. Pure oil colours have been used to give brilliance and lasting qualities. Should the surface become soiled it may readily be cleansed by sponging with soap and water."
- 26 Philip SURREY, "Canadian Silk Screen Prints Enlist," *Canadian Art* I, no. 2 (December 1943/January 1944): 59. Accounts would vary. Philip Surrey suggests that McCurry initiated the project and consulted Jackson who "promptly suggested the silkscreen process."
- 27 Gregory CLARK, "Dominion's Art and Artists: Brush and Easel now help to Transform Drab Service Huts," *The Star Weekly*, 27 Mar. 1943.
- 28 *Ibid.*
- 29 Peter Haworth to McCurry, 4 Feb. 1943. Haworth also urged that certain artists — the impecunious ones in particular — should be paid.
- 30 McCurry to Jackson, 3 Mar. 1944 and Jackson to McCurry, 9 July 1945.
- 31 Robert STACEY, *The Canadian Poster Book* (Toronto: Methuen, 1980), xii.
- 32 A.Y. JACKSON, "Silkscreens," typescript, dated by hand 1944. Jackson points out that as a stencil process, it is much less expensive and that "the initial costs of plates in printing by ordinary methods is prohibitive for small runs."
- 33 STACEY, *The Canadian Poster Book*, xii. Jackson went to great trouble to assure McCurry (21 May 1942) that Sampson saw this as an important contribution to bring art to the general public and "not a racket to get business." As early as 1942, Matthews, apparently looking for more business from the silkscreen project, noted that "the various reproductions which we are making in 30" x 40" size could be reduced to a size more acceptable for the schools. The proportions could be reduced to 14 1/2" x 19 1/2" and 19 1/2" x 26."
- 34 CLARK, "Dominion's Art and Artists." On 26 June 1943, Jackson wrote to McCurry that it was important that, "this project is endorsed by the National Gallery and the Department of National Defence" to give it "official standing."
- 35 Matthews to McCurry, 18 Nov. 1942. Text for information on silkscreens prepared for the Gallery by Sampson-Matthews titled, "Reproductions of Canadian Paintings." Under the heading "Notes," Matthews records, "The work will be sold by Sampson-Matthews Ltd. and invoiced by same."
- 36 Jackson to McCurry, 13 May 1942.
- 37 McCurry to Jackson, 20 Nov. 1942. See also Jackson to McCurry, 13 May 1942.
- 38 McCurry to Jackson, 11 June 1941.
- 39 Colonel C.R. Hill, Director of Special Services to Matthews, 14 Jan. 1943.
- 40 Charles Power, Minister of National Defence for Air to McCurry, 30 Jan. 1943, C.A.G. Matthews, MG 30 D 230, Vol.1, National Archives of Canada.
- 41 R.S. LAMBERT, "Bringing Canadian Art to Our Armed Forces," *Saturday Night*, 3 Apr. 1943, 4 & 18.

- 42 Copy of letter from Major Alex Macpherson to Dr. A.Y. Jackson, 30 May 1943. See also Matthews to McCurry, 18 Nov. 1942, "Reproductions of Canadian Paintings," Under the heading "Notes," Matthews advised, "the pictures are not for use in officers' and sergeants' messes but are for the men."
- 43 McCurry to Matthews, 3 June 1943.
- 44 Jackson to McCurry, 11 June 1943. See also Philip SURREY, "Silk Screen Prints Enlist," 58-61.
- 45 *Ibid.*
- 46 Matthews to McCurry, 25 June 1943. "It would not be difficult to convince sponsors of the first series of prints to support the production of additional prints for the British army." In a letter from McCurry to Harold Beament, 24 Nov. 1943, McCurry states "we are sending 2000 prints to the British War Office at their request for the British Services."
- 47 Matthews to McCurry, 6 May 1944. See also Wartime Information Board, R.D. Boyd, Administrative officer, to McCurry, 16 May 1944.
- 48 Boyd to McCurry, 17 May 1944.
- 49 McCurry to Matthews, 30 May 1944.
- 50 A.Y. JACKSON, "Silk Screens" typescript, 1944, 2. Paraskeva Clark to McCurry, 17 May 1944. "I would be feeling unhappy to have missed opportunity to have my work in the collection going to Russia."
- 51 Jackson to McCurry, 3 Mar. 1944.
- 52 *Ibid.*
- 53 McCurry to Jackson, 11 June 1941. See also STACEY, *The Canadian Poster Book*, xi.
- 54 J.W. McConnell, Office of the President, *The Montreal Star* to McCurry, 31 Mar. 1944.
- 55 McCurry to Jackson, 19 Mar. 1943.
- 56 McCurry to Jackson, 19 Mar. 1943. In reference to the need for war artists, McCurry says "the R.C.A.F. need[s] [an] artist. Having failed to get Pellan, who do you suggest. Roberts is on our list and Surrey was too but wasn't actually rated. Can you think of a good Frenchman?"
- 57 Document titled "Artists' Rights," handwritten, undated.
- 58 Matthews to McCurry, 8 Oct. 1942 and 19 June 1944. Jackson requested a reproduction of the work on which to base the silkscreen design. Later they would require the painting itself to ensure fidelity to the colours, etc.
- 59 Memo from McCurry, May 1944, re first series. See also Jackson to McCurry, 23 Nov. 1942.
- 60 Jackson to McCurry, 13 May 1942.
- 61 *Ibid.*
- 62 Jackson to McCurry, 6 July 1942; see also McCurry to Lucille Gagnon, 10 July 1942. Lucille Gagnon wrote to McCurry, 24 Oct. 1943, she asked how *March in the Birch Woods* (which she considered to be an unsatisfactorily flat reproduction of her husband's painting) could have been reproduced without permission. McCurry replied that the National Gallery had nothing to do with the selection or processing of the work.
- 63 Jackson to McCurry, 23 July 1942. It was Jackson's belief that Matthews had not tried to get sponsorship for Savage's work, despite the fact that producing her work might have provided an incentive for other Montréalers to participate (Jackson to McCurry, 20 Feb. 1944).

- 64 *Ibid.*
- 65 McCurry to Brooke Claxton, M.P. Parliamentary Assistant to the Prime Minister, 6 Oct. 1943.
- 66 Jackson to McCurry, 1 June 1943. Fifteen prints had been completed.
- 67 Jackson to McCurry, 23 Nov. 1942.
- 68 Matthews to McCurry, 16 July 1943.
- 69 Matthews to McCurry, 28 Oct. 1943. "I am afraid that waiting for these two [western scenes] is going to cause this fifth set to be very late."
- 70 Matthews to McCurry, 2 Nov. 1943.
- 71 McCurry to Brigden, 18 Apr. 1944. Brigden's 1944 *Assiniboia Valley* was sponsored by the Western Grain Pool and the General Manager of the Alberta Wheat Pool had earlier offered to sponsor an appropriate subject. The Wheat Board was "anxious to know where the picture was done" and if it represented any particular village. The original offer of sponsorship came from W.A. MacLeod, Director of Publicity, Canadian Co-operative Wheat Producers Ltd., Winnipeg. McCurry had replied on 19 Apr. 1943 that "at the present" there were no subjects available with a "western atmosphere and preferably by a western artist of distinction." On 15 Apr. 1944, Sampson Matthews shipped six reproductions of *Pincher Creek* by A.Y. Jackson, along with leaflets, to Senator Paterson. A memo to Matthews from McCurry re "Armed Forces Reproductions - First 25 Pictures, May 15 1944," lists the first five complete sets and the numbers of National Gallery prints in stock. It also indicates that the Weston had been printed and the Thoreau MacDonald, Lismer and Phillips rerun. It is important to note that a number of works bore various titles over the life of the programme. Brigden's *Assiniboia Valley* was sometimes called *Assiniboine Valley*. Jackson's *Pincher Creek, Alberta Farms* was also known as *Alberta Farms* and *Pincher Creek, Alberta*. Brooks' *North and Barrington Streets* was often called *Halifax Harbour*. Housser's *Indian School* was also known as *Indian Children*. Morrice's *Quebec Ferry* was occasionally titled *Ferry from the Levis*, Hallam's *The Plowman* was sometimes spelled *The Ploughman*. Isabel McLaughlin's *Blossom Time* was also called *Blossom Time*, *Hog's Hollow* and Paraskeva Clark's *Caledon Farm* was sometimes titled *Caledon Farm in May*.
- 72 Matthews to McCurry, 6 May 1944.
- 73 Matthews to McCurry, 16 Sept. 1944. Document titled, "Reproductions of Canadian Paintings — First Series 25 Pictures."
- 74 Matthews to McCurry, 6 Oct. 1944.
- 75 Jackson to McCurry, 24 July 1944 from Calgary. On 7 Jan. 1943, Jackson wrote to McCurry that "Brooker made a good one. gay and happy." Noting that there was nothing similar in the series, he encouraged McCurry to approve it.
- 76 Jackson to McCurry, 11 May 1944 and Clark to McCurry, 17 May 1944. Clark was recruited to the project by Harry McCurry in the spring of 1944 and her work was sent to Sampson-Matthews on 12 Feb. 1945. Though she had originally hesitated, saying that she had no subject matter and had not been out of Toronto in three years, the invitation to participate led to a Caledon sketching trip and the design for *Caledon Farm*.
- 77 McCurry to Jackson, 12 Apr. 1943. In reply to McCurry's suggestion that they impose tighter control, Jackson echoed the same concern: "Agree with you that we must push up the standard," Jackson to McCurry, 8 Nov. 1943.
- 78 *Ibid.*
- 79 Jackson to McCurry, 13 May 1942; see also Jackson to McCurry, 21 May 1942.
- 80 Jackson to McCurry, 7 Jan. 1943.

- 81 *Ibid.*
- 82 Jackson to McCurry, 28 Mar. 1943. He was disappointed in the *Star Weekly* article since they had promised a much more indepth article. He was still trying to get *LIFE* to write it up. "If *LIFE* gave it a boost, that would make all the knockers sick." See also a reference to *Newsweek*, Jackson to McCurry, 15 Apr. 1943.
- 83 McCurry to Jackson, 4 Nov. 1943, S. 42 G-K, Canadian War Artists, Jackson, A.Y.
- 84 McCurry to Lawren Harris, 1 May 1944, MG30 D208, Vol. 1, Corr., National Archives of Canada, 1941-47.
- 85 McCurry to John R. Spendlove, 13 Sept. 1943. He described the series as "includ[ing] reproductions of original paintings in public collections and also a number of designs done specially for the silk screen process by prominent Canadian artists who were invited to do them [and who] have given their designs free for this purpose."
- 86 Jackson to McCurry, 8 Nov. 1943.
- 87 Jackson to McCurry, 15 Apr. 1943.
- 88 Alan B. Beddoe, Special Services Officer, Department of National Defence, Naval Service, Ottawa to Matthews, 30 Apr. 1943, ref. N.S. 450-13-3.
- 89 McCurry to Matthews, 3 June 1943.
- 90 Jackson to McCurry, 27 Apr. 1943.
- 91 McCurry to Illingworth Kerr, 7 June 1943.
- 92 McCurry to Jackson, 9 June 1943. McCurry forwarded the watercolour to Jackson (and Casson) for consideration.
- 93 Jackson to McCurry, 11 June 1943.
- 94 McCurry to Illingworth Kerr, 7 June 1943.
- 95 Illingworth Kerr to McCurry, "On the train somewhere west of Moose Jaw, 15 June 1943." He went on to say that he did not believe he could arrive at the desired quality "with the means at [his] disposal."
- 96 Though Casson's prairie scene was never printed, the tempera design he had created, titled *Wheat Fields, Alberta* was part of the L.H.R. Matthews gift to the McMichael Gallery in 1968.
- 97 Casson to McCurry, 25 June 1943. See also McCurry to Casson, 30 June 1943 and Matthews to McCurry 3 Nov. 1943.
- 98 McCurry to Lindner, 27 July 1943.
- 99 Lindner to McCurry, 29 Sept. 1943.
- 100 Jackson to McCurry, 9 Apr. 1943.
- 101 Robert J.C. Stead, Superintendent, Publicity and Information, Department of Mines and Resources, Lands, Parks and Forests Branch to McCurry, 20 Apr. 1943.
- 102 Dennis REID, *A Concise History of Canadian Painting* (Toronto: Oxford Press, 1973), 204.
- 103 Jackson to McCurry, 23 Nov. 1942.
- 104 Jackson to McCurry, January 14 1944. (Italics this author's.)
- 105 John SLYKHUIS, "Silkscreen visions of Canada now on view at Aurora Library," *Topic* (8 Jan. 1980).

- 106 Jackson to McCurry, 14 Jan. 1944.
- 107 *Ibid.*
- 108 N.G.C. undated typescript titled, "Art Reproduction of Canadian Pictures," 3. References to the artists indicate that this text dates to late 1943 or early 1944. (*Italics this author's.*)
- 109 Cloutier was appointed a war artist in 1944.
- 110 McCurry to Matthews, 30 Mar. 1944. When he wrote this letter, McCurry had a design from Cloutier in hand.
- 111 "'Colour-Craft' Reproductions of Canadian Paintings," c.1943.
- 112 Untitled typescript with descriptions of silkscreens, c.1945.
- 113 *Ibid.*
- 114 "'Colour-Craft' Reproductions of Canadian Paintings."
- 115 Jackson to McCurry, 28 Mar. 1943.
- 116 Jackson to McCurry, 26 Nov. 1943.
- 117 Jackson to McCurry, letter is undated; received 8 Dec. 1942. McCurry had written to Mrs. Gagnon (10 July 1942) apologizing for not having attended the Gagnon Memorial Exhibition in Quebec City and asking for permission to include a work by Gagnon in the silkscreen series. He suggested that a "Maria Chapdelaine illustration would be very suitable."
- 118 Jackson to McCurry, 11 Dec. 1942.
- 119 Jackson to McCurry, 20 Feb. 1944.
- 120 McCurry to Jackson, 4 Feb. 1943.
- 121 Jackson to McCurry, 19 Feb. 1943.
- 122 Brandtner to McCurry, undated, received 23 July 1943.
- 123 Jackson to McCurry, 16, 20 and 27 Feb. 1944.
- 124 McCurry to Jackson, 28 Feb. 1944
- 125 Jackson to McCurry, 19 June 1944.
- 126 Brandtner to Jackson, undated, received 11 Feb. 1943 at the N.G.C.
- 127 C.F. Martin to McCurry, 14 July 1943.
- 128 McCurry to Brandtner, 26 May 1944.
- 129 McCurry to Sampson-Matthews, 16 Nov. 1942.
- 130 Matthews to McCurry, 21 May 1942.
- 131 Jackson to Matthews, 2 June 1942. "I am more concerned with the standard of the designs than I am with the advertising of them. They will not all be good but if you remember the series of silk screen Christmas cards we worked out about eight years ago it was a remarkable group of designs and I think we can do as well with this. If we can persuade advertisers to use works of art instead of the usual commercial junk it will mean a lot to the artists."
- 132 Jackson to McCurry, 23 Nov. 1942.
- 133 McCurry to Jackson, 16 June 1943. Marked PRIVATE.
- 134 Jackson to McCurry, 6 Jan. 1944.
- 135 Jackson to McCurry, 10 Feb. 1943.

- 136 Jackson to McCurry, 23 Nov. 1942.
- 137 Jackson to McCurry, 6 Jan. 1944.
- 138 MacLeod wrote to McCurry that, having seen the other silkscreens, she did not think much of the paintings she had submitted; McCurry replied that although they were "charming," it was unlikely that they would be able to secure a sponsor for any of them. MacLeod to McCurry, undated, received 15 Apr. 1943. McCurry to MacLeod, 30 Apr. 1943.
- 139 McCurry to Matthews, 23 Nov. 1944. Jackson to McCurry, 23 Mar. 1943: "That chap Shadbolt is doing some very able stuff. We bought a drawing at the Gallery [Toronto] the other day."
- 140 McCurry to Jackson, 19 Mar. 1943 and Jackson to McCurry, 23 Mar. 1943. Scott had submitted *A British Columbia Coast Line*.
- 141 Jackson to McCurry, 15 Apr. 1943. Untitled list in N.G.C. files dated 20.5.42.
- 142 Jackson to McCurry, 21 May 1942. He noted that for the schools "you would not want Sampson's design at all."
- 143 Jackson to McCurry, 21 May 1942.
- 144 Jackson to McCurry, 23 July 1942.
- 145 Jackson to McCurry, 2 Dec. 1942.
- 146 Matthews to McCurry, 22 Jan. 1943.
- 147 Jackson to McCurry, May 1944. It was described as representing in a "general way" the country between Winnipeg and Regina.
- 148 Jackson to McCurry, 11 June 1943.
- 149 McCurry to Jackson, 30 May 1944.
- 150 Matthews to McCurry, 20 Mar. 1944.
- 151 McCurry to Jackson, 12 Apr. 1943 and Jackson to McCurry, 9 Apr. 1943.
- 152 McCurry to Jackson, 12 Apr. 1943. McCurry proposed an honorarium of \$50.00 for each original design used in the school programme, with an additional \$50.00 payment if a second edition were required.
- 153 Matthews to McCurry, 2 Nov. 1943. The artists were given ten prints and the firm undertook to sell any which the artists might wish to dispose of at \$5.00 per copy. By November 1943, these were sold and the artists appropriately remunerated.
- 154 Matthews to McCurry, 2 Nov. 1943. Matthews reports on the individual sales the firm has made and the basis for these sales. See also Matthews to McMillan, McMillan Export, 23 Feb. 1944. Matthews to McCurry, 30 May 1944: Sampson-Matthews Ltd. notifies McCurry that they will forward a cheque for \$50 to A.Y. Jackson for the sale of ten prints.
- 155 McCurry to Jackson, 4 Nov. 1943.
- 156 Jackson to McCurry, 8 Nov. 1943. Jackson refers to the strength of the prints which were displayed in Eaton's window in Edmonton.
- 157 Matthews to McCurry, 30 May 1944. See also Matthews to McCurry, 16 Sept. 1944. Document titled, "Reproductions of Canadian Paintings- First Series 25 Pictures."
- 158 Jackson to McCurry, 27 Feb. 1944.
- 159 Jackson to McCurry, undated, received 21 Jan. 1944. This was a list of works by 22 artists whose original, revised, or new designs were scheduled for a second print run. Of the Phillips, he noted "Railway bolder"; of the Gagnon "Could be improved with stronger blues"; of the Hallam, "Poor design, looks like advertisement."

- 160 Matthews to McCurry, 28 Feb. 1944.
- 161 *Ibid.*
- 162 Matthews to McCurry, 10 Feb. 1944.
- 163 Jackson to Matthews, 4 Mar. 1944.
- 164 McCurry to James F. Cassidy, Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, 2 May 1944.
- 165 Matthews to Joseph W.G. Clark, Director-in-Chief, Public Relations, Armed Forces, re *Pictures for the Armed Services*, dated by hand, January 1945, See also Matthews to McCurry, 1 Mar. 1945, document titled, "Reproductions of Large Paintings." The prints requested by the Armed Forces included Jackson's adaptation of the Gagnon, Hallam's adaptation of the Morrice and Robinson, A.J. Casson's adaptation of the Haines, the Lismer and the J.E.H. MacDonald and the Tom Thomson (Matthews to McCurry, 16 Sept. 1943). In January 1945, before the completion of Paraskeva Clark's *Caledon Farm*, Sampson-Matthews was holding over 8000 gallery prints of thirty images. (Memo to Matthews, subject Armed Forces Reproduction, 8 Jan. 1945, from W.) Three hundred copies of each of five prints, all endorsed with sponsorships, were used to complete the outstanding request for 2400 prints from Auxiliary Services, the Air Force and the Navy.
- 166 Matthews to McCurry, "Reproductions of Large Paintings," General Notes, 1 Mar. 1945.
- 167 In a letter of 24 Oct. 1945, McCurry outlines the history of the wartime project to the Chairman of his Board, Harry S. Southam. He here posits that 35,000 prints had been supplied to the Canadian Navy, Army and Air Force as well as two thousand prints supplied to the British Army and 1000 prints supplied to the R.A.F. by the National Gallery with the help of the Wartime Information Board. He states that about 17,000 non-sponsored imprinted works were issued by the National Gallery.
- 168 McCurry to Southam, 24 Oct. 1945.
- 169 Matthews to McCurry, 28 Jan. 1944. Inventory document titled, "Reproductions of Paintings."
- 170 Matthews to McCurry, 1 Mar. 1945, "Reproductions of Large Paintings." See also Matthews to McCurry, 13 Oct. 1944 in which Matthews outlined the costs to the Gallery and the income on the sale of prints owed to the Gallery by Sampson-Matthews. At that time, the Gallery's outstanding balance totalled over \$25,000 for the first series of 25 prints, the second series, and the coats of arms of Canada and the provinces which they were also producing in silkscreen format. The Gallery's credit on the sale of prints by Sampson-Matthews totalled \$3,668.
- 171 This was the second group of prints. The first group included Casson's *Ontario Village*, Jackson's *Quebec Village*, the third MacDonald's *Mist Fantasy*, the fourth Lismer's *Isles of Spruce* and Thomson's *Northern River* and the fifth Harris' *Maligne Lake*, Jackson's *Pincher Creek, Alberta* and Carmichael's *White Water*.
- 172 McCurry to Matthews, 8 Mar. 1943.
- 173 Matthews to McCurry, "Art Reproduction of Canadian Pictures," undated typescript.
- 174 "The Art Forum: Silk Screen Prints" *Canadian Art* I, no. 3 (Feb./Nov. 1944): 126.
- 175 Walter ABELL, "Canadian Aspirations in Painting," *Culture* (June 1942), 172-82. See also Hélène SICOTTE, "Walter Abell au Canada 1928-1944," *The Journal of Canadian Art History* XI, nos. 1 & 2 (1988): 88-108.
- 176 Colonel C.R. Hill, Director of Special Services, to Matthews, 14 Jan. 1943.
- 177 *Catalogue of Reproductions; Colour Reproductions, Postcards, Silk Screen Prints, Publications*, National Gallery of Canada, c.1955-57, 1.

APPENDIX A

THE NATIONAL GALLERY/SAMPSON-MATTHEWS The Wartime Prints

Dates of original publication and wartime sponsors. This information is gleaned from the January 18, 1944 National Gallery of Canada list "Silk Screen Reproductions of Canadian Paintings: Sponsor Imprints," from general correspondence regarding sponsorships, and from the prints themselves.

SERIES I

ARTIST	WORK	SPONSOR
Group A (May 1942)		
Charles Comfort	<i>Bon Echo</i>	The Canada Life Assurance Co.
A.J. Casson	<i>Ontario Village</i>	The Rowntree Company Ltd.
Thoreau MacDonald	<i>Wild Geese</i>	Shell Oil Co. of Canada
A.Y. Jackson	<i>Quebec Village</i>	National Gallery of Canada/ Canada Life
B. Coghill Haworth	<i>Port au Persil</i>	Canada Packers Ltd.
Group B (June 1943)		
Leonard Brooks	<i>Haliburton Village</i>	Christie Brown and Co. Ltd.
Yvonne McKague Housser	<i>Evening-Nipigon River</i>	The Southam Company/ John Northway & Son, Ltd.
Sydney Hallam	<i>The Plowman</i>	Massey-Harris Co. Ltd.
Fred Haines	<i>Beech Woods</i>	Mutual Life Assurance Co. of Canada
L.A.C. Panton	<i>Windswept</i>	The Canadian Bank of Commerce
Group C (June 1943)		
J.E.H. Sampson	<i>Veterans of the Sea</i>	The Tuckett Tobacco Co. Ltd.
Walter Phillips	<i>Victoria Glacier</i>	E. and S. Currie Ltd./ Imperial Optical Company
J.E.H. MacDonald	<i>Mist Fantasy</i>	Art Gallery of Toronto/ National Gallery of Canada
J.W.G. Macdonald	<i>B.C. Indian Village</i>	Jantzen Knitting Mills of Canada Ltd.
Albert Robinson	<i>Return from Easter Mass</i>	Quaker Oats Co.
Group D (October 1943)		
J.W. Morrice	<i>Quebec Ferry</i>	Cook Clothing Co. Ltd.
Arthur Lismer	<i>Isles of Spruce</i>	Gordon MacKay and Co. Ltd.
Tom Thomson	<i>Northern River</i>	Wm. Wrigley Jr. Co. Ltd.
Clarence Gagnon	<i>March in the Birch Woods</i>	Regent Knitting Mills
Jack Humphrey	<i>Swallow Tail, Grand Manan</i>	Belding-Corticelli Ltd.

Group E (March 1944)

Lawren Harris	<i>Maligne Lake</i>	National Gallery of Canada/ Beardmore and Co.
Herbert Palmer	<i>Maple Lake, Haliburton</i>	Canadian General Electric/ The Robert Simpson Co. Ltd.
Franklin Carmichael	<i>White Water</i>	Canadian Bank of Commerce?
Fred Brigden	<i>Assiniboia Valley</i>	Western Grain Pool
A.Y. Jackson	<i>Pincher Creek, Alberta (Alberta Farm)</i>	Paterson Grain Company

SERIES II

Group A (September 1944)

Leonard Brooks	<i>North and Barrington Streets, Halifax (Halifax Harbour)</i>	Christie Brown and Co. Ltd.
Thoreau MacDonald	<i>Winter Morning</i>	National Gallery of Canada
Isabel McLaughlin	<i>Blossom Time</i>	R.S. McLaughlin
W.P. Weston	<i>Vancouver Lions</i>	British Columbia Electric Railway Co. Ltd.
Fritz Brandtner	<i>Potato Pickers</i>	The Southam Company

Group B (September 1944)

Albert Cloutier	<i>Sugar Making</i>	Canada Life
Yvonne McKague Housser	<i>Indian Children (Indian School)</i>	National Gallery of Canada
R. York Wilson	<i>Auction Sale</i>	R. Laidlaw Lumber Co.
L.A.C. Panton	<i>Silver Stream</i>	Sponsor not indicated
A.Y. Jackson	<i>Peace River Bridge</i>	H.J. Heinz Co. of Canada Ltd.

(January 1945)

Paraskeva Clark	<i>Caledon Farm</i>	Canada Packers Ltd.?
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UNE VISION DE LA NATION

La nation, l'identité et les sérigraphies du temps de guerre de Sampson-Matthews

Entre 1942 et 1963, la maison Sampson-Matthews a imprimé plus d'une centaine de sérigraphies qui connurent une large diffusion à travers le Canada et à l'étranger. Ces sérigraphies jouèrent un rôle important dans l'élaboration du concept de l'art canadien. Ce premier de deux articles portant sur les sérigraphies de Sampson-Matthews, traite du projet entrepris conjointement avec la Galerie nationale du Canada (maintenant Musée des beaux-arts du Canada) pendant la guerre.

Des cent dix-huit reproductions réalisées au cours des trente années que dura le programme, seulement trente-six font effectivement partie de la série du temps de guerre. (Voir l'Annexe pour la liste complète des sérigraphies et des dates de publication). Trente-six autres sérigraphies furent créées dans le cadre du projet conjoint d'après-guerre. Une autre série de quinze fut imprimée par Sampson-Matthews, pour continuer le programme après que la Galerie nationale s'en fut retirée en 1955. De plus, des reproductions imprimées par Sampson-Matthews pour la Federation of Canadian Artists et la Canadian Pulp and Paper Association, selon le même procédé et du même format que la série du temps de guerre, furent commercialisées en même temps que les séries Galerie nationale/Sampson-Matthews, durant les années d'après-guerre.

Le second article étudiera la phase d'après-guerre du projet conjoint, la dernière phase commerciale après 1955, année où la Galerie nationale mit un terme à sa participation, et la série connexe de sérigraphies identifiées au projet Sampson-Matthews/Galerie nationale.

L'article aborde plusieurs des questions concernant les gravures du temps de guerre — y compris la manière dont le programme a été conçu et réalisé, quelles gravures il comportait et leur nombre, les artistes qui les avaient créées et leur public cible. Il étudie le processus de sélection et de diffusion des gravures, ainsi que ce que le médium de la sérigraphie pouvait avoir de prometteur pour les artistes canadiens.

L'article identifie la tension continuelle entre le besoin de plaire aux commanditaires, aux militaires et au grand public et les objectifs esthétiques perçus comme étant à la base du projet. Il tient aussi compte de l'influence d'un petit groupe d'artistes en place, d'administrateurs et de gens d'affaires qui collaborèrent pour créer une esthétique institutionnalisée qui devait, par la suite, apparaître comme l'évolution naturelle d'un nationalisme émergent. Il examine le rôle de la Galerie nationale comme partenaire du projet Sampson-Matthew et, particulière-

ment, le rôle de H.O. McCurry, directeur de la Galerie nationale, A.J. Casson, qui supervisa la production des gravures par Sampson-Matthew et A.Y. Jackson, qui favorisa l'ébauche et l'élaboration du projet.

Lorsque la dernière gravure de la série du temps de guerre fut tirée, en janvier 1945, trente des «plus grands artistes du Canada» avaient été représentés par une série complète de trente-six sujets différents, dont vingt-neuf avaient été peints spécialement pour le projet et dont sept étaient des adaptations de tableaux des collections permanentes de la Galerie nationale du Canada, de la Art Gallery of Toronto et de Hart House. La Galerie nationale du Canada avait commandité cinq des reproductions, quatre compagnies avaient commandité chacune deux sujets différents et sept compagnies avaient commandité un second tirage d'un même sujet. Au total, trente compagnies individuelles contribuèrent à hauteur de 33 000 \$ approximativement, et 16 500 œuvres furent données aux forces armées; 17 000 reproductions, portant le sceau de la Galerie nationale, furent distribuées à des écoles et établissements publics au Canada. De plus, la Galerie nationale distribua un certain nombre de gravures aux bureaux du gouvernement dans diverses parties du monde, dont la Russie, la Chine et l'Amérique du Sud.

Il est toujours frappant de constater à quel point on se rappelle les sérigraphies du temps de guerre. Plusieurs générations de Canadiens se souviennent des sérigraphies du Groupe des Sept, exposées à travers le pays ou accrochées aux murs des écoles, des établissements publics, des banques et des bureaux privés. Peu de gens se rappellent les noms des autres artistes associés au projet. Il est vrai que Jackson, J.E.H. MacDonald, Lismer, Harris, Carmichael et Casson, ainsi que Tom Thomson, étaient tous représentés par au moins une gravure de la série de guerre. En fait, un seul des cinq premiers groupes de gravures de la série ne comportait pas au moins une œuvre signée par un membre du Groupe, mais on y retrouvait *Evening Nipigon* de Housser et *Windswept* de Panton, dont le sujet et le style rappelaient ceux du Groupe. En dépit du fait que, dans les premières années, on demandait aux écoles d'acheter des séries de gravures où, à côté des reproductions du Groupe, on retrouvait des scènes des Prairies, de la côte atlantique ou des Rocheuses, ce sont les images du Groupe qui sont restées le plus profondément gravées dans notre mémoire collective.

En intégrant, par la suite, les gravures du temps de guerre aux séries d'après-guerre, on a certainement créé une certaine confusion. Des images populaires, telles *White Church* d'Emily Carr, *Algoma Country* de Harris et cinq gravures d'après Thomson, de même que des œuvres connues d'artistes tels Jackson et Thoreau MacDonald, n'ont été imprimées qu'à la fin des années quarante et au début des années cinquante. Elles ont pourtant été associées au projet du temps de guerre, tout comme les sérigraphies créées à la fin des années quarante par la Federation of Canadian Artists, et qui comprenaient deux gravures de Harris, une de Jackson et une de Thomson. De même, lorsque, après la guerre, les écoles et

établissements publics ne furent plus tenues d'acheter les gravures en série, les registres de vente confirment la popularité des œuvres des peintres du Groupe.

Tout comme l'art abstrait, le réalisme social et les œuvres dont le caractère politique ou esthétique aurait pu être controversé ne correspondaient pas aux paramètres du projet qui, toujours, se tenait dans une position intermédiaire. On ne semble pas avoir songé à la possibilité d'inclure des artistes autochtones. *B.C. Indian Village* de Jock Macdonald et *Indian Children* de Housser renforçaient le discours colonial dominant, en présentant les autochtones dans l'imaginaire canadien à travers un mode de vie pittoresque et d'adorables enfants. Ces représentations, largement diffusées dans les écoles du pays, en démontrant que l'organisation sociale autochtone se situait en dehors de la vie et de l'expérience contemporaines, codifiaient et légitimaient une vision de l'autochtone comme étant «l'autre».

Malgré l'intérêt d'A.Y. Jackson pour le travail de certaines femmes artistes, des œuvres présentées par Mabel May, Ethel Seath, Ann Savage et Pegi Nicol McLeod ne furent jamais imprimées. Il semble toutefois y avoir un progrès variable dans la représentation d'artistes femmes, car elles ont fait partie, dès le début, d'un projet antérieur d'une série de lithographies de la Galerie nationale. Cependant les œuvres choisies confirment l'esthétique dominante: Yvonne McKague Housser était la seule femme peintre à avoir deux œuvres dans la série du temps de guerre. *Blossom Time* d'Isabel McLaughlin et *Caledon Farm* de Paraskeva Clark eurent un tirage limité. Lors de sa visite à la Galerie nationale du Canada, en mars 1943, la princesse Alice admira les gravures et demanda si on avait prévu d'en fournir aux quartiers des femmes, auxquels elle «apportait une attention spéciale». Bien que le directeur de la Galerie nationale eut fait suite, par lettre, à la demande princière, il ne semble pas qu'on y ait apporté quelque considération et la demande est restée sans suite. Le public de la série du temps de guerre était perçu comme essentiellement masculin. Du point de vue militaire, les «scènes canadiennes» servaient à raviver le souvenir du «pays» dans l'esprit des hommes partis à la guerre.

Jackson aurait été le premier à admettre que le rêve d'une série de gravures représentative des artistes canadiens d'un océan à l'autre n'avait pas été pleinement réalisé. Bien que le texte d'un discours sur les gravures ait insisté sur le fait que le comité «avait pris soin de voir à ce que toutes les parties du Canada soient représentées» dans le choix des artistes et des sujets, vingt-six des trente-six reproductions du temps de guerre venaient d'artistes demeurant en Ontario. L'attitude des éditeurs, prudemment orientée vers le marché, a effectivement déterminé le choix des œuvres à imprimer. Le compromis était à l'ordre du jour. Le besoin d'avoir des œuvres faciles à reproduire sous forme d'affiches a contribué à la nature commerciale du travail, en favorisant des reproductions par des illustrateurs et des dessinateurs plutôt que par des artistes plus doués, mais sans expérience dans la technique de la sérigraphie. L'engagement avoué pris par Jackson, de faire une place, dans les séries ultérieures destinées aux écoles, à des reproductions plus artistiques et innovatrices

qui n'avaient pas trouvé de commanditaires durant la guerre, fut oublié au profit du besoin de fournir constamment des images populaires qui se vendent bien.

La nature conservatrice du programme était certainement due à l'influence de Casson et de Sampson-Matthew, soucieux de la rentabilité des œuvres choisies, mais elle était aussi affectée par la domination du Groupe des Sept et par la tradition paysagère de l'art canadien, et particulièrement par le rôle de Jackson et de Casson et leur refus d'inclure les «modernes» dans leur définition de ce qui était canadien. Si Jackson se souciait de la qualité, sa définition de l'art canadien demeurait étroitement conventionnelle et tournée vers le paysage. De plus, la mise en œuvre du programme avait été motivée par l'accueil espéré de la part des commanditaires, des forces armées et du grand public. Les voix alternatives qui critiquaient le projet de fonder le nationalisme sur la nature furent ignorées. À Montréal, John Lyman et la Contemporary Art Society présentaient une définition bien différente de ce qui constituait l'art canadien. Ils ne furent pas inclus dans les séries du temps de guerre.

Aux yeux des artistes, des institutions et des critiques qui appuyaient le programme de sérigraphies, particulièrement durant la guerre, le paysage canadien définissait un secteur d'expression culturelle spécifiquement canadien. Loin des tendances modernistes de l'art européen, il représentait l'aboutissement logique de l'évolution historique de l'art canadien. Pour Jackson et ses collègues, le paysage incarnait l'essence de l'école indigène. Cette position nationaliste de défense était un élément clé dans le processus de définition de la culture à une époque où l'unité nationale et la promotion du patriotisme étaient des objectifs déclarés. Comme le faisait remarquer un officier: «par la présentation de scènes canadiennes [le projet de sérigraphies fera que nos hommes seront] conscients du pays et de la cause pour laquelle on leur demande de combattre.»

Bien que la mission déclarée du projet ait été d'élargir la représentation des artistes et des sujets en proposant une vision diversifiée, plutôt qu'homogène, de l'expérience canadienne, les séries allaient continuer d'être dominées par le Groupe et par la tradition du paysage. Dans le projet Sampson-Matthew, le paradigme nation-nature était réaffirmé par de grandes et attrayantes images, diffusées dans des lieux publics, surtout les écoles, à travers le pays. Bien que l'idée implicitement politique de l'esthétique de la «nature sauvage» ait été contestée par des artistes et des critiques de différentes parties du pays, les alternatives au paysage, quoique présentes dans les séries, ont diminué d'importance dans le plus grand projet. Pendant toute la durée de la série, les reproductions d'œuvres du Groupe des Sept et de Tom Thomson allaient demeurer les sujets les plus populaires, renforçant les idées reçues concernant l'identité et réaffirmant la conception populaire de l'art canadien.

Traduction: Élise Bonnette