

AFFIDAVIT OF AMERICAN BIRTH

This is to certify that Walter Halsey Abell, whose photograph and signature appear below, is our son and that he was born an American citizen in Brooklyn, N.Y., on the 23rd day of February, 1897.

Signed *Edward W. Abell*
Edward W. Abell (father)
Bertha M. Abell
Bertha M. Abell (mother)

*Sworn & Subscribed to
before me this 27th day of April
1942. A. D.
Blanche M. Buckell
Tolson Del Co Penna
my com exp Mar 24, 1945.*

Walter H. Abell



fig.1 Affidavit of American birth for Walter Halsey Abell, 1942. (Photo: the author)

“FROM AWAY”

THE CARNEGIE CORPORATION, WALTER ABELL AND AMERICAN STRATEGIES FOR ART IN THE MARITIMES FROM THE 1920s TO THE 1940s

The history of the art community in the Maritime Provinces is written through a series of episodes. At various points, this narrative describes the influence of individuals and interests from outside the region or, to use the more redolent Maritime phrase, “come from away.” This is particularly true of the period from the late 1920s to the mid 1940s, when the identity of the region’s art milieu was strongly marked by American attitudes and strategies. The two most influential forces on the Maritime art community were the President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Frederick P. Keppel (1875-1943), and the Pennsylvanian art writer and educator Walter Halsey Abell (1897-1956) at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia (fig.1). Their story is the subject of this article, but it is only one part of a larger story.¹

The Carnegie Corporation had been interested in Canada since the founding of their Commonwealth Program in 1911; and the relationship was facilitated by easy access, a shared language and a legacy of historical interaction between the two countries.² The Carnegie became actively involved in Maritime education in the early 1920s when it funded a government project to establish an inter-provincial federation of universities.³ Its reasoning was quite straightforward: “the Corporation extended its main effort in the Maritime Provinces which were effectively isolated from the rest of Canada and had particular educational problems.”⁴ A similar motive would underpin Carnegie support for art in the region.

Under Frederick Keppel’s presidency from 1923 to 1941, the Carnegie grant programs were driven by an agenda of cultural philanthropy.⁵ The former Dean of Columbia College (now University) and the son of a famous New York art dealer, Keppel (fig.2) was the first Carnegie administrator to fully ensure that the visual arts were the main priority of its grant-giving. As Walter Abell would write at the time of Keppel’s retirement, “there are few institutions in the field of art on the North American continent which have not received encouragement at their growing edge from the Carnegie Corporation.... That program was, in not small measure, Dr. Keppel’s vision and achievement.”⁶ Keppel’s definition of cultural advancement derived from his belief that Americans were merely “unaesthetic,” rather than anti-aesthetic. His writings⁷ emphasize a desire to



fig.2 Frederick P. Keppel, 1941.
(Photo: www.carnegie.org/sub/philanthropy)

educate public taste by promoting “the best” in culture, which he defined as the most beautiful and the most edifying, as opposed to the most popular and the most entertaining.

Keppel believed that aesthetic education could be achieved by developing the expertise necessary to promote and disseminate wider access to culture; this goal would be accomplished by training future cultural authorities who would function as interpreters to the general public. He also envisioned these “aesthetic” experts as the next generation of art patrons or “philanthropoids” (as he called them). Preparation of such diffusers of cultural knowledge would be achieved by the upper level of educators. Here the very American Keppel may have followed a contemporary British model that relied on university-based intellectuals to perform the task. Keppel also ensured that colleges and universities received the infrastructure support necessary to make it happen. He regarded such institutions as the most appropriate training ground as they had the scholarly resources for developing elevated taste, for maintaining and diffusing models of excellence, and for encouraging the teaching of art history and aesthetics as part of a liberal education. As Ellen Lagemann points out, Keppel’s preoccupation with this professionalization of culture clearly relates to the Carnegie’s involvement in the “politics of knowledge.”

Keppel's cultural philanthropy was not intended to educate the artist or similar cultural producers as the Carnegie had little interest in supporting vocational education. This explains, for example, why the Nova Scotia College of Art in Halifax did not receive Carnegie funding despite the requests of its principal, the formidable Elizabeth Nutt. Nevertheless, in the late 1920s, Keppel demonstrated his belief that Carnegie programs for the advancement of art could be as efficacious in the Maritimes as anywhere else in North America. That such financial assistance was welcomed by the region's institutions seems undeniable; that it was of dire necessity was forcefully (over) stated by Dr. J. Clarence Webster, the Maritime physician and historian who had his own ties to the Carnegie Corporation:

In the Maritimes...cultural development is almost entirely wanting. Art is practically non-existent. There is little appreciation for it in any form. There is no market for paintings, etchings, engravings or sculpture; not a single public collection of any importance, and very few private houses in which good works of art are to be found. Loan exhibitions, even, are so very infrequent as to be almost unknown.⁸

Webster placed the blame squarely on the region's universities for failing "to develop a widespread love of culture" and for not having "furnished the intellectual leadership so greatly needed in public life."⁹ But with the arrival of Carnegie art support at Acadia University in 1927, some of Webster's criticisms would be addressed and several of Keppel's ambitions fulfilled.

Walter Abell in the United States

The second protagonist in this narrative of the Maritime art community is the aesthetician, educator and writer Walter Abell, whose work in the region defines Carnegie cultural patronage. After negotiations between Frederick Keppel and the university's president, Dr. Francis Patterson, Abell arrived at Acadia University in the fall of 1928 to establish a Department of Art and Aesthetics.¹⁰ He would stay in Wolfville for the next fifteen years and successfully place the Maritimes on the map of Canadian art. Abell was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. although his family was resident near Philadelphia when he was a young child.¹¹ At the end of World War I while completing a B.A. in literature at the Quaker school, Swarthmore College, he became a convert to the Society of Friends.¹² His decision to become a liberal Hicksite rather than an Orthodox Quaker was undoubtedly influenced by the modern views espoused by the Friends' communities at Swarthmore and its sister college Haverford. Abell would remain a member of the Swarthmore Monthly Meeting throughout his lifetime.

From October 1918 to September of the following year, Abell volunteered with the American Friends Overseas Service as a member of a reconstruction

unit in France.¹³ There he was posted to Ornans and then to the Meuse to help replace housing that was destroyed during the war.¹⁴ Before returning to the United States, he was offered a scholarship by the Quaker Studies Centre at Woodbrooke in Birmingham, England.¹⁵ Although he refused the grant, he spent some time there in late summer 1919 prior to returning to Swarthmore to complete his undergraduate studies the following spring. In October 1920 Abell took up the managing editorship of the Philadelphia Quaker bi-weekly newspaper the *Friends' Intelligencer* where he would publish over sixty signed articles and several poems over the next two years.¹⁶ He was introduced to its readership with the comment: "He has been interested for several years in the problem of squaring the modern concept of religion with the highest modern thought and modern social needs." Authoring a range of editorial topics, especially on the role of young Friends and their place in post-war society, Abell also wrote a number of pieces that referenced the fine arts, particularly architecture. He resigned as Editor of the *Intelligencer* in June 1922, although he would contribute twenty-five more articles until the early 1930s. He also served as the Publicity Secretary for the American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia from 1922 to 1923. As I shall explain later in this text, Abell's Quakerism deserves closer consideration than it has previously received because it is most relevant to his activities in eastern Canada.

Abell then returned to Swarthmore and completed his Master's degree in 1924 with a thesis entitled "Fine Art as an Element in Liberal Education." Because art history *per se* was a fledgling academic pursuit at Swarthmore, part of his research work was carried out in France, England and Italy. He also did independent study at home at the Barnes Foundation in nearby Merion, Pennsylvania.¹⁷ Although Albert Barnes famously barred art historians and critics from the Foundation, it is possible that Abell's past work with the Society of Friends made him acceptable to Barnes. More to the point, the Foundation particularly welcomed students and professors from the nearby Quaker colleges. The Barnes' educational programs and publications such as its *Journal*, were a major influence on Abell and his interest in John Dewey's theories on the educational and societal value of art were also a result of his time at the Foundation.¹⁸

After spending more time abroad, Abell accepted a position at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio where he would teach art and aesthetics from 1925 to 1927. During his tenure he also published a book of poetry, *Eternal Springtime*.¹⁹ His arrival at Antioch to develop a program in Applied Aesthetics may indicate Abell's initiation into the circle of Frederick Keppel and the Carnegie Corporation. In a 4 February 1925 letter, Arthur Morgan, the President of Antioch College informed Keppel that:

I wanted some one with whom the appreciation of art was an emotional experience even more than an intellectual discipline, and I finally found Mr. Abell. I discovered that for some years past he has been looking for a place

to work in the field of art teaching, but that he had found almost every course in art appreciation to consist of the history of art. He visited colleges over the country and visited faculties in this general field, and came to the conclusion that he wanted to make a radical departure from nearly all of them. He believed that they were teaching the history of art rather than the emotional appreciation of art. When he and I became acquainted with each other each of us felt that the meeting was a fortunate one.²⁰

Another, but less significant factor in Abell's appointment may have been his Quaker connection as the Society of Friends was beginning to establish a presence at Antioch at this time.

Morgan also furnished Keppel with Abell's five-page syllabus, "Aim and Outline of Antioch College Course in Applied Aesthetics."²¹ This course plan would also serve as the template for Abell's art offerings at Acadia University a few years later. As Abell explains in the syllabus, the course would "cultivate the student's power of perceiving and enjoying beauty in all its phases, in order that his experience may be enriched by this source of pleasure, and in order that he may recognize and develop the aesthetic possibilities of his own daily life and environment." At Antioch he introduced such topics as "The Nature of Beauty," "Beauty in Personal Life," "Beauty in Social Life," and "The Fine Arts." In his second year Abell added the course "Art Through the Ages" where: "These achievements are studied, not as models to be copied, nor as sources of historical data to be memorized, but as treasuries of beauty to be enjoyed and as examples of the successful application of universal aesthetic principles."

While at Antioch, Abell also delivered papers at the annual meetings of the College Art Association and the American Federation of the Arts, as well as attending a summer course at the Art Institute of Chicago,²² thereby extending the network of contacts that would serve him well in the Maritimes. However, his tenure at Antioch was not of long duration because of reductions in the university's budget and, as he wrote to Albert Barnes in January 1926, there were some questions about his "aesthetic judgments."²³ However, in a 10 March 1927 letter to the Foundation, he states that Antioch asked him to come back for the academic year 1927-28, but he had refused their offer.²⁴ This decision was to be of great benefit to the Maritimes.

It was at this point that Keppel informed Abell that he had recommended him for a position as Professor of Fine Arts at Acadia University in Wolfville.²⁵ He accepted the offer although, with President Francis Patterson's agreement, he postponed the appointment for one year until the fall of 1928 so that he could "complete my first-hand observation of the important phases of European art."²⁶ Before leaving for the continent, Abell attended what was known as the Carnegie Corporation summer course in museum studies at Harvard and offered by Paul J. Sachs.²⁷ The best information available on Abell's time in Cambridge comes from his letter to Sachs in 1931: "At the close

of the course, as my special paper, I drew up a tentative outline for a study of the esthetic aspects of museum work. At that time I was just beginning a study of the esthetic values of architecture, sculpture and painting, upon which I have since engaged.”²⁸ Abell’s interest in museology would continue to be a strong preoccupation when he moved to Nova Scotia, and he would end his Canadian career as an educator at the National Gallery in Ottawa. More importantly, Abell honed his definition of aesthetics in the United States and he was equipped with the ideological tools to challenge the condition of the Maritime art community. This would symbolize a Carnegie approach to cultural education that most decidedly came “from away.”

Carnegie Art Teaching Equipment

The narrative that follows Walter Abell’s arrival in Wolfville, Nova Scotia in the fall of 1928 had begun a year earlier when he was first offered his professorship and when Acadia University obtained a Carnegie Teaching Equipment Set. The Corporation’s project of providing visual arts materials to colleges and universities had been initiated in 1925, and each set was valued at \$5,000 or at least \$50,000 in current dollars.²⁹ The “arts teaching equipment” or “art study material,” as it was also known, consisted of almost two hundred books, eighteen hundred black and white photographic reproductions of art works in storage cases, and a small group of original prints and textiles, all with annotated labels. Intended to accompany the visual materials were lengthy explanatory texts and catalogues but the latter were never fully completed.³⁰ In the late 1930s, two hundred colour illustrations were also distributed, but by then the boxed set of textiles had been eliminated.³¹ The content of the sets were determined by a Carnegie committee of Frederick Keppel, Paul J. Sachs of Harvard, Frank Jewett Mather Jr. from Princeton, John Shapley, president of the College Art Association, and other art historians, museologists, librarians and related experts. Most impressively, the Carnegie materials were remarkably inclusive at the time in their attempt to span the history of art in terms of both historical periods and international geography.

The allocation of art teaching materials began in 1926, with the Carnegie drawing up its own list of potential recipients as well as agreeing to requests from numerous institutions. Although there were some exceptions, equipment sets were not generally available to universities with a solid program in art history or visual arts. One hundred and fifteen sets were distributed to universities and a few art museums in North America; of the twelve sent to Canada, the University of Toronto, Queen’s and Dalhousie were the first recipients in 1926.³² That same year, Antioch College had also received its arts equipment, so Walter Abell was fully familiar with its contents and had presumably used the set in his classes.³³ Acadia University received theirs in 1927, the only one distributed

in Canada that year; and it would receive the set of colour illustrations in 1937. Elsewhere in the Atlantic region, Mount Allison at Sackville, N.B. obtained its Carnegie materials in 1933 but only after several requests and a year after Memorial University in Newfoundland.³⁴

Frederick Keppel believed that making the teaching materials available to universities was the most expedient method to prepare the next generation of cultural leaders. The Carnegie stated that the equipment sets “should serve in the teaching of art as the laboratory serves in the teaching of science.”³⁵ This gifting of art materials was also seen by the Corporation as a “start-up” strategy that would help to introduce academic art courses at the post-secondary level, or in some cases, to expand the few art offerings already in place. The Carnegie also believed that the sets would encourage the introduction of departments of fine arts and most importantly, they would help make the study of art history the scholarly equivalent of other academic disciplines.³⁶ At the very least, the sets would make students more aware of “the significance of art in daily life, in clothes, furniture and belongings” – an oft-repeated phrase and a sentiment that was also integral to Walter Abell’s definition of aesthetic education.

The Carnegie made no distinction between the sets for Canada and the United States. Such thinking reflects the continentalist attitudes and benevolent cultural imperialism that pervaded all of Carnegie philanthropy. Through visits to those universities and colleges that received or asked for Carnegie support, Corporation representatives determined first whether the institution would put the sets to good use, and later returned to learn how the art materials were actually being used. According to an 18 March 1927 letter from Keppel, it appears that Professor Clarence Kennedy of Smith College, Northampton, Mass. visited Wolfville in early 1927 to ascertain “any impressions as to the vitality of the art interests at Acadia University. President Patterson has asked for one of our Fine Art sets.”³⁷ There were obviously no difficulties.

The Carnegie and its advisory committees did not mandate the ways in which the arts equipment sets were to be used inside or outside the classroom. However, Keppel had originally hoped that the books and images would be kept together in a special area so that the students (and faculty) could consult them in tandem. The Carnegie also wanted this dedicated space to function as a type of art center for exhibitions of the illustrations. Although this request was abandoned in 1928-29, it seems that Abell did present displays of the visual materials at Acadia. (A number of the prints are now in the Acadia University Art Gallery collection.)

The Carnegie considered the illustrations of architecture, painting and sculpture to be “the major unit” of the set. The reproductions were “virtually identical for each college” and “represented all the major currents in the stream of art - individuals, periods, schools.” Annotated labels were provided, “giving

the artists, the setting of the work as to school and technique, something of the life and personality of the artist and that for which the work is distinguished. Some analysis also is given." Grouped with the reproductions, were "50 original prints, showing different processes of print-making and the work of periods and notable men." The emphasis on images of artwork in the sets can be related to Keppel's concern that aesthetic awareness should be drawn directly from the object, "rather than in the abstract." That his father was a famed New York print dealer undoubtedly influenced his belief in the importance of the visual.

Throughout the years of the project, the availability of titles would determine the selection of books in each set. Nevertheless, the Carnegie believed that: "The books constitute a good working library in the history of art and the analysis of all the arts, including decoration and the décor of the theater. They are in English, French and German, some of them equally valuable in text and reproduction; some on the arts in general, some on definite arts, some on special periods, others on individuals." Because Acadia University has preserved its original library accession books, the contents of their set of books can be largely reassembled.³⁸ Their holdings correspond almost exactly to the titles listed on the mimeographed "List of Art Books Distributed by Carnegie Corporation, 1927. 9 Sets" that is preserved in the Carnegie archives.³⁹ The same degree of inclusion seen in the Carnegie's choice of reproductions can also be found in the range of subjects within the equipment set's collection of books, reflecting Keppel's belief that art "may be a universal language but it has many different dialects in different times and places."⁴⁰ This promotion of the universalism of aesthetics would also underscore Abell's work in the Maritimes.

Abell at Acadia

Walter Abell's appointment at the Baptist-run university quickly put into play Carnegie's ambitions for the development of cultural expertise in the region.⁴¹ Since 1920, the Corporation had been contributing to Acadia's endowment fund and would continue to aid its arts and science programs into the 1940s.⁴² For many years the university's Ladies' Seminary and then the School of Household Science and Fine Arts, had offered studio courses; but given the low priority of art history, Acadia met the Carnegie criteria for receiving an arts equipment set in 1927. President Patterson had obviously made it clear that Acadia was ready to develop an academic program more in line with the Corporation's aims. Abell's new Department of Art and Aesthetics came under the Arts and Science faculty; and more importantly, it was the first of its kind in Canada.

Although Annie Richter from Household Science would continue to teach the new department's studio courses for several years, Abell would be its only academic as he had been at Antioch's art department. His American definition

of aesthetic education is strongly echoed in his description of the department in the 1928 Acadia calendar: "to develop the aesthetic faculties of the student in order that he may increasingly enjoy the beauties about him in nature and in art. To acquaint him with the great creative achievements of the past and the present; and to promote refined taste in personal life, and the competence to meet the aesthetic opportunities of public life." The text not surprisingly also reads like a mission statement of Carnegie cultural philanthropy, and it also easily incorporates Keppel's ambitions for the arts equipment sets. Abell's courses such as "Elements of Beauty," "Beauty in Daily Life," and "The Enjoyment of Art," in addition to traditional art history study, certainly replicates the topics that Abell had taught at Antioch, but now he could expand his ideas within a Canadian context.⁴³

Writing to Albert Barnes on 11 April 1929 after his first full term at Wolfville, Abell agrees with Barnes' earlier comment that he and his wife Marcelle were "exiles," but replies that "to find out how much in the way of esthetic development can be undertaken in a place like this, to adapt the tradition to local possibilities and needs is proving quite an interesting task. I think I'll get more out of such work, with freer possibilities for experiment, than I would in an academic art department at most of the universities."⁴⁴ By the time he wrote this letter, Abell was starting to look beyond the classroom; he had already published "Three Essentials to the Enjoyment of Art" in the June 1928 issue of the *Bulletin of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union* and he would soon assert his presence in the wider community by developing the Maritime Art Association. His activities in the regional milieu will be treated separately from his academic life, although the two are often intertwined.

In the late 1930s, Abell introduced a groundbreaking course on the art history of Canada. "Canadian Culture in the Visual Arts" was conceived "to develop a sense of the artists' accomplishment in their own land," which Abell believed was a necessity "if a genuine natural culture is to develop." In his 1938-39 departmental report to the University, Abell described the project:

So far as is known to the writer the course is the first university course ever offered anywhere which gives a comprehensive introduction to the study of Canadian art and its relationship to Canadian life. It will be seen that the course is in line with the current trends towards regionalism, toward connecting art studies with one's own time and place and – in its modern section – toward encouraging an appreciation of the creative efforts being made by contemporary artists of Canada.

More details on the course content can be surmised from Abell's 4 June 1938 letter to Frederick Keppel where he lists the topics: "Primitive cultures: Indian cultures," "Settlement by white races," "Folk Arts: farms and their

architecture" (including crafts and painting) and "Towns: their architecture and layout" that covered the fine and industrial arts, art museums, private collections and dealers.⁴⁵ He further described the project as one "devoted to the study and promotion of cultural values in Canadian life, and more especially in the life of the Maritime Provinces."

The course was evidently well into the planning stage before Abell left for a sabbatical year in New York. In early September 1937, a Canadian Press wire service article quotes Abell's exuberant proposal for an offering in Canadian culture that "would make [Acadia] a research centre for the study of folk arts in Canada and introduce extension work in the...Maritimes to make textiles, rugs, pottery, furniture and even paintings." But just as unusual for the time was Abell's inclusion of Inuit and Native art as part of his course on Canadian art history. While the Carnegie arts equipment set was of obvious use in his other courses, its books and reproductions were lacking in any "Canadian" visual material and he sought the help of Alice Webster, the doyenne of the New Brunswick Museum in Saint John who had amassed her own collection of historical illustrations and objects.⁴⁶ Abell continued to develop other courses such as "Art in Contemporary Living" and "Creative Art for Children," although "Canadian Culture in the Visual Arts" would eventually become the more prosaic "History of Canadian Art."⁴⁷

At Acadia, Abell also broadened his contacts with the wider Canadian art community and the most important of these was H.O. McCurry, then the Assistant Director of the National Gallery of Canada, whose support would be essential to the founding of the Maritime Art Association. In the 1930s Abell had begun taking frequent trips to central Canada, meeting museum directors, collectors and artists, including Arthur Lismer.⁴⁸ These visits were also the occasion for public talks on aesthetics in Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal, sponsored by the National Gallery. He had commented on the importance of the trips to McCurry:

As an American, whose training had been received in the United States and in Europe, I had for several years felt the desirability of being in closer touch with Canadian art centers. Yet I had had no opportunity either to meet the leaders in this field of Canadian life or to study the material contained in any of the more important art collections.⁴⁹

At the same time, Abell kept up his professional academic ties to the United States. Working on a manuscript entitled "The Elements of Art Criticism" in the early 1930s, he unsuccessfully applied for publication aid from the American Institute of Architects and the Carnegie.⁵⁰ Unfortunately he faced the same rejection when he twice applied for a Guggenheim Fellowship to investigate the history of art criticism.⁵¹ However, in his career as an art theorist, his most significant achievement to date was the 1936 publication of his well-received

book, *Representation and Form*. Advantageously, the Harvard scholar Arthur Pope wrote the introduction and the book had sideways funding from the Carnegie Corporation.⁵² During the 1930s Abell also contributed articles to *The American Magazine* and during the rest of his stay in Canada, he would publish regularly in the *Magazine of Art* and *Parnassus* (in addition to Canadian periodicals). He also maintained his ties with American art associations by attending conferences, and met with Frederick Keppel and other Carnegie officers on his regular summer trips to the eastern United States.

Meanwhile Abell was becoming aware of Acadia's limitations: "The position has its desirable aspects, but it is limited in the resources which it offers for research and for contact with important museum collections, current exhibitions, and people who are active in the field."⁵³ It seems that he always intended to return to the United States as evidenced by both Walter and Marcelle Abell's letters to Albert Barnes, who believed the best place for him was Philadelphia. Nevertheless Acadia itself was obviously supportive of his efforts: "The Acadia Fine Arts Course is now recognized as outstanding among similar courses offered by either Canadian or American universities."⁵⁴ Letters from Acadia's President Patterson to Keppel in the mid-1930s also record his great satisfaction with Abell, but they also lament that the university's financial difficulties during the Depression were making it difficult to retain his professorship. The Carnegie solved the problem in the short-term by granting Acadia funds specifically for Abell's salary because "the art program at Acadia is among the most interesting that has been developed in Canada."⁵⁵

In the mid 1930s, Abell also received a Carnegie grant to study at Columbia University in New York with the intention of introducing art education training courses at Acadia (which he would offer the following year along with Saturday morning art classes.) But instead of going to Columbia or even Harvard as he had suggested to Paul Sachs, Abell spent his 1937-38 sabbatical year as the Supervisor of Education at the Brooklyn Museum (then the Museums of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences.) There he organized activities for children and series of lectures for its adult education program as well as other projects including an exhibition on games and toys.⁵⁶ As he wrote to the painter Jack Humphrey, he had come to the Brooklyn not only for the new experience but also to help decide whether or not to return to Acadia.⁵⁷ The decision was easily made as the museum intended to eliminate the position for financial reasons; but by then Abell had already decided he preferred university teaching even if he had told Humphrey that Brooklyn was more conducive to him and his family than Wolfville.⁵⁸

Unfortunately for Abell, there was a major change in the Corporation's financial policies as grants to universities were being curtailed and the Carnegie was moving towards a new policy of favouring the sciences over the humanities.

At the end of 1940, Acadia's Board of Governors told Abell that it could not "continue his services" unless funding arrived from the Corporation.⁵⁹ While New York again came to the rescue, it is not surprising that when Abell was attending the Carnegie's Conference of the Arts in New York in December,⁶⁰ he informed Keppel that he was thinking of leaving Acadia and was interested in applying for a position at Swarthmore. In 1941, he also gave a course on modern art at McMaster University's summer school, perhaps because of the city's proximity to Toronto and his friendship with Stanley Hart, the only art professor at Hamilton. Even though Keppel "had started to taper off the arts and adult education programs, on the grounds of leaving a clean slate for his successor,"⁶¹ the Carnegie provided funds to Abell to present a talk on art education programs in Canada at a conference in Philadelphia in 1942.⁶²

During Abell's last years at Acadia he presented more courses on aspects of the history of art and was less obviously privileging studies in aesthetics. With severe financial shortfalls in the early 1940s, added to declining enrollments as more and more students became soldiers, President Patterson could find little justification for continuing the Art Department, which had certainly never been the favourite of his Board of Trustees. The University effectively ended Abell's tenure at Acadia in 1943.⁶³ Abell's departure to Ottawa in late summer obviously left a void in the Maritime art community, and it was also a difficult move for him. He had earlier expressed his regret at possibly leaving Wolfville in a letter to Robert Stackpole at the Carnegie Corporation: "I love this country around here and in many respects should hate to leave it if I were ever called upon to do so."

He then spent a trying year at the National Gallery of Canada, during which he replaced Arthur Lismer as Education Supervisor and he also worked as the editor of the newly-founded *Canadian Art Magazine*.⁶⁴ Believing, however, that there was little to keep him in Canada, Abell returned permanently to the United States and to the Art Department at Michigan State College [now University].⁶⁵ He would continue to preserve some ties to Canada by occasionally writing on Canadian art and maintaining friendships. Certainly, the importance of Abell's time at Acadia went well beyond the classroom as evidenced by his work with the Maritime Art Association. But his academic life is testament to his determination to provide an Americanized aesthetic education that was steeped in Keppel's definition of cultural advancement. While Abell showed a great empathy with the Maritime's cultural difference, he also followed the Carnegie Corporation's view of the region as part of a North American mainstream; and in this way he was not so different from many Canadian academics and administrators.

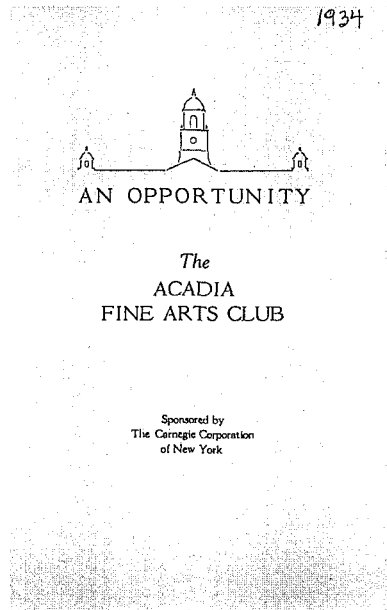


fig.3 *The Acadia Fine Arts Club* report, 1934.
(Photo: the author)

The Maritime Art Association

Abell's second arena for aesthetic advancement and cultural awareness was the Maritime Art Association formed in 1935; and in many ways it parallels his experiments in the classroom. The year before, with Carnegie financial and ideological backing, he had organized the Acadia Fine Arts Club with its membership of town and gown (fig.3). The art club grew out of Abell's desire: "to bring the various art activities of Acadia as fully as possible into the life of the university and the surrounding community, and, by enlisting the cooperation of the community, to increase the resources available for the study and enjoyment of art in Wolfville."⁶⁶ With an initial membership of seventy, he also set up a picture-loan collection and held regular talks and workshops. More importantly, he joined with Elizabeth MacLeod, the director of Mount Allison University's Art School in Sackville, to obtain circulating exhibitions from the Carnegie-supported College Art Association and the American Federation of Artists. Abell's own earlier ties to these groups undoubtedly played a role in their willingness to send artwork to such remote Canadian centres, and several of the shows traveled to other Maritime venues. The six exhibitions from the United States shown at

Acadia in 1934-35 included "Self Portraits in Prints" by sixty contemporary European and American artists and "Oil Painting by Contemporary Artists." This program clearly demonstrates that the region was not quite so isolated from viewing international art as it might proclaim.

More important for the future Maritime Art Association, in 1934 Abell also obtained another small Carnegie grant to investigate "the development of art interest in the Maritimes."⁶⁷ It is not surprising that the Corporation would support Abell's study as it had been funding American community-based art groups since the early 1920s.⁶⁸ Abell and MacLeod first envisaged the association as an interprovincial exhibition circuit.⁶⁹ As they wrote to fourteen potential organizations and institutions in eight centres across the region, "we feel that the benefits [of] cooperation could be strengthened and extended if all Maritimes centers interested in art joined with us to establish a Maritime Art Association."⁷⁰ They stressed that an association would not only increase the number of traveling exhibitions, but would reduce the costs of presentation and circulation. As well, such "joint action" would give more muscle to regional requests to the National Gallery of Canada "for loan exhibitions of Canadian art to be shown in the Maritimes;" and would also "enable us to organize significant exhibitions of our own."⁷¹ The Gallery's Assistant Director, H.O. McCurry assured them that he would support the project although his assent is somewhat archly stated in a 2 November 1934 letter to Abell: "I need hardly tell you that this is a scheme which the National Gallery has been anxious to foster for a number of years. Our loan exhibitions have been extensively distributed throughout Eastern Canada with marked effect, but the response...has been spasmodic and unsatisfactory." Abell got his own back by informing him that some groups in the Maritimes were not enchanted with "the idea of National Gallery exhibitions" as they were "quite expensive, and...it was somewhat difficult to conclude definite arrangements as to dates of showing." Although Abell knew that McCurry was a formidable ally, currents of tension between the Maritimes and Ottawa would mark the Association's first decade.

Within a few months Abell and MacLeod announced the official formation of the Maritime Art Association – the first Canadian regional alliance of art clubs and societies, public schools, universities, social organizations, service and civic groups, artists, art students and anyone else interested in art. The MAA's constitution was ratified at the Association's first annual meeting held in Saint John, N.B. at the end of March 1935, and Abell was easily elected its President.⁷² The MAA's constitution was quite straightforward: "to promote a knowledge and appreciation of art; to foster art activities in the Maritime Provinces by uniting for cooperative effort, all interested groups and individuals, by securing and offering for circulation, exhibitions of fine and applied art," as well as "arranging for lectures and for engaging in such other activities to promote

these aims.” Despite the constitution’s lack of lyricism, the MAA attracted an impressive membership of seventeen groups in fourteen centres within two years, and would continue to maintain these numbers for the coming decade. The creation of many local art societies, such as the Fredericton Art Club and another at Charlottetown, were the immediate result of the formation of the MAA. In a letter to Jack Humphrey (who seemed to look at all of Abell’s initiatives in terms of his own potential rewards), Abell insisted that the Association would be “a constructive force by working in the right direction of promoting increased interest in art and educating public opinion to an understanding of the aims of the modern painter.”⁷³

Abell’s ambitions for the MAA were pure Carnegie: to ensure a wider access to culture, to advocate the development of taste through aesthetic experience, and to constitute a *form of public patronage or even philanthropy through art sales*. But rather than depending on a narrow elite in colleges and universities as happened with the Carnegie arts equipment set, Abell took a grass-roots approach to constructing a regional art community. He cast the net wide and obtained memberships from such disparate groups as the Art Society of Prince Edward Island to the Amherst, N.S. chapter of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire. As the first organization of its type in Canada, the MAA offered Maritimers a more democratic and populist arena than art associations in the rest of the country, which tended to be city-based and only a few were province-wide.⁷⁴

Abell’s desire for cultural advancement was first and foremost tested and proven through the MAA’s network of circulating exhibitions. The National Gallery of Canada, in view of its superior resources and experience as well as its ability to subsidize costs, loaned the majority of the exhibitions. However, there were no more shows borrowed directly from the United States as McCurry made it known that his support of the MAA exhibition circuit was not open to competition from other agencies.⁷⁵ While it goes without saying that the exhibitions provided by the Gallery allowed for efficient and regular regional art programming, it is also obvious that the National Gallery saw the MAA as a further site for determining its own hegemony as *the* art institution in Canada. Abell himself was fully aware of the advantages offered by Ottawa for the fortunes of the MAA as well as for his own career.

McCurry’s power over the activities of the MAA was further enhanced by changes in the Carnegie Corporation’s support of community (rather than university) art activities. In 1933, Carnegie arts funding within Canada was channeled through the advisory board of the newly-formed Canadian Museums Committee; it was centered in Ottawa with McCurry as its Secretary and its primary administrator.⁷⁶ The Canadian Committee would provide a small annual grant to the MAA for almost a decade, although on occasion additional

funding came directly from New York. However, in the early years of the MAA, McCurry would make demands and attach strings to his purse that went beyond those ever exerted by the Carnegie.⁷⁷ Knowing that he was working for two masters, Abell regularly sent lengthy reports to New York, as well as visiting the Corporation in the summer so that Keppel was informed of the MAA's activities from his perspective, rather than only through McCurry.

The MAA's exhibition program of about eight shows per year was its most effective instrument for aesthetic development. In the early materials publicizing its formation as well as the numerous newspaper and magazine articles heralding the organization, exhibitions are certainly given pride of place. Its lecture circuit of speakers from both within and outside the Maritimes was also highly promoted by the MAA, and radio talks and later a slide collection would be part of its cultural mandate. The Carnegie Corporation also supported traveling exhibitions as a means of public art education. Keppel had stated in a 1932 American Federation of Art booklet that: "exhibitions, in their travels, and wherever they might be shown, prove that art has no boundaries or limitations." Abell shared the Carnegie belief that the exhibition was also a venue for patronage by the public, as the artist had the right to make a living through exhibition sales. In the Dirty Thirties, any purchase of work from MAA shows or shows sponsored by member groups would be a validation of modern Canadian art and a basic source of income for the artist. Spreading the word beyond the Maritime Provinces, Abell lectured at the Art Association of Montreal in 1939 where he urged that: "A fine school of Canadian painting must depend in part, upon adequate Canadian patronage" to "assist artists who cannot live and work if they cannot sell their pictures."⁷⁸

The MAA annual exhibition, with its wide variety of regional artists and enthusiastic newspaper coverage, was perhaps the most successful strategy for constructing the identity of the regional art community. From the beginning, the annuals were accompanied by mimeographed information sheets that included an essay on the exhibition, as well as a list of participants. Several were written by Abell; and the first of these, his 1935 text "Paintings by Artists of the Maritime Provinces," serves as an important indicator of his aesthetic approach and its application to Maritime art. Here, Abell is strident in his emphasis of borderless aesthetics as exemplified by Maritime efforts. He makes no reference to Canadian painters outside the region; he makes no attempt to link trends in Maritime painting to those in the rest of the country. Nor does he make reference to the nationalist implications of any type of subject matter. More importantly, he does not position Maritime art within the usual self-deprecating narrative of regional isolation, although both he and the Carnegie Corporation were mindful of this position. Instead he discusses the work only within the context of international art history. His text also stresses that art is a metaphor for the

ideals of contemporary social democracy: "The ultimate aim is to help awaken the eye and the sense of beauty and to bring them together in relation to both the pictures and with life" – ideas that he expressed throughout his American and Canadian teaching career and in his texts for other annuals.

The reports of the Association's annual meetings (sometimes running over twenty pages in length) suggest that despite the difficulties related to organizing and representing such a disparate community, the MAA's diffusion of art knowledge was working successfully in the Maritimes. The membership remained steady and continued to include diverse types of organizations. The annual exhibitions, usually held in makeshift venues, certainly provided an opportunity for both professional and amateur Maritime artists to display their work in a regional forum that could only have been provided by the invention of the MAA. Oddly enough, one bone of contention was H.O. McCurry's attitude to the Association. Despite constant invitations, McCurry never attended any of the Maritime Art Association meetings during its first decade, although he always led the executive to believe that his arrival was imminent. He also demonstrated little understanding of the problems and complexities encountered when organizing an exhibition circuit in a region with only one art museum and two permanent multidisciplinary museums.⁷⁹ For example, at the end of its first season Abell had to remind McCurry that unlike institutions in Montreal or Toronto, most centres did not have the resources – physical or human – to maintain a summer exhibition schedule, and that whatever the MAA did accomplish, it was done entirely by volunteers and not by paid professionals. McCurry's criticisms were based on obtaining greater exposure for Ottawa shows during the tourist season but only served to reinforce the Maritime's own perception of its position on the periphery. Nevertheless, the National Gallery provided exhibitions that otherwise would not have been seen in the region, even if they were often displayed in halls, schools, libraries, gymnasias, department stores and hotels.⁸⁰

The successes and failures of the MAA during its first decade are too lengthy to be discussed here and are part of my ongoing study. As would be expected in any communal project, local squabbles and regional jealousies abounded. For example, the tensions between Abell and his long-serving successor as president, John Meagher of Halifax (who resigned angrily in 1942) reflect Abell's larger ambitions for the organization as much as they describe Meagher's attempts to maintain the status quo. These differences came to the forefront over the Association's performance during World War II.⁸¹ As is obvious in Abell's writings and lectures, he saw the period as an opportunity for increased commitment to art activity, and a reason to plan for the future. His evidence was the WPA in the United States and nearer to home, the formation of the Contemporary Arts Society of Montreal in 1939 and the Federation of Canadian Artists in 1941.⁸² Meagher on the other hand, saw the period as one

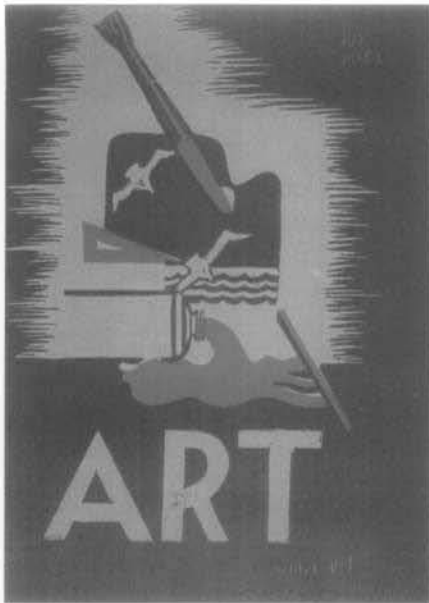


fig.4 *Maritime Art*,
vol.1, no.1, 1940.
(Photo: the author)

MARITIME ART		
THE JOURNAL OF THE MARITIME ART ASSOCIATION		
Published Every Second Month from October to June.		
One Dollar per Year.	OCTOBER 1940	Twenty-five cents per Copy.
Volume I		Number 1
Contributors in this Issue		1
Editorial Comment : To Be Creative : In Future Issues ..		3
Mabel Elliot Day		8
Handicrafts in the Restoration of the Fort Royal Habitation (By Ronald Peck)		17
Reflections : An Original Two-Colour Linocut (By Annie Louise Rickes)		16
Elsewhere in Canada (Edited by Mrs. Thomas J. Coughay)		17
Little Haven, Nova Scotia: Reproduction of an Oil Painting (By Arthur Lisman, A.R.C.A.)		26
Association News		25
Cover Design and Department Headings by Students of the Art Department of the Saint John Vocational School, under the Direction of Miss Violet Elliott.		
Assistant Editor : MR. THOMAS J. COUGHEY SAINT ANDREW, N.S.	Editor : VALUEN ADRIEL Acadia University, Wolfville, N.S. Business Manager : JOHN W. HARRISON 27 Cherry St., Halifax, N.S.	

fig.5 *Maritime Art*,
Table of Contents,
vol.1, no.1, 1940.
(Photo: the author)

filled with imposed limitations and did little to sustain the circulating exhibition program. He even went so far as to refuse funding from the Carnegie Canadian Committee although they sent the money anyway.

Other internal problems arose from the diverse resources of the member organizations; others were the result of ineptitude. Still others came from Maritimers' long suspicion of people "come from away" who, like Abell, would never gain real acceptance. While the Maritimes had obvious social, economic and cultural ties to the United States, it also continued to privilege inherited British traditions and a reticence to step outside self-imposed boundaries. This situation was exemplified by Abell's most vocal early critic of the MAA, Elizabeth Nutt, the British painter and Principal of NSCA. She repeatedly insisted with great exaggeration that "the College was the pioneer of all such efforts," citing among other endeavors, her own "Citizen's Society for Fostering an Appreciation for Fine Arts," which was really a local public lecture series. Although their relationship could be seen as a clash of egos, it is perhaps more appropriate to view it in terms of the tensions between Nutt's Canadian neocolonialism and Abell's pragmatic American continentalism with its inherent threat to her Old World governance. Nevertheless the MAA created an infrastructure for the promotion and dissemination of art in the Maritimes – despite or perhaps in recognition of the difficulties imposed first by the Depression and then by the Second World War.

Maritime Art Magazine

Another principal instrument for cultural advancement by the MAA was *Maritime Art* magazine, founded in 1940 by Abell (figs.4 and 5). It was the first periodical in Canada entirely dedicated to the visual arts and would prove to be his most successful and lasting contribution to Maritime and Canadian visual culture. The magazine was ostensibly intended to disclose art activity in the region but from the start Abell had national ambitions for the periodical. Aware of the influence of large themes and a wide readership, Abell drew upon his American experience as editor of the *Friends' Intelligencer* in Philadelphia, and a contributor to the *Magazine of Art* and *Parnassus*.⁸³ His previous work provided the models for Abell's Maritime publishing project and the Carnegie provided the money.⁸⁴

The most important aspect of *Maritime Art* was its inclusivity as defined in Abell's oft-quoted first editorial of October 1940:

We are interested in the painting of the Maritime Provinces, but we are also interested in their architecture, their creative photography, their pottery and weaving, their work with children; in their efforts at town planning, in the art departments of their schools and colleges, in the collections being formed by their museums and private collectors. All of these things are art. All of them have a contribution to make to culture.

Certainly these words evoke the language of Frederick Keppel in his publication, *The Arts in American Life* as well as the ideology of Abell's Antioch and Acadia course descriptions, his radio talks and his lectures in central and eastern Canada. Abell invited articles from artists and art writers from the Maritimes and outside the region, allowing for a democratization of the magazine that paralleled his own American-honed populist attitudes. Like the American art periodicals to which he contributed, Abell wanted the publication to have a national audience; and in 1942 it added the subtitle, *A Canadian Art Magazine*. The following year he wrote to the New Brunswick potter, Erica Deichmann about the future of the periodical:

It seems evident that a national magazine when, and if, started had better have an independent foundation rather than attempt to take over Maritime Art, for it will have to be started without any regional strings on it. On the other hand it seems unlikely that such a national magazine can be put in operation before the autumn of 1943. The best course therefore seems to carry on with Maritime Art, giving continuity to the work already accomplished and filling to the best of our ability the gap now existing in the national field. This means another year of hard work for all associated with the magazine, but it has its rewards in the feeling that we are doing a pioneer job and contributing something to art both in the Maritimes and other parts of Canada.⁸⁵

The Maritime Art Association, however, would take a contradictory position on the magazine's national ambitions. Certainly the MAA was fiercely proud of the reputation that the magazine had instantly garnered outside the region; but it was equally resentful of its growing national content. Ironically, the detractors had little concern about Abell's articles on pan-Canadian topics and had no difficulty with his regular reviews of American and British art books, perhaps because they believed that they reflected a Maritime perspective. In a 16 June 1942 letter to André Bieler at Queen's University, he reiterated the situation of the magazine, but the tone was more irritated than in his later comments to Erica Deichmann:

Certain elements in the Maritime Art Association oppose the manner in which I have developed the magazine toward a national policy, and feel that it should be kept for regional purposes. In some ways they are no doubt right, and I am now inclined to feel that the best course may be to leave Maritime Art for them as a regional magazine and make a clean start with a new national set-up.... Basically I and the staff have made the magazine what it is and the Maritime Art Association has done almost nothing in the matter.⁸⁶

The role of *Maritime Art* came to a head with John Meagher's resignation from the MAA presidency and his covert slandering of Abell in letters to the membership. In reply, Abell's four-page legal-sized letter to the entire MAA

membership in early January 1943 insisted that the publication was separately funded by the Carnegie and took nothing from the monies for the Association. He also addressed the criticisms over the amount of Maritime content in the periodical and accepted them as a difference of opinion, but adds that he never failed to publish any article on the region. He admonishes the membership by stating that if they want more, they should write more and not just submit local news. He summarized his argument for a greater national perspective by saying:

There is no less talent in the Maritimes than elsewhere, but it is exposed to less constant stimulus due to its relative isolation from large centers, and is thus in danger of failing to develop its full capacities.... We must know what is being done elsewhere in Canada and must measure our own work by the highest standards obtainable. Only so will our artists keep pace with the times and our public grown in its understanding.

Abell's rebuttal was obvious: the magazine informed Maritimers of the art world beyond its borders; and just as importantly it brought their own art community to national attention. Such estrangement between the MAA and its periodical was not unexpected in a context that exemplifies the tensions between regionalist and nationalist perspectives. In fact, Laurence Coleman, a Carnegie Corporation advisor had already predicted both the difficulties of such an association-based project and the eventual solution:

From what I have seen elsewhere, I think that art magazines are sometimes hampered by the organizations running them, and that an independent magazine with plain cold-blooded subscriptions is likely to be better off than a magazine sharing dues and also problems with some membership group. If the 'Canadian Art Magazine' had a management of its own and the subsidy that would be needed under any control, Ottawa might be the best place to publish it.⁸⁷

Needless to say, Abell's federalist position won out with the creation of *Canadian Art*. But whatever the internal difficulties *Maritime Art* was a major cultural accomplishment in a regional community with a weak base, a flimsy superstructure and an ad-hoc infrastructure. To its credit, the Maritime Art Association had achieved a certain stability despite the fracas surrounding the magazine and the decline of its exhibition program. The organization had become financially self-sufficient or at least it was solvent enough to maintain its basic activities; and it would continue as force in the Maritimes until the mid-1960s. Certainly Abell had greater hopes for the MAA's accomplishments, including its potential as the stimulus for a similar national art association.

The MAA's replacement for *Maritime Art* was the new *Bulletin*, a publication for regional news. It certainly paled in comparison to Abell's production of the first issue of the new national publication, *Canadian Art Magazine* from Ottawa. While his editorial work was part of his shared National Gallery and

Carnegie salary as the gallery's education supervisor, the Carnegie would not separately finance the magazine because by now it had withdrawn its support for American art periodicals. Concomitantly, the unofficial management of *Canadian Art* by H.O. McCurry, who was now the National Gallery's director, was becoming increasingly bureaucratized. Although he was also teaching an art history course for Carleton University, Abell's own education activities at the museum gave him limited satisfaction; and so with nothing to keep him in Canada, Abell accepted a professorship in art history at Michigan State College.⁸⁸ He remained in East Lansing until his early death in 1956, having written his posthumously published, *The Collective Dream in Art*.⁸⁹

To Conclude

With all of Walter Abell's activities for defining, activating and educating an art community in the Maritimes, comes the question of "why"? At the most basic level, the Carnegie Corporation encouraged Abell's work because it fulfilled the Corporation's mandate to promote "the diffusion knowledge" and Frederick Keppel's particular policy of cultural advancement through the visual arts. Carnegie's interest in the Maritimes was one aspect of its North American continentalism, even if its Canadian Committee was overlaid with centralist ambitions. Perhaps more complex are Abell's own motivations for becoming a "missionary for culture" as Helen Beals, his friend and associate at Acadia so aptly described him in her writings and interviews.

His first five years of teaching at Acadia University had provided Abell with a ready audience to advance his belief that art played an important role in the betterment of society. He had created a template for aesthetic education at Antioch and expanded its parameters at Acadia, especially in terms of a Canadian context. Acadia also provided him with the financial security to continue his own research and writing on international art, and to maintain his ties with North American art organizations. By the time Abell began constructing the Maritime Art Association, his first book was completed, he had administrative experience at Acadia, and he had made connections with artists in the region. Energetic and ambitious, he seems to have been frustrated by the limitations of Wolfville and its isolation from more intellectually stimulating art centres. Faced with this situation, it could be said that he simply took matters into his own hands, and with unbridled entrepreneurial spirit he attempted to turn the Maritimes into a vibrant audience for art – as much for himself as for the regional community. Being an American, he was unburdened by the Maritimes' long-standing and somewhat deserved resentment towards the rest of Canada. Instead Abell saw the region as the land of opportunity with the potential to emulate democratic cultural action as it was being framed in the United States.

Abell's motivations for establishing the Maritime Art Association can be further positioned within American parameters. His participation at meetings of the College Art Association and similar educational societies acquainted him with the power of communal organizations and their potential to foster art knowledge, in its broadest definition. Creating an exhibition circuit that would bring national and international art to the region was of prime importance and this went to the heart of his empathy with John Dewey who had said, "what an artist produces is an art product, but it becomes a work of art through the active engagement of the audience." His belief in the cultural value of exhibitions and the important interchange between objects and viewers also allies Abell with Holger Cahill, the National Director of the Federal Art Project, Works Projects Administration (WPA), who Abell lauded in his presentation at the 1941 Kingston Conference. In Cahill's writings of the 1930s, he stressed the need for the democratic dissemination of visual culture to the people and that the exhibition was intrinsic to its success. Other American precedents for both the MAA and its exhibition program could be cited; but Abell's work towards the construction of an art community in the Maritimes was unique in this country, and is rooted in the instruments of cultural democracy from the United States.

At the same time, it is also tempting to link Abell's vision of the educational potential of the MAA to two other significant cooperative movements closer to home. The first, the Maritime Rights Movement of the 1920s had been a regional alliance formed in protest against the economic decline of the region, and it was supported by trade unions, civic organizations and local clubs.⁹⁰ While its efforts were wiped out with the coming of the Depression, it had given a collective voice to Maritime frustrations and it long remained a symbol of regional determinism. Because of its role in defining the political identity of the Maritimes and Abell's own concerns for social justice, he would undoubtedly have been aware of Maritime Rights' importance to the region. A second possible influence was the Antigonish Movement that had just begun at St. Francis Xavier University when Abell came to the Maritimes. Its primary mandate was the fostering of adult education programs through study clubs and cooperatives as well as publications, all of which would ideally lead to widespread social reform. The structure and educational spirit of the Antigonish Movement have obvious similarities to the MAA. In terms of the more elusive potential of art for the good of humanity, Abell's interest in the Movement is documented by two letters he wrote to its leader Reverend Moses Michael Coady.⁹¹ On 6 June 1940 he tells Coady that the Movement's objective to develop the "foundation essential to a good life" was a reflection of his own belief in the "spiritual, aestheticism and cultural values through which the good life must ultimately find expression." In an 8 September 1940 letter to Jack Humphrey, Abell

mentions spending two months with fishermen in eastern Nova Scotia working on a novel based on their lives. Evocative of his empathy with the situation of Maritime artists, Abell hoped:

to study the cooperative movement among the fishermen about which I have heard so much...., plenty of opportunity to see the cooperative movement at work.... It has only made a fair start and cannot be said to have radically changed the economic status of the people. But it has given them a new hold on their economic destinies, and in time if pursued far enough, and if not crushed by resistance from groups in power, could transform the economic order. It is the only thing I know about which seems to have some real hope of economic democracy in it, for by a perfectly orderly process, it is capable of placing economic power in the hands of those who should hold it – namely those who produce it in one way or another by their labour.

It is also revealing that in the August 1940 issue of *The Canadian Forum*, Marcelle Abell published an enthusiastic review of Rev. Coady's *Masters of their Destiny. The Story of the Antigonish Movement of Adult Education Through Economic Development* (1939), and she comments on the Movement's "tremendous faith in man and his power of bettering himself and his environment."⁹² This statement also parallels the attitudes inherent in both the writings of her husband and the cultural philanthropy of the Carnegie Corporation.

However, I would like to suggest that there is another important factor in Abell's concept of a cooperative and democratic Maritime art community; and it derives from the fact that he was a Quaker. As mentioned earlier, he was a convert to the Society of Friends and always maintained his membership. He rarely cited his religious affiliation in the entries that he contributed to Canadian biographical dictionaries while he lived in the Maritimes, although it does appear after he returns to the United States. Abell did, however, serve on the *Friends' Intelligencer's* Advisory Board in the early 1930s after arriving in Nova Scotia. But nothing (so far) suggests he openly mentioned his Quaker affiliations to his Maritime associates and there were no Friends' meetings in either Wolfville or Halifax at the time.⁹³ Perhaps he felt that there were enough negative undercurrents in his dealings with the Maritime Art Association simply because he was "from away." To further identify himself with someone more familiar to the majority of "downhomers" as that man on a box of breakfast cereal might have caused even more unneeded tension. Nevertheless, his work in the Maritimes frequently echoed the ideas of his writings in the *Friends' Intelligencer* in which he had often used references to art and aesthetics to express the development of spiritual strength and accomplishment. He had often implored his readers "to cultivate this spirit in ourselves and in those

about us, and to apply it to the miracle of transforming drab existence into abundant lives." This was a constant thread in his Quaker editorials; he believed that fulfilling spiritual life was the means "for solving the problems of personal and social life, and for promoting human growth and happiness."⁹⁴ It is not difficult to see that Abell applies the same turn of thought to the enrichment of life in the Maritimes through the agency of the visual arts. Similarly, his perspective as a Friend is underscored in one of his early Nova Scotia radio talks, where he stressed that "art is an international language by which the best of each race speaks to the best in all the others. It helps us to understand the good things in other nations and so helps us to love them." He continued by saying that although too few people encourage international understanding, their numbers "will grow as the love of art grows and the whole world will gain as a result."⁹⁵

Furthermore in his *Friends'* editorials he had consistently emphasized the power of collective action, using architecture as a metaphor for past cooperative effort. His Quaker writings regularly refer to the Society of Friends' obligation to service in the wider community through the instrument of "democratic cooperation," a term that he later applied to efforts by the Maritime Art Association. Similarly his use of the phrase "comradeship in terms of ideas" in his *Intelligencer* editorials and later contributions such as its lead article "Social Vision Through the Meeting for Worship" of 13 Sept. 1924 reflects the same idealistic social views that he would hold for the MAA and its community. His editorial comment on the potential of Quaker "active cooperation" to "awaken in all a sense of responsibility to self-development" is easily applicable to his ambitions for the region through the workings of the MAA. In the same vein, in July 1930, he wrote a three-part article entitled "Technique for Friends Meeting" in which he calls for a merger of substance and technique for developing comradeship, and this may have served as guide when he ran the large and sometimes heated MAA annual meetings.

Certainly Abell's desire for an inclusive content and readership for *Maritime Art* can be linked to his earlier Quaker newspaper editorials. While the primary models for the magazine were first and foremost American art journals, it is worthwhile considering a comment Abell wrote on 28 January 1922 in the *Friends' Intelligencer* explaining that for the newspaper to reflect its community it:

must give expression to all the degrees of conviction..., and that within the limits of proper balance and available space, every Friend should feel free to use it as a medium for the expression of beliefs which he considers of possible interest or value.... To have a periodical which can [have a rounded corporate opinion] and a constituency which in open-minded tolerance, can read and profit by all sides of any question, is to demonstrate the real working power of that spirit of considerate brotherhood.

Ironically, his future disappointment with the conflicts over *Maritime Art* could have been foretold by his 12 May 1928 *Intelligencer* article "The Modern Natural Man," where he wrote that: "the group can grow only as various of its members explore new possibilities and gradually add new elements to the group tradition. Often the group punishes with its disapproval, not only those who are behind its standards, but also those who are moving ahead of them, who are confronting it with something new and difficult to assimilate."

Other comments from his Friends editorials would provide further links between Abell's Quaker thinking and the cultural concerns of his teaching, his work with the MAA, and his articles in *Maritime Art*. His writings in the *Intelligencer* on the need for progress, for betterment, and "a more perfect humanity," clearly exemplify the attitudes that informed his art activities in Nova Scotia. The universalist spirit of a liberal Quaker is clearly reflected in his ambition to be a "missionary for culture," and in his belief that through collective effort and mutual understanding, the Maritime art community would assume a meaningful place in the hearts and minds of its constituency - both regionally and nationally.

At their very best, the Carnegie Corporation and Walter Abell had cultural ambitions for the Maritimes that were perhaps more idealistic than realistic. Their continentalist aspirations were contested by a conservative and circumscribed mindset, and by a population too small to provide the necessary support for a more fully developed regional art community at that time.⁹⁶ As well, Ottawa's determined centralization of Canadian art created a form of national cultural imperialism that could be seen as more directly imposing than the ideas of the Carnegie's North American continentalism.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, without Frederick Keppel, the Carnegie and most importantly the determination of Walter Abell, the Maritime art community from the late 1920s to the early 1940s would have been of little consequence to the region, or even to Canada. Coming "from away" had its benefits.

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Notes

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1 The documents cited in this article relating to Abell's dealings with Frederick Keppel, the Carnegie Corporation and Carnegie administrators can be principally found in the Carnegie Corporation of New York Records (CCNY Records), Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Libraries (CU RBML), Series III, Grants, Series III.A. Grant Files, Box 1, Walter Abell. The Carnegie Corporation Archives has been most supportive and I am extremely indebted to Brenda Heering, William Stingone, and Jane Gorjevsky of the Carnegie Corporation.

2 See Jeffrey D. BRISON, *Rockefeller, Carnegie and Canada. American Philanthropy and the Arts and Letters in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005). I wish to thank Dr. Brison for allowing me to read his doctoral dissertation, "Cultural Interventions: American Corporate Philanthropy and the Construction of the Arts and Letters in Canada 1900-1957," Queen's University, Kingston, Ont., 1998.

3 See William S. LEARNED and Kenneth C.M. SILLS, *Education in the Maritime Provinces of Canada* (New York: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1922).

4 Stephen STACKPOLE, *Carnegie Corporation Commonwealth Program 1911-1961* (New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1963), 7. See also Robert LESTER, *Review of Grants in The Maritime Provinces of Canada and in Newfoundland 1911-1913* (New York: Carnegie Corporation, Office of the President, 15 March 1934).

5 For discussion of Keppel and the Carnegie, see Ellen Condliffe LAGEMANN, *The Politics of Knowledge. The Carnegie Corporation, Philanthropy, and Public Policy* (Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 1992 ed.). Her classic study, as well as the Corporation's own publications including Robert LESTER, *Review of Grants to Colleges and Universities in the United States 1911-1932* (N.Y.: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1933), and Brenda JUBIN, *Carnegie Corporation Program in the Arts 1911-1967* (NY: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1968), are the primary texts for my discussion of Carnegie policy and funding.

6 Walter ABELL, "Patron Incorporated. Dr. Keppel and the Carnegie Corporation's Art Program," *The Magazine of Art*, vol. 34 (November 1941): 472-75, 491. Abell does not discuss Canadian activities, but does include an illustration captioned: "A Saturday morning art class at Art Gallery of Toronto. One of several Canadian educational projects directed by Arthur Lismer. Supported by Funds from Carnegie Corporation."

7 Keppel's numerous publications include *Education for Adults and Other Essays* (N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1926), *The Foundation. Its Place in American Life* (N.Y.: Macmillan Co., 1930), *Philanthropy and Learning* (N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1936), and especially, KEPPEL and R. L. DUFFUS, *The Arts in American Life* (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1933).

8 John Clarence WEBSTER, *The Distressed Maritimes* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1926), 12. He adds that the "appreciation of the fine arts in the rest of Canada, for the greater part is scarcely in a more advanced condition, and cannot boast of any such activity as is exhibited in the United States."

9 Ibid., 45. Webster specifically admonished the Maritimes for ignoring Carnegie recommendations for higher education.

10 It has yet to be determined when and where Keppel and Abell first made contact. Both attended the 1926 meeting of the American Federation of Arts, as noted in a letter from Keppel to Arthur Morgan, President, Antioch College, 17 May 1926 where Abell was teaching. Morgan and Keppel discussed Abell in letters from 1924. I wish to thank Scott Sanders, archivist at Antiochiana, Antioch University, for his enormous help in supplying documentation on Abell's time in Ohio and for information from the Arthur Morgan Papers that is cited in this article. Correspondence between Morgan and Keppel as well as other Antioch administrators, is also found in the CCNY Records, CU RBML, Series III, Grants, Series III.A. Grant Files, Box 42, Antioch College. Abell accompanied his poem published in the 10 April 1926 *Friends' Intelligencer* with a quote by Keppel on education.

11 His father, the Yale-educated Edward Walter Abell (1864-1957) worked for the General Electric Company and was also a violin historian and contributor to *The Violinist* periodical, and his mother, Bertha Halsey, was a Wellesley College graduate of old New England stock. Family biographical information provided by Edward Abell can be found in the Herbert K. Goodkind Papers, Series II, Special Collections, Library, Oberlin College, Ohio. Walter's younger brother Richard was a psychoanalyst in New York but my meeting with him prior to his death in 1998 yielded little information, and I know almost nothing of their sister, Frances Abell Booth.

12 The Abell family was Presbyterian and his mother, sister and brother would also become Quakers after World War I, although his father, who was most sympathetic to the Friends, did not convert. Abell's wife, Marcelle Marie Achard (1898-1990), from Grand-Serre (Drôme), France was a student at Swarthmore and become a Friend at the time of their marriage in September 1921. She and their two children gave up their Quaker membership after Abell's death. I wish to thank Susanna Morikawa, Archival Specialist, Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore, for her great assistance. For pertinent discussion on the Society of Friends in Philadelphia, see Philip BENJAMIN, *Philadelphia Quakers in the Industrial Age, 1865-1920* (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1976).

13 There is little personnel correspondence by Abell at this time but a letter to one of his professors was published in the 4 Oct. 1919 *Friends' Intelligencer*, as "A Swarthmore C. [Conscientious] O. [Objector] in France." Abell also writes of the experience in his "The Mission Vs. French Materialism" in the November 1919 *American Friend*, and in *Friends' Intelligencer* editorials.

14 His unit is cited in Ormerod GREENWOOD, *Friends and Relief* (York, England: William Sessions Ltd., 1975), 203-07. I wish to thank Jack Sutters, Director of the American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia for his help. Abell would also do liaison work for the American Friends while in Europe in the early 1920s.

15 Woodbrooke was founded in 1903, using a house donated by George and Elizabeth Cadbury, who were one of the British Quaker "chocolate" families that included the Rowntrees and the Frys of which the art critic Roger Fry was a member.

16 The *Friends' Intelligencer* was begun in 1844 as a continuation of the *Friends' Journal of Religious, Literary and Scientific Culture*, and continued to publish until 1955. It was supported by the Hicksite Friends, who had separated from the Orthodox Quakers in 1827. I wish to warmly thank Emma Lapsansky-Werner, Curator of the Quaker Collection, Haverford College for facilitating my access to the *Friends' Intelligencer*. While in Canada, it

appears that Abell did not contribute to its counterpart publication, *The Canadian Friend*. I am grateful to Jane Zavitz-Bond of the Canadian Quaker Archives and the Arthur G. Dorland Friends Historical Collection, Pickering College, Newmarket, Ont. for this information.

17 I wish to thank Katy Rawdon-Faucett, Archivist, The Barnes Foundation for making letters between Abell and Barnes up to 1934 available to me. More correspondence may come to light as the archive continues its important cataloguing work. Letters between Barnes and Marcelle, and her 1974 conversation with Charles Hill at the National Gallery of Canada (who kindly provided me with a resumé of their meeting), suggest that she may have taught French to Barnes, that they may have seen each other in France and that Barnes much preferred her to her husband. One of the Foundation's first publications, *An Approach to Art* (1925) by Mary Mullen, prompted Abell to send Barnes a thirteen-page "critique;" Barnes found it youthful but valuable as a reflection of the views of its intended readership.

18 Barnes' admiration of George Santayana would also be important to Abell. Barnes' emphasis on first-hand study of art in Europe was an essential factor in Abell's own research, and he often mentioned on his curriculum vitae that he had followed "a program in line with the Foundation activities." The numerous publications on Albert Barnes and the Foundation provide a context for Abell's time in Merton. An evaluation of Foundation thinking on Abell's art writings has yet to be done.

19 In a letter from Barnes to Abell of 22 May 1924 he advises Abell not to accept a position at Antioch, but to spend more time in Europe. Other letters to Barnes and Morgan's to Keppel, 24 Nov. 1924 show he was already preparing his lectures for Antioch.

20 Morgan's earlier letter to Abell in Paris on 25 Dec. 1924 assures him that he has sent the syllabus to Keppel "without changing a word of it." Copies of the syllabus are found at both the Antioch and Carnegie Corporation archives.

21 The course covered architecture, sculpture, painting, music, house design and interior decoration. The department expanded its name to include the title "art," and two courses in drawing and painting were offered by a Mr. Whitmore.

22 Abell's time in Chicago is mentioned in a letter from Philip C. Nash, Dean, Antioch College, to Frederick Keppel, 25 June 1926: "He is enjoying it greatly, and I think may have something to contribute to the course as well as receiving a great deal from it. His main contribution perhaps would be the spreading of an interest in Aesthetics, not only to painting and sculpture but also to architecture, house furnishing, even offices and factory buildings, etc."

23 Letter, Walter Abell to Albert C. Barnes, 18 Jan. 1926. The Barnes Foundation Archives, Merion, PA. Reprinted with permission.

24 While at Antioch, Abell applied for a position at Lehigh University, where his father had also studied. A letter from Barnes to John Dewey (Special Collections, Morris Library, The Dewey Centre, Southern Illinois University) concerns a request from P.W. Palmer at Lehigh's College of Arts and Science for Barnes' opinion of Abell. Barnes withheld his opinion but recommended the art writer and educator Thomas Munro. Barnes fired Munro from the Foundation in 1927 for being too "old-fashioned," and thus presumably better suited for an academic position.

25 On 24 March 1927, Keppel wrote to Patterson: "This is a letter from my friend Abell, which I think, shows the kind of man he is. Will you write him directly if you want any further details." There is no copy of Abell's letter in the Carnegie Corporation Archives,

nor at the Acadia University Archives. Correspondence between Francis Patterson and Frederick Keppel as well as documents relating to Acadia University at this period are found in CCNY Records, CU RBML, Series III, Grants, Series III.A. Grant Files, Box 1, Acadia University.

26 Abell to Keppel, 21 April 1927.

27 Topics included the philosophy, history, organization, buildings, administration and collections of museums. I wish to thank Abigail G. Smith, Archivist, Harvard University Art Museums for her help.

28 Abell to Sachs, 2 Sept. 1931, Harvard University Art Museums Archives, Paul J. Sachs files. I am most obliged to Steven McNeil, National Gallery of Canada, for transcribing their correspondence in February 2006. Abell is possibly referring to research that appears in his 1936 book, *Representation and Form*.

29 The \$100,00 for the costs of material and labour for the sets was allocated by the Carnegie on April 6, 1925 and the project was officially announced the following October. It was discontinued in 1940, but by then sets had also been distributed to secondary schools. Detailed information on the sets is found in the CCNY Records, CU RBML, Series III, Grants, Series III.A. Grant Files, Box 44 and 45, Arts Teaching Equipment. See also Robert LESTER, *Arts Teaching Equipment for Colleges and Secondary Schools* (N.Y.: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1937) and Florence ANDERSON, *Memorandum on the Use of Art and Music Study Material* (N.Y.: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1941). Music study sets first came to Canada in 1933.

30 The sets were to have also included ceramics and casts but these were eliminated by late 1925 because they were difficult to ship and to store.

31 The textile collection producer, Eliza Niblack was killed in an automobile accident in 1930 and her sister Sara took over the work along with Frances Morris of the Metropolitan Museum's Decorative Arts Department. Unfortunately Sara had little talent and also seems to have abused her workman, but more importantly she was in constant conflict with Morris. In 1932, the Carnegie decided that the situation was no longer worth the time and trouble, and the textiles were discontinued.

32 Queen's early receipt of a set seemed to have made little impact as they requested one a few years later, oblivious to the fact that they already owned it. The Carnegie bemusedly agreed. For a brief discussion of the Dalhousie materials, which has an intact set of textiles, see Sandra PAIKOWSKY, "The Carnegie Collection," *Dalhousie Art Gallery. The Collection* (Halifax: Dalhousie Art Gallery, 2003), 64-68. At the time, the University offered one course in art appreciation given by Prof. James W. Falconer.

33 Prior to the set's arrival at Acadia and with Keppel's agreement, Abell had taken some of the books to Europe with him before he began teaching in Wolfville. According to Carnegie records, the list of books that he obtained has been destroyed.

34 The Carnegie hesitated to support Mount Allison because it had a fully functioning studio art department. From 1930 to 1932, the allocation of the sets was done through the College Art Association. Previously known as Newfoundland College, Memorial's establishment in 1925 was strongly aided by the Carnegie Corporation.

35 All comments here concerning the set are from a six-page detailed statement on the purpose of its contents in the CCNY Records, CU RBML, Grant Files, Box 44, Arts Teaching Equipment. It is unsigned and undated, but probably written in 1926 for distribution and promotional purposes.

36 For a view of the sets' contribution to the advancement of fine arts education, see Priscilla HISS and Roberta FANSLER, *Research in Fine Arts in the Colleges and Universities of the United States* (N.Y.: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1934). Their findings are based on a questionnaire that the Carnegie had sent to the recipients of the sets. One unnamed respondent commented on the lack of Canadian materials. See also Robert LESTER, *Arts Teaching Equipment*.

37 For information on Kennedy see, CCNY Records, CU RBML, Grant Files, Box 195, Clarence Kennedy.

38 I wish to profusely thank Pat Townsend, University Archivist, Acadia University for providing me with the library records and for her generous help in many other aspects of my research over the years.

39 Another, but slightly different, list of the books included in the 1926-1928 sets is dated 1 March 1928 and can also be found in the CCNY Records, CU RBML, Grant File, Box 45, Arts Teaching Equipment. Undoubtedly other early sets would also replicate the titles cited in "Books for the College Art Library" published in the September 1929 issue of the Carnegie-supported *The Art Bulletin*.

40 KEPPEL, "The American Approach to the Arts," *The Arts in American Life*, 26.

41 Abell, his wife Marcelle and their children Alfreda (1926-76) and Marc (1927-93) arrived by ship in Halifax from France on 25 September 1928; National Archives of Canada, RG76, Immigration Series C-1-b 1928, vol. 13, 58.

42 Information concerning Carnegie funding of Acadia can be found in the CCNY Records, CU RBML, Series III.A. Grant Files, Box 1, Acadia University, and the annual reports of both the Corporation and the University. The majority of the comments in this text derive from these sources.

43 In his first year at Acadia, he also gave a five-week lecture course in Windsor as part of the university's Carnegie-sponsored extension program. He would continue these lectures to the wider community, in addition to participating in Acadia's series of radio talks. In 1928-29, Stewart Dick of the National Gallery of Art in London, England gave a series of lectures entitled "Art in Daily Life," in various centres in the Maritimes as part of the same extension activities. See "Report of the Board of Governors of Acadia University," in *The United Baptist Yearbook of the Maritime Provinces of Canada* (Truro, N.S.: News Publishing Co. Ltd., 1929), 72-73.

44 Letter, Walter Abell to Albert C. Barnes, 11 April 1929. The Barnes Foundation Archives, Merion, PA. Reprinted with permission.

45 At this time, Abell was on sabbatical leave in Brooklyn, N.Y. An enthusiastic photographer himself, Abell initiated a student project at Acadia to create a (now lost) photographic archive of Maritime architecture.

46 Abell to Webster, 11 Oct. 1938, New Brunswick Museum Archives, Art Department F3-1. I wish to thank Peter Larocque, Curator of New Brunswick Cultural History and Art for his assistance. Alice Webster, a mainstay of the NBM was also a supporter of early education and as a friend of Keppel, had asked him for Carnegie art teaching materials and books for New Brunswick school children. She was also the wife of the afore-mentioned Dr. J. Clarence Webster.

47 Abell's lengthy reports from 1938 to 1943 on the activities of the Art Department also include information on his publications, lectures, and exhibitions organized for Acadia, the Maritime Art Association and *Maritime Art* magazine; see the various annual "Report of

the President to the Senate of Acadia University,” Acadia University Archives. Unfortunately, Abell’s reports prior to 1938 have not been found. Brief descriptions of Abell’s courses are also found in the University’s annual calendars. In 1934 Marguerite Porter (later Zwicker) began teaching studio courses in the department, along with Annie Ricker.

48 The Art Gallery of Acadia University holds an undated manuscript by Abell entitled “Badger and the Star Wars. A Story based on the Legends of the Micmac Indians of Nova Scotia,” with eight drawings by Arthur Lismer.

49 “Report of a Trip to Ottawa and Toronto Jan. 22 - Feb. 2, 1935,” Archives, National Gallery of Canada, 7.4.c, Carnegie Corporation – Individuals (Outside Activities/Organizations) Abell, Walter. I wish to sincerely thank Cyndie Campbell at the National Gallery for her dedicated assistance. Copies of documents that address Abell’s activities were also regularly sent to the Carnegie Corporation.

50 Paul J. Sachs and H.O. McCurry wrote weak letters of support; Lionello Venturi in Paris, Philip McMahon at NYU and Arthur Pope at Harvard were most enthusiastic.

51 In his application, he describes his research plan as “The preparation of a book on French art criticism: its history and essential findings, together with selections from its masterpieces of critical writing.” Archives, John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, New York, Walter Abell File. I wish to thank Thomas Tanselle of the Guggenheim Foundation for his help.

52 The Carnegie Corporation gave Harvard University \$1000 to subsidize publication costs as part of its grant for art publications and research. It is worth mentioning that following the Carnegie “money trail” is not always easy as funds rarely went to an individual but were channeled through diverse institutional grants to facilitate the Corporation’s administrative operations.

53 Abell to Sachs, 12 March 1937, Harvard University Art Museums Archives.

54 “Report of the Board of Governors of Acadia University,” *The United Baptist Yearbook of the Maritime Provinces of Canada*, 1933, 72.

55 The Carnegie Corporation internal memorandum of early March 1934 continues: “The President believes it would be unfortunate for this work to lapse now due to a temporary shortage of funds.” Prior to this Abell was paid with endowment funds including monies from the Estate of C.E. Reid that had been allocated to the Art Department. Funding for Abell came under the Carnegie category of “Fine Arts Work.” Payment of “6,000 payable \$2000 annually for 3 years” began in March 1934 and other financial assistance continued until 1940. Patterson’s Board of Trustees was not particularly progressive, and Keppel’s assistant Robert Lester commented in a Carnegie internal memorandum that “the Baptists should give him a rest.”

56 His activities at the Brooklyn Museum are outlined in two internal reports; I wish to thank Deborah Whyte, Archivist and Manager of Special Library Collections for her help. Abell also gave a talk in January on “Recent Painting in Canada” for the Canadian Women’s Club in New York, according to the *Acadia Bulletin* (April 1938): 22.

57 Abell to Humphrey, 6 April 1938, Jack Humphrey Papers, NGC Archives.

58 Ibid., 7 March 1938.

59 Minute Book, Board of Governors, 12 Dec. 1940, Acadia University Archives.

60 Abell and John Alford of the University of Toronto, who had strong ties to the Carnegie including his eventual marriage to its art adviser, Roberta Fansler, were the only Canadians invited to the December 16-17, 1940 conference and listed under the category of "Art Education."

61 "History of the Carnegie Corporation Art Program, Report of Interview, 7/3/56," CCNY Records, CU RBML, Series III.A. Grant Files, Box 72, Carnegie Corporation Arts Program.

62 In a 26 Jan. 1942 letter from Bartlett Hayes, Director of the Addison Gallery in Andover, MA to Florence Anderson at the Carnegie requesting funds for the conference, he wrote: "we are anxious to have Walter Abell...to tell something of the art program in Canadian schools, particularly what has happened during the two years that Canada has been at war. The added reason for asking Mr. Abell to speak is what seems to be a desirable contact between those teaching secondary art in the United States and in our northern neighbour."

63 According to the Acadia University, Board of Governors Executive Committee Minutes, 10 March 1943. "The President reported that he had informed Professor Abell that due to the decrease in the registration in Arts it would be impossible to carry on the work next year." With Abell's departure, the department as he envisioned it, effectively closed. Helen Beals, a librarian, painter and his assistant at *Maritime Art* magazine was appointed Instructor in Art, but did not take over until 1945 when she completed art history courses at the University of Toronto.

64 Half of Abell's salary was paid by the Carnegie Corporation. Lismer had come to the National Gallery as Educational Supervisor in September 1939. Because of his difficulties with McCurry (and vice-versa), he was parachuted into a similar post at the Art Association of Montreal that was also funded by New York. Lismer's letters to Keppel deploring the National Gallery are at the Carnegie Corporation of New York Archives. For a discussion on Abell's activities, see "The National Gallery of Canada. Progress Report on Educational Activities Supported by the Carnegie Corporation, 1944-45." National Gallery of Canada, 7.4.c, Carnegie Corporation – General-File 5 (Outside Activities/Organizations).

65 Abell had applied for a position at East Lansing in 1942 but at the time, the school preferred a practicing artist.

66 "Acadia Art Department Active," *Acadia Bulletin* (May 1935). Abell received \$200 from the Carnegie for the Art Club; and his eleven-page report of the Club's activities for 1934-35 for the Carnegie Corporation notes that one of the aims of the club was "to make increased use of the Carnegie art and music set." Other university art activities organized by Abell are cited in the *Acadia Athenaeum* and the *Acadia Bulletin*.

67 He received \$100 in April 1934 (in addition to funds for the Art Club) and another \$100 in late November "to round out the project."

68 Sir Henry Miers and S.F. Markham prepared *A Report on the Museums of Canada* for the Carnegie Corporation and appended it to their 1932 *Directory of Museums and Art Galleries in Canada, Newfoundland*. It recommended the creation of regional museum associations, which suggested the potential of community cooperation.

69 "A Maritime circuit for exhibitions is fine. I have thought that something of the kind should be arranged and am glad that you are doing it." McLeod to Abell, 23 Oct. 1934, Acadia University Archive, 1900.028, Walter Abell fonds. In a letter to Keppel, 10 Nov. 1934, Abell mentions the possible inclusion of the CAA and the AFA in the project.

70 Copies of this letter are found in various Maritime archives as well as the National Gallery and the Carnegie archives. The lengthy letter also discusses exhibition and membership fees. In general the response to their letter was positive although Clarence Webster, writing on behalf of the New Brunswick Museum, was unimpressed and the University of New Brunswick was among those who declined because of their lack of art activities.

71 Abell had informed McCurry of his plans on 20 Oct. 1934. See NGC Archives, 5.11- M, Maritime Art Association. for this and other relevant correspondence pertaining to the MAA. By early 1935 McCurry had agreed to arrange traveling exhibitions and lecture tours for the region. Other material on Walter Abell and the MAA is found in the Acadia University Archive, 1900.028, Walter Abell fonds. Further documentation on the MAA is at the Public Archives and Records Office of Prince Edward Island, Charlottetown.

72 The Constitution of the MAA was written by Abell in consultation with McCurry. Abell intended to decline the presidency if he received a positive reply to his applications for American scholarships

73 Abell to Humphrey, 24 May 1935, Jack Humphrey Papers, NGC Archives.

74 The MAA intentionally differed from the only provincial art association in the region, the Nova Scotia Society of Artists, which was mainly concerned with its own annual exhibitions. Abell had been elected an NSSA member in 1930, but never exhibited any work (he was a photographer), although he gave talks at their meetings and was on the jury of their 1937 Annual. See Mora Dianne O'NEILL, *Nova Scotia Society of Artists. Exhibitions and Members 1922-1972* (Halifax: Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, 1997) and also Sandra PAIKOWSKY, *Nova Scotian Pictures: Art in Nova Scotia 1940-1966/Images néo-écossaises. L'art de la Nouvelle-Écosse de 1940 à 1966* (Halifax: Dalhousie University Art Gallery, 1994).

75 It seems that the College Art Association was willing to help Abell with "special assistance" for MAA exhibitions, but "had no process in place;" see letter from Philip McMahon, President of the CAA to Keppel, 14 Aug. 1935. CCNY Records, CU RBML, Grant Files, Acadia University.

76 For information on the Committee, see BRISON, *Rockefeller; Carnegie and Canada*, 125-35, as well as the CC Grant File, Canadian Museums Program (Advisory Group on Canadian Museums), 1935-50, and the NGC Archives 7.4.c, Carnegie Corporation (Outside Activities/Organizations). The chair of the Ottawa committee was Dr. J. Clarence Webster. From 1934 to 1942, the MAA and its magazine would receive over \$40,000 in Carnegie funding. Because Carnegie funding went to the MAA through Acadia, some correspondence concerning the Association is found in the University's file.

77 For example, Abell was interested in giving radio talks on international art but McCurry insisted that the content should directly relate to the National Gallery collection and be based on reproductions of its work. McCurry had asked President Patterson to use Acadia's radio station, but because it was ill-equipped for regional emission, the talks were broadcast by the CBC in Halifax. McCurry also exhorted Abell to involve Newfoundland within the MAA, and the St. John's Art Student Club joined in 1941.

78 See the *Montreal Gazette*, 18 Nov. 1939. According to the *AAM Annual Report*, 28 (which misspelled his name), Abell gave public talks on Nov. 13 and 17.

79 Unlike the Owen's Art Gallery in Sackville, the Nova Scotia Museum of Fine Arts in Halifax existed in name only; its permanent collection was housed at the provincial archives and the Nova Scotia College of Art. Materials pertaining to the NSMFA are found at the Nova Scotia Archives & Records Management, Halifax.

80 See Garry MAINPRIZE, *The National Gallery of Canada. A Hundred years of Exhibitions* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1984), for a listing of exhibitions sent to the Maritimes.

81 In his January 1943 letter sent to the entire MAA membership, Abell criticized Meagher's executive and financial management skills as well as his questionable knowledge of art. He also cited the MAA members' lack of involvement with other activities besides the association's annual exhibition.

82 Abell had a good knowledge of modernist Montreal art and was a major player at the Carnegie-supported Kingston Conference in 1941. New Brunswick painters Miller Brittain, Ted Campbell, Julia Crawford, Jack Humphrey, and Lucy Jarvis were the only other Maritimers at the Conference.

83 The November 1940 issue of *Parnassus* cites his appointment to its Editorial Board and contains a short notice on *Maritime Art* magazine.

84 Other art periodicals receiving Carnegie support were the *Art Bulletin*, the *American Journal of Archeology*, the *American Magazine of Art*, and *Art and Archeology*. The idea of a Canadian art periodical had also been discussed by the Carnegie Canadian Committee in 1933. Abell's wife Marcelle, Helen Beals at Acadia, and Leroy Zwicker in Halifax also aided in the magazine's production. For a recent discussion on the magazine, see Steven McNEIL, *Maritime Art. Canada's First Art Magazine, 1940-43* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2002).

85 Abell to Deichmann, 11 July 1942, Deichmann-Gregg Papers, NB Provincial Archives, MC497, file 328.

86 Abell to André Bieler, Queen's University Archives, coll. 2050, Box 4, André Bieler fonds. The letter also discusses whether the envisioned publication be an "organ of the Federation" [of Canadian Artists] or that "the national magazine be an independent self-sustaining organization, cooperating with all national and regional art societies in Canada who desired to cooperate."

87 Coleman to Robert Lester, "Notes on Canadian Trip, October 4-24, 1942," Nov. 3, 1942, CCNY Records, CU RBML, Series III, Grants, Box 70D, Canadian Museum Program (Advisory Group on Canadian Museums).

88 Despite Abell's earlier attempt to be hired by Michigan, a 31 March 1942 letter from Charles Dollard, at the Carnegie to Dean Lloyd Emmons, Michigan State College, recommended him based on President Patterson's reports and Carnegie's own satisfaction "with the resulting growth of art appreciation in Nova Scotia. His most outstanding contribution we believe has been in organizing small art societies in this largely rural area." See CCNY Records, CU RBML, Series III, Grant Files, Box 220, Michigan State University.

89 He maintained his ties to the Maritimes with a few summer trips to Nova Scotia. See Abell's letters to Lillian Freiman, McLaughlin Library, University of Guelph Archives and Special Collections, Lillian Freiman Collection, and his correspondence with Jack Humphrey and also with Fred Taylor; see National Archives of Canada, Frederick B. Taylor fonds R3299-0-8-E.

90 See the classic study, Ernest R. FORBES, *The Maritime Rights Movement, 1919-1927. A Study in Canadian Regionalism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979).

91 I wish to thank Kathleen MacKenzie, archivist at St. Francis-Xavier University for copies of Abell's letters.

92 Marcelle ABELL's other Canadian writings include "What is Wrong with the Teaching of French," *Dalhousie Review*, vol. XXI (1941-42): 299-312; *En Route, Canadien. A Pre-High School French Course* (Vancouver: Copp Clark, 1944) as well as her 1940 Acadia University M.A. thesis, "An Examination of Methods of Teaching Modern Languages in the Light of Psychology." An undated portrait of Marcelle by Helen Beals is in a private collection in the United States.

93 There was possibly only one other Quaker family in Wolfville at the time. According to the May 1935 issue of the *Acadia Athenaeum*, Abell led a forum on pacifism at the university on 25 April 1935 and he must have mentioned his own experience with the American Friends Overseas.

94 "Look Out of the Window," *Friends' Intelligencer*, 19 Second Month [February] 1927: 146-47. It was Quaker usage to refer to the months by their number rather than by their name (as I have done in this text) and issues of the *Intelligencer* are dated in that manner.

95 "The Fine Arts and Good Citizenship," CKIC, Wolfville, N.S., Feb. 1935, NGC Archives, 7.4.r, Radio Broadcasts (Outside Activities/Organizations).

96 The British art historian Eric Newton commented during his 1937 tour of Canada: "I shall be glad to leave the Maritimes. The people are hard and puritanical. Neither the breezy gusto of the Prairies nor the worldliness of the eastern towns. And not a bit welcoming." Eric NEWTON, *Diary of an English Art Critic. Eric Newton on a North American Lecture Tour in 1937* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), 35.

97 It must also be understood that the National Gallery had to consider the less than satisfactory conditions for showing art in many Maritime venues when offering exhibitions to the MAA.

« D'AILLEURS »

LA CORPORATION CARNEGIE, WALTER ABELL ET LES STRATÉGIES AMÉRICAINES POUR L'ART DES MARITIMES DES ANNÉES VINGT AUX ANNÉES QUARANTE

L'histoire de la communauté des provinces maritimes à partir de la fin des années vingt jusqu'au début des années quarante, a été influencée par des personnes et des facteurs extérieurs à la région ou « venus d'ailleurs ». Il y eut, en particulier, Frederick P. Keppel (1875-1943), président de la Carnegie Corporation de New York, et Walter Halsey Abell (1896-1957), écrivain sur l'art et éducateur originaire de Pennsylvanie, professeur à l'Université Acadia de Wolfville, Nouvelle-Écosse. La Carnegie Corporation s'intéressait depuis longtemps au Canada et leurs relations étaient favorisées par la facilité d'accès, une langue commune et l'héritage d'une interaction historique entre les deux pays. Durant sa présidence, Keppel soutenait que les arts visuels étaient la principale priorité philanthropique culturelle de la Corporation. Walter Abell, qui était venu à Acadia sous l'égide de la Corporation, a vu à ce que se réalise le désir de Keppel de favoriser un plus large accès aux beaux-arts dans trois secteurs distincts.

Formé en histoire de l'art au Swarthmore College et à la Barnes Foundation, Abell avait aussi été rédacteur en chef du journal quaker de Philadelphie, le *Friends' Intelligencer*, ainsi que professeur d'esthétique au Antioch College. À son arrivée à Acadia, en 1928, où il allait demeurer pendant quinze ans, il créa le premier département d'art et d'esthétique dans une université canadienne et développa des cours qui soulignaient l'importance de l'art dans la vie quotidienne. Il introduisit aussi le premier cours universitaire en art canadien. Inhabituelle aussi était l'attention qu'il portait à l'art autochtone et inuit. Son enseignement fut facilité en grande partie par un don de la Carnegie Corporation à l'université Acadia, en 1927, de matériel didactique sur l'art, comprenant près de deux cents livres, des reproductions photographiques en noir et blanc d'œuvres d'art et quelques gravures et tissus originaux.

En 1934 Abell fonda l'Acadia Art Club et, avec Elizabeth MacLeod, directrice de la Mount Allison University Art School à Sackville, il organisa des expositions et en emprunta d'autres de la College Art Association et de l'American Federation of Artists. Grâce à une petite subvention de la Corporation, ils créèrent, un an plus tard, la Maritime Art Association dont Abell fut le président, poste qu'il conserva pendant plusieurs années. La MAA fut la première alliance régionale canadienne de sociétés artistiques, d'écoles publiques, d'universités,

d'organismes sociaux, de groupes de service et civiques, d'artistes, d'étudiants en arts et de toutes personnes intéressées aux arts. Ses activités principales étaient la circulation d'expositions obtenues de la Galerie nationale du Canada (aujourd'hui Musée des beaux-arts du Canada) et la mise sur pied d'un programme de conférenciers qui faisaient la tournée de la région. L'exposition annuelle de la MAA, avec sa grande variété d'artistes locaux et une couverture journalistique enthousiaste, se révéla être sans doute la stratégie la plus efficace pour construire l'identité de la communauté artistique régionale. Plusieurs des essais qui accompagnaient les expositions avaient été écrits par Abell, et faisaient ressortir le contexte international pour la compréhension de l'œuvre des artistes des Maritimes.

Les appuis financiers à la MAA venaient du comité canadien de la Carnegie Corporation, administré par H.O. McCurry, alors directeur adjoint de la Galerie nationale du Canada. Malheureusement, McCurry comprenait fort peu les difficultés que présentait l'organisation d'expositions dans les Maritimes où les facilités professionnelles étaient rares. De plus, des querelles internes causèrent d'autres tensions avec l'Association elle-même. Malgré tout, la MAA créa les infrastructures pour la promotion et la diffusion de l'art dans les Maritimes – malgré, ou peut-être au vu des difficultés imposées d'abord par la Dépression puis par la Deuxième Guerre mondiale.

En 1940, Abell fonda la publication *Maritime Art*. C'était le premier périodique au Canada entièrement consacré aux arts visuels et qui allait devenir sa contribution la plus efficace et durable à la culture visuelle des Maritimes et du Canada. Grâce à l'appui financier de la Carnegie Corporation, la revue était remarquablement ouverte pour l'époque et ses articles étaient consacrés à tous les aspects des beaux-arts et de la communauté qui soutenait la culture canadienne. La revue devait ostensiblement révéler l'activité artistique de la région, mais, dès le début, Abell nourrissait des ambitions nationales pour le périodique. Ces ambitions devaient se réaliser en 1943, lorsque la revue (et Abell) déménagea à Ottawa, où elle prit le nom de *Canadian Art*.

Plusieurs facteurs motivaient le zèle que Walter Abell mettait à définir, activer et éduquer une communauté artistique dans les Maritimes. La Carnegie Corporation soutenait son travail parce qu'il réalisait leur mandat de «promouvoir le savoir par la diffusion» et la politique de Frederick Keppel d'avancement culturel par les arts visuels. Énergique et ambitieux, Abell semble avoir été poussé à dépasser les limites de Wolfville et son isolement des centres artistiques intellectuellement plus stimulants. Cherchant à faire de la population des Maritimes un public enthousiaste pour l'art, il voyait dans la région une terre prometteuse capable d'égaler l'action culturelle démocratique telle que définie aux États-Unis par les organisations artistiques avec lesquelles il avait noué des liens durables. Abell a probablement été influencé également par les ambitions du Maritime Rights Movement et du mouvement de développement coopératif et d'éducation des adultes du Antigonish Movement de Nouvelle-Écosse. Le

facteur le plus important dans son idée de développement d'une communauté artistique et coopérative dans les Maritimes venait peut-être du fait qu'il était quaker. Ses premiers écrits pour le *Friends' Intelligencer* montraient le pouvoir de l'action collective par la Société des amis et faisaient référence à l'art et à l'architecture comme à des métaphores de la compréhension mutuelle. Il allait exprimer ces idées dans les Maritimes à travers son action culturelle en faveur du développement esthétique de la communauté artistique.

Dans le meilleur des cas, la Carnegie Corporation et Walter Abell nourrissaient pour les Maritimes des ambitions culturelles qui étaient peut-être plus idéalistes que réalistes. Leurs aspirations continentalistes étaient contestées par un état d'esprit culturellement conservateur et limité et par une population trop petite pour fournir le soutien nécessaire à une communauté régionale artistique plus développée à l'époque. Néanmoins, sans la Carnegie Corporation, Frederick Keppel et, surtout, la détermination de Walter Abell, la communauté artistique des Maritimes de la fin des années vingt au début des années quarante aurait eu peu d'importance pour la région ou même pour le Canada. Il peut y avoir des avantages à venir « d'ailleurs ».

Traduction : Élise Bonnette